



# Live to Rock

REVIEWS BY  
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Five Finger Death Punch have been rocking the globe for over a decade now on their ascent to multi-platinum success, and on the wave of their latest release, 'And Justice For None', we caught up with guitarist Zoltan Bathory to get a little insight into what it's like living life on the road in one of the world's wildest rock bands...

Blasting on to the scene back in 2007, over a decade later Five Finger Death Punch (5FDP) are sticking to their guns and still cranking hard, reinforced with their latest album release 'And Justice For None' debuting at #4 on the Billboard Charts.

After becoming 'one of the most-streamed bands in the world' they've achieved some amazing accolades like the recognition of their staunch commitment to the military by receiving the coveted 'Soldier Appreciation Award' from the United States Army for their hit song 'Wrong Side of Heaven'. On top of that they have also appeared on the covers of renowned rock magazines, Revolver, Metal Hammer and Kerrang.

And it's fair to say it's been one wild ride so far as Zoltan eludes to, "We've been in the eye of the tornado so to speak for a while now, a lot of it has been self-inflicted, but it is a rock band and we wouldn't have it any other way. As they say, smooth water doesn't make good sailors. But yeah, it's been one hell of a ride and in ten years we've accomplished a lot. If I compare us to other bands, we've probably put out twice the amount of records and on top of that we tour about 250 days of the year, so it's a lot of hard work climbing, and a lot of crazy shit happens. I will say that we've calmed down a little bit now, but we've had a few wild years, I mean imagine of all people Nikki Sixx from Motley Crue coming up to us and saying, 'Guys, you are out of your mind. You might want to take it down a notch!' So you know you're doing something crazy..."

Finding that balance between living life in the fast lane can often be challenging though, even more so when temptations arise, which is something most rock bands experience, especially when success and fame comes knocking on the door.

"A lot of people don't realise what it's like to be in a touring band. Well, first and foremost when the success comes so does access to a lot of things you wouldn't have usually had before. Every city you go to people want to go for a drink or whatever and because you're the band you're always bringing the party. You can't do that for 200 days in a row, for them it's one night whereas for us it's all year round. A lot of musicians fall victim to this, and a lot of them are gone now or in rehab, some of them make it through which is great. I can say that all the guys in 5FDP have gone to rehab at some point or another - but now they're okay.

"For me personally, I'm only addicted to work. That's my addiction. If I go to the beach it takes me about ten minutes to say, fuck this I'm bored I've gotta go do something. So it's the music and work that I get my juice from. It's funny actually, whenever I roll up to the studio or wherever, the guys say, quick, daddy's coming hide the shit. Someone has to keep it together you know and I wouldn't have it any other way. But we've still got a lot to accomplish, which is why everyone had this moment of realisation that maybe we should slow down a little, so you know what, Nikki Sixx was probably right!"

Although when Zoltan says they're slowing down, that's just the wild night life, cos they're definitely not decreasing speed when it comes to releasing new music or touring, something he feels is important to enjoy continued success.

"Yeah, we always keep ourselves busy. Big bands like AC/DC, Metallica or Black Sabbath, they could wait three or four years to release another album, but now it's much different. Music isn't the centre of the universe any more, kids are playing video games and staying inside on computers and stuff. So I don't think a band can afford to disappear for long periods of time. And as you know true freedom is doing something that doesn't feel like work, so why would I want to take time off? We all know that only one in a million bands get to this level, so once we stepped on the gas pedal we just never took our foot off. We were like fuck we are in, let's do this!"



# DELIVERING THE DEATH PUNCH

# Live to Ride

And their seventh studio album 'And Justice For None' is another step forward for the band as they deliver their no frills hard core rock as only 5FDP can. And as Zoltan describes, it's a very diverse record.

*"Bringing out an album is kind of like a time capsule. We write about friendship, relationships, loyalty – just human elements. We don't really think about mythology, history and all that shit, it's just not interesting to us. So the new album is very diverse – songs like Fake which is all about what is real that's left in the world. Everyone lives on social media and pretends to have this great fucking life and it's fake. Politicians are fake, news is fake, so it's an angry song about all the fake things in life. Then there's a song 'The Seasons Change' which is about loyalty, the real people in your life that no matter what happens they'll always be there. So it sort of covers everything and everybody is going to find something relevant to them."*

Just some personal questions to finish off...

*"What were your musical influences growing up? In the early days I got into punk rock believe it or not. I grew up in a communist country – Hungary, so punk rock was like a rebellion- you know, fuck this let's burn it all down. And then Iron Maiden was probably the first ever metal band that influenced me, I thought, wow, this is different, and then I picked up everything from there."*

And what about your first ever guitar?

*"Again it was hard growing up in Hungary where the average wage was about \$100 a month, so my first guitar was a custom-made air guitar which I built myself. I was jumping up and down and pretending to be in Iron Maiden. Then I found an old guitar, the neck was still okay so I got a jigsaw and cut up my parent's coffee table when I was about twelve. It wasn't the best, but it was a guitar. I had it for about three years, but it just got in the way and it was a piece of crap. Then I got a better guitar which was when I was about fifteen."*

And what about motorcycles, do any of you guys ride?

*"I don't ride but Chris has a Harley and a Victory and Jason is absolutely crazy, he owns about seven motorcycles – a H-D, a Victory, a Ducati and some Kawasaki dirt bikes. So whether he's going for a long ride or ripping it up in the dirt, he gets out on two wheels whenever he can."*

And what about the first car you ever bought?

*"Ha...this is an insane story. Being in a communist country, you could only buy a car that had been manufactured in another communist country. And as the government owned everything, there wasn't a private sector so you had to go to a government car dealership. I'm not sure if you've heard of a car called Yugo but it was a car from Yugoslavia which was the worst car ever imported to the US but in communist countries it was the best car you could have. I had a Trabant which was from East Germany where you had to mix the gas and oil as it had a little two stroke engine with a whopping 26-horsepower and a maximum speed of 60-miles an hour. It had two cylinders and was made of compressed wood. But here's the kicker, you had to pay half the cost of the car and then wait about four or five years before you got your car, and you had no choice of colour or interior. Whatever you ended up with that was your car, and I got Baby fucking Blue, it was insane!"*

And your favourite drink?

*"Well, I don't really drink a lot but I don't mind a Caribbean Rum, you know something sweet like those beach drinks with a stupid fucking umbrella, and sometimes I drink red wine socially, but I'm not really a drinker. If you're asking me about my favourite gun now we're talking."*

There are plans for Five Finger Death Punch to bring their road show down to Australia, which will be one hell of a concert not to be missed. In the meantime, to hear the interview with Zoltan in its entirety, check out Live to Ride's YouTube channel... **LTR**

