



CHRIS CHENEY OF THE LIVING END

Chatting to front man and guitarist extraordinaire Chris Cheney of The Living End is always an exciting time at Mixdown. He is easily one of the best guitarist's in the Southern Hemisphere and could easily keep his mojo in any hell club guitar dual. The band's new album *White Noise* comes out later this month and Chris was kind enough to let us in on this new very rockin album.

The new album sounds like there is a definite change from that rockabilly/punk sound, is this something that you set out to do from the start or was this a natural progression?

Yeah, I suppose we dabbled more in the past with the occasional hard rock sort of riff and I've always been into that but its never been at the forefront of what we have done. And with this record it was a combination of me wanting the band to evolve and get further into that side of the band as far as locking into a groove and just playing as a unit. I suppose just sitting on the riff rather than playing a hundred miles an hour and being real flashy and stuff. I just felt myself sitting around when it came to the writing stage with my guitar, playing this Zeppelin kind of bluesy type stuff, just exploring the different aspects of the guitar as opposed to just playing chord type stuff. Yeah, so we just hit upon something very early in our writing stage where we went right that is what we want to do.

That's pretty evident on *How Do We Know?* Yeah.

***How Do We Know* is really different to what you have done before. It's got a real *Rage Against The Machine* feel to it almost...**

Yeah, I mean that was the aim with that song, to just make it real heavy while slowing it down and have a depth or a groove to it that we haven't really explored before. Like *Rage*, they don't particularly have really heavy kind of sonic sounds, they just sound really heavy and that's what we wanted to do. We wanted to take what we already had, the sounds that we already had going and add kind of heavier riffs and stuff. And that's what we have kind of done and the coolest thing is that it's been the most comfortable thing we have done in a long time. So its great you know, it was just meant to be. We weren't pushing ourselves, we just went that way and it felt really fresh.

Songs like *Make The Call* and *Kid* are quite melodic and simple, did you try to stay away from the blazing solos?

I did in a way I suppose, it just came back to

the fact that when we were distinguishing and approaching the songs for this record I suppose as much as I wanted it to be really riff heavy, I wanted to be focusing on the hooks of the song and the song itself. And I suppose in a way the hundred mile an hour solos took a back seat as I re-drafted these songs, just to get the songs to really jump out of the speakers so they just grab you. I think its got more of a guitar element to it to what we have done in the past, in a sense that we have been more clever and more interesting this time rather than just like, 'oh here comes the guitar solo in the middle and pulling out all the tricks.' Overall, songs like *Loaded Gun* have the signature character guitar sounds which I was trying to achieve for this record.

You recorded this album straight to tape did you use a lot of vintage gear?

Scott ran through his Ampeg A510 and also a Fender Twin just to get some sort of upfront plucking of the fingers and to get the feel of the front of the note I suppose. The majority of the time I went through my Wizard and AC30 just cause I found the combination very hard to beat. It just has that sparkle and that ring from the AC30 and the Wizard just has this massive thump and bottom end crunch.

That seems to be a pretty popular combination as interviewed John Toogood last month and he said he borrowed it off you for his album?

Yeah, he used a couple of my guitars too and you know, I think I am just kind of lucky I purchased it. Over the years I have been lucky to stumble upon Gretsch guitars, fell in love with the way they looked and I had my idols playing them and then I thought, 'Fuck, they sound pretty good too...' (laughs). So a Gretsch through a Marshall, Wizard or AC30 just sounds magic so its kind of unique as its not your typical Les Paul through a Marshall.

You have Gretsch now making your own signature model, is that correct?

Yeah, true...

When can we see one?

Well, I think you can order one as they are going into production as we speak. There has been three prototypes made of which the third one came up an absolute treat. They were kind of tweaking them a little bit over the last two years which I think I got the first and third one from the Japanese factory and I'm absolutely stoked. Its just kind of everything I have done to modify my guitars over the years on one guitar with a kind of old off white paint and it sounds cool. Its just got all this cool stuff on it, but above all else it sounds really good and I wouldn't put my name on anything that didn't sound any good. So I'm really glad that it actually fucking rocks.

Was that a childhood dream, to have your own signature guitar?

No, my childhood dream was to actually have a guitar (laughs). And the idea of having a Gretsch guitar with my name on it never even entered my mind. The fact that I one day dreamt of having my own Gretsch and you know, worked at a supermarket so I could save up and buy one and finally I did. So when the idea came along for the signature model it just knocked me off my chair.

So what were the main guitars you used on the album?

Well I used that one, the third prototype and I used my White Falcon and I used my Nick Valensi model Gibson, which I borrowed off the Gibson factory over there. It was the Strokes guitar player's signature model and that was a great guitar as I used that on quite a few tracks, mainly for doubling. So I did all my basic guitar parts and then I would double it and then layer it with guitar solo's or whatever. I used a beautiful old 66 Les Paul Junior that was the TV colour.

So what pedals did you play with?

I used my main pedal board, I've got a Seymour Duncan Twin Tube overdrive thing which is just killer. They are really great. I used the Octave pedal that's on *How Do You Know?* and *Hey Believer* and *Twenty First Century*, which is just an old two hundred dollar Boss OC2 that I got at a pawn shop a few years ago. The thing was with that pedal is that I forgot that I had it and it was just lying around the house and I brought it in and then came up with that riff *How Do You Know?* It just kicks butt on the record, so I am so glad I found that pedal again (laughs).

Is that the poo brown one?

Yes, and it kind of farts around and makes all sorts of gurgling noises and stuff but I tried a bunch of different ones and a whole lot of new ones but nothing had the tone of that one.

And what else do you have on your board other than those two?

I have a Tube Screamer, I have a Boss Giga Delay, a Rolling Space Echo delay pedal in addition to the....John had a few old pedals a Fuzz Box, Fuzz Face and a couple other distortion pedals. We just tried loads of different stuff and it was cool.

So the Wizard and the Vox were the only amps used... that was it for you?

No, no I also used an old 63' Bassman, I used a Marshall 800 JMP head which was quite nice. He had another Vox 100 watt head which was the loudest thing I have ever heard in my life and it did not break up no matter how loud you turned it up (Laughs). It was incredible...it was like a PA.

Wow, was it old?

Yeah, it was an old seventies one which was really great which was good for clean stuff. I mean we tried to plug into it for natural gain stuff but it just wouldn't brake up no matter how loud we turned it up it just wouldn't brake up. We also used a beautiful old late sixties Band Master silver face which was awesome.

So are you really happy with the album?

Yeah, I am and I haven't really had a brake from it. I hadn't heard it for a few days and then I sat back and thought, 'Fuck yeah, this is good.' It has everything we do but it has the best vocal performances, the best riffs and I think it has the best songs we have ever done and I think it sounds like a band who has found their groove. That's what we found over the last six months and it definitely sounds a lot better on tape.

Do you kick off on the tour soon?

Yeah, I think so...it's getting announced and we are finalising all the art work now and its coming out on the nineteenth and then *The Living End*, all we do after that is fucking hit the road (laughs).

Are you looking forward to it this time?

I am this time... I mean *State Of Emergency*, that was a long and hard record to make but this one is more enjoyable. This one has been the most enjoyable one and I just want people to enjoy it and I want to play these songs live. They still sound the best that way because that's how they were written and formed with the three of us just powering away in the rehearsal room. So we want to get a couple weeks of touring under our belts and just get stuck into it.

LOGAN XAVIER

ARTIST PROFILE



NAME:
CASEY DEAN
BAND:
ENGINE THREE SEVEN

What's your band name and what the fuck do you do in the band?

We're Engine Three Seven bitch, I'm the front man, Casey Dean.

What do you sound like?

A billion Spartans on coke.

What do you love about making music?

The strange way in with four completely different lads can argue for hours about a thing that you can't see or physically touch, then somehow come to an agreement that sounds and feels like we knew what we were doing all along.

What do you hate about the music industry?

Idiots who have somehow convinced themselves that they are the best musos the world has ever seen and feel that they should be treated accordingly. It reflects very poorly on the ones of us who really just want to write & play.

If you could travel back in time and show one of your musical heroes your stuff, who would it be and why?

Well they do say never meet your idols; let alone getting in a time machine and going back to do so. I'd be scared that they would steal my tunes and with the space/time continuum being what it is, coupled with my lack experience in using the Flux Capacitor, id get back and my band would be gone, id be packing shelves and Eddie and Kurt would be singing my songs. Fuck that.

If you could assassinate one person or band from popular music, who would it and why?

I really don't think I would assassinate any one to be honest. Every one has the right to play what they want, to who they want, regardless of whether I think it sucks large cocks or not.

Besides, if you kill the one you hate the most, they'll just play it a million more times on the radio, giving more influence to young minds to become the same "individuals". And we really don't need that.

What could a punter expect from your live show?

A very energetic and well paced rock show. Consistently dynamic, theatrical and a little silly.

What you got to sell CD-wise?

A pumping four track, self titled debut EP recently made available @ Rare Records St. Kilda, our website www.engingthreeseven.com or you can grab a copy at one of our shows.

When's the gig and with who?

Thursday 3rd July @ Next with Rook, Five Star Prison Cell & Truth Corroded. We're also opening for Hinge on Saturday July 12 @ Ding Dongs.

Anything else to add?

I don't know what relevance this holds but i thought id share a poem of mine with you...

There once was a man in a cave
Who married a baker named Dave
The baker was ace
And renovated the place
Just think of the money they'll save!

They could spend it the entire world wide
Like themes parks, and have a fun ride
But the man and Dave fought
So Dave finally brought
A Ferrari, then crashed it and died!