



LET'S FUCK SHIT UP, MAN

Dirty Pretty Things played the Pukkelpop festival in Belgium the 14th of August and I got to do an interview with Didz and Gary after their gig.

They talked about the new album, Mercury Rev and the Matrix...

A LABOUR OF LOVE

What was the biggest difference between recording this album and 'waterloo To Anywhere'?

Didz: Waterloo to Anywhere was really rushed, we were like pushed into having something out. This one, we had too much time really.

Gary: With Waterloo to anywhere, we started playing as a band in August and then coming November we had the remnants of six tracks and we went and took that to LA, where we had five tracks, one we wrote out there and the other five tracks we basically had an arrangement.

D: This one was much more a pain in the ass. It was a fucking nightmare.

G: A labour of love as we prefer to call it.

D: It's nice, that's good.

Carl was rushed to the hospital a while ago because of pancreatitis. Does this affect the band in any way?

D: Hopefully long term.

G: Yes, long term for the better. Carl has a very large palette for words, but one of the words that Carl never really utilized was moderation.

D: Or stop. He's much better for it, though. He's definitely paying for it.

G: He's a lot more healthier right more now, he's a lot more focused.

D: Less grumpy.

G: Less grumpy as well, so generally, his illness has had a knock-on effect, or should I say his recovery has had a knock-on effect with everything and everybody around us. It's a much more productive environment. Because he's not getting smashed all the time.

D: Carl minus drinks equals Carl minus hangover, which equals ten.

//

Anthony and Didz did a lot of work regarding the album in Anthony's flat..."

How were the songwriting duties split for this album?

D: Well, we did a bit of work in Anthony's flat and demoed stuff while we were writing.

G: I think my friend, I use the term friend quite loosely, my friend Didz has kind of..

Anthony and Didz did a lot of work regarding the album in Anthony's flat. I came in and played on the majority of it. And Carl, he had a few tracks of his own that he were very keen to work on and those tracks, we all had a little bit of input in. But for the majority Anthony and Didz did a lot of work on the album.

D: And then we took it to LA, which was pretty much a bit a waste of time, and mixed it. Overdubbed at Central parks. Re-recorded some parts in London. But even some stuff like The North we recorded in Anthony's flat which had just put strings on it.

POST-ROCK STUFF

Are there any new bands that you like at the moment?

D: I like the Ting Tings single, but that's not new anymore. But the album was a bit of a letdown.

G: The Ting Tings have been somewhat overplayed. I do like them, I hope they have a little bit of longevity, but I can't say it at the moment because everybody's playing the same singles all the time.

D: The last single wasn't very good though.

G: I do like Hercules and the Love Affair.



D: The other day in Norway, we went and go see them. Something in a field.

G: Fleet Foxes are very good.

D: MGMT are pretty good. Mostly, the most part of my iTunes is post-rock stuff, electronic music.

G: I like a bit of Neon Neon.

D: Neon Neon is awesome, man. How can you fuck up when you've got Gruff from the Super Furries who's the singer.

G: I do like them, that's pretty damn good.

D: I've gone to Black Affair. It's actually pretty good. I think Gruff and Steve share the same lineage and statute in being uncompromising experimental bastards.

Are you going to watch any bands today?

D: We wanted to watch Ian Brown and we've also



with chicks. This is the wrong time, let's just move on.

Have you already chosen the new single?

G: We are actually shooting a video with a filmmaker called John Bland, he's done U2 videos and God knows what else. He's an independent filmmaker who's very arty. He wanted to do a video with us as well, which will be on the internet. We've chosen the song for the video, it's going to be... I'm trying to remember what... Oh yeah, the truth begins.

D: I completely forgot. We've also got some stuff left over from the last record and we're all still writing so we could maybe get some new stuff and just stream it and go for the anticipated idea of releasing songs for the record company. You know, it's not the sixties.

G: We're in a period of time now of change in the music industry; the old idioms are actually getting their music out, releasing a single, releasing an album. That's still important.

D: The Streets have just said their next album will be their last album. He feels that a sixth one would be rude, which is true, but... We've just got to shape up and look at how the industry really works rather than just playing to the old money, which isn't really money, it's just institutionalized bankruptcy, impending bankruptcy. It's ridiculous.

G: It's a bit like the matrix: It's not the spoon that bends, but the world that bends around it. And we have to bend with the changing times. We can't be spending all our time worrying when the next single is going to be out on Mtv because right now nobody really cares.

watched The Crips. That was really good.

G: I caught a little bit of the Pidgeon Detectives, that was okay as well. We wanted to see Ian Brown, but he's on now so that's getting difficult.

D: I want to see Mercury Rev. Just because All is Dream and Deserter's Songs are such important albums for me. I really want to go and hear those songs, I'm hoping they'll be playing songs from that era.

Are you going to do any more gigs or tours in Europe?

G: We played Berlin on Sunday and I think we'll come back there, but I have been wrong and quite possibly I shall be wrong.

D: Mostly, he's wrong on stage. And with chicks he's wrong.

G: I'm like totally wrong with that, Jesus Christ, I need help

DUDES JUST GET TOGETHER

Are there any artists you would like to work with?

D: Tons, Steve Mason would be great, Super Furrries would be great, I heard the new Eno with David Byrne thing the other day ... But the nineties, when Noel Gallagher worked with the Chemical Brothers and Tim Burgess also worked with the Chemical Brothers, that was a step forwards and there's been a decline on that front. Let's fuck shit up, man.

G: Let's bring back Stock, Aitken and Waterman and work

with them.

D: Me and Anthony worked with a band called The Hugs from Portland, Anthony played guitar on a Jamie T track recently, Carl done some stuff with Jon from Reverend & the Makers and me and Gary did a lot of stuff on that as well. You know, the whole industry, the money-making machine is in complete decline and everyone's friends. Dudes just get together and make music like in Anthony's flat, like me and Anthony and Jamie Klaxon. Let's put it together and have a nice song that we worked on and then put it out on the internet so everyone can hear it. You know, it doesn't matter, if it's all about getting music across to people, then even the idea of 'bands' is maybe going to fade out.

How do you feel about this album?

D: I feel brilliant about it, the album's genius, it was a pain in the face to make but we knew it, even before we went to LA, people were saying: you've already got the songs, why are you going to LA? We can do it in Anthony's flat and then a week in a real studio and deliver the goods. It's about the songs, it's not about the recording process or about Dave Sardy eq'ing the amps in the right way, which also, I should say, was brilliant, he's a genius.

//

I feel brilliant about the album, it's genius"

G: I think this album has been an arduous task. A lot of things got on regarding getting the album released and even getting the album completed, but I think all of that goes to bring out the stress in everybody. It would be too easy to just do it easy, just put it out. Sometimes, you just have to really stretch yourself out, just put yourself out there and go through whatever, in order to get to the end of it.

IT'S ABOUT MUSIC

D: But we fucking said it, that album's brilliant, it's a massive departure from the first album, it's not like what anyone else is doing and the British record critics have just got their heads up their ass and are looking for the next scene. It's not about scenes, all bands are friends and they can be playing different types of music. Look at Richard Hawley, who's friends with the Klaxons. It's not the same kind of music, you could be a fifties balladeer and be friends with massive e-heads from fucking Hoxton. It doesn't matter, it's not about a media scene, it's about music and people who are like-minded. You know what, people can be like-minded without even entering each other's spheres. They can relate to each other and you know what, in their record collections are probably the same records, they're just busy with different things.

G: They may have completely different record collections, but I listen to a record of yours and I say "Well, that's interesting, I've never heard that before" and then I'll put something on and you'll say "Well, that's cool, I've never heard that before" and you start this communication between the two of you. Music does this, it brings people together.

D: Me and Gary have the same kind of thing, we've both got a lot of different songs in our record collection. And I'm a middle class white boy, I'm an indie kid but with an open mind and Gary's a drummer, he's going to be able to interpret jazz and classical music in a way that I definitely couldn't. But you know what, were in the same band, we work together pretty well, we look at each other on stage and pull spasm faces and laugh at each other.
G: I cringe, I don't laugh. (laughs)

Are there any songs on the new album that stand out for you in any way?

G: The North stands out for me. Didz wrote the North and that is definitely one of the standout tracks on the album.

Once again it is because it's a massive departure for us, we've never done a track with that tempo, with that kind of sentiment behind it. One that's extremely naked as well. And it's beautifully crafted and well done and then we added the element of strings and that was it. It's completely different. If you were to put that track on without telling anybody it was us, a lot of people would not know, which I think is really good.

D: We wrote Kicks or Consumption with a mindset of being in complete departure but in the end, we were kind of



stifle about the process. Chinese Dogs also made the album, but I think that as a group Blood on my shoes, Truth begins,.... Faultlines was a massive departure, just like having that naked Oasis b-side mentality and adding some bass to it. We tried to stretch out on the entire album as much as we could, Hippy's son was like the Rolling Stones, we made it up as we went, but for the whole record, Buzzards is like a death mark, just a massive fuztdown. Plastik hearts is a departure, everyone says it sounds like the Libertines, but it doesn't sound like the Libertines, it's a fucking summer single. It's not like the Likely Lads or anything by the Libertines. If anything for me, it's a bit like Jamie T, with a reggaeish feel to it.

G: That's just people being lazy with their affiliations.

D: Deadwood, Bang Bang and Gin & Milk, you could go and put it in a Libertines album. There's no song on the new record that could have appeared on a Libertines record. Apart from 'Tired of England'.

Where does the new album's title Romance at Short Notice come from?

D: It's a Saki poem. It was a conversation that Carl was having about Romance at Short Notice being a good lyric and in the end, it made it as an actual lyric and we just pinched it as an album title.

G: It's from a book called 'The Open Window' by Saki, it's a short story and the last words are "Romance at Short Notice was her specialty".

D: It appears in Plastik Hearts as well "There's romance at great distances" It's a similar thing, you can really relate to those things being the same thing.

How do you feel about the gig you just had?

D: Awesome. I'm fucking flying from that gig. Two years ago, we came here to Pukkelpop and fucking died.

G: We were bad.

D: We had a fight before we went on and our guitar techs were all playing different songs as the first song, but we knew we had to redeem ourselves and we fucking killed it. We were definitely the best band of the day. If you take away all the headliners...

G: And anyone else who played.

D: We killed it, we were the best.

G: Yeah, we were the best.

**Interview - Pieter Claeys
Dirty Pretty Site
(www.dirtyprettysite.com)**