

INTERVIEW | KYUSS



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Last year, Nick, Brant and you played together for a short appearance at Hellfest (France) during a headlining show of your side-project, GARCIA PLAYS KYUSS. It marked the first-fruits of KYUSS' reunion. A year after, KYUSS played Hellfest. How do you feel about it now and how's the tour going so far ?

I feel great about it. Looking back at Brant on drums and seeing Nick Oliveri on stage next to me is just as great as I ever remember it. It felt like a flashback to my early twenties and nothing's changed. We had three quarters of KYUSS that night (at Hellfest 2010) and that's the closest of a KYUSS reunion ever came. So you are totally right, that was the beginning of the revival. Then they kind of obliged me to keep it going and I have been enjoying it. Things are looking very good so far. I wanted to be back, I wanted to re-introduce myself. I wanted to tell « Don't sweep me under the carpet just yet, don't kick me to the kerb just yet. I am not done » ! I want to make my mark, our mark.

Before the reunion took place, you worked as a veterinary surgeon. Why did you decide at that point to leave that behind and make music full-time once again ?

I, first, wanna make something clear. I am not a doctor veterinary medicine, I worked very busy assisting some doctors' practices in California. I assisted veterinary medicine in all aspects. I was really interested in the diagnostic tests. That being said, I left with the blessing of my wife wich was very important to me. When you get back into the music business, it's got to make sense because you leave your job, your nine-to-five job that you had for eight plus years, you leave your normal life to something unstable, to something known for being very hard. Trying to make a living and support your family by being a musician is far, far, from being easy. That was a serious decision to take. My wife and I have been talking back and forth about it for over a year. She had to be OK because when I am on tour although she's at home, she's « on tour » as well. It takes a very, very strong woman to be able to handle this situation. So it's got to make sense financially and musically. It is not something you can take lightly. We'll continue to move forward as long as it works. I probably won't be doing this forever. I'll always be singing though, but as far as touring intensively, I don't think so. Mick Jagger is 65 years old and he's still touring, singing « Satisfaction » up on stage in front of hundreds of thousands of people... That's an incredible privilege and I am sure he knows how lucky he is to still be able to do that. As for me, I don't think I will.

Are your children aware of your musical career ?

My daughter is. She is 8 years old. She knows what daddy does. Our son, Marshall, is not 2 yet so he doesn't really grasp on what daddy does just yet (laughs). However, I am so looking forward to showing them. For sure. None of them have ever been to a show before. I don't think they are prepared to see this environment yet for being crazy sometimes. I am realist and I know eventually they can find out exactly what daddy does but I will share this part of my life with them only when it's time.

What will you miss the most about not doing any work with animals anymore ?

I will be missing the interaction. I will be missing the procedures. I will be missing the experience of knowing that you are helping. Some people consider their pets as their children, you know. This is what I genuinely miss already !

But you can also help people with your music. In a different way but still.

If this is a possibility that the music we play helps people to get through some difficult situation in their lives, then it's amazing. I appreciate that a lot. I listen to music myself for the exact same reason. If I see bad things on the News that touch my heart and soul or if I am having a bad day, I listen to music. Music is an escapism ! With my wife Wendy, we like to sit on our deck, we have a cold beer or a jacking coke, and we talk. Otherwise, we listen to music such as THE CULT, SLASH's new record, MAROON 5, BOZ SCAGGS, THE BEE GEES... We have a wide range of types of music that help us get through the day. Music brings joy to me. So I really appreciate the fact that I can do the same for people.

Is this what you want people to take away from listening to your music ?

Yeah ! I want people to have a good time, relax and enjoy their time. There's enough bullshit in this world that's going on right now. I hope my music is an escapism for people. Whether they are cooking with their wife on a Saturday night, or having a bunch of good friends over... This band is not a political band, we have never sung about politics and this will never happen ! This band is a jam band. We jam a lot, we love being with each other and we try to get that on tape.

So when should we be expecting the new album ?

For the moment, we are in the process of writing it. We would like to have it out by this time next year (summer 2012). After that record, I am sure we are going to tour and promote it. I am pretty curious to see how it will sound like without Josh Homme. But I think that Brant, Nick, Bruno and I are equal to the task. Then hopefully, my project GARCIA vs GARCIA will come out which is actually the entire reason I quit my job. That is the schedule we have for this year.

So yeah, by reforming KYUSS, you said that you want to promote your solo project, GARCIA vs GARCIA. How is it coming along ?

All the songs have been written. Four of them have been recorded. The process will continue itself. This project is very important to me. This is something I am very looking forward to completing. This GARCIA vs. GARCIA project intentions are not to be successful as in having my picture on the cover of the Rolling Stone, this is not my plight as I already consider myself a successful father, husband and musician. This will be my time to finally get this monkey off my back. With this record, I finally get to release the feelings, lyrics, songs and music I have collected and have held on to for 20 plus years and to date.

Who are involved in this project ?

I have some songwriters that I work with : Nathan L. from North Carolina and Eric Belt. I'd like to work with Ed Mundell, Trinidad from DIXIE WITCH. Scott Reeder plays on few of the tracks. I have a wish-list so we'll see when it's time.

Any other projects ? What's the future of HERMANO ?

HERMANO is an island position right now. At the end of last year, the guys got together and started writing the next record. They typically write the music then give it to me, and I would fit vocal melodies over the music. I've heard it, it sounds amazing. Most likely it will come out and a tour will follow but as you know I've got 2 things before HERMANO. I've got my work cut out for me for the moment.

You've been working with a lot of people. What sorts of things do you look for in music or artists ?

Hum... I look for feeling. I look for heart. I look for emotion. I look for personality. I look for writing ability. That's a very long, long answer... You know, when you work with somebody, it's got to reach out and touch you, just like bands you listen to. If a band makes me feel like I've never felt before, then I like it, no matter what type of music it plays. At my age, I don't give a fuck if that band is seen as cool to the public eyes and media. I don't need to be cool, you know what I mean ? I change diapers at 3 o'clock in the morning. OK, my wife does even more than me but you can get the message. It's got to reach out and touch your heart and soul. This is what I look for in the first place.

What influences your lyrical content ?

My lyrics are very abstract. I generally write a line then it goes by itself. I don't think about what I am going to write about or where I want to go with the song. It's mostly where I've been that influences the first few lines. The majority of my songs, I'd say 99,99 % of the lyrics I have written are just stories. It's a book. If it does touch you, if it does something to you - whatever it means - that's the correct version. The correct version is what the listener makes of it. I'm not gonna get all Jim Morrison and talk about shamanistic shit 'cause I just don't do that (laughs). As for the music, I think people have a difficult time staying simple, they always like adding, and adding, and adding... thinking that makes the song better when in reality « Less is More ». It's pretty much the motto I go by and I hope that answers the question.

It does. What do you think has been your biggest challenge or greatest achievement so far, either on a personal level or a professional one ?

My greatest achievement is where I am right now. I consider myself to be a successful husband, father and musician. I can't imagine my life to be more fulfilled. I am very lucky to be here. I am thankful for the things that I have. I am not searching for more. A lot of people are constantly in need for more and more. I am not like that. I do appreciate what I have. I have a wonderful wife, two beautiful kids, a home, a job that I love... Man, that's a lot to be thankful for ! The challenge is to keep what you have. Every single day is a challenge. Fight for what you have. Don't take it for granted. You run into temptation every single day. How you deal with it is what counts. Some people can't control themselves and that's a shame. They fuck up and ruin their lives. That's obviously not the best thing to do. Be aware of the outcomes and fight for what you have. Whatever challenges you, whatever you are tempted by, don't give in. This is what I do. You won't find another man that is more « love » with his family. And actually, I have two families : The one at home and the one on the road. I love them both more than anything in the world.

Thanks very much for your time John.

Thank you. Thanks for having me. See you at the show.

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