



# FAKE PROBLEMS

**HQ:** Naples, FL  
**NOW PLAYING:** *It's Great To Be Alive*  
(SIDEONEDUMMY; [sideonedummy.com](http://sideonedummy.com))

**WHY YOU SHOULD KNOW 'EM:** Blending the fervor of Against Me! with the genre-defying nature of Portugal. The Man, Fake Problems birth a sound all their own.

**YOU LIKE? YOU'LL LIKE:** AGAINST ME!  
LUCERO / MURDER BY DEATH

**BANDS ENCOUNTER MANY TRIALS** and tribulations while crafting their masterpieces in the recording studio: temperamental producers, malfunctioning equipment, band members' battling egos, addictions and/or performance anxiety. Add Mother Nature's wrath to that list. "There was actually a tornado while we were recording," explains Fake Problems vocalist/guitarist Chris Farren (second from right). "It was really scary. We watched it from inside the studio." Luck won out though, as the forces of nature spared the band,

their recording session and the studio itself. "That place is built like a tank," Farren says.

*It's Great To Be Alive*, Fake Problems' SideOneDummy debut, channels the swirling spirit of cyclones and their attendant fury. From the plaintive folk of "Tabernacle Song" to the homebrew-bred bolero of "Level With The Devil," the band demonstrate a tremendous growth spurt since 2007's *How Far Our Bodies Go*. They still find room to deliver anthem-aspiring punk raves—including "The Dream Team" and "Don't Worry Baby"—but Fake Problems embark on a mission of boundless musical exploration.

That mission began in late 2004 when the longtime Naples, Florida, pals—Farren, guitarist Casey Lee, bassist Derek Perry and drummer Sean Stevenson—joined forces following the demise of their previous rock projects. To perfectly capture the daring nature of their new material, Fake Problems braved the unpredictable summer weather of the Midwest with veteran producer AJ Mogis (Bright Eyes, Cursive). Farren says recording with Mogis "was a dream come true. He was a part of so many records we grew up on, [records] that had an impact on us. Working with him was amazing." It might seem an incongruous fit given Fake Problems' past

teammates (Against Me!, the Gaslight Anthem, et al.), yet Mogis shed new light on the band's sound. "It was the first time we worked with a producer who had a lot of input," Farren continues. "He added so much to the record."

Fake Problems also used brass to bolster their disc: Matt Agrella (Look Mexico) arranged a six-piece horn section with musicians from the University of Nebraska. "Everything was planned out and written beforehand," Farren explains. "With our first record, we just walked in and figured it out. But this time, it was well thought out." Farren enjoys using the additional instrumentation for live shows, though he stresses he is equally excited about the band performing as a core unit. "I like the sound of both—just us, and full orchestration. I like the dynamic of both." He adds, "The challenge is to make it cohesive."

But that doesn't mean Fake Problems aren't up for the challenge: The band's love affair with the road began almost immediately after they formed, and Farren estimates they've completed 25 tours since the fall of 2005. "We saw so many bands who never tried, who just played in town every weekend," Farren says. "We're gone nine to 10 months a year."