

Creation Records founder Alan McGee talks Oasis, attitude and why X Factor is like karaoke

Twenty years ago he signed one of Britpop's biggest bands, now indie music legend Alan McGee hopes to repeat that mid-Nineties success with a new label and a slew of promising artists



Alan McGee recently founded his new record label entitled 359 Music [PH]

YOU may not immediately recognise his name but Alan McGee is the man who unleashed Oasis and the Gallagher brothers on the world with his indie label Creation Records.

"We were coming out of acid house and people wanted personality again and people wanted rock and roll again," says the 53-year-old Glaswegian, who is returned to the music industry 10 years after turning his back on it.

"Oasis were the first bad boy rock and roll band that had personality so that's why they made it. I signed them to the label, I was never their manager but they had the right manager and it worked."

Creation Records was one of the key labels of the mid-Eighties indie movement. Founded in 1984, early releases featured artists including Jesus and Mary Chain, Primal Scream, The Jasmine Minks and The Loft.



Alan discovered and signed Oasis to Creation Records back in the early Nineties [PA]

But it was Oasis that really catapulted the label into the limelight as the nation went crazy for Noel and Liam Gallagher's bad boy attitude and rock and roll antics.

"They sold seven million Definitely Maybes and they went on to sell 21 million Morning Glories so we went from being in the fourth division to being in the first division," he says.

"But having said that we had some good bands and put out some great records, we just never had the commercial success.

"When you have a label and you get just one band like Oasis, that's a moment of f***** genius. I don't mean I'm a genius - no one is a genius in the music business, you just put out records - but what I'm trying to say is that's a moment of genius because you can't expect that. If that happens then rock and roll!"



Thanks to technology Alan can run his record label from his country home in Wales [PH]

In McGee's upcoming book *Creation Stories: Riots, Raves and Running a Label*, released on November 7, he is described as, "a charismatic Glaswegian who partied just as hard as any of the acts on his notoriously hedonistic label, he became an infamous character in the world of music."

McGee is the first to admit that he was difficult at times and gleefully recounts the details of those party years before he fled the increasingly corporate ethos of the music industry in 1999.

"The old Alan McGee in the Eighties and Nineties probably wouldn't make it in this climate," he says. "The only reason that I fit in with this climate now is because I've gotten older and more mellow. I never used to be mellow, I used to be a nightmare."

He acknowledges today's up-and-coming musicians face a very different world.

"The music industry has changed since I've been away," he says. "It used to be 50 per cent music and 50 per cent attitude but it's so much harder for a band to make it now. It's 40 per cent music and 60 per cent attitude.



The father-of-one admits that the old him would not have survived the music industry today [Express Pictures]

"Music is less important now than having the right attitude to make it. The people that are making it now must be made of steel, they must have platinum characters.

"Twenty years ago you could be mental and a drug addict but it's got so hard to make it that you'll never make it. The attitude has never been more important. That's what I've learnt in the first six months of being back in the music business," he adds.

McGee has returned with 359 Music, a label he co-founded earlier this year. He's already released four records and signed acts including 15-year-old John Lennon McCullagh and Canadian singer/songwriter Tess Parks.

John Lennon McCullagh released his record North South Divide last month after Alan saw him perform in a pub.

"I met him when he was 14 because I went to a pub to DJ and help his dad. Little John got up on stage and absolutely smashed it. So I said if I ever got a record label, I'd like to sign him. I don't know what it is but kids are becoming super talented really young."



Mineral released their album 'Plastic Ekphrastic' last month [PH]

359 Music's second release was It's Not About War from Chris Grant, who McGee met six years ago. "I knew about Chris Grant from MySpace in 2007 and I knew about Pete MacLeod, I met him in LA in 2008," he says.

With MacLeod's record Rolling Stone being released on November 4, McGee's now looking forward to introducing music lovers to Gun Club Cemetery, a rock 'n' roll three-piece releasing their self-titled album in a week's time.

Canadian singer Tess Parks' Blood Hot is out on on November 18. "I met Tess Parks on a film set because she was doing some acting work," McGee says. "She reminded me of a younger Courtney Love."

McGee is refreshingly honest about the future. "It's going great but what we don't know is if anyone buys records any more but we're going to find out," he laughs.

"We live in completely different times and we're only in the first realms of technology. Before long there's gonna be a tipping point, we're either gonna be controlling the computers or they're gonna be controlling us. We're gonna merge with computers."



Canadian singer Tess Parks will release 'Blood Hot' on November 18 [PH]

Yet he has fully embraced the power of social media. "I think it's hugely important," he says. "That's huge that you can just send it to me on Facebook. And if I like it, I'll contact the person."

"If someone really wants to get music to me, I do my 359 music night in Liverpool. Come to a gig and give me a physical CD if you don't want to send me a MP3, or send me a MP3. It's simple."

We have yet to see if within this batch of young talent McGee's spotted another Liam or Noel Gallagher, an artist who McGee credits as having the head for success as well as the drive.

"I met him 20 years ago. He would make any situation work, he would be on Facebook working at it. He'd be on Instagram. He's 47 now, he doesn't need to do any of that, but the guy I met 20 years ago he would be working it all over the place."

The old Alan McGee in the Eighties and Nineties probably wouldn't make it in this climate. The only reason that I fit in with this climate now is because I've gotten older and more mellow
Alan McGee



Pete MacLeod released his record 'Rolling Stone' on 359 Music today [PH]

McGee may be internet-savvy but that doesn't mean he's embraced everything about today's music industry.

For wannabe musicians taking the X Factor route, McGee can't think of anything worse.

"I think it's karaoke. We live in a karaoke culture, I think it's inauthentic. The public gets what the public wants, if they like X Factor then they f***** deserve it.

"We're living in times where someone picks your clothes, picks your songs, tells you what to say – it's not authentic. People are puppets, musical puppets."



Alan first met John Lennon McCullagh when he was just 14-years-old [PH]

The advice that McGee gives to singer/songwriters who would rather give up their guitar than sell their soul to X Factor is simple: it's all about having the right attitude.

"Music's been so devalued that people don't even buy it any more unless you're in the top, the little part of the pyramid," McGee says.

"You need to write songs but f*** me you need to get your attitude right, 'cause if you've got the right attitude you will win.

"Write songs, play every gig you get offered and learn your craft because that's what music is."

For more information on 359 Music visit the website [here](http://359music.co.uk/). (<http://359music.co.uk/>)

<http://oas.northernandshell.co.uk/5c/www.express.co.uk/entertainment/music/652134479/x04/default/empty.gif/536c2b7770564b4c6c665541412b6e45?>

x)