



Photos: Drew Crozier

Fozzy

Boasting WWE Superstar Chris Jericho and Stuck Mojo guitarist Rich Ward among their ranks, Fozzy have managed to outlast everybody's expectations. Starting as a cover band with the members donning wigs and adopting alter egos, Fozzy have evolved into a serious, hard hitting high quality metal band. Their third album 'All The Remains' was their first all original album, which saw the gimmick

dropped and the real Fozzy stepping forward. The album was extremely impressive, and the follow up 'Chasing The Grail' raised the bar even higher. Now 'Chasing The Grail' has been reissued, packaged with an excellent live album 'Remains Alive' - two cracking albums for the price of one. Prior to Fozzy playing their last gig of their UK tour, James and Buz Gaden sat down with the charismatic Jericho to talk about Fozzy, the second part of his bestselling autobiography, metal in general and to present him with the greatest album ever made...

The last time I spoke to you, 'Chasing The Grail' had just come out, and you remarked how proud you were of the record, and we both agreed how good it is. Was that reflected in terms of record sales?

Yeah, in terms of sales and in terms of momentum. I mean, the fact that we've been through thirteen different countries on this tour so far, which started almost two years ago, shows how many doors it's opened for us. Sales wise too, even though nowadays it's really hard to judge record sales. But like I said, it's mainly the doors that have been opened for us. I think Fozzy has gone to a whole new level since 'Chasing The Grail' came out, in touring and perception, in the quality of the music, and in the live show. People love hearing these songs live, and we're still out here touring it.

Edel have just re-released the album, with the 'Remains Alive' live record with it.

Yeah, the live album's great!

Thank you! It was recorded in Australia a couple of years ago, and now it's been combined with the re-release of 'Chasing The Grail'. Anytime you can get an album you released two years ago out again, has got to be a good thing, because it allows a whole new world of people to hear it.

I mentioned this to you last time, I'd seen Fozzy live, and I knew how impressive you are live. You included the Download live DVD with the re-release of 'All That Remains', but I thought that an official live record would be a good move. So why did you choose Australia? Was there a specific reason to record it there?

I don't know, like I say we recorded it on the 'All The Remains' tour, and it took a couple of years to get it all sorted out and ready to go. We have a really good fan base in Australia, just like we do here in the

UK, and I think for whatever reason, the guy that was promoting the gig wanted to record the show. So it all kind of came together. The only downside was we basically had the tapes for a while and didn't know what to do with them. Now seemed to be the perfect time, as we couldn't release it too much longer after 'Chasing The Grail' came out, because we have new material, and a whole new setlist. So this release is a cool closure on that stage of the band's setlist, the band's evolution - and that lineup actually.

So yeah, just for whatever reason, it's very cool how we've been able to open up these countries, one country at a time. Starting with England, then it went to Ireland, then it went Scotland, Wales, then Australia, Canada. France is starting to get good for us. Germany too, is very good for us on this tour. We're gonna take over the world - one country at a time! (laughs)

I don't think there's such a connection with the wrestling either anymore, because the albums are obviously getting stronger...

Yeah, in a way there never was. I mean obviously there's going to be a connection because of the fact that I'm a wrestler, but gimmicks only last for so long. KISS wore make up, okay, great, but after one or two albums, the focus goes onto the music. It's the whole package. We never went on stage and wrestled each other, never performed in a ring or sang songs about hitting each other with chairs, it was never about that. People just made it about that because of who I was outside of it.

I've been in bands since I was twelve years old, I've been a musician since my early teens. I always wanted to be in a band, and I always wanted to be a wrestler. The wrestling took off first, but I still continued to record, to do demo's, and when Fozzy took off in 1999, it was a chance to have a dream come true, which was just as far fetched and seemingly as impossible as becoming a wrestler was ten years prior. The next thing you know, you put your mind to it, and you get good. When something is good, when you know you've got something, you've just got to go for it.

The people that said, when I was wrestling, that I was too small to make it, are the same people that said we would never make it as a band - so twelve years later, five albums later, we're now doing all these great tours and shows.

I really think there's people that come to the shows that are Chris Jericho fans, which is great, some of them might be wrestling fans, that's cool too, because when they leave the show they're gonna be Fozzy fans!

We became Chris Jericho fans, not just Jericho the wrestler, we checked out your Fozzy because of you, bought your Fozzy DVD 'Unleashed', which was fantastic, and then on top of that we ended up buying both of your autobiographies. So we're fans of Chris Jericho the artist, not just your WWE character. What really endeared me to your second book 'Undisputed' was the fact that I connected not just with the wrestling, but all the bands that you mentioned I was into, or liked. The second book talks more about Fozzy and reading about how you made it into a rock star was fascinating. The stories you had about meeting Dio and hanging out with Lemmy when you supported Motorhead, all that appealed. When you mentioned going in to record the first Fozzy album, that you didn't really know what you were doing, and that you still find that you're embarrassed by your version of 'Riding On The Wind' on the first record - I loved the honesty and humour.

Yeah, it's my opinion... it's like James Hetfield says he hates listening to 'Metal Militia', just how he sang a certain way. That's the thing, I think people connect with our band because we just never gave up. The only people that don't like Fozzy, are the ones that never heard the band. If you like metal, you're probably going to like this band, because it's very catchy, it's very hooky, it's very heavy. There's great musicians, great lyrics. Whatever it is that you're looking for, y'know? I think this translated because people understand that after all the time of doing this, that this is real. This is part of who I am, this

is a passion of mine. It's very rare to find somebody who knows more about metal, or about some of the obscure bands. It's like talking to Lars Ulrich, we can talk for hours about White Spirit or about Angel Witch, Raven, Saxon, and it's real. We have before. I think that's what people relate to, that this is not just some guy who woke up one day and decided that he was going to be a singer in a band. I have lived and breathed this since I was twelve years old, since I first discovered Ozzy. Prior to that I had loved The Beatles for five years, but at that time no girls were into The Beatles in 1980/81, so if I ever wanted to get a date I'd had to start checking out some of these bands! (laughs)

Yeah, it's a bit like when you get an actor, and then he forms a band. The same thing as you being a big wrestling star - people judge it as a fad.

Of course, and I knew that! As much as it helped in some ways when we started in terms of interest, it was also detrimental in a lot of different ways. We got over that hump years ago, and now we can share the stage with any band on the planet. I mean we just opened for Anthrax, and we had that crowd chanting 'Fozzy'. Holland, Belgium, Germany, all these places that we hadn't been to, were chanting our name. People get it, they like seeing us live, it's very entertaining, it's energetic, it's fun! When you go and see Maiden it's fun, when you go and see Metallica it's fun. They're enjoying what they're doing, and that rubs off on the audience. I think it's like you said, I'm not focusing so much on 'This is Jericho, the wrestling guy'. I have this 'Jericho brand' if you will, and I think people understand that whatever I try to do, then they'll probably enjoy it if they have enjoyed whatever else I have done. I wouldn't agree to do it unless it was 100% something I could hit a home run with and not let down all the people that have been with me all these years.

When you did the first album originally, you were supposed to be a covers act, because you were signed sight unseen, sound unheard, just because you and Rich were in the band. When you were putting together your list of covers, were there any songs that you wanted to do, but just couldn't capture it?

Yeah, I mean it was a very strange way to get to the dance, being signed as a cover band, by Johnny Zazula, who of course signed Metallica and Anthrax years before. So it was a little bit strange, but we thought 'let's do it'. We decided if we were going to do covers, we wanted to do ones which weren't the norm. If it was Maiden, I didn't want to do 'Run To The Hills'. We were not going to do 'The Trooper'. These songs have been heard enough times, y'know what I mean? So that's why we went with 'The Prisoner', 'Where Eagles Dare', try and do stuff which were more deep album tracks, which a lot of people may not know so well. Now of course a lot of bands have covered them, but back then in 1999 that wasn't the case.

As for 'Riding In The Wind', I didn't think I did it very well. 'Freewheel Burning' was great though, from the next record. I remember I wanted to do a Loudness song, 'We Could Be Together', off 'Thunder In The East'. Rich didn't want to do that, so we just kind of went through bands we liked. We liked Dio so 'Stand Up And Shout' - easy, Motley Crue, I could kind of sound like Vince Neil, so we chose 'Live

Wire'. Then we decided we wanted to do a couple of original songs too, because every band wants to do original material, that's the point. That's why we picked the covers that we chose, songs that weren't your everyday, run of the mill tunes that you hear all the time.

My favourite cover on the first album, is one you still play now, 'Eat The Rich' by Krokus. I actually like your version better than the original!

Thanks! It's funny, because when we opened for Anthrax they played a ten or twelve song set, and they did 'Antisocial' and 'Got The Time'. Now when you hear those songs as a metal fan, you don't think Joe Jackson and Trust anymore, you think Anthrax. I think it's the same with 'Eat The Rich', it's become like our song. When we play that, I think most people from this generation might equate that with us. We still do that in the set, it's the only cover that we do nowadays, as the rest is all our own tunes.

It's like 'You Really Got Me'. Rockers think Van Halen before they remember it's a Kinks song.

Yeah, exactly! That's always the way it is. I mean Metallica did 'Helpless', but it's actually a Diamond Head tune. If there's a good tune out there, that a lot of people don't know, you can steal it! (laughs)

In your books, you mentioned about the 'Jericho Curse' referring to your debut wrestling matches and performances for various different companies were always a disaster. Did the curse strike when you had your first proper Fozzy gig?

No, not really, because it was more like a fun thing, there was no real pressure when we first started doing it. The first gig we had was in Maryetta. I remember we stuck a towel on a rig on the ceiling, so that the towel came down from the ceiling, and I grabbed it from a cable. Y'know, stupid shit like that. The first time I sang live it wasn't a problem, as I'd been playing in bands, singing or playing bass, my whole life. I'd played in High School, at garage parties, at bars and stuff, so the first gig I ever had in music was years and years before that. So with Fozzy I just had to fucking do it, and make it happen. I mean, we have had those type of gigs that were just terrible, but they weren't the first ones that we played! (laughs)

Were there any Fozzy songs from the albums that you really wanted to play live, but they just didn't translate on stage?

We played 'All That Remains', the song, a couple of times, but it just didn't work for whatever reason. It just didn't fit. That was a while back when we first started the Australia tour. Other than that, we've played almost every original from the first two albums. We never played 'Happenstance' live, but we've just kind of rediscovered that, we might want to try that one in the future. That's pretty cool. We did 'The Way I Am' from 'All That Remains' a few times, but that one didn't really go over very well.

From 'Chasing The Grail' all the songs that we've played live have really gone over well. A song like 'Wormwood' would be too long for our crowd, so we pretty much do all the songs that we want to do live. We pick them properly, and take a lot of time to work the set out.

I think probably the only one I'd like to

add, but there's too much additional shit we'd need, like keyboards, is 'Broken Soul'. A lot of people really want to hear that, but there's a lot of intricate stuff behind it. I think for the next album, we're going to try and write a more straightforward ballad, that we can actually play live.

I think the only way 'Broken Soul' could work live is if you did it acoustically, but that would be a bit anti-Fozzy really...

Yeah, exactly. We could do it, but I think we're just gonna focus on the next record, and have something that we can play as a piece live.

Is it true that you're recording the tour for another DVD?

We recorded the last tour for a DVD, when we were here last time, whenever it was. We're working on that, putting it all together for the end of the tour.

One of my favourite parts of 'Undisputed' was when you met Axl Rose at a radio show. To take the edge off the situation, you asked him about music he liked and he really opened up. So, to help shed the 'dumb wrestler' stereotype we thought we'd do a similar thing with you?

Sure!

Okay, we'll start off with Black Sabbath, as we know you like them. Your Black Sabbath singers in order of preference?

Y'know, it's a hard choice, but I've got to go with Ozzy. To me just his vocals in the early days of Sabbath were just so high, and nobody has ever sung like that. I still think that Ozzy gets a lot of flak as a singer, and has almost underestimated and forgotten how good he really is, because he's been doing it for so long. Then obviously Dio is right up there. I thought Tony Martin was pretty good, and I was always a fan of 'Born Again' with Ian Gillan... but then Glenn Hughes is great too! The band has always had great singers, but I've gotta put Ozzy at the top.

A good point on Ozzy. Thinking back, his vocals on tracks like 'Sabba Caddabra' and 'Hole In The Sky' were awesome!

Yeah, that's what I mean! Or 'Megalomania'! If you listen to that melody line, it's so fucking high! It's incredible, it's so high and it goes for so long, it's like how the fuck did he sing that?!

Sabbath have had so many great singers, but none of them could do 'Paranoid' the same, they couldn't really capture it.

Y'know, the thing about this is, I talked with Zakk Wyld one night, about why Ozzy was such a great singer. Ozzy sounded like he was the loneliest man on the planet, that Satan was standing right next to him, and was going to take him away to Hell as soon as the vocal was done! It's so desolate, it's so helpless, y'know what I mean? He's the perfect singer for those riffs.

Okay then, Iron Maiden or Judas Priest?

Maiden. I won't even take a second to think about it.

Right, what about Maiden with Blaze Bailey or Priest with Tim 'Ripper' Owens?

They both had one really good album

and one stinker! I think 'X Factor' was a good album, I really got into it, especially ten years after it came out, I really started to get it. It's very dark, and 'Sign Of The Cross' is one of the best Maiden songs! It gets glossed over because of Blaze, but when Bruce sings it, it's amazing! 'The Unbeliever' is great, '2 A.M.' is great, there's some really cool stuff on there.

Then they did 'Virtual XI' which is by far the worst Maiden album - I don't think there's one song on there that I like.

It's like their 'Van Halen III'!

(Laughs) Yeah, pretty much!

That was one of the lines that cracked me up in your book, when you said something was about as classic as the Gary Cherone fronted Van Halen! (Laughs)

(Laughs) Yeah, yeah. Then with Priest, on 'Jugulator' I thought 'Cathedral Spires' was amazing! One of my favourite Priest songs. I wasn't keen on the 'Demolition' album though, it was very dark, and it was all like 'kill, kill, kill!' I mean, I like Ripper, he's a great singer, but I mean lets be honest, there's one singer for both of those bands, and they're currently with them at this point.

Journey or Foreigner?

Journey, although Rich loves Foreigner, so he'd argue on that one. I was never a huge Foreigner fan, but I loved Journey with Steve Perry.

Do you like Journey without Steve Perry though?

Erm, I think the guy they have now is really good, the Phillipino guy. It's uncanny, he's a clone! I wish that Steve Perry would still sing, but I would see them live with Arnel.

I've only seen them with Jeff Scott Soto singing, I think he's great, and he did a great job, but he got booted out in favour of a Steve Perry clone, which I thought was a bit of a slap in the face.

Soto was interesting - yeah, it must have been down to personality.

Okay then, the best wrestler, who also plays bass, that has made records?

Hulk Hogan. (Everyone laughs) You thought you'd get me on that one!

(Laughs) Yeah, we'd thought you'd say you were, and we'd correct you with Hulk Hogan! Did you ever hear his album?

No I never did get that, was there a song like 'Hulkamaniac in Heaven' or something like that?

Yes, ten songs, six of which feature the word 'Hulk' in the title.

Like AC/DC with 'rock and roll'! (Laughs)

We think it is the greatest album ever made! (Laughs)

(Laughs) I'm sure it is!

Hulk has a go at many styles on that album - rap, dance, rock, poignant ballads... and crucifies them all! Pure 80's sound and production - even though it was made in 1995! It's so bad it's brilliant! (Laughs)

(Laughs) Yeah, so bad it's good, I know what you mean! I'm the same with movies. I've never had the pleasure of hearing

Hogan's album though.

Well Chris, it's your lucky day!

Oh wow! You guys have brought me one? (Laughs) Look at this! Wow! It makes no sense! Oh my God, dude, check it out - Ralph Santolla plays on this! That's hilarious! (Laughs)

Yeah, not something I imagine Ralph puts on his resumé!

(Laughs) Hulk's done a McCartney and got his wife roped in on backing vocals too! I'll have to not listen to this later - it'll be twelve minutes I'll never get back.

Hey, it's ten songs clocking in at twenty nine minutes I'll have you know!

Is that what it is? It's like 'Eat 'Em And Smile'? (laughs)

(Laughs) Is Fozzy your main focus? Are you done with wrestling, or might you go back to it?

People get mad at me when I say I don't know, or whatever. I don't have any ties to wrestling at this point, there's no feeling there for it, y'know? I'm still a fan of it, I'm not sick of it like I was in '05, but it's just that there's other things going on. If I'm going to do it, it has to be all the way. I'm not going to do it just for money. You know you come back for a week, and it's all exciting, then you realise 'oh shit, I'm here for another year!' So right now, the answer is no plans.

One final question. You've acted, you've done it all in wrestling, you made records and have a great band, is there anything else that's left which you feel you need to try?

I'd like to do more acting. It's funny because I've done so much of it over the years in wrestling, playing a character, and it's fun to do that. So I'd like to do some more of that. Hosting a game show was fun, that was cool too. I just don't really put any limits on what I should do next. If something feels interesting, and feels like it's something I could be good at, I'd do it. 'Dancing With The Stars' was like that - I never thought 'Oh, I should do 'Dancing With The Stars''. They asked me a couple of times, I said no, but the third time I went for it and it went really well. I just wait and see what life throws at me, and if I can do something, and make it good, and not let down the people that follow me, then I'll do it, I don't give a shit what it is! Jericho the Street Sweeper - that street would be immaculate!



Cinderella

INTERVIEW WITH FRED COURY BY MÓNICA CASTEDO-LÓPEZ

After some serious voice problems that kept front man Tom Keifer off the road for some time, Cinderella have been touring arenas in their native country on a regular basis for the last few years, despite their last studio album dating as far back as 1994. At the end of 2009 the live album 'Live At The Mohegan Sun' came out on Frontiers, which seemed to imply they would soon get back in the studio and add to their short discography comprising of a mere (though superb) four studio albums.

Last year, the UK witnessed the return of the American blues rocker gods at the Download festival. In June 2011, and as part of their 25th anniversary celebrations, the band graced the British public with a headlining show by all four original members. In light of this occasion, I met drummer Fred Coury for a pre-show chat to investigate when and if Cinderella will release a highly anticipated fifth studio album. Interrupted by bassist Eric Brittingham rummaging in his suitcase, one of the crew testing a hairdryer and a saxophone close by, the friendly and ever youthful-looking Coury commented upon the issue with an honest approach and a loveable sense of humour!

Although there is a possibility they will come back before the end of the year, what is already confirmed is that in February 2012, departing from Florida, they will board the Monsters of Rock Cruise with Tesla, John Corabi, Firehouse, Eric Martin, Lynch Mob, Stryper, Black'N Blue and many others, a voyage that Fred encourages fans to take.

Welcome back to the UK. Last time you played in British territory was this time last year at Download. During that same weekend you also played Sweden Rock, where I saw you and you totally rocked. How was that for you?

We love playing the big festivals in Europe. They're the best ones. It's an honour to play Donington, that's THE one. And Sweden Rock is great too.

On the tour you're offering VIP packages. Would you agree that given the current market it is essential to keep closer to your fans, aside from the obvious fact that these packages mean extra income?

Well, they're both contributing factors. If we met every fan that wanted to see us, we would be there for hours and hours. We would love to be able to do that but we can't; this is our job. We have to have a way of kind of filtering: you bought a ticket for the show, you come to the show and we give you the show you paid for, that's it. If somebody wants to come and meet the band after, that's got to be extra because we have to leave at some point. Everybody is doing that now in the States, but I do feel that you have to connect with your fans as well. We have Facebook and that kind of thing.

The Cinderella website is not up-to-date though...

It's the worst website in music. It's horrible, but we're working on it. We're redesigning it and in a couple of weeks we're going to have another one with information on what Tom, Eric, Jeff and I are doing. It's going to be a lot better. I didn't even know there was still a website. It's a joke.

Now, the question of the millennium...

Is there going to be a new record?

Yes!

No. As of right now, no.

Why not?

Tom is working on a solo record.

Tom has been working on that solo record for a few years now...

Nine.

His voice is fine now...

Fine, amazing...

...and you write music for films and TV, so it's not like you're not productive or can't write...

[Adopting a voice of an impeccable story teller] As Fred holds his hands up and moves his head to the side, he gives the look of: I don't know. Yes, I don't think so. In 18 years we'll release the record, I have no idea.

You see other bands like Night Ranger, Journey, Whitesnake, Def Leppard, etc, etc, releasing new albums, and you're still here playing live shows. So, why isn't there any new material?

We've always been slow in doing our records. Four studio records in 25 years. But Tom is the main writer and the singer, so it's his fault! [sighs]

From a musician's point of view, are you happy playing the same songs all the time?

No, it's not creative anymore. Honestly, and I've been completely honest in all the interviews this year, it's not creative. So that's why we've changed up the set. I'm having the most fun playing this set that I've had in years because it's a great set. But it's not creative and that's why I do my own music for other bands, for Disney, television and movies. That's where I'm creative. Here, basically, it's me playing with my brothers, who I've known for more than half of my life, and I'm just having fun. Do I think there should be a new product? Sure. Is there going to be? I don't know.

Are you going to push for it?

I can't push because it's an art and however long Tom takes to do it. Axl took how many years to do his thing? That's just the way Tom works and I will tell you that the music for his solo record is great, awesome. Will it ever come out? Who knows?

Is it ready yet?

No, it's not ready. I thought it was ready last year, but you know, he is a perfectionist. We all are. It's difficult when you have four perfectionists in a room. It's never perfect.

And you know what happens when someone is a perfectionist and then release 'Chinese Democracy', which, in my opinion, is a horrible album...

Yeah. This is going to be The Korean Democracy! The songs are amazing and every time there is a new version of the record and it keeps getting better and better. The last group of songs are amazing, really great. Will you hear them? I don't know. But they are phenomenal.

Are you or any of the other guys in Cinderella involved in Tom's solo album?

No, that's his record, his musicians, his way. I haven't heard the newest record but the last one that he did