



THE TREATMENT

Interview by James Gaden

Forming in 2008, The Treatment were immediately touted as young hopefuls for the British Rock scene. Playing gigs like Download and Sonisphere, alongside bagging support slots for acts like Status Quo, Alice Cooper and KISS, everything was looking rosy. Their 2011 debut album 'This Might Hurt' was well received, and 2014's 'Running with Dogs' looked to build on that. However, lead vocalist Matt Jones would then quit the band. Keen to not lose momentum, they are back with a new look, new members and a new album 'Generation Me'. Drummer Dhani Mansworth told Fireworks what has been going on.

The first place to start is with the hiring of new guitarist Tao Grey (not to be confused with the other guitarist Tagore Grey) and singer Mitchell Emms, who was seen on UK television singing on the reality show 'The Voice'.

"The thing was, when Matt left, we were just about to set off for Australia and he basically turned around and said to us that he didn't want to do it anymore," Mansworth explains. "He just wanted a normal life. It was a shame because we're in a position where we're starting to make an impact now and our singer wants to leave. So just before we left for Australia we decided to have a look around for some people to audition. I just went on Youtube searching for "UK Rock Singers", just to see what came up, and the first thing that popped up was Mitch's audition for 'The Voice'. I watched him and was so impressed with the sound of his voice and his range, I just messaged him and see what was going on, if he'd be interested in talking to us about auditioning. He knew the band anyway, and said he liked our albums and was definitely up for auditioning. So as soon as we'd done our Australian dates, we met up and were working with Mitch pretty much straight away."

As somebody who had seen the band live with Jones and heard their albums, personally I think Emms is a better vocalist and a better fit for the band. Mansworth is inclined to agree.

"Yeah, his voice is more dynamic than

Matt's, Mitch can go to different places whereas Matt was more that gruff out and out Rock singer."

Sometimes there can be negativity or musical snobbery aimed at "reality shows" like 'The Voice', 'The X-Factor' and the other various talent shows. I ask if that potential backlash was a consideration.

"You know, the thing is people slag off 'The Voice', 'The X-Factor' and all that stuff, but if you look at it, the best four young singers in Rock at the moment all came from TV shows," Mansworth responds vehemently. "You've got Nathan James from Inglorious who came from 'Jesus Christ Superstar' and 'The Voice'. You've got Erik Gronwall from H.E.A.T. who was from 'Swedish Idol', Mitch for us who came from 'The Voice' and you've got Adam Lambert, who came from 'American Idol' and is now singing for Queen! Mitch is right up there with all those guys and for those guys, if they didn't have a band and hadn't got anything going on at that particular time, why wouldn't you want to try and further your career and break into the business a different way, and try out on a show? Just because you went that route doesn't mean you're any less influenced by the same bands or singers, it doesn't mean you're not as into Rock as anyone else. It means you had more drive to go out and try and get out there, instead of being someone sat at home moaning 'Oh, that's not Rock N' Roll, you're fake' kind of thing."

"Yeah, that was certainly a point of jealousy,

but what should we do? Anybody else in that position would jump at the chance to open for KISS. If we were just in it for money, we wouldn't bother. We're in this for the long run because we love playing Rock music."

The comment about not being "in it for the money" is a revealing one, and I suggest to Dhani that if you tell somebody you have a record deal, a lot of people will equate that statement with a belief that a band has "made it", whereas the reality is the music business has changed dramatically since the days of big money record deals.

"It's nothing like that, if anything, I think it's harder when you have a record deal," Mansworth says. "If you want to get on big tours, and you're going abroad, it's no longer going half an hour down the road to play a pub, you're trekking halfway across America. If you want to do it enough you'll find a way to do it. We're with Frontiers now and they've been amazing, they've basically let us get on with it. When we were on previous labels, they wouldn't allow us to properly let go and make the album we wanted. In the past we've had cases where the label have said 'We want you to put an Anvil sort of sound in there, we want this and we want you to do that...' Frontiers basically told us to go and make the record, bring it back and they'll tell us if they liked it. And they loved it, so they're getting really behind it."

That statement about Frontiers letting the band be themselves is surely the reason I felt this was the strongest Treatment album to date and Mansworth is in total agreement.

"Exactly, with previous labels they haven't really taken us for what we are, they've tried to market us as one thing or another. We're just a Rock band, we just want to put on a leather jacket and play Rock, you know what I mean? That's why I think this album is more in your face, after the last seven years of us being dominated about which direction we should be going, we just want to play Rock."

With two new members adding to the mix, their presence must have had an effect on the creative process.

"They definitely brought a lot," Dhani confirms. "We had half the album written prior to Mitch joining, and then we were writing for his voice after that. We'd played some of these songs with Matt live, just to road test them and see how the audience felt. The other half was written from scratch with Mitch in mind. He's got so many things he can do with his voice, we could present him a song and he could nail it, straight out of the bag. And with Tao coming in, we've known Tao for so long... a couple of days before he auditioned, he just turned 18 and he was working at Pizza Express. So we asked if he wanted to tour with a Rock band or work at Pizza Express, and he said 'Er, yeah, I know which one I'd rather do!'"

Laurie Mansworth, Dhani's father, is once again credited as the producer. I enquire what sort of producer he is.

"He's really hands on, what you see is what you get and we're so used to working with him, we really don't want to work with anyone else," the drummer replies. "If there's a problem, something that ain't right, he'll just

outright say 'That is shit, we've gotta change it.' That's what you want, if people aren't brutally honest... he'll give us an outside point of view, how he hears the record. By the time it gets to the punters, we've already had it reviewed if you know what I've mean, I'll play it to my Mum, my Nan, anyone, just to get feedback. And my Dad was in two successful bands back in the day, with Airrace and More, so he's got experience in the business."

Material aside, the record is also the band's best sounding one from a sonic standpoint to my ears. Mansworth explains about the different approach the group took this time.

"The big difference on this album was we recorded it live. We literally set up in a room and played it as a band. We overdubbed the vocals, because it's difficult to get that down live with the volume we play at, but otherwise what you hear is basically the four of us in the same room together. It made a massive difference and we loved the sound of those early AC/DC albums like 'Powerage' and 'Let There Be Rock', we wanted to try and get something like that but a bit more modern way."

It worked, and I point out by playing the songs in that manner, they should easily translate to the stage when the band begin their UK tour in April.

"Yeah, exactly," Dhani says enthusiastically. "We've been playing the songs and we're basically ready to go, we just need to figure out the set list. We're just playing the waiting game now, we're really looking forward to getting out there!"

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