

DISAPPEARING ACT

Things have been very quiet on The More I See front since the release of their *Tread The Darker Path* album in 2010. It seemed for a while as if the band might be following that darker path down into oblivion, but then, as 2013 dawned, signs of life began to emerge... and now the band have exploded back into action with a new label and undoubtedly their finest album to date. Chris Kee caught up with guitarist Gizz Butt to hear all about *The Disappearing Humans*.



VITAL STATISTICS ORIGIN PETERBOROUGH ENGLAND FORMED 2002 CURRENT LINE-UP DREW MARKWICK (BASS) JAMES CLUER (VOCALS/GUITARS) HARRI WRIGHT (DRUMS) GIZZ BUTT (GUITARS) CURRENT LABEL EARACHE RECORDS
BAND URL THEMOREISEE.COM LABEL URL EARACHE.COM
DISCOGRAPHY THE DISAPPEARING HUMANS [EARACHE RECORDS 2013] TREAD THE DARKER PATH [TRANSCEND MUSIC 2010] THE UNHOLY FEAST [TRANSCEND MUSIC 2008] THE WOLVES ARE HUNGRY [STEAMHAMMER 2004] DON'T LOOK NOW...I'M LIVING EP [MODERN NOISE 2003]

Sitting across the table from me in a North London pub, Gizz Butt looks happy with life, and well he might do. He's signed a new deal with Earache Records, and the legendary label are throwing all their weight behind the new The More I See album, *The Disappearing Humans*. The differences in label support since moving from previous label Transcend Media have been immediately apparent to the experienced guitarist: "Well, the first, biggest one was when they put us into Abbey Road studio to master the album; that was a really, really big pledge. This is what Earache do - genuine, impressively sized demonstrations that their intentions are real. I feel that they want the same things that we want. I'm working with people that are experts now." And using only the best facilities when it came to mastering the album was just the beginning of Earache's demonstrations of support. The band soon found themselves being flown out to Tunisia to film a video clip for first single 'The Eye That Offends' on the iconic sets of the *Star Wars* films. "Well, that was [Earache boss] Digby's idea," reveals Gizz. "It was just an idea that he threw at me, and I said, 'Why not?' Because we could have come up with our own video idea, and it's very possible that it could have looked cheap, tacky, or - even worse - embarrassing. Instead, it's just us, playing the song on the set of *Star Wars* ...and it looks cool."

It certainly does look cool, and has recently hit #3 on the Scuzz airplay charts and racked up over 25,000 views on YouTube. It's all a far cry from watching a dispirited The More I See playing to half a dozen people in some shit-hole pubs not so very long ago. It must have seemed, at times, that Gizz was banging his head against a brick wall trying to get people to notice just what a fine band he had on his hands with The More I See... "Well, this was going to be the final shot," he admits. "This album was destined to be that last one, but now it looks like it might be a longer-term thing." And for that, we should all be grateful, as cutting this band off in their prime would be nothing short of a tragedy. Gizz has had a long and varied career, lending his talents to the likes of the English Dogs, Crass, Sabbath, War Dance, and - somewhat infamously - The Prodigy, but *The Disappearing Humans* certainly ranks as one of his proudest achievements. So, what elements of this album is he most satisfied with? "The songs," he replies immediately. "The songs are going to stand. The overall balance of everything - every performance is such that I know I'm going to be able to look back on this in ten, 20 years' time and still be happy. I like good songs that are very rounded and have a beginning and build right to the very end. I'm a fan of hook-lines that are existing within the vocals and everything coming together." I start to highlight the diversity of the material on the album, but Gizz interjects: "I think the word, really, is 'dynamic' - that is really what I wanted. I wanted dynamics, I wanted textures, and I wanted to have elements that weren't absolutely full-on, turned up to 11 or 12. We've got thrash elements - and that's something we'll always have, because I love thrash - but I can't do 18 songs with nothing but breakneck speed; I need to hear a record that has dynamics. We

are a modern heavy metal band," he insists, "and this album is a modern heavy metal album. We represent that form of music. I still don't agree with metal fans who say, 'It's not heavy metal unless it's all brutal'. That, to me, comes from hardcore. I keep on saying - and I will always keep on saying - heavy metal comes from the sound of the guitars, the sound of the drums, and a certain aggressiveness. But," he adds forcefully, "for me, it also comes from the fact that there is a melody, there are songs, and it has a guitar solo. Call me old-fashioned, but for me, heavy metal, that is the formula. Heavy metal still can be Metallica's *Ride The Lightning*, it still can be Megadeth's *Holy Wars...*, it still can be Dio's *Holy Diver*."

And who would argue with that particular triptych of metal essentials? Getting back to the creation of *The Disappearing Humans*, despite the air of celebration that surrounds its release, the album, particularly lyrically, feels intensely personal and reflective. The reason for this becomes clear when Gizz candidly reveals the personal tragedy that was the backdrop to the writing process: "I think part of the reason why was because some of the songs were half-written, and then when my eldest brother, Chris, died, the words just came up very easily...they almost seemed to shine on pages." After a pause, he continues: "The More I See started demoing the new songs in springtime, and we got something in the region of seven or eight songs, and then I went on holiday, with the intention of coming home and really getting stuck in and finishing everything. Then when I was on holiday, we got the news; my other brother, Julian, he rang up and said, 'Christopher's died - he's taken his own life'. So, then, feeling really sensitive, all sorts of things just

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sorta come out at you. Words leap from the page; you're in the shower and things come into your head; you're listening to a song somewhere and statements just make themselves very bold - you hear things differently when you're that sensitive. So, the songs then really finished themselves. They felt really concluded; they felt rounded." To date, Gizz has written every set of lyrics for The More I See, and it's a job he takes very seriously. "Some musicians do treat the music a little bit more seriously than they do the lyrics," he acknowledges, "but me, I go 50/50. I keep on pushing lyrics around until they serve every purpose - until they read well, until they sound well as they come off your tongue, until they sing well."

And it's that sort of work ethic and attention to detail that has made *The Disappearing Humans* the stunning album that it is. Gizz Butt has earned every last drop of success that I can only hope will come his way with this record, and if you share his beliefs about what makes metal great, then you owe yourself a chance to hear it. 🎧