

# Live to Rock

FEATURE BY PUGS

GET READY TO ROCK BECAUSE SLASH AND THE CONSPIRATORS ARE COMING DOWNUNDER...

It was a sight we never thought we'd witness again in this lifetime, Slash returning to the stage with Axl Rose and Duff McKagan for a Guns 'N' Roses reunion tour, but it happened, and it was huge! Like any successful tour though, sacrifices need to be made, and in this particular case, it would be the hiatus for Slash's band The Conspirators, four long years in fact.

But while he crisscrossed the globe with the Gunners for multiple arena and stadium performances, playing to millions of fans the world over on what resulted in a record-breaking tour, even with all the reunion activity, The Conspirators was never far from Slash's mind with plans to always get back with the band and continue what they started. So now that it's all come full circle again, it brings us to their new full-length album 'Living The Dream', which along with Slash and singer Myles Kennedy, also includes drummer Brent Fitz, Frank Sidoris and original bassist Todd Kerns, who we were lucky enough to catch up with on the cusp of their upcoming Australian tour this month.

*"It's fascinating to think that it's been four years. At first we said it'd probably be two years, but things were just happening so fast. I mean, we were kind of back in each other's pockets by mid-2017, so it didn't feel like that long, but we just sort of fell right back into this pattern and chemistry together that I don't think we were even aware we possessed. I think the record speaks for itself as far as that goes, we're playing better than ever and I think we're just very comfortable in each other's company, both musically and personally."*

## LIVING



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## THE DREAM

But let's face it, playing in a band with one of the best guitarists on the globe has to be a little daunting, even moreso when you spend almost two years together touring, but according to Todd, it's something he soon grew accustomed to.

*"Early on it was mildly surreal – I was a huge Guns and Roses fan, and in my opinion I think Slash is one of the best living guitarists on the planet, which most people would agree with. Some of that was a little crazy in the beginning, but Slash has a way of making you feel pretty comfortable pretty fast. He soon becomes more than just a band member, he becomes your friend. But that can also be funny sometimes, like just recently I was telling someone about a gig we were at with Zac Wilde playing with Ozzy Osbourne and Geezer Butler, and I remember saying, 'Oh and Slash was there too'. It's weird sometimes – because you know the man so well you kind of forget that he's an icon in his own right."*



## LIVING THE DREAM

“ I THINK MY INFLUENCES ARE THE SAME AS THEY’VE ALWAYS BEEN – KISS, GUNS ‘N’ ROSES, THE RAMONES, AC/DC – THE FOUR ESSENTIAL FOOD GROUPS OF ROCK AND ROLL AS FAR AS I’M CONCERNED! ”

In comparison to their first two albums, *Apocalyptic Love* and *World On Fire*, it’s crystal clear how much The Conspirators have evolved as a band, which is something Todd attributes a lot to Slash’s input.

“On the last record there was a lot of muscle flexing – we went a full 17 songs and sort of said, here take that as we threw it at the world. And this time Slash suggested we do a 10-song record, a very succinct record like the ones we grew up on – AC/DC, The Who, Led Zeppelin, Van Halen, bands like that – all those were 10 song records, some of them were even 8-song records. I think that sometimes having a package of songs that is very succinct, it’s like a big piece of music as opposed to one giant collection of songs, which was sort of the point with ‘Living The Dream’. We shot for 10 and ended up with 12, and I think it’s one of those records that I couldn’t imagine any of those songs not being there.”

And when it came time to record, they took up residence at Snakepit Studios, which was important according to Todd, especially when it comes to being creative.

“We started doing the drums at a place in North Hollywood we use called NRG, because it has a nice big room for drums and it’s very important to capture a big open-room drum sound. And then we went right back to the Snakepit for everything else basically. It’s a great facility, he actually had another studio back in the Snakepit days, which he ended up selling to Billy Bob Thornton, but this one’s great, there’s memorabilia on the walls and along with the studio there’s also an office at the front. The studio itself is very comfortable and very cosy – and you spend a lot of time in that room so to be creative you have to really enjoy being there which I do.”



If anything, the biggest positive amongst the band is just how serious Slash is about The Conspirators, which has turned out to be a far cry from just a drop in the ocean. Some would even argue his new band is just as important to him personally as the Gunners...

“It’s bizarre actually. In the early days there was a part of me that kind of thought we were just doing this to support his solo album and I never really had any preconceived ideas of what it would or wouldn’t be. I didn’t know if it would be just two or three months playing a few shows and then ‘thanks a lot guys, see ya later’, but it went around the world for a year and half. And then Slash just said, okay, we’re making a new record. He didn’t sit me down and ask me or anything, he just announced to us all that we were going to make the next record together. So we did it again and then we did it again...and here we are with ‘Living The Dream’. I think he honestly has a great deal of love and affection for this particular gathering of people - we all feel like family.”

But everyone knows that dedicating your life to the world of rock isn’t always beer and skittles, it takes dedication and continuous sacrifices, and many don’t even taste success, especially on such a level like this. But years of touring and living life on the edge takes its toll, with some legends checking out well before their time. Slash could easily have ended up a statistic, especially in those early days of his career when he lived his life redlining in top gear, some would even say it’s a miracle he survived. Fortunately for the world of rock he did, and today continues to not only be an icon in the industry, but also a strong role model.

“The perception of Slash with a Jack Daniels in his hand and a cigarette in his mouth is gone, now he’s like a focused ninja. He always has something going on and always has something that he’s working on or looking to perfect. Mostly he’s perfecting himself – he’s always got a guitar in his hand and he’s always trying to be the best he can be, which is really inspiring all round. I mean he’s in the gym, he’s getting healthy, he’s always writing and he’s always got something he’s aiming for, which I find pretty inspiring!”

It’s just great to see The Conspirators back and firing on all cylinders, and of course they’ve already hit the road again for another world tour, which also includes Australia and New Zealand.

“I think we’ll at least do a year. It kind of gets harder and harder to not only do records but to stay on the road because everyone has all these other projects. Although at the same time a lot of the guys have pulled their schedules apart and dedicated their time to support this record. So we’ll definitely be going around the world a couple of times which is all part of the fun, we love being together and we love making music together.”



### NZ TOUR

Friday 25th January 2019  
Baypark Arena, Tauranga NZ

Saturday 26th January  
Spark Arena, Auckland, NZ

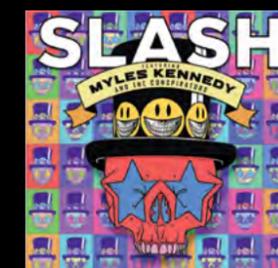
### AUSTRALIAN TOUR

Monday 28th January 2019  
Qudos Bank Arena, Sydney

Wednesday 30th January 2019  
Brisbane Convention  
Exhibition Centre, QLD

Friday 1st February 2019  
Margaret Court Arena, Melbourne

Sunday 3rd February 2019  
RAC Arena, Perth



The Conspirators hit our shores late January, so make sure you don’t miss out on tickets, because it’s time to rock...

Just a few personal questions to finish off...

First Ever Car?

I always say it was a Chevy Cavalier – a very crappy Chevy Cavalier. But there was a car before that – that I’ve actually forgotten what the hell it was, a big boat of a thing, a Pontiac I think. Funny thing about my life though is that I was always in a band and was always in a van or a bus travelling off into the distance so the idea of owning a car became sort of pointless cos I was always on the road.

Favourite Drink?

Well, I don’t drink anymore. The funniest thing about these old rock and rollers now is that we’re all sober and boring. So I’d have to say coffee, as sad as it sounds – a Flat White as the Australians have.

Musical Influences?

I think my influences are the same as they’ve always been – Kiss, Guns and Roses, The Ramones, AC/DC – the four essential food groups of rock and roll as far as I’m concerned. But also The Rolling Stones, Cheap Trick, The Beatles, The Who, Led Zeppelin – I can go on and on because I’m such a musical nerd that way, if you get me going I’ll never stop. **LTR**