

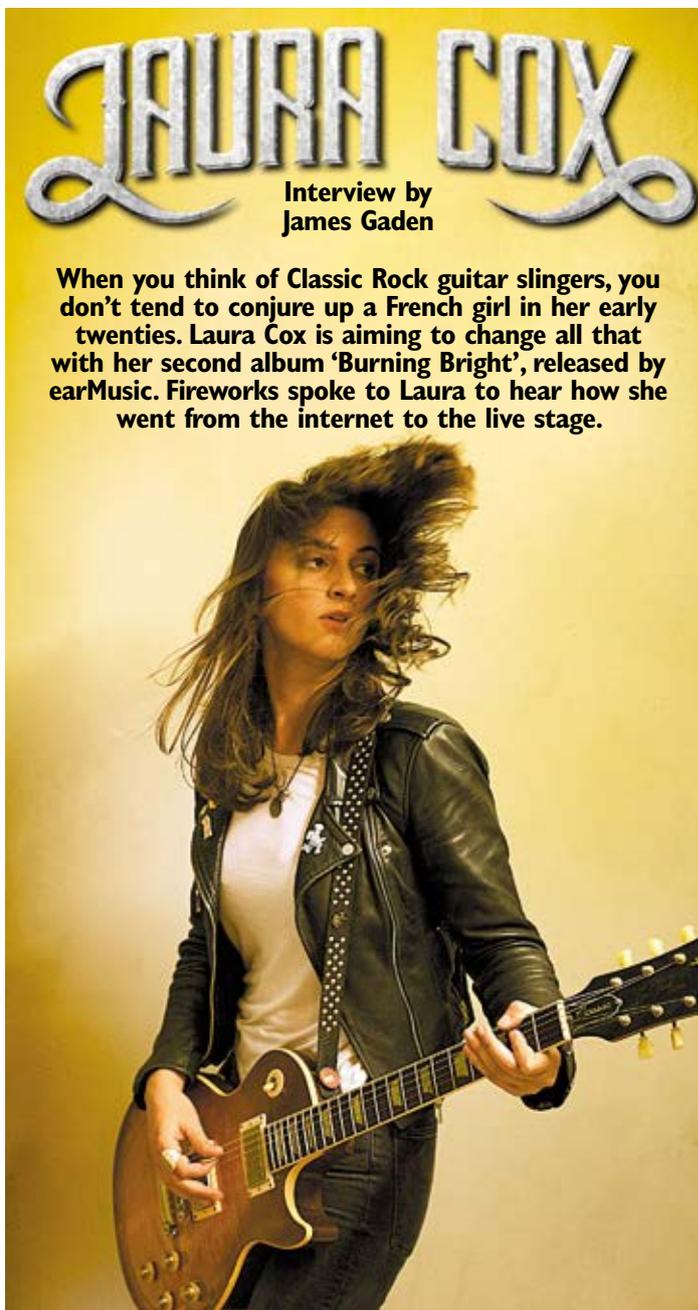
Cox first came to prominence by putting examples of her guitar playing on Youtube, which caused something of a stir.

"I started uploading videos back in 2006 and I wasn't expecting anything at the time but I ended up getting millions of views!" she laughs. "So I started thinking about forming a band with a friend, but that didn't happen until 2014. I never thought about a career making videos like some Youtubers do, it was just fun for me. I wanted something real and when I met Mathieu Albiac, the other guitarist in my band, he said I had to get out of my bedroom and play with real musicians because that's what it's all about. I was a bit shy, I liked just uploading videos and seeing the reaction but I realised I couldn't keep doing that, I had to work with people. We started playing covers but pretty soon I wanted to do more, I wanted to write original stuff and we created songs using the influences we all had, which was Classic Rock and Southern Rock. We prefer to play originals, we didn't want to just be a tribute or covers band."

France is not exactly a hot-bed of developing Classic Rock acts, something which Laura was only too aware of.

"I'm half French, half English but I've lived in France all my life and think of myself as French. Here, it's not really about Rock or even Country, it's much more Electro Pop and R'n'B, so my musical taste comes from my father. He's English and when I was little, he'd listen to lots of great Classic Rock music like AC/DC and Dire Straits as well as some wonderful Country music like Johnny Cash and Willie Nelson. Those were artists that aren't really known in France so I was really grateful to hear them, it's why I started playing guitar in the first place. I had spent about eight years doing stuff myself on Youtube – when some bands take to the stage the first time they are beginners with nothing to prove, whereas I had been seen by a lot of people over those eight years. When I first went on stage, I was worried that anybody coming to see me might be disappointed. It worked out well though, I wasn't comfortable at first but I've been touring for three years and I feel more like myself. I prefer playing live to recording in the studio now."

Laura's guitar playing was shaped by three respected figures in



# LAURA COX

Interview by James Gaden

**When you think of Classic Rock guitar slingers, you don't tend to conjure up a French girl in her early twenties. Laura Cox is aiming to change all that with her second album 'Burning Bright', released by earMusic. Fireworks spoke to Laura to hear how she went from the internet to the live stage.**

the industry.

"Growing up, it was Slash, Mark Knopfler and then Joe Bonamassa, for me those were the three main guitar players that made me want to practice and improve. I spent lots and lots of time learning their solos, like 'Sweet Child Of Mine' and 'Sultans Of Swing' – I learned a lot from Mark Knopfler's right hand technique, where he uses a fingerpicking style that I really like. Those guys were the ones when I started about fifteen years ago, now I'm less interested in guitar heroes and more interested in actual bands and particularly song writing, listening more to the songs as a whole than just the guitar. I really like Blackberry Smoke, they are like the new Lynyrd Skynyrd, I love them."

As well as being the lead guitar player, Cox also handles lead vocals.

"I've always considered myself more of a guitar player than a singer but it seemed natural to do both and the band has my name, so I have to be the front-woman," she explains. "The guitar is my real passion but I realise I needed to put in a lot more work on my vocals too and I've done that over the past year. I know that people who aren't musicians will probably hear my voice over anything else, so it didn't come to me as naturally as playing but I realise how important the vocals are."

She made her first album 'Hard Blues Shot' in 2015, credited to 'The Laura Cox Band' and while the new effort 'Burning Bright' is credited solely under her name, the guitarist is quick to state that it's the only thing that has altered.

"It was natural to go into a studio to make a record because any band wants to make their own

music. The first record was The Laura Cox Band, this one is just under my name but nothing has really changed with regards the people involved. I always thought we should have 'Band' in the title, because I thought it was important people realised it was a team effort and not just some Youtuber with a bunch of guys backing her. I write the songs with Mathieu, we work together to come up with a riff to form the structure of the song around. Once we have that, we'll write the lyrics; sometimes Mathieu writes the words, sometimes I do, sometimes we do it between us. Once we have the basic guitar and vocal structure put together we take them to our bassist and drummer and the four of us arrange the songs together for recording.

"We put this one out under my own name," she continues, "because often when you hear somebody's name with the word 'Band' after it, it's usually a Blues band. I thought I had to take that out because we don't do traditional Blues, we're a Rock group. So the music, the image and the line-up hasn't changed, we're just going out under my name."

It's a strong record throughout and Laura has a hard time with the question of any standout tracks.

"Fire Fire" is one," she says after some thought, "that was why we chose it to open the CD. There are several I really like – our first single 'Bad Luck Blues' was a song we all liked and it has a catchy riff that made it a good choice as a single. I think those two are good representations of what we're about."

The new album has involvement from earMusic and Cox is over the moon to be part of their star studded artist roster.

"For our first album we signed with a French label called Veryrecords and we are still with them for this record, but they work with earMusic, so when the album was done they submitted it to earMusic to see if they were interested in working with us. We had French distribution but to have a chance for an international label like earMusic to support us with worldwide distribution, that would be so cool. Fortunately earMusic loved the album and it worked out really well. I'm so happy to be part of that team!"

**'Burning Bright' is out now on CD and digital via earMusic.**