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Exclusive : Finding Nemo



James Cook, far right

James Cook's - the sharp dressing lead singer of cutting edge electro rock quartet Nemo - star is on the up. But what lies beneath the big hair? Claire Storrow found out.

I don't want to like Nemo. With their Roxy Music-esque sharp suits and great looking hair (which everyone knows is the most important thing when you're in a band) and a shiny foil-wrapped confectionary of a single in the wonderfully neo-80s shape of Car Crash Eyes, it's just too beautifully orchestrated to be true. I'm suspicious.

James Cook turns up for our interview in a houndstooth coat with fake fur collar and aviator sunglasses - it's true to the form I expect but actually it's pretty practical on this blustery/rainy/sunny/cloudy June day.

But once we get a drink and he removes his coat and sunglasses it becomes clear that beneath the aesthetics Nemo are very much about their music and all observed nonchalance dissolves.

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As we both bemoan the **ridiculous caricatures that Johnny Borrell and Pete Doherty have become**, the fact that the NME has degenerated from being an iconic standard for music lovers all over the world to a literal bandwagon-jumping rag of a publication, and chat about how MySpace and the internet in general has revolutionised the production and distribution of music, he becomes more impassioned.

"You really have to decide whether you want to make music or you want to go out with Kate Moss," he says seriously before laughing.

He doesn't say this begrudgingly though, as being able to count **Alan McGee (the man who signed Oasis), Nighty Night's Julia Davis, The Mighty Boosh boys, and Grammy-nominated Imogen Heap amongst their fans**, Nemo are not short of friends in high places.

All these associations came out of a club night called The System which the lads ran pre-Nemo, and which lead to creative collaborations further down the line (James makes appearances in several episodes of The Boosh and the band toured with Imogen Heap as both support and backing band.) However, Nemo certainly do not lean on their connections, having as they do, their own recording studio and label.

"We don't have to rely on anyone," James tells me peremptorily.

There is definitely a D.I.Y punk philosophy which has arisen out of music being downloadable, and with bands being able to disseminate information about gigs at short notice, the live scene is probably more important for bands than getting signed at the moment. When I ask James whether being signed to a major label is an attractive option for a band anymore the response is an emphatic, "No".

He explains: **"If you're interested in business and you're interested in art, it doesn't make sense to sign (a contract). If you want to be famous, maybe it makes sense, but that isn't a guarantee of fame - signing a deal isn't a guarantee of anything. If you're on your own label that's as credible as you can be."**

I comment that their new single sounds like Duran Duran and I mean this as a compliment but James obviously feels this is a lazy comparison,

"If it sounds like Duran Duran it's because our influences are the same as Duran Duran's were."

The influences the band list on their MySpace page (Scott Walker, Human League, Bowie, Pulp and Depeche Mode being just a few) are the ones that James says the band "all agreed on" as individuals.

It's an eclectic and admirable list that represents the ingredients which contribute to the sound which is ultimately Nemo.

With a new distribution deal for Europe under their belts, a slot at the prestigious Montreux Jazz Festival for the second year running, and currently recording their second album, the band are ensuring that their fanbase is growing steadily but surely.

So the final verdict?

Snappy dressing? **Guilty.**

Stylish, infectious elctro-rock? Guilty.

Impeccable taste? **Guilty as charged.**

Too good to be true? Not guilty.

Nemo's new single "Car Crash Eyes" is available for download from itunes or from www.nemointernational.co.uk as is their album Post Album Love Their next UK gig is at Club B5 in Hitchin, Hertfordshire.

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