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**Interviews: Interview with TINYFISH Frontman Simon Godfrey**

Posted on Friday, September 11 @ 10:16:02 EDT

Topic: Interviews

**Simon Godfrey:  
Big Fish in the Sea of Prog  
by Tommy "Hashman" Hash**



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A progressive rock band without keyboards - it's like having a heavy metal band without guitars, a jazz band without a saxophone, or an orchestra without a violin. But progressive rock has been all about defying the laws of tradition, as the music has added non orthodox rock instruments into the mix (some bands use oboes, marimbas, you know the art rock formula) - this time we are taking one out.

Not only that they also dub themselves as 'the worlds smallest progrock band' - hey rules are meant to be broken when it comes to rock and roll and when it comes to prog, were there any laws of tradition to begin with? Nevertheless, here we have **Tinyfish**, a band that is comprised of Simon Godfrey (vocals/guitar/drums - yes, he is Jem's brother, of Frost\* fame), Jim Sanders (guitar/vocals), Paul Worwood (bass), Rob Ramsay (lyricist, spoken word, harmonica), and Leon Camfield (live drums) - they meld the punkish, yet slickly sheered attitude of the XTC alongside Belew-era Crimson, putting the balls into singer/songwriter motifs with a technical edge. Godfrey, Sanders, and Worwood have known each other at an early age - playing in various bands together - this would seal the musical bond that would lead up to what is now **Tinyfish**.

"Knowing each other for as long as we have, there is a personal chemistry between us. That allows us to trust a musical idea that might not necessarily work the first time out." begins **Godfrey**, "We also do a lot of laughing because there is so much history between us all and no-one is allowed to get too much of an ego on them."

Like bands such as Darwin's Radio, JOLLY, and The Vital Might, **Tinyfish** don't play to the expectations of the typical progressive rock stereotype, "I think Brett Kull of Echolyn summed it up best when he said the word 'progressive' should be viewed more as a verb, than a noun," explains **Godfrey**, "We utterly reject the popular press notion that prog rock is a moribund movement. If we belong anywhere however, it's with the bands that refuse to become clones of what has gone before. The best way for bands to help reinvent the genre is to tap into sounds and styles from other musical forms. Progressive Rock has always been a hybrid scene and the best bands in it continue to uncover new ideas that add to the huge body of inventive work that has gone before. My only hope is that we don't lose such creative talent to other styles of music due to certain people vehemently clinging to their copies of *Topographic Oceans* in the hope that all this nasty new stuff will go away. In a genre that encompasses both Renaissance and Opeth, there's room enough for everyone."

Already, the band has played the majestic Wyspianski Theatre, filming a live DVD titled *One Night on Fire* (Metal Mind Productions/MVD Entertainment) to capture the event, "I received a call from Clive Nolan of Pendragon/Shadowlands asking us if we'd be interested in being part of the bill for a two day festival in Katowice (Poland)," elaborates **Godfrey**, "It was a no-brainer and we said "yes" immediately as we had never played in Poland before. The theatre itself is an impressive structure with many levels and corridors to get lost in. The interior has a 19th century European atmosphere which I liked immensely. I can see why so many other groups choose to shoot their DVD's in the building because it really puts you in the mood to put on a good show."



He has made the statement that he "writes constantly to keep himself sane" - you have to wonder what it is that falls upon the inspiration of the frontman, "Strange as it may seem, much of the material I write is inspired by words rather than music," hints **Godfrey**, "Although most of the lyrics are written by Robert Ramsay, 90% of the song titles we use are generated by me. I have sheets upon sheet of potential song names upon my studio wall which I have generated from certain phrases I read in books or overhear people say. Robert then does an incredible job of finding a hidden meaning in the titles I give him. The older I get, the more important words are in the construction of a song. I'm also a nut for any interesting technology that arrives on the market and which allows me to express myself better. William Arthur Ward and indeed Godley and Crème, put it very well when it comes to inspiration; 'If you can imagine it, it can be done.'"

With his brother Jem Godfrey being the focal point of another inventive progressive rock band known as Frost\*, it's no surprise that there is a musical bond that goes way beyond the musical realm, "Let me just say that Jem is absolutely my favorite keyboard player in the world. I love what he achieves both technically and sonically. I believe the one common bond we share is a love of unexpected harmonic structures which we both jokingly refer to as 'Godfrey chords'. If a song has a few of them in it, we're always interested. (As for working together at some point) we both recently played on an album called *Black and White* by an artist called Lee Abrahams and Jem produced our most recent EP *Curious Things*."

The upcoming studio full-length that will follow the both the self-titled debut, the *Curious Goods* EP, & the live set is in the works, this one will take a more intricate path, being divided in half - Concept album? well, let's just let **Godfrey** tell us what beholds the next album, "Well the new album is called *The Big Red Spark* and will be split in two parts. The first will be a collection of unrelated material but the second section will be a sequence of songs connected by an unusual narrative developed by Robert Ramsay. It's the next step on the

**Tinyfish** path. I guess and we are working like mad to have it completed by the end of the year."

At this point in time, **Godfrey's** main objective is to get the upcoming **Tinyfish** material recorded and out in the racks, so there aren't any other side projects at this time - although he might try his hand at some other things after *The Big Red Spark* hits shelves; but there's always still some more stuff that might show up in the pipeline for **Tinyfish**, as **Godfrey** concludes, "More music, more interesting technology and even more Dr Pepper!" - we won't complain.

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