

Lifehouse Interview (edited version English)
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Shortly before their concert at the Frannz Club in Berlin we had the pleasure to meet the guys of Lifehouse for an exclusive interview. Rick, Jason, Bryce and Ben talked about the new album "Smoke & Mirrors", their future plans and told us why their European fans waited for them for so long.

Kat: So, you haven't been to Europe for quite a few years, have you? Were you a little afraid of the fans' reaction?

Rick: Geez, I don't know, we showed up to soundcheck yesterday and I don't know what we expected but we literally recognized the same fifteen, twenty fans from seven years ago. They still came out. They were all in the front row like they were back in the days. Well, I guess this Europe run has been a good thing.

Bryce: We were really surprised by the shows selling out as fast as they did.

Kat: And they're still pretty small though.

Rick: Well, haha, it is pretty small, yeah.

Bryce: Not this one in particular but the other two ones.

Kat: How many people fit in here?

Rick: I like this one, it's about...

Bryce: ... 500 to 600 people?

Kat: Do you prefer bigger or smaller venues?

Ben: We like both actually for different reasons. The energy in the big rooms is like nothing else. We were just talking about coming here and playing the smaller club shows. It's a chance to get intimate with our fans and we're tight together on stage, it rocks. The energy in the small rooms is pretty amazing.

Kat: 7 years ago I saw you here in Berlin, too. I had the feeling that you, Jason, were a little like shy on stage. Do we German or European fans scare you?

(everybody starts laughing)

Jason: Nooo! These guys scared myself back then! I used to have really bad stage fright to be completely honest with you. I am so much more comfortable playing in front of people now, I'm sure everyone will see a difference tonight.

Kat: In Pomona it was totally different.

Jason: You saw us in Pomona? Oh cool!

Rick: Wooaahh! And you saw us in Berlin last time we were here?

Jason: But you live here, right?

Kat: Well, in Leipzig.

Jason: Oh and you thought I was way more excited to play there than here? (Rick starts laughing)

Jason: I was way more comfortable to play live then. In the early days it was really hard for me.

The new record: "Smoke & Mirrors"

Kat: Let's talk about the new album. Why was it postponed so often?

Bryce: We just pushed it back so we could have the chance to reach the audience the way we felt that the album deserved. The timing for March sounded a little better than in December. It was a decision mostly by our team that lined everything up. We were just as excited as everyone to get it out and have it heard.

Kat: How was working with Chris Daughtry and Richard Marx?

Rick: They're great. We actually met Chris a few years ago during a festival where we were on the same bill. And he came to our tour bus, knocked on our door and wanted to meet us while, you know, we'd wanted to meet him. So he came on the bus, we had a couple of beers and he's just a super down to earth guy and he's really talented. A lot of the American Idol people are known for being vocal focused, you know, singers and he's a songwriter and a singer so...we get along really well.

Bryce: We're gonna be touring with Chris and his band in the United States.

Jason: It's gonna be a fun tour.

Kat: You wrote a song for his record “Leave This Town”, too. But it didn’t make the record though.

Jason: I think it ended up on one of his deluxe versions of the album or whatever. We wrote it really early on like when we were starting to write for his record and then he wrote like 30 songs with a bunch of other people. We played it live a couple of times, it’s a good song.

Kat: And what do you think, which song turned out better? The one for him or the one on your record?

Rick: Haha, woah!

Jason: I don’t know. I don’t think it really matters. Both of them are good and I have a feeling that “Had Enough”, the song I wrote with him and Richard Marx is gonna be a single at some point. It’s gonna be a lotta fun to play.

Kat: And how many songs did you write for this record all in all?

Jason: By myself?

Kat, Well, all of you.

Jason: I wrote a song called “Wrecking Ball” with the guys and Bryce is featured on the lead vocals on the track. There are other collaborations we wrote with Kevin Rudolf and we wrote a lot of songs with our producer, Jude Cole, who produced our last record as well. So we did a lot more collaborations than I had ever done in the past.

Bryce: All in all there were like 30 – 35 ideas / songs that we finished.

Jason: We physically recorded like 2 records almost in a year and a half time span.

Kat: And I read that all the songs that didn’t make the record will be featured on a special iTunes version.

Jason: A deluxe version, yes.

Kat: Please tell me it’s gonna be available over here as well. (Rick starts giggling)

Jason: It will, it will! And actually I’m pretty sure that the European version will have even more songs on it

Kat: Which one is your favourite one of the new songs?

Ben: Well...my favourite song, it changes from day to day but this week it’s a song called “Nerve Damage”. We love playing live and part of what we do is taking the live show in the studio. We’re very proud of what we do on stage and the song “Nerve damage” is a step outside the box for us as a band. Reminiscing bands we love from the 70s. It rocks in a way we haven’t done before and getting to play that in front of people is gonna be really cool.

Kat: What about you, Rick?

Rick: Yeah, the same! “Nerve Damage” it’s almost borderline prog. It’s a full journey, there are like so many different scapes to the song and there is not like one even tempo. Each section has got it’s own little deal. That’s a tune you can really turn up in the car, just the guitars, they’re really kind of snappy. And his vocal phrasing on the song is a little bit different than on some of the other songs. Yeah, I’m with Ben on that one, Nerve Damage.

Jason: I have to go with “Halfway Gone” right now. I just think it’s one of the more interesting pop songs we’ve ever done. Just because of the collaboration with Kevin Rudolf it’s a really neat hybrid between what we do and the current pop world that’s going on right now. And I think we kinda made it our own and it just feels fresh.

Kat: What about you, Bryce?

Bryce: I’m going for “All In”. “All In” is the first song on the record. It was written late in the game. We were missing a piece. Lifehouse in the past had the formula of having the first track be the showcase of direction of the record. We were missing that piece. I guess the song was written in half an hour and it turned out to be like the perfect missing puzzle piece for the beginning of the record.

Ben: What’s your favourite? You put us on the spot, so what’s your favourite?

Kat: Hmm, it changes...

Randi: I asked her for her recommendation and she said “Nerve damage”.

Jason: Ahh! You like the rock songs!

Kat: Yupp, I’m always up for the rock tracks.

Randi: What about Quasimodo? Will we hear it tonight? Please? I’d love to...I’m dying to hear it live.

Rick: Even if it’s only like a verse?

Ben: We're playing a piece of Quasimodo.

Randi: The melody or the chorus.

Ben: You'll hear a hybrid version of it.

Rick: You'll find out. (giggles)

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Rick: It's such a big catalogue now, it's hard to choose which one to play live.

Jason: It's like you play "Everything" and people wanna hear "Trying" or "Breathing". You play "Breathing", you play "Everything" and then they yell at you. It's hard to keep everyone happy, haha.

Bryce: Pretty soon we're gonna draw straws to find out which song to play..

Kat: And I guess you will have to play "Everything"... the wedding song.

Jason: ehm...maybe...

Rick: ...maybe not.

Jason: We actually took out the song out of the set list for 3 years and a half. We might be playing it tonight but I can't tell you. (winks and everybody laughs)

Kat: Bryce, tell us about Wrecking Ball" and how came you got the lead on that one?

Bryce: That was totally not predicted at all. When we were just experimenting in Jason's new studio, we were rocking out and jamming. We went to lunch and I played a bunch of songs that I was influenced by and that I liked. And we came back and I guess Jason just had an idea in his head and we all kinda came up with the song and he sang the vocals on it originally and I guess it kinda came around to "Why don't you try the vocals on it?" and I did and it ended up fitting on the record.

Jason: We wanted Bryce to sing lead on one track on this record cuz in the past he'd done pretty much one song per set but they were all covers so we wanted him to sing one lead song on this record but we weren't sure which one. He did this other song but it didn't fit in with the material. And "Wrecking Ball", he put his voice on it and it felt perfect, you know.

Kat: And was it a live recording? Because you can hear people screaming and clapping towards the end

(the guys start laughing)

Jason: Haha, that's actually us. We just cheered him on.

Rick: He'd just finished and we were like "woohhh!".

Jason: We were excited for him.

Kat: And what's next then? Are we gonna hear The Rick song and The Ben song on the next record?

Rick starts laughing

Jason: Gimme your drum stick, Rick!

Bryce: These guys have great voices actually.

Ben: They're so great we don't sing very much. It might be too much for people to hear. We might sing tonight, Rick and I...maybe.

Kat: Maybe?

Ben: Maybe.

Rick: The glass in the building will shatter and your ear drums will just pop.

Kat: One of your French fans would like to know what happened to the song "What happens next". Wasn't it supposed to be on the new album?

Jason: I think that was one of those older songs that, as we kept progressing and recording, it just kinda got pushed further and further in the past cuz it was already an older song, you know. But I never throw any songs away, you never know when a song's gonna pop up for a tv show or a movie, so we'll see.

Bryce: We have a rough recording of it lying around somewhere.

Jason: Yeah, I play that song live, I like that song.

Kat: Some fans are a little sceptic about the new record, they prefer the sound of the first three albums.

Jason: Well, have they heard the whole album yet?

Kat: I think so, yes.

Jason: Oh, I see. I think they will be in the minority. I have a feeling that there is something on the record for all of our fans that have listened to us from the beginning. I feel confident about that.

Bryce: This was the record we went the extra mile for our fans, too by recording "Crash & Burn". That was a song that everyone was pushing for us to do. We did a live version of "Everything". We're releasing a deluxe version with 18 tracks so we tried to appeal to the masses on this one.

Jason: I think they'll be happy with it.

Kat: But was it really your decision or was it rather the record label saying `Let's do something for the masses`?

Jason: Nooo.

Rick: The company has trusted us and they let us do our thing.

Jason: They stay completely out of there creatively. It was our decision. We just felt like we made four records and all of them had been unique and "Who We Are" was a huge success. We had 3 top ten singles in the states. We didn't wanna do that again just for being successful, we wanted to stay current. You know, that's the reason why we're still around and the fans from the "No Name Face" days can still come to our shows and appreciate what we do, otherwise it'd be just them in the front row and no one else, haha. And so I think it's important to stay current and to keep building the fan base and keeping what you started.

Kat: You're talking about your Top 10 singles in the states but here it is very difficult. I have the feeling that there has to be done more promo for you by the record label.

Jason: I think our plan right now is to keep coming back. I mean, we disappeared for a good 5 or 6 years, we had members leaving the band, the record company folded and we had to kinda pick up the pieces and kinda keep on our path I guess you could say. And now we're really established in the states and we plan to keep coming back to Europe quite a bit more in the next few years.

Kat: And why did you choose to play Cologne, Berlin and Amsterdam but excluded London, Paris etc.?

Bryce: That was a record label decision! (everybody laughs)

Jason: I don't know maybe it was because the single was doing well on the radio or something.

Ben: It's also the time period. The record comes out March 2nd and we only got so many days to fit in this much. I think that's why they felt we'd got the best amount of exposure and work. All the shows are sold out. We have people coming here from all over. We're excited to be here and we're back again.

Jason: Definitely.

Ben: You can't do 10 days of work in 3 days. This is the first stop...

Kat: Have you ever been to Europe?

Ben: Yes.

Kat: By yourself?

Ben: The band has been here previous before Bryce and I joined the band and I've been here with other bands many many times before. I like it here.

Kat: Which bands for example? (guys start laughing)

Bryce: Ben used to play in Savage Garden.

Kat: Really?

Bryce: You knew that, be honest.

Kat: I think tomorrow there'll be some French fans coming to Amsterdam, too.

Rick: We already met some yesterday.

Jason: That might be the same ones.

Rick and Bryce: There were people coming over from Spain, Switzerland,

Kat: What can they do? If you don't come to see them they gotta come to see you.

Ben: We met a couple from Lich...Lisch...Liechtenstein. I'd never actually heard of that country.

Bryce: There was a couple there from Italy too, yesterday.

Kat: How did you get to meet Kevin Rudolf?

Jason: Our manager / producer emailed him and asked him if he wanted to write a song for our record and he ended up being a huge Lifeshouse fan so we had mutual respect for each other and it was some really really fun days in the studio with him. And he has this guy named Jacob Kasher who is his songwriting partner who writes lyrics with him and he is a rapper so we brought him in too. It was an interesting day and he had these lyrics that I'd never even heard of before, they were so coming from a different world almost, you know. It was a really unique collaboration.

Kat: What lyrics for example?

Jason: Just like a lyric on "Falling In". He had the line `Don't be scared it's only love that we're falling in, don't look down it's only love we're falling in`. I'd never heard that before I thought that was really interesting. `Heart takes of on a high speed chase`. He had this flow to him that was really cool. And it surprised me, every time I see that guy that can write lyrics like that I get really inspired.

Bryce: And he is a hype man. You know what a hype man is?

Rick: COOOMME OOOONN!!

Jason: He (goes along) with Kevin, he's in his band and we had a great time with him.

Kat: What are your plans for after the tour with Daughtry?

Jason: I think we're gonna go to Australia, we're gonna do the whole world tour this time. We gotta come back to Europe, too, to do all the other places you were talking about sooner. So you'll have to come see us. Then we have to go back to the states and do our own headlining tour. So we're gonna be busy. We're gonna be working this album for a long time hopefully.

Kat: And afterwards you gonna be working on the Rick song and the Ben song?

Ben: Absolutely.

Rick: No, uhuh. That song is retired.

Jason: No, she's talking about a new song.

Rick: Oh, a new version of it?

Ben: A new Ricky song.

Bryce: I got a song, then you get a song and he gets a song.

Rick to Bryce: What's your song?

Bryce: Wrecking Ball.

Rick: That is totally different than Rick, Rick gimme your drums stick.

Jason: No, she's saying that you need a song, a real song!

Rick: Oh, I thought it was about "Rick gimme your drum stick". I don't wanna record that. We already buried that.