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Robert, Postbox, Los Angeles | The Rules Of Covers

While there are very few rules when creating new music, covering another band's work does have a set of parameters to follow. Tokyo Police Club is currently sequestered at Red Bull Studio in Santa Monica, recording 10 covers in 10 straight days, so keyboardist Graham Wright is intimately familiar with these unspoken guidelines. Here are three items to consider when getting ready to cover another artist's track:

1. **Know Your Surroundings:** There's a difference between covers at a concert and going through the process of recording a cover song. "When you're playing a cover live, like 'Last Night' or 'My Name Is Jonas,' then you just want to play the damn song," Wright said. "It's the end of the night and [the audience is] drunk and sweaty. They don't want to hear you saying 'what if 'Last Night' was in three-quarter time?' "
2. **Walk The Line:** The cover has to sound like the song, but not be a perfect match for the original. "It's the right balance of reverence and irreverence," Wright said. "You can't just strip the song of everything that makes it good, but you can't be slavishly devoted to the original."
3. **Give Them What They Want:** The joy of a cover is hearing a new interpretation of an old classic. This is not the time to prove your indie cred. "We didn't want to pick any songs that people know we hate," Wright said. "But if it comes down to X and Y, and X is a Top 40 hit, and Y is a small indie band that opened for us once that we really liked, X was probably weighted heavier."

Click on the image above to hear the band's version of Moby's "Southside."

Image: Courtesy of Tokyo Police Club

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