



NOEL

What was it like making this album through the media

madness of the last 12 months?

"It wasn't that difficult at all really. We're in the business of making records. That's what we do, and we enjoy doing it. It took us two or three weeks to get into it, because we hadn't been in the studio for a year and a half, but we'd never let people outside the band influence the way we work."

Who produced the album and what did they contribute?

"I produced the album with Owen Moris. Owen's contribution was a lot of shouting and a lot of drinking. It's quite difficult to remember who done what really, cos I was half-pissed most of the time. I think Owen can get the best out of the rest of the band really. I can play the same thing on the guitar 50,000 times, if I was asked, but some of the others need to be pushed now and then. I think he's good at that. He's a mate, he's like one of the band, and we've always worked well with him — I don't know why. And he gets it loud. He's good at spotting if there's something wrong with an arrangement, or if a song's too long."

You're particularly pleased with Liam's singing. How do you get him to perform?

"Shout at him really. Call him a cunt. It depends what sort of songs he's singing. For the songs that need belting out, you just wind him up really. So you call him a cunt, tell him he's shit. If you tell him he's shit, he goes out of his way to prove you wrong. Sometimes we do it on purpose. Sometimes we don't."

It's a great album, and it will be massive, but no way is it the major progression some have claimed. The sound is Oasis Classic.

"We tried to make it a bit louder, put a few more guitars on it, but I don't see this big progressive leap that people have been talking about for the last couple of weeks. To me it's not really a progression. This takes the best elements of *Morning Glory* and *Definitely Maybe*, puts them together, and out comes a new album."

I thought that, after working with the Chemical Brothers, you had different things planned for Oasis.

"There's a few breakbeats on 'D'You Know What I Mean' and 'Fade In-Out', but the songs didn't call for much technology. They will do on the next album. I don't think we can keep on making records like this for the rest of our career. It would become a bit boring after a while. The production on the next album is going to be better. The production on this album is a bit bland, a bit safe, a bit commercial. I wanna make a really mind-blowing record next time, but we'll see what happens."

Who's your mystery celeb pal on 'Fade In-Out'?

"Johnny Depp. He plays slide guitar. We were on holiday at the same time in Mustique. I was writing the album and I had a little digital eight-track studio with us. He happened to be staying at the same place I was staying, so we got drunk one night. I was trying to play a slide guitar solo — not very well at all — and he asked could he have a go. I said yeah. It's no big deal really, but he's a brilliant guitar player. He's a mate more than anything, but he's a top guitar player."

Do you know what you mean, because I certainly don't?

"Not a lot really. I don't say much. The people will know what it means. I can't put it into words, and nor would I want to. But I think the kids will know what it means. I hope they do anyway. It's just an expression, 'd'you know what I mean'? I dunno what it means. Fuck all really."

What do you say to people who say your lyrics aren't ever about anything?

"I tend to agree. I go out of my way to try not to say anything really. I get myself in enough shit with my fucking mouth anyway, without me writing subliminal messages in the lyrics. I don't consider myself a great lyricist, but while the words may not say much on paper, in the context of a song they say quite a fucking lot. I don't actually know what that is, but it must be saying somethin' to someone. I like the lyrics to 'Magic Pie', because I don't even know what a magic pie is, but I wrote a song about one. 'D'You Know What I Mean' is a brilliant title for a song."

Why did you start recording in Abbey Road?

"We only recorded three songs there anyway. It was all right, but everyone was staying in hotels or going home every night, so there wasn't really an atmosphere — they were all doing their bit and getting off again. We're best if we piss off to a farmhouse together for six months. It was all a bit fragmented at Abbey Road."

Are drugs a big part of your creative process?

"I can't do anything when I'm off my tits. I usually hammer myself into the ground and fall over or fall asleep. I can write stupid lyrics when I'm out of it, but I can't play guitar, I can't make records and I can't perform. You've got to have your wits about you. I have to wait until after the gig."

What's touring going to be like now that Liam is very clean-living?

"He's very what?! Clean living? Where did he get that from? First I've fucking heard. Married life, you see. What's it gonna be like being out on the road again? Well, Liam will probably be in bed at eight o'clock every night now, saying that. Me, personally, I'll be 'avin' it fuckin' large every night on that tour bus, and getting it wherever I am. It'll be the same as it was last time: wake up wherever you are, hang around all day, do a bit of a soundcheck, do a load of interviews, get something to eat, do the gig, go and get fucking trashed off your head afterwards and go on to the next place, where you wake up with a hangover. You've got to have a night off sometimes, days off to stay in bed, but you have to unwind, let off a bit of steam. A few things might get damaged, but we pay for our damage."

Where do your exploits score on a scale from Rick Astley to Led Zeppelin?

"Rick Zeppelin or Led Astley. We're definitely not up there with Led Zeppelin yet, though Bonehead was making a valiant effort years ago. But he's 33 now, he's going through the change, so he's calmed down a bit. Compared to them we're probably a right bunch of fucking pussies. Probably a little bit above Rick Astley."

What have been the best and the worst bits of the ride?

"Looking back, I wouldn't change a single day. The worst experience was when I got fucking smacked in the mouth by some Geordie bastard in Newcastle."

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The best ones have been being onstage at Knebworth and Earls Court and Maine Road. I'd say — that was a bit of a spiritual homecoming. Just seeing the crowd getting into it, jumping up and down. Top!"

Can you possibly still have any unfulfilled ambitions?

"Playing Australia, playing South America. I wouldn't mind a No.1 album in America. Oh, there's plenty yet. Bomb the White House and No.10 Downing Street. Well no, not No.10 Downing Street any more, cos my mate [Tony Blair] lives there now."

What do you do with all that money?

"Fuckin' spend it mate, that's what you do with it. A couple of houses, cars. My missus takes care of my money for me, and you've got no trouble spending it with my wife. I don't know anyway, I don't spend it anymore. The trouble is, being in a band ... when you're on the dole you got to buy all your fuckin' clothes. By the time you have become a millionaire, everybody gives you everything. I don't think I've paid for one item of clothing I'm wearing today. Stop giving me clothes! I wanna buy me own. I dunno, stick it in the bank account it. I haven't got that much money, anyway. I've only got about £40,000 in the bank."

How's the 2 million country seat turning out?

"I haven't moved in yet. The woman who's living there moves out on August 1st, so it'll be quite soon. I'll be able to play a bit of croquet on Sunday afternoon with the wife, bit of horse riding (laughs). Can you imagine? Few laps of the pool, get out, fuckin' puke up probably."

I hear you're not fond of videos.

"That's because they're shit. I like the new one, and I like 'Wonderwall', but I think they're the only two I like. The rest are dreadful, to be quite honest. The one for 'Don't Look Back In Anger' is

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particularly appalling. It's just disgraceful. Have you seen that bit with that fucking square magnifying glass? What the fucking hell was I up to there? Why did I agree to do that?

Do you have much creative input on your videos?

"No. the less I have to do with that the better. It's usually Marcus (Oasis' manager), he's the video expert. I just turn up and fucking mime for three days, get pissed-off and go home. I don't watch videos anyway. I don't even watch MTV, except when we're on it."

The cover artwork of *Be Here Now* is said to contain a whole heap of hidden messages and visual clues. Is that true?

"Well, people were making up their own hidden messages really. There's absolutely nothing, no hidden meanings on the album sleeve at all, apart from we put a Rolls Royce in the swimming pool that's got a registration plate off one of the cars on the back of Abbey Road. That's it really. It's just a white Rolls Royce drove into a swimming pool, and us lot stood

round looking like cunts basically. Everyone seems to think it's got these hidden Beatles references, but it hasn't really."

Why is it called *Be Here Now*?

"Which explanation do you want? I've got about 10 for you, all true. It doesn't mean anything really. It's just a good title for an album."

What songs are you most proud of having written?

"I'm proud of writing 'Champagne Supernova', 'Don't Look Back in Anger', 'Wonderwall', 'Cast No Shadow', 'Magic Pie', 'Fade In-Out'. All of them really. There are ones I'd like to re-record and some of the early B-sides, cos they were just demos."

What song would you have liked to have written?

"Can I have more than one? 'Anarchy In The UK', 'My Generation', 'Jumping Jack Flash', 'Paperback Writer', 'I Am The Walrus', 'Search And Destroy', 'Redemption Song' — loads mate!"

GAAETH EVANS