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It's nice being legends say new look Nazareth.



Linton Osborne (front) is the new voice of Nazareth.

A LITTLE piece of Scottish rock history will be made in Inverness this evening.

Tonight, for the first time in the band's 45-year history, **Nazareth** will take to the stage without frontman Dan McCafferty.

It is not quite the last fans will have heard from the 67-year old singer.

His vocals will again be to the fore on this summer's new release Rock 'n' Roll Telephone, the latest in a line of albums that have sold over 30 million copies worldwide, but after a series of health issues has had to call time on singing live.

"Dan can still sing — on the album he's superb — what he can't do is tour," explained bass player Pete Agnew, now the last remaining original member from the band formed in Dunfermline back in 1968.

Dan's health has been deteriorating over the past couple of years, but matters came to a head last year at a festival in Switzerland when Dan had to leave the stage after only three songs.

However, he was insistent this did not mean the end of Nazareth, making it Pete's mission to keep the band going.

Nevertheless, the big voiced Dan McCafferty was a hard man to replace, Pete acknowledged, and the search for a replacement saw candidates emerge from as far away as Russia.

"But we ended up with a guy who lives three miles away from me," Pete laughed.

"It's very handy when we go to the airport."

The new face in Nazareth is 41-year old Linton Osborne, a fellow Fifer Pete counts as a long time friend of the band.

Linton was even at school with Pete's sons, including Lee Agnew, who has occupied Nazareth's drum seat since 1999.

Although an experienced singer with a solo album to his credit, joining Nazareth brings him to a completely new level.

So rather than have him make his debut either in front of thousands of dedicated Nazareth fans on their forthcoming Russian tour or in the home town of Dunfermline, the band have opted to break him in at one of their favourite Scottish venues, The Ironworks.

"One gig is worth three rehearsals so we needed to find a gig," Pete said.

"Inverness was our first choice. We were looking for a great place to play and we've always loved playing The Ironworks."

So far they have only played together seated in a circle in the rehearsal room,

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sometimes with Dan on hand to give the new recruit his seal of approval.

"This will be the first time this line up of Nazareth has played facing away from each other," Pete said.

With a new chapter in the band's story set to start in Inverness tonight, Pete sees Nazareth continuing for a long time to come.

"Over the last 15 years, we've been playing bigger venues than ever before," he said.

"Modern music is a bunch of boys dancing that only appeals to 11-year old girls. Nobody is playing live rock and roll, so we are meeting a demand. When we go to places like Russia or Brazil, the first 200 people we see are aged 18 to 22. It's definitely not a pensioners' convention.

"You go from being old farts to dinosaurs. If you survive being a dinosaur, then you become a legend. It's much nicer being a legend."

•Nazareth are at The Ironworks, Academy Street, Inverness, on Thursday 10th April, with support from local rockers Toby Michaels Rollin Damned.

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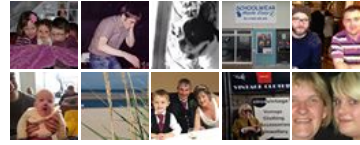
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