

Something for the Weekend



BY CHRIS SWEENEY

MOST rock stars spend their downtime living it up in places like Beverly Hills, blowing off steam and spending small fortunes.

But not Queens Of The Stone Age axelord Michael Shuman.

He's hard at it – with his other group Mini Mansions.

They're grafting away, playing support slots – miles away from the headlining duties of his more famous band.

The Los Angeles star explained: "It's two completely different things. I enjoy both equally."

"It's always a challenge to be a support band because you're trying to win over someone else's fans and they don't really care."

"We played a bunch of shows with Arctic Monkeys and it was really great – the fans were young, hungry and excited about new music."

"But a lot of times it's not like that. It can be hard and you need to give everything you've got to win them over."

"I like being the underdog."

'There are all these hoops'

"We're a completely different band, completely different kind of music and I wouldn't expect it to be the same world."

Mini Mansions are hoping to get rid of their underdog tag with their new album The Great Pretenders, which is due out in March even though it has been done and dusted for six months.

Michael, 29, said: "It's been done since July. There are all these hoops you've got to go through, but the music has been done for a while."

"We're fine with waiting. We're getting ready to tour a lot. Of course I want the music to be heard as soon as possible, but I know how it works."

The band did toy with following U2's lead by giving the album away for free.

Michael added: "We were thinking about putting it out for free, we make this art and we want people to hear it."

"I fully support bands putting out their music for free – more power to them if that's their choice."

"But I have mixed feelings about the streaming companies like Spotify. In some ways it's great as people can hear all types of music but it is hard for an artist."

"You put your blood, sweat and tears into making an album and it also costs a lot of money."

"This one cost us a lot and it was our own money at some points so to not get a return would be hard." Punters have reacted

well to lead single Death Is A Girl.

But Michael has bad news if you did like it. He said: "The album sounds nothing like that."

"That song was weird and different enough to catch people's attention."

"We wanted to put out a song with that energy as our first album was laid-back."

"This time we wanted to come out all guns blazing."

"I wouldn't say the music people have heard so far is any indication of what's on the rest of the album. It's pretty much all over

the map. One thing I'm proud about is we've made a record that sounds like us – it stands on its own."

'We hung out and had a good time'

And the trio – also including Zach Dawes and Tyler Parkford – will be showing it off because they've agreed a deal to be the support act for rockers Royal Blood's upcoming tour.

They storm Glasgow's Barrowland for a double-header on February 22 and 23. Michael said:

"When we got those shows, it was super exciting. Their success has been great and they're really great guys, I met them when they were just starting out."

"They came out to a Queens show and we played a festival together in Norway. We hung out and had a good time."

He added: "A lot of times you go on tour and either you don't talk to the other band or you're in different places but this time, we can all hang out and have a good time."

● Watch the video for the single and get tour tickets at minimansionsmusic.com



ONE2HEAR

TURBOWOLF rock harder than a bag of cement.

Head-banging, booming drums and crunching guitars.

And the Bristol band's current single Rabbit's Foot has got all of that... in spades.

Even better, if you pre-order their album, you get it now for nothing. Give it a listen at facebook.com/turbowolf

ONE2SEE

ICONIC venue King Tut's in Glasgow is about to turn 25.

And to celebrate, bosses are putting on a load of cracking gigs throughout February. The likes of The Courteeners, The Cibs and Vigo Thieves are all set to wow the crowds.

Check out the full list at kingtuts.co.uk but be quick because the dates are selling out fast.

ONE2WATCH

NewMusic



By JIM GELLATLY

WE WANT A GOOD SOCIAL LIFE

SUNSHINE SOCIAL

WHO: Calum MacDonald (vocals/guitar), Daniel Miller (guitar/vocals), Spencer McMillan (guitar/vocals), Jake Morris (bass/vocals), Greig Dickson (keyboard/vocals), Julian Lambin (drums).

WHERE: Glasgow.

FOR FANS OF: Bombay Bicycle Club, Mumford & Sons, Frightened Rabbit.

JIM SAYS: I first came across Sunshine Social in 2010 when I was a judge at the final of the Billy Kelly Songwriting Award at Oran Mór in Glasgow.

Despite a very strong line-up, it was a unanimous decision to present Sunshine Social with the prize worth £5,000, including studio time and promotion.

Though initially listed as a solo act for the competition, by the time the final came round they had become a full band. Greig said: "The band got together throughout that competition. Calum

intended to enter as a solo act but invited a few of us to accompany him. We played the final as a six-piece. Winning the competition secured the funding and support network to record our first EP and video."

A collective of singer-songwriters, the band gradually got together through open mic nights across Glasgow. Julian added: "At the start the band fulfilled a more supportive role to Calum's songs. As people joined they also got involved in the songwriting, although Calum still writes the majority of the lyrics."

The band's early material was rooted in acoustic folk but they've developed a more contemporary sound as they approach the release of their debut album. Daniel said: "We've added a lot more instrumentation, so it's an almighty noise. But there's a lot of delicate melody and harmonies in there too."

Watch the band at: thescottishsun.co.uk

Recent material, including the stunning new single The Brace, retains the folk influence, but with more of an indie rock feel. The plan is to release another single at the start of next year, with the as-yet-untitled album to follow in February.

Having previously sold out King Tut's and packed out the T Break tent at T In The Park, Sunshine Social have already have a healthy following.

Julian said: "We really want to play some gigs further afield and generally gig as much as possible. Some more festivals in the summer would be great. We're really happy with the music we've got on the album. It's now just about getting as many people as possible to hear that music and see us live."

MORE: facebook.com/sunshinesocial

● Jim presents Drivetime on XFM Scotland, Monday to Friday 4-7pm. www.xfm.co.uk www.jimgellatly.com

PHOTO CREDIT: Brian Sweeney



SHINING... lads want more gigs in 2015