

Music – Interview with Prides



Out of the blue, Prides were asked to play during the Commonwealth Games when their song 'Messiah' was acclaimed as representing the sporting event most appropriately.

The band had been writing and touring under different names and genres before that. With such hype surrounding this performance, Prides should be headlining venues similar to Catfish & the Bottlemen who are selling out two nights at London's prestigious Brixton Academy. They have sold out all their Scottish dates on the tour in Aberdeen, Inverness and Edinburgh's Liquid Room, which shows the band are on a trajectory worthy of their talents.

The album has been a long time coming – what are the plans for it?

To do an album [laughs]. It's pretty much done. The DIY magazine put up the other day that we've done a Kanye approach, which we kind of liked. While we have the time to write, we'll just write. If we come up with something better than we've got already, well then maybe it's not finished. But at the moment, it's finished. The plan is to get it out before the summer. Fingers crossed.

So if you're continually writing, will you have enough material for another album?

Yeah, you always want to have more than you need. Whether that means we've got something to sit on for another album or EP or b-sides or all that that kind of stuff, it's always good to have as much material as you can.

If we keep songs now that we've written now, they'll sit for ages and when we come to do a second album, we'll probably all

get up and say: "We should rework this", and we'll rework it for ages. Then we just end up writing new songs.

Is there another EP release due or are you leaving all new songs exclusively for the new album?

We've got two singles that are to come out before the album. Well, 'Higher Love' has just come out and then we'll probably do one more into the album, but that's the plan.

So will there be b-sides on those EPs as well?

'Higher Love' is just the one track. We don't really do b-sides actually. Digital has just gotten rid of that, really. We have some b-side type tracks. The other thing is, we need to sort out our first American release, so we might put out songs on that they've haven't heard before.

Apart from the album release, what other plans is there for Prides?

Big thing is probably is just playing as much shows as we can. We want to get out and do all the festivals and we look to get over to America again pretty soon, and just see where the year takes us.

You've played the Commonwealth Games, you've toured with some of the hottest bands in the country – are you receiving any other attractive offers?

Well we've got some things in the pipeline, but we don't want to give too much away.

Obviously your music is heavily influenced by the 80s, but is there anything modern influencing you?

All of it. There's loads of really good music out just now, loads of good bands, good pop music. We listen to Radio 1 all the time and think that there is loads of good tunes. It's a bit of everything, really. Depends what you're into. Like, we

have not stopped listening to One Direction's new album. You'd be surprised where some of the ideas come from. It's sort of like, 'Yeah, I heard this really cool riff on a Gloria Gaynor track!' Cool, that'll do.

How is the songwriting process pursued? Is it jam sessions or songs written on guitar?

We don't jam! No, we're sort of like a backwards band. Usually you get together and jam in a rehearsal space, bash stuff out and try different things, make sure everyone is happy. Then you go into a studio and you refine it. It's completely the other way: we go into the studio and then we have to learn how to play it in the end. We end up going to shows and not knowing any songs [laughs]. They're very coffee-induced.

We started working on a track the other day on a flight to Philadelphia from San Francisco. We have a couple of hours and see what comes out of it.

We must say that we have never jammed an idea, it has never come about in that scenario. The closest that comes to when we are sitting in one of our houses while one of us watches the TV and the other plays the piano. Then the person watching the TV goes, 'I like that bit!' It's like a verbal jam. Do that bit longer. Yep, that's it.

Most, if not all of your songs, are upbeat numbers – how do you arrange a setlist?

It's a bit of a weird one, especially when you're playing shorter sets, it's just full on. You do half an hour and it's non-stop. But we have enough songs now that we've got a little bit more of a dynamic. So you just have to bookend it with the biggest ones. Just play the first and the last one really well, nothing else matters!

If there is one venue in the world you want to play, what is it?

Barras. It's up there. The SSE Hydro. We played the Webster Hall in New York, which was amazing. We didn't headline, we just supported. If we could go back there and headline then that would be cool. Brixton Academy as well is another one on the list, a bit like one of those iconic places to play.

Surely you're on your way to the Barrowlands?

Maybe. If not this time then maybe next time.

You put out a lot of remixes of other artist's songs, was that an influence based on Bastille?

Not really. We produce a lot of music so people ask us to remix. It's a similar vibe. It's actually quite a good thing to do. We would never ask Catfish & the Bottlemen to do a Prides remix, but that's because most bands don't have a producer. We've sort of got an in-built DJ function.

It is impressive that you have sold out certain venues like Liquid Rooms Edinburgh without releasing an album. How do you think you have managed it?

We have just tried to release the best songs we've got. At every stage we've just tried to put on the best performance. Do everything we can: posting stuff online, be really involved with people, and let people be involved with what we are doing. Just trying as hard as we can.

We've played loads of gigs, even before we started Prides. A lot of people come to shows and say, 'We saw you at this and that', and it's like, 'You've seen us this many times already?' It feels like we haven't actually played that many gigs in total. People say they've been to 22, and it's like, 'What the hell?'

Obviously everything has had amazing support from the likes of Radio 1 and XFM, and we've had Commonwealth Games and FIFA. So we've been really, really lucky with the kind of exposure we

have had. So at the moment, we're just trying to get as much out of it as possible.