

The Edinburgh Reporter in conversation with Gun



Gun were the Scottish glam rock band in the 90s who could have taken over the world. They supported The Rolling Stones on their Urban Jungle stadium tour in Europe, and also had the opportunity to share the stage with Bon Jovi and Def Leppard soon after. Gun split in 1997 after poor sales leading to a decline in the band.

But after reforming in 2008, there is still demand for the band who have a new album, *Frantic*, coming out on 23 March. Their newest song dips into pop-rock and drifts away from their renowned hard rock sound. 'Labour of Life' is the first single off the new album and sounds as fresh as Gun did when they started.

The band are looking to appeal to a new audience as well as pleasing their dedicated fan base. "We kind of got lost, doing more pop than we were ever doing," said Dante Gizzi. "I think it is a bit of both, though. We scrapped a lot of songs, it was two years in the making. These songs come from the heart. Rock or pop, whatever genre, we just wanted the right songs that we could listen to and play all the time."

Frantic is the first album since 2012's *Break the Silence*, which was also the first album to feature original bassist Dante Gizzi on vocals. Dante described the album as a "challenge" with the band recording roughly four songs in three locations: Sam Studios in London, ICP in Brussels and Gorbals Sound in Glasgow.

"We were thinking about the fans, we have a huge following," said Dante. "You don't want to get caught up in the history. We couldn't come out with another *Taking on the World* album.

Jules [lead guitarist] and I listen to contemporary stuff that is happening right now all the time. It's really hard to write out rock songs. We've never been a band that could pigeonhole being a certain rock band. We spent a lot of time working out the direction."

Gun have been active on the live circuit prior to the promotion for the new album. The band played a three-night residency at Glasgow's King Tut's in November and will play two more Scottish dates around the album's release. As well as playing Edinburgh's Liquid Room, they will also play the legendary Barrowlands, a venue Gun are almost masters of playing – even though on March 28 it will be the first time the band have played the venue since the late 90's.

"I suppose we're subdued and emotional about playing there," said Dante. "We used to live a stone's throw away from it. I used to go there on a Saturday morning and spend most of my pocket money on the puggy. I played it at 17, that was an incredible experience. You just reminisce about playing there. We'll play a mixture of new and old songs, we just can't wait to perform."

Playing Edinburgh, on the other hand, isn't as memorable for them but they still have some memories of playing a couple of certain shows back in their heyday.

"We did the New Year's Eve party, I remember doing that. That was back in about 1996, or maybe just before. It was a mental gig, just totally crazy. Jules came through on the minibus that night while I was meeting my girlfriend's father in Edinburgh – I was sober as a judge. Jules may have emptied a bottle of Jack Daniels before the gig, and it was just screw-up after screw-up. I remember it so well."

When supporting The Rolling Stones on their stadium tour in 1990, Gun built up a small fan base in mainland Europe, which still hasn't diminished to this day. The band have been

fortunate enough to go over to different countries and play to sizeable audiences in the last few years. "We were lucky," said Dante. "We got a bit of success in Germany, Spain, Portugal and even Holland. It was great going over there and playing shows. Playing Madrid to capacities similar to over here. You get a fantastic response, and we'll probably be going over there this year with the new album and doing festivals."

The main thing for the group now is focusing on the promotion of the new album. As for what the band are up to after the UK tour concludes, it's their duty to reintroduce the band while maintaining and capitalising on what they already have. "I don't see this being a short-term thing," said Dante. "I see it as a long-term campaign. We'll keep working this album for the course of the year, then do festivals in the summer, maybe another British tour around October and some touring around Europe. It will be a busy year for the band."