

Live to Rock

REVIEWS BY
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Bullet For My Valentine continue their world tour and are set to land on Australian shores very soon...

The wind of change can often be a good thing – something Bullet For My Valentine know all too well. With new band members coinciding with the signing of a new record deal, the moons seemed to have aligned for the wild and ferocious hard rock band from Britain as they stretch their creative wings like never before. With drummer Jason Bowld joining founding members Matt Tuck and Michael 'Padge' Paget along with bassist Jamie Mathias, a member since 2015, the band has been reborn. And with an Australian and New Zealand tour just around the corner, Pugs caught up with lead axeman Padge to find out a little more about one of Britain's biggest ever heavy metal bands.

Bullet For My Valentine began their assault on the world's airwaves back in 2005 with their debut album *The Poison*, and instantly attracted a fanbase that would remain loyal for years to come. Backing that up with *Scream Aim Fire* provided heavy metal music with the injection it needed, and in doing so really put Bullet For My Valentine on the world map. Their following albums *Fever*, *Temper Temper* and *Venom* would cement their stature as one of the biggest metal bands on the planet with millions of album sales along with being crowned Best British Band at the credible Kerang Awards – three years in a row.

"It's amazing – I don't think any of us would have expected six albums and over ten years later we'd be still rocking hard – it's all very exciting. The metal scene is still thriving too! I've always believed things come around full circle and it's the same with metal rock, it keeps getting re-inspired and I don't think it'll ever die. People are just as much in love with rock and metal now as they were back in the 70s and 80s."

But it's not just fans that have lapped up the cranking sounds of Bullet For My Valentine, with some of their biggest influences like Iron Maiden and Metallica personally selecting them to hit the road on tour and share the stage.

"We did some great concerts with Metallica which was awesome, and then we did the big North American tour with Maiden, along with a few Canadian shows – which was mind-blowing to be honest. I think the biggest ever gig for me personally that comes to mind though was the second time we played a big festival in the UK on the big stage in the main tent. It was the first time we had an official release out and it was jam packed – and it was the first time I've ever heard people sing our songs back to us – it was a little surreal. I don't think I'll ever forget that feeling – it was like a drug. For a band from a small village in Wales, we've accomplished quite a lot – it's quite amazing really."

But to keep the rock and roll pumping through your veins and into the lives of all your fans, you need to constantly reinvent your sound, which is why the recent changes have been so important, clearly reflected on their new album 'Gravity'.

"We definitely wanted to do something different on this album and not stick to the usual Bullet formula – step out of the box a little so to speak. Especially now that half the band is new – a new bass player and a new drummer along with a new record deal – it just felt like the right time to mess around and try something different, so we went for it. The new drummer has been great. The different grooves and excitement that he brought to the table on the record and to the band is mind-blowing – I've never quite heard or seen a drummer like him in my life and fortunately for me he's in the band now. He's never short of ideas and that's really interesting in the writing room. He keeps coming up with new ideas and grooves – new vibes all the time – you know, after you've already done five albums, it's kind of hard to reinvent new things, but now with the new drummer it's doing to be really interesting moving forward."

And of course after hearing Padge doesn't mind riding motorcycles, we couldn't pass up the opportunity to ask him about his bike...

"Yeah, I've got a Honda CB600 Hornet – but it needs a little work. It's in the shop now actually getting a few things fixed up. I am looking at getting a bigger bike though, maybe I'll treat myself to a Harley or a Ducati in the Summer. Problem is I just don't get a lot of time to ride. We just finished our latest tour last Saturday so I flew back on Sunday and am enjoying a few days at home – drinking



a couple of beers in the garden and catching up with a few friends – we've had some good weather too. But unfortunately it's only five days before we start rehearsals for our next up and coming tour – the European Summer Festivals, so I'll be shooting off to London on Sunday. I'm just trying to make the most of the short time off. But I wouldn't have it any other way. You know, looking back on my earlier jobs, I've had factory jobs and stuff before, and every job has its days where it kinda does your head in and smothers you a bit – but that's the same with everything in life, you have your good days and your bad days. So it's good to remember that this is a once in a lifetime job and people would cut off their right arm to do it, it's a really good thing – and although it gets hard and there are a lot of sacrifices – all that hard work gets you to where you are."

Just a few personal questions to finish off with...

When did you get your first ever guitar and what was it?
"I was pestering my mum for years and she finally bought me one out of a catalogue – it was a ¾ Spanish acoustic guitar and I had no idea what I was doing. But eventually that guitar went on to have all the things I hate written on it, so it turned into a special guitar. I have no idea where it is now though – it's probably burnt, not too sure, but it's definitely gone."

Most Embarrassing Moment

"I've fallen over on stage a couple of times so that's pretty embarrassing, which has included smashing a couple of guitars. There was one night when I managed to find a hole in the middle of the stage which I fell through... lucky I didn't break my face, but I did break another guitar."

What's the first car you ever bought?

"Nothing too flash. It was a Ford Fiesta – I think it was a Mach II. Little red thing which was really old but in good condition – cost me about a thousand pounds. I remember it had a big parrot sticker on the side which meant everyone knew it was me driving past."

Favourite Drink?

"I love a nice cold Corona with a bit of lime." LTR



Bullet For My Valentine will be touring Australia in December. Head to their website www.bulletformyvalentine.com for all the details.



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