

horrified. Things that they think are private, I don't necessarily."

*You're going to be talking about these lyrics for the next six months.*

"I know and that's okay, 'cause anything that I choose to communicate in front of others is stuff I've either processed and dealt with or it's waste. Nothing that I am unable to understand in my life and nothing that I feel is deeply personal and important to me is ever paraded out with my body. I have things that I would never share with the general public, but things that I share willingly inside music is stuff that I no longer need and no longer neurose over. All the stuff on the record is stuff that I've finally confronted during the process of making music, so it's deeply emotional but it's no longer painful."

*On Version, you're voice sounds more stylish, more mature than on Garbage.*

"Again I think it's probably I'm more confident. When I first joined Garbage I had never really sung, and I'd certainly never sung around people who believed in me, who thought I had a lovely voice, ever. So, all of a sudden I was exercising a muscle, I was developing confidence, and I had people who made me feel good about my voice, and it allowed me to push it a little more. I think there's more of my natural voice on this record. Again, I think subconsciously I was trying to please the boys in the band all the time, last time round. I think I had some twisted idea of what they wanted from me, and I tried to fit into that mould."

*Did you come out of that first album angry?*

"I've come out of my whole life feeling angry. I think it's probably a chemical thing, I think some people have it and some people don't, and there is absolutely no reason why I have it. I have anger that I don't know what to do with, I feel angry towards things and people, irrationally, it's just there. I like my anger, as a magazine once said, 'my irritability keeps me alive and kicking.' I have used it to my benefit but nevertheless I think it's ugly. I think loads of people have it but just don't admit it, people think it's a dreadful thing to talk about one's anger, to me it's something very much part of my life and I don't see why I can't just be honest and say to people that I acted a particular way because I was furious about something but I'm not quite sure what it was."

# Garbage

*It's better it surfaces day by day, instead of after a few drinks.*

"Yes, I never change when I'm drunk, I'm always the same, whereas in my life I have met so many people who are so sweet and nice, and then that horrible drunk comes out. That to me is a disease, I'm not going to let my anger eat me."

*You swear you've no idea where it comes from?*

"Absolutely none, I swear to god it's chemical, I'm convinced it's chemical, I've got no reason to be angry but I guarantee you it's there."

*Has turning 30 had any significant impact on your life?*

"I did not enjoy the day, it was horrible [laughter]. But I am happier now as an adult than I was when I was 17 years old. I learn more about myself and therefore I learn to be able to reach a certain level of happiness that I was never able to do, so I like getting older. I don't like looking at my body deteriorate and my face deteriorate, I would be a liar to say otherwise, but I think the pros have definitely outweighed the cons for me. I have found a certain peace and it's such a relief. I get better with age. All of a sudden in my life, I'm creative, I wrote songs on this record, I wrote all of the words on this record, and that makes me happy in a way that nothing else has been able to do in my life. It's been like an ointment on my life and that has been amazing."

*Do you view this new album as some sort of a beginning for yourself personally?*

"I think I've got a long way to go, but I feel I've unblocked the fear of failing, now I'm trying."

*What will dictate how long you continue to do music and be in a band?*

"I think society's view of age will dictate how long I'm able to do this. For me to actually think that I am unaffected by the way society views women and age would be ludicrous."

*I noticed you've got a 'Women in Rock' type interview to do tomorrow. How do you feel about that angle?*

"I don't like it but I'm not going to shy away from it because I think it's important that women continue on mass to fight for equality. But, the fact that it's still an issue and the fact that we're still grouped together as one is proof enough that we've a long way to go. We have no choice really, it's either all together or not at all. So, we take it all together in the vain hope that it will push the doors wider and wider until a massive influx of female artists flood through, and there's as many females out there as there are men."

*For a while now, Garbage has ceased to be Butch Vig's band, Shirley Manson has been the focus.*

"I can remember when we first went into Geffen Records to talk with our press officer about the launch of our first record. This wonderfully earnest young man who I love to pieces was trying to explain to me that he would try and get me some press attention, but I mustn't take it personally if he couldn't get it, and that obviously people would focus on Butch and blah, blah, blah. And for some reason inside my head I remember thinking, 'I'll get press attention,' because I'm much more vocal than the other three. I knew that if we sat down in an interview, the person that would do the talking would be me, so it never really worried me. If they were looking for the boys to be loudmouthed they were barking up the wrong tree. Now, they're battling to try and encourage the press to want to speak to other members of the band. The boys don't give two flying fucks, I think they're relieved that the onus of attention has been removed from their shoulders to a certain degree. And it doesn't bother me. I am the front person of this band, when people come to see our shows, I am the first in line, I'm the closest thing they've got to getting near us as a band, so I think it's obvious that people are going to see me as the communicator of the band. And I'm talkative, I should probably button my mouth more but I can't."

Later in the evening, Manson is guest of honour at a low key 'meet-and-greet' do at a chic bar in St Kilda. Present are the staff of Mushroom Records, and Sony Music, Mushroom's Australian distributors. Manson, clad in Diesel overalls and nursing a 'Garbage Slushy' (vodka, cranberry



and crushed ice), greets complete strangers as though they're old friends, yet there's nothing false about her behaviour. For an hour and a half she chats about *Version 2.0*, Sting's worst videos, and her worship of Chrissie Hynde, before revealing she has only recently paid off the debts of her first band, Goodbye Mr Mackenzie. Just after nine, Manson decides to go back to the Hilton. "I want to phone my husband," she says.

Two more days of Melbourne based promo are on the agenda, then Manson travels to Sydney, before jetting off to the Asian region. A hectic lifestyle it undoubtedly is, but it's all part of Garbage's master plan to hold onto their 'artistic freedom' and 'incredible luxury', says Manson.

"As a band we feel very lucky to have the opportunity of having an audience for our second record, that's a massive luxury that a tiny percentage of band's enjoy, so for us to hiss and moan about it would be just ludicrous. We are very grateful that we are in this position, and we're also aware that we have to be careful in how we view the world because it's very easy for us to sit in America, make a record and just pander to the Americans. Unlike a lot of bands we've had global success, which is really quite unusual, we haven't sold a lot of records in one place, it's all been spread out, and with that comes a huge responsibility to try and cater to all the different territories around the globe. Garbage, as a band, we're trying to have an international approach and be a little more broadminded about our world." **John Russell**

## the new album



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