

HE'S GOT THE TOUCH

If you were asked to embody the phrase 'melodic rock', you could pretty much manage it by mentioning STAN BUSH. A singer-songwriter with a distinctive voice and style, Stan provided 'Transformers The Movie' with a pair of classic songs for the soundtrack, wrote and performed 'Love Don't Lie' which was later covered by House Of Lords, penned and sung songs for feature films, wrote a song for the Olympics, won an Emmy for his track 'Till I Was Loved By You', has written songs with some of the most respected writers in the industry and has an impressive back catalogue of solo work.

Now, Stan releases his tenth solo album (and arguably his best to date). James Gaden offered his congratulations and got the lowdown on 'In This Life'...

Hi Stan. I've been a fan of yours for a long time, so it's great to talk to you. I'm delighted with the new album, I think it's superb.
Thank you! The response has been tremendous so far, everyone really loves it.

It's hard to believe this is your tenth album!

Yeah, you'd think I'd have learned how to do it by now! (laughs)

I was really impressed with the material on the new one.

Thank you. I think it's the best one ever. I think the songs are stronger, the production, everything is just better.

The only one you've done to rival it for me is 'Language Of The Heart' because I really connected with those songs. The songs on that just blew me away. I've liked all your solo albums but 'Language...' was the benchmark for me. I haven't heard the new one as often but I think it's about on a par now.

Awww, thank you, that's so cool! 'Language...' is a cool album too, I really like the songs on that one. The only problem was some of the fans, who prefer the rock, thought 'Language...' was a little light, y'know? I had gotten into a more acoustic thing, a Don Henley deal for a while.

With this one I expected a follow on from 'Shine' and while that did have up tempo stuff, I thought this rocked harder. It reminded more of Barrage than your recent solo work. Was that a conscious decision?

Yeah, I definitely wanted to go back to my roots, the eighties rock kind of thing.

One thing I did notice on the album is you've got a guy called Holger Fath who not only plays guitars, he adds keyboards, co-writes and produces the album as well! How did you come into contact with him?

Holger's from Germany originally, but he's been out here for about fifteen years I guess. He and I have been friends for a long time... well, since he came out here really. We wrote some stuff together but this is the first time I've ever used him on an album. He did a great job on the production.

Is Curt Cuomo co-writing as well? The promo doesn't tell me who wrote the songs.

Oh, yeah. Curt wrote with me on 'Shine' and 'Language...', and the one before that too which was called 'The Child Within'. He and I had written two songs for the new album, but scheduling wise it didn't work out for him to be as involved in this one. So Curt and I wrote some of the stuff, then Holger and I wrote some songs and I wrote some alone.

Some of it sounded like stuff you've done with Curt, but Holger seems to add a different dimension. Was it all fresh material or did you have anything left from previous albums that you wanted to put out?

No, everything was new... well, brand new or written within the last year, so nothing was from a previous session.

I've also noticed you started your solo career playing guitar on your work, and I've spotted that while you still play guitar live, on the last few albums you've been handing those duties to other people. Is there any reason for that?

Well, I dunno... I play a guitar live all the time like you say, but I've been playing more of acoustic guitar than anything over the last few years. Y'know, when I'm in the studio it's just easier to hire someone to nail it. It's hard in a studio to play it perfectly every time. It's easier to get somebody else, because there are so many guys out there who are just great, great players.

Yeah, I noticed you had Tim Pierce play all the guitars on the 'Shine' record.

Oh, he's great. He's an amazing player. It's just one of those things... I think it would take me a lot longer to achieve what he can lay down. Also, in the studio, you really have to have great time. It's hard to play everything perfectly and still have

energy in the performance. I figure it's better to hire somebody who will make sure it's better!

I see you've got a guest guitarist on the final track, 'Southern Rain'. It's Rocket Richotte from David Lee Roth's old band?

Yeah, right! Rocket is great. He's a really good acoustic player and I had known him for years. In fact, he played on the song 'Every Beat Of My Heart' from the album of the same name. I had run into him and I kinda got the idea to call him up to play the guitars on 'Southern Rain'. I had just written the tune and I wanted to put together a little song... just an acoustic guitar and a click track. I paid him to do it and what he did wound up being the track on the album! Holger added a little bit of strings and stuff and it was done.

With you going back to a rockier direction, did you write a song first and decide you wanted the album to sound like that, or did you write a collection of songs and just cherry pick the best ones to put out?

Well, it was pretty much a bit of both. I wrote fifteen songs for this album, and wound up using eleven of them. Some things were started and they never got finished as things took shape. I just tried to focus on the ones I liked and make them as good as possible.

One other thing was, with this album, this was the first time I didn't really have Curt around to fall back on. He's a really good lyricist and he's responsible for most of the lyrics on the last two albums. So this time I had to write most of these lyrics alone. Holger speaks great English but he finds it difficult to write lyrics because it's not his native language. So I wrote most of the words and I had to really push myself to do it. It's not easy! You have to think abstractly and get into the right frame of mind.

I think it's paid off because some of these are the best lyrics I've heard on one of your albums.

Thank you! I'm proud of them I really feel like I pushed myself hard on the lyrics side. The main piece of advice I heard that made the most sense is to not give up. Keep working on it to make them as good as possible... even if it takes weeks.

The one that struck a chord with me lyrically was 'I Can't Cry'. I really liked what you did with that.

Oh, thank you! I really like that one too. I love the sentiment on that. I put the music together with Tommy Denander. Tommy didn't have anything to do with the lyrics at all. He and I just sat down and came up with the melody and the chorus for part of it, and then I pretty much wrote the rest of the song alone. It sounds like a single to me!

It does! It's just a shame radio is ruled by dreadful music.

(Laughs) Ah, well it's the same here! I'm with you. I don't even listen to music much on the radio. It's hard... I like maybe every tenth song that gets played.

Do you still write for other people, or are you concentrating solely on your own material at the moment?

Mainly my own work. I have been trying to get songs out there for films and so forth. The new Transformers movie that's coming out is going to be huge, so I submitted a song for that. I'm still waiting to hear if they take it - if they do, it will be amazing. It would really put me on the map.

I was going to ask you about Transformers - that's what made me a fan of you in the first place, like I'm sure was the case with a lot of people. When I was little I used to love Transformers. I watched 'The Movie' and the song that always stayed with me was 'Dare'. Years later when it came out on DVD, I was given a copy of the film as kind of a nostalgia present. I watched it, this time much older and into rock music, and I was blown away by the soundtrack.

I bought the soundtrack, and 'Dare' and 'The Touch' impressed me that much I went out and pretty much bought your entire back catalogue in two weeks!

Aww, that's great! 'The Touch' was also in 'Boogie Nights' too, but you probably knew that. I've really got my fingers crossed, big time. The president of Hasbro Corporation, he just called me about an hour ago, so I'm still buzzing from that, one of the biggest corporations in the world! Anyway, they're very excited about the movie and stuff, and I guess my song is still under consideration. They put me in touch with Steve Jablonsky who is the music supervisor for the film.

Because the song may get picked up by the movie, I couldn't put it on the European release of 'In This Life' and if they do take the song, I probably won't be able to put it on the American release either. I've got my fingers crossed anyway!

Well you've got a good song in the bag for your next album if nothing does happen with the film. What's the song called?

It's called 'Till All Are One'. That phrase occurs at the end of the movie, it has a pivotal meaning in the story apparently.

I know what it means from the cartoon, but I won't explain its meaning because that will make me seem such a geek. I hope it goes well for you, because you're no stranger to doing music for films are you? You did 'Bloodsport' and 'Kickboxer'...

Yeah, they're actually re-releasing all the 'Bloodsport' stuff pretty soon. Those songs used to be available on a compilation with stuff from films named 'Call To Action'.

Your press release says you're also looking at touring for this album. Do you have any firm plans?

If the album does well, I'll definitely tour, but I have to wait and see. Touring is one of those things where you have to see if it would make sense. If the new record went down well, I'd obviously have to do 'The Touch' and 'Love Don't Lie', but otherwise most of the set could be from the new album.

You've written with some of the most famous rock songs writers out there, like Paul Stanley and Jack Ponti. Obviously you have a good rapport with Curt and Holger, but is there anyone else you really enjoyed writing with?

Well, way back, Jonathan Cain from Journey was great. It was amazing to write with him. Also, Jim Vallance from Bryan Adams' stuff. He was great too. What's cool about those guys is they just work and work. We might work twelve or fourteen hours in the studio making a song great, but they'll spend that time re-writing it to get it right. They're talented, certainly, but they're not afraid to work at it to make something great.

I was going to ask you why the song 'In This Life' was chosen as the title track. Was it a particular favourite or was there another reason?

Y'know, that song just happened. I was fishing with my son on Santa Barbara pier and it just came to me. I ran back to the car and wrote down all the words to the chorus. It just poured out.

A couple of weeks after that I was in the car driving home down Central California and I was listening to the song as it was in my head, and I just came up with the 'Nah naah' section. I was just like 'Whoa!' and I got quite excited about the song. We had a song but when I

added that it all sort of came together. It seemed like a big song and a good message so I figured it would be an appropriate choice to title the record.

It has that sort of spiritual aspect to it, I really like what it says. It's the same as 'The Touch' and 'Dare'. We don't realise how much power we have. When you really tap into yourself and believe, it's really cool what you can do.

I was going to say, before I even played the new CD I noticed some the names of the songs. You've got that trademark upbeat 'go for your dreams' feel to a lot of your songs...

Yeah, it's corny! (Laughs). But I love it, y'know!

You could call it corny, but I think it's more inspirational. People need that. Self belief and going for your dreams are things I certainly believe in. When I saw titles like 'This Moment' and 'Take It All The Way' I thought that it would probably be a good album, and I was right!

'Take It All The Way' is really cool, I like that too.

Yeah, with the little spoken bit in it as well.

Oh yeah, the rap section! (Laughs).

Do you have a pinnacle album you look back on with more pride than the others - this one aside?

Well they all have pinnacle moments where something magical happened. Usually though, it's only in a few places, where as this one I think has the most magic all the way through the album. I think it flows better than my others.

Well, I'm about out of questions now Stan, so congratulations once again on a fine record. Is there anything you'd like to say before I go?

Yeah, I'd just like to say a big thank you to all the people who have given me such support over the years. You can check out what I'm up to on www.stanbush.com as well. Thanks a lot!

FIREWORKS