



QUOTE OF THE DAY

“I call on the Senate Republicans to not walk lockstep as they have with the president for years in this war. It’s time to change. It’s the president’s war. At this point it also appears clear it’s also the Senate Republicans’ war.” – Senate Majority Leader **Harry Reid** D-NV

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Musicians Zac, Isaac and Taylor Hanson from the band Hanson arrive at the premiere of Sony Pictures’ ‘Superbad’ held at the Grauman’s Chinese Theatre on Aug. 13 in Hollywood. – Getty images

Hanson takes ‘The Walk’ to independence

By La Shawn Barber

Mention the band Hanson, and you’ll hear an inevitable snigger. Ten years ago, its syrupy yet infectious confection, “MMMBop,” burned up the airwaves as DJs and VJs spun it hour after hour. The journey from long-haired blonde boys to mature men has been exceedingly kind to the brothers, and their recently released album, “The Walk,” is a culmination of who they’ve become.

Guitarist Isaac, 26, keyboardist Taylor, 24, and drummer Zac, 21, are taller, darker and married, but the “blue-eyed soul” brothers are still writing their own songs, playing their own instruments and three-part-harmonizing their own tunes.

Hanson’s story isn’t one you’d expect from a so-called boy band of the ‘90s. While groups like the Backstreet Boys were packaged and marketed like widgets, Hanson walked headlong into independence, having won the right to control and own their music.

Disenchanted with former label Island/Def Jam Records, the brothers rebelled against the label’s tunnel-vision quest to produce a hit song at the expense of the band’s artistic integrity. Trying to shed a bubble gum pop image, Hanson didn’t cave to the pressure. After a frustrating three-year ordeal over creative differences, it left and formed its own label, 3CG Records. The group chronicled its battle with Island/Def Jam in a documentary called “Strong Enough To Break,” which premiered at the 2006 Hol-

lywood Film Festival and is available as a free download exclusively on iTunes.

With control comes responsibility. Releasing music independently even before hitting it big in 1997 on Mercury Records, Hanson could be the poster band for personal responsibility. Rather than sulking and pointing fingers, they took control of their product and crafted the music they wanted.

“The Walk” represents the creative and financial risks Hanson’s taken for the sake of artistic freedom. The brothers grew up listening to such diverse music as The Beach Boys and Otis Redding. R&B, rock and funk influences are evident throughout the album, especially on songs like “Been There Before,” an homage to rock ‘n’ roll legends, “Tearing It Down,” “Blue Sky” and “Running Man.”

Hanson released the first single, “Great Divide,” on World AIDS Day, with proceeds going toward preventing mother-to-child transmission of AIDS in South Africa. While visiting Mozambique, Hanson recorded a children’s choir, whose vocals can be heard on “Great Divide” and other tracks. Footage from this trip is included in a docu-series available exclusively on iTunes, “Talking The Walk,” which documents the making of the album. More than Hanson’s previous albums, this one is socially conscious and, some would say, political. “We’re aware that the messages of this album are coming through in a stronger way, and it was purposeful,” Zac Hanson said in a telephone interview.

And the medium is just as im-

portant as the messages. With the emergence of the Internet, there’s never been a better time in the music industry to be an independent band. Rapidly changing technology has made production and distribution of music relatively cheap. Using digital tools, indie bands like Hanson can record and sell the kind of music they want. But there’s a downside.

“The Internet has changed the way music is made and also the way people find music and ... buy — or not buy — music,” Zac said, chuckling, referring to ripping and file sharing. “I don’t think there’s a model for selling music now that’s really working the way it should. Record sales are down, radio listenership is down and MTV is not playing any videos.”

Regardless, Hanson wouldn’t trade independence for all the corporate capital in the world.

“Those are the reasons why we wanted to do the independent label ... to just do those things instead of waiting to see if we can get the green light from the legal department or if the label is willing to license the master of the lead single,” Zac said. “We can just say do it and move with the times in a more active way rather than being victim to the times.”

In control and armed with fresh, new music, Hanson hit the road this week for “The Walk” tour. If you want to challenge your perceptions of what this band is, drop by the 9:30 Club (815 V St. NW) on Sunday.

La Shawn Barber is a member of The Examiner’s Blog Board of Contributors and blogs at lashawnbarber.com.

COMMENTARY

New doubts on global warming in revised NASA temperature data

By Dr. Tim Ball and Tom Harris

Imagine basing a country’s energy and economic policy on an incomplete, unproven theory — a theory based entirely on computer models in which one minor variable is considered the sole driver for the entire global climate system.

This is precisely what former Vice President Al Gore, Senate Environment Committee Chairman Barbara Boxer and others want their nation to do.

They expect Americans to accept on blind faith the thesis that human carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions are causing catastrophic climate change. Boxer, Gore and their allies readily resort to emotional bullying against anyone who dares question this dogma.

Their pronouncements — Boxer’s juvenile “the American people have the will to slow, stop and reverse global warming” is a prime example — are merely displays of arrogance that expose their lack of basic science understanding, and their complete disrespect for public intelligence. The policies they advocate are wholly unjustified scientifically and have extraordinarily damaging economic implications for the developed world.

The scientific method, which even grade-schoolers know, provides that science advances through hypotheses based on a set of assumptions. Other scientists challenge and test those assumptions in what philosopher Karl Popper called the practice of “falsifiability.” Trying to disprove hypotheses is what real science is all about.

Yet the hypothesis that human addition of CO₂ would lead to significantly enhanced greenhouse warming was quickly accepted without this normal scientific challenge.

As Dr. Richard S. Lindzen, professor of meteorology in MIT’s Department of Earth, Atmospheric and Planetary Sciences said, consensus was reached before the research had even begun. Adherents to the hypothesis began defending the increasingly indefensible by launching personal attacks, essentially trying to frighten scientific opponents into silence.

Much to the frustration of alarmists, however, solid scientific evidence continues to mount against the flawed notion that human CO₂ emissions are a problem. For instance, NASA’s Goddard Institute for Space Studies (GISS) just made significant changes to its temperature records, downgrading the magnitude of recent rises.

This was precipitated by discovery of errors in NASA methodologies by Canadian researcher Steve McIntyre, already well-known for his debunking of the now-infamous “hockey stick” temperature

graph that was a fundamental pillar of the 2001 United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) Report.

Dr. James Hansen, as director of GISS, is responsible for NASA temperature records. An ardent Gore supporter, Hansen often plays conflicting roles simultaneously. Within one week of the change to the NASA record, he posted a blog diatribe — not officially through his employer’s channels, but as a private citizen.

In his blog post, he claimed the temperature changes were insignificant (in reality, they are highly significant) and likened climate warming skeptics to “court jesters” paid by industry.

Hansen also played this duplicitous game when he made a sensationalist climate change presentation to Congress — also as a private citizen. Such strongly held and outspoken views likely influence, and so are inconsistent with, his activities as a scientist/executive at NASA.

Before McIntyre’s discovery, NASA considered 1998 the warmest year in the continental U.S.; now it is 1934, with 1998 second and 1921 third.

Four of the 10 warmest years on record are now acknowledged to have occurred when human production of CO₂ was minimal, in the 1930s. The past decade now includes only three of the 10 warmest years. Will Gore withdraw “An Inconvenient Truth” pending necessary corrections?

A second “proof” of human CO₂-caused warming, according to the U.N.’s IPCC, was a claimed increase in global temperatures of about one degree fahrenheit over 130 years. This was asserted to be outside natural variability. But the uncertainty in the measurements was more than 0.3°F, meaning possible values could vary by as much as 66 percent of the total change.

The source of this temperature calculation, University of East Anglia’s Professor Phil Jones, has refused to disclose which temperature records were used and how he “adjusted” them. Clearly, the IPCC’s conclusions must be viewed with considerable suspicion until they provide full disclosure on the Jones data.

The meaning of these revelations is clear: Computer models are the basis of all forecasts used by alarmists. These models used temperature data that is now known to be suspect or completely wrong. Will Gore, Boxer and the IPCC call for a rational re-evaluation of the global warming scare?

Don’t bet on it — accurate science was never a hallmark of this crusade.

Dr. Timothy Ball is chairman of the Natural Resources Stewardship Project and former climatology professor at the University of Winnipeg. Tom Harris is an Ottawa-based mechanical engineer and NRS executive director.