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Something for the Weekend



TWIN THE MOOD ... lads are ready to rock Belladrum after getting an invite to headline the festival

Growing up has been key to becoming band we dreamed of

ROCK boys Twin Atlantic planned to spend the year with their feet up and watching afternoon repeats of *Only Fools And Horses*.

The Glasgow gang badly needed some recharging time after a blistering global run with hit album *Free*.

It rocketed them into the big time, and has them leading the rock renaissance in the pop charts.

But *Del Boy* and *Rodders* have had to take a back seat because the boys have become too big to take a break.

Bass player Ross McNae explained: "We haven't had a chance to think at all in the last two to three years — we've just flown by the seat of our pants."

"When we started our new album, we wanted to think about what album we actually wanted to make."

"We've taken our time and stopped gigging, and it's the best thing we've ever done."

"I know I sound like I'm Johnny Big Baws but, since we decided that, we've had a lot of offers that we've had to say 'Thank you but

it's maybe not the right time'. It's been hard. We even made the decision not to play any festivals, but then we got offered them."

"So we said let's do a few real key things that are close to our hearts — but, ultimately, let's focus on the album as without the right music, what's it all about?"

The few key things were a bonkers appearance at T In The Park recently, where they ripped the roof of the King Tut's Tent.

They went down a storm at Hard Rock Calling in London's Olympic Park and, in a few weeks, they'll line up at Reading and Leeds.

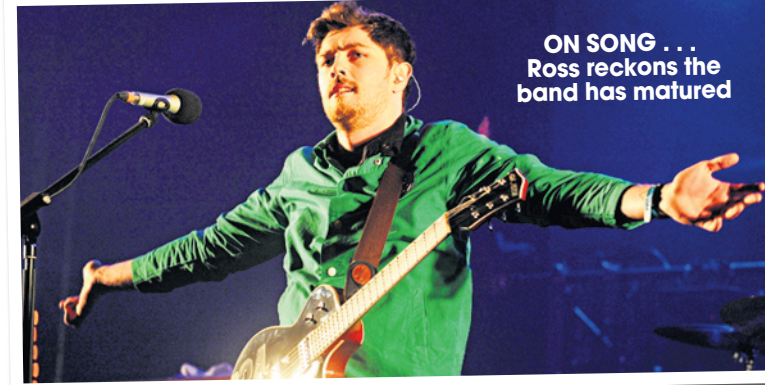
Plus they'll headline Belladrum in Inverness-shire next weekend. Ross, 26, said: "It was a weird scenario for us."

"When *Free* came out, we were really proud of it — but it took a little while to get up and running."

"We didn't have radio support for the first six months, we were just out playing shows and felt no difference. Then out of nowhere, radio caught on and it just started to go

EXCLUSIVE by CHRIS SWEENEY

Weird



ON SONG ... Ross reckons the band has matured

really well. It feels like we'd been touring for two years, but it only connected in the last 14 months or so."

That's not true for Belladrum — a favourite for Ross, frontman Sam McTrusty, drummer Craig Kneale and guitarist Barry McKenna.

It's a big deal for them to be topping the bill, Ross raved: "It was one of the first places where our band was taken seriously right back at the start."

"There's something special about that festival. It's going to be amaz-

ing as it's the first one we're going to headline. It was flattering just to be asked to play."

The new album won't be out until 2014 but some of the songs will be released soon. And while the sound won't be radically different, they have adjusted to their new status.

Ross said: "When we wrote for *Free* we never had a connection of playing a show in front of thousands of people who are singing parts of a song back to you. Every

band dreams of playing to a lot of people — you'd be lying if you didn't admit it would be amazing to play a stadium."

"Once you've had those slight exchanges with fans in front of you, it's hard not to include it in how you go about recording things."

"The key thing is we do what feels natural, but we have incorporated thinking about how it will work in front of crowds and on the radio this time."

Another key part of Twin's rise — powered by energy drink giant Red Bull, who signed them to their record label — is the acceptance by the masses.

Bash

At the start they were dismissed in some quarters as Biffy Clyro wannabes. Ross added: "I think a lot of it is down to age."

"We're not by any means old, but it takes a while to grow into your band."

"Naturally when you start, some people champion you and some people bash you — that's the world we live in. We feel we've grown up through that and are now taking our own place at the table."

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WIN TWO TICKETS

BELLADRUM will be Twin Atlantic's first bite at the festival headlining cherry.

It'll be a massive occasion on August 2/3, seeing them top the bill at Beaulieu in Inverness-shire.

The big event — celebrating its 10th anniversary — is now sold out. But we've got a pair of weekend camping tickets to give away. To win, just tell us the name of Twin Atlantic's hit album in 2011.

HOW TO ENTER: Please email your name, address, daytime contact number, date of birth and answer to win@the-sun.co.uk making sure you put the competition name **BELLADRUM — TWIN ATLANTIC** in the subject heading. Over-18s only, excluding any employees and their families or anyone professionally connected with this promotion. Competition closes midnight, Friday, July 26, 2013.

The prize is one winner receiving a pair of weekend camping tickets to Belladrum Festival at Beaulieu in Inverness-shire. Prizes must be accepted as offered and are not transferable. No cash alternative to the prizes will be offered. One winner will be selected at random after the closing date from all correct entries received. Usual Scottish Sun rules apply.

NEW MUSIC
By JIM GELLATLY

FRIENDS IN AMERICA

WHO: Matthew Rawlings (vocals/guitar), Hamish Black (guitar), Scott Duffy (bass), Liam Chapman (drums/keyboards/vocals).

WHERE: Glasgow.

FOR FANS OF: Franz Ferdinand, Foals, REM.

JIM SAYS: I'm in Dumfries and Galloway for the Wickerman Festival.

Primal Scream are the main stage headliners tonight. Amy Macdonald takes top billing tomorrow, just before the burning of the massive Wickerman.

The festival's always been great for unearthing new talent as well as the big names. The Solus Tent has become an institution for emerging acts, this year with rising favourites like Vukovi and Vigo Thieves.

The addition of the goNORTH Festival Tour Tent really puts Wickerman on the map as one of the biggest supporters of new music in Scotland. One band I'll certainly be seeking out are Friends in America.

They were my wee discovery at goNORTH, though others I spoke to at the time were dismayed I wasn't aware of them.

They weren't really on my radar before, but totally blew me away in Inverness.

Matthew said: "We made the conscious decision early on that we wanted the progression of the band to be as organic as possible. That



applies to how we write as well as how we promote the band."

Hamish added: "We made a conscious decision that we were going to avoid shoving ourselves in people's faces in an obnoxious fashion. We'd much rather let the music do the talking."

Everything feels fresh with them — they also have a lot of likeability on-stage.

Sometimes a cooler-than-thou attitude can put me off, but Friends in America make you feel part of their gang.

They also have the banter to match.

No po-faced indie stylings from Friends in America.

I particularly enjoyed Matthew's statement on-stage in Inverness: "We've been described as the new Kaiser Chiefs... personally, I think we are the new The Twang."

Radio friendly indie-pop, with beautifully constructed songs, there is bags of potential here.

The band's self-released debut album *What It Is To Be* is a total delight.

Friends in America play the goNORTH Festival Tour Tent today at the Wickerman Festival. They also appear at Electric Circus in Edinburgh on August 3 and Inverness to play Hootananny on August 23.

MORE: facebook.com/friendsinamerica

Jim will be playing Friends in America on In-Demand Uncut this Sunday from 7pm. Check it out on Clyde 1, Forth One, Northsound 1, Radio Borders, Tay FM, West FM & West Sound FM. in-demandscotland.co.uk