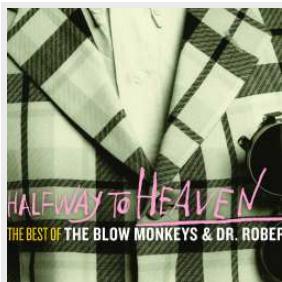




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Exclusive interview with Dr Robert from The Blow Monkeys



The Blow Monkeys

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'The Blow Monkeys' are bringing the 80's back with 'Halfway to Heaven: The Best of The Blow Monkeys and Dr Robert' which is out on 17th June. 'The Blow Monkeys' first formed in 1981 and they gained phenomenal success, even producing a worldwide hit 'Digging Your Scene'. After nearly a decade of success, the band disbanded in 1990 and Dr Robert went on to have a huge solo career. The band went on to reform five years ago and has released three more albums since then.

We caught up with Dr Robert to discuss 'Halfway to Heaven: The Best of The Blow Monkeys and Dr Robert' and 'The Blow Monkeys' upcoming tour.

'Halfway to Heaven: The Best of The Blow Monkeys and Dr Robert' is released on the 17th June. Can you tell us a bit more about the album in terms of sound and what we can expect from the album?

The album is a three CD career respectability, it's the first time anything's been released with the best of 'The Blow Monkeys' and the best of my solo stuff on so that's nice because it's got all 'The Blow Monkeys' hits but it's also got stuff from my ten solo albums on the second CD. The third CD is a live concert from 1984 at Hammersmith Palais that they discovered that they recorded and knew nothing about so it's nice, it's got a bit for everyone.

How would you describe the album?

It's the musical journey... I think it will surprise people, you know? You're talking about thirty years of somebody writing songs and all the time different influences coming along, improving and changing and that's what you hear.

How did you decide what tracks would go on the album and were there any disagreements over what would and wouldn't go on the album?

No. Obviously there are certain things that have to go on from 'The Blow Monkeys' point of view; the hits if you like and then the rest of it was cool. I was talking to the guy here at Sony and we agreed on what we would do and it was pretty painless.

What are your favourite tracks from the album?

At the moment, there's one called 'Chained' which is a 'Blow Monkeys' track which is taken from our very latest album which came out at the end of April, 'It Feels Like A New Morning'. We reformed five years ago and this is the third new album we've made since we've reformed. We took a track from that called 'Chained' and I think that one is a good one!

That actually leads me on to my next question - you've included the track, 'Chained' from your brand new album, 'Feels Like A New Morning' to the 'Halfway To Heaven: The Best of The Blow Monkeys and Dr Robert' album. What made you decide to include this track to the album rather than any of your other new tracks?

Because in some ways I felt it was the best track – it's hard to say really, it just how you feel about things on the day. It hasn't really

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been released as a single or anything so it didn't get exposure but in some ways I know a lot of people think it's the best track on the new album so I thought it deserved the exposure.

What is the song about?

I could say it is about growing up but I guess it's influenced by my kids a bit, who are not kids any more. It's just a message to say be free, don't be tied to the teller of ambition and work and blah blah blah and then suddenly you look back on your life and all you've ever done is that. The pressure to conform now is greater than it's ever been but the world has to change; you can still go out there and be free and travel and do stuff without fear.

Are there any new features on the 'Halfway to Heaven: The Best of The Blow Monkeys and Dr Robert' album that will appeal to your older fans?

If you're talking about old fans who would only know us from 'Digging Your Scene' or 'It Doesn't Have To Be This Way' then they're going to find there's a lot more to us than that hopefully and if they dig it a bit deeper, it's worth it - it's rich. It's about the song writing and the band playing and then you've got my solo stuff which is very different to 'The Blow Monkeys' so hopefully they'll enjoy all that.

How do you think the album will appeal to younger fans?

They'll be able to hear surprises and unexpected twists and turns musically and hopefully it doesn't sound like it's from any particular era, there's a kind of freshness to it which still sounds relevant.

Where do you get your inspiration from when writing your music?

Just everyday life; things that people say, things that you might see, little bits and pieces of conversation, a little musical thing might start a song off - anything, just everyday things.

Your tour for 'Feels Like A New Morning' starts on Saturday. What can we expect you to bring to the tour?

Just a whole mixture of things! Obviously we're going to play the new album and really focus on that but we're also going to play a few of my solo tracks acoustic version, have a little session of that, we'll play the old hits, so a real mixture.

How will this tour differ to all your other tours?

Because we have a new album and we haven't played any of those songs before.

Does the style of music found on 'Feels Like A New Morning' differ from 'Halfway to Heaven: The Best of The Blow Monkeys and Dr Robert'?

It's hard to say really; it's a collection of songs that were written in a short period of time, it has a certain vibe, it has a certain sound, I think it's quite optimistic. The band all reformed when we did it and it is our third new album we've done since we've reformed - it feels good.

Will you be playing at any summer festivals this year?

We're doing the two Rewind festivals, one in Henley and one up in Perth. We're going to be touring lots later on in the year and in November we have a big tour lined up and it's all on our website and the official Facebook site.

What else is on the agenda for the band?

We're going to tour, we're going to make records, we're going to play, we're going to do, we're going to write more songs and just carry on - that's what bands do. We're not going to open up a shop or anything like that; we're just going to do what bands do.

Will you be releasing a new album any time soon?

I think we've done a lot of new albums, I think we might release some of the old ones again with extra tracks and carry on doing that sort of stuff but we've done a lot of new stuff for the past few years so I think for us the focus is getting out and playing.

By Claire Lancaster

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