

Big Country: Looking back from new horizons

☒ If there is going to be a more memorable and moving event than Big Country's home-turf gig at [The HMV Picture House](#) on April 21st, it would have to be a tram in operation.

Big Country's enduring rock anthems defined a generation (and more) during the 1980s, with their unique twin-guitar bag-pipe motif born from a well-spent youth in their native Fife. Charismatic co-founder, vocals and guitar, Stuart Adamson was a genuine Celtic Rock/Folk hero for the common man. Respected and revered by fans and music fraternity alike, his tragic descent into depression, dependencies and eventual suicide was deeply felt by all who knew and admired him.

Whatever projects followed, it was evident to both band and fans that no-one could, or would want to, emulate Adamson's role. But come 2010, fellow co-founder, guitar/vocals, Bruce Watson, who spoke to The Edinburgh Reporter, found an ideal new guitarist, namely Jamie, his son. Long-time fan and friend, Mike Peters, whose own band, The Alarm, celebrate thirty years and running this Autumn, was invited to see how he might help celebrate Big Country's triumphs and Adamson's memory. Other original band members, Tony Butler, bass and Mark Brzezicki, drums, were on board to help drive father and son's double-axe anthems.

The nation-wide tour has been a hot ticket sell-out these past six months, and will also see the band play several summer festivals. Whatever initial reservations the faithful might have had about Peters' taking on frontman duties, these were soon dispelled early in the tour. Peters shared his feeling with a heaving, cross-generational crowd in Birmingham last December:-

"I feel so proud that you've wanted to join us in celebrating Stuart's legacy. For me this is so special. Stuart would have been so proud of you all. You just can't know how much he would have appreciated you being here tonight."

So, The Edinburgh Reporter asked Bruce, with it having been an exhausting, emotional and highly successful tour so far, did he anticipate an Edinburgh 'barmy-army' reception for the returning Fifers? Bruce said:-

"The tour has been very enjoyable. We felt by now that our career didn't have to be a slog after twenty years. With Mike Peters we've been rejuvenated. He's just brilliant, with his spontaneity and unpredictability. At a recent gig, just as we were cuing him in for vocals on 'Poroman' : nothing. He's away in the pit crowd-surfing! For us, the crowd has always been very special. They're part of the band, hence the large vocal input from them. With our fans there's no 'fourth wall'."

Any special surprises for the Edinburgh gig given that you are only a bridge too far from home territory?

"We have an unwritten rule to do something different every night. So we'll just have to wait and see."

Many are bound to be asking, is there any new material coming from this creative re-union?

"On tour you are always strumming away with ideas to pass the time and we've certainly come up with some new songs. We aim to get recording later this year but it won't be an album project. More, specialized format releases. The technology has moved on so much since our time. And the costs!"

If you have a ticket, tuck it away safely in the top breast

pocket of your obligatory tartan shirt, because when classic songs such as '1000 Stars', 'Wonderland' and 'In A Big Country' rock out, you will be utterly carried away in a wave of shameless nostalgia and celebratory bonhomie.