

BRIGHTON • NOVEMBER 2016



# BIMM *Life*

THE BRAND NEW MAGAZINE FOR BIMM STUDENTS



## LOVIN' PEACE

Meet the disarming indie heroes

**PLUS:**

FICKLE FRIENDS

MAMMOTHFEST

DIVINITY ROXX

**AND:** HOW TO MAKE  
MONEY PLAYING MUSIC  
WHILE YOU'RE AT BIMM

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I'd like to start by wishing you all a cordial welcome back to BIMM (or to all the first years, just plain welcome) and also to the second issue of BIMM Life. I've been asked to chat a little about about my experience here so far.

My name is Sam Rowlands and I am a second year music journalism student. I found out about BIMM through some old band mates who had joined the college a few years before me. Knowing that I wanted to work within the music industry has been a given for most of my 'adult' life, so when I noticed that BIMM was offering a journalism course I signed up to UCAS and have never looked back.

I'd been writing for various online music magazines since the age of 15. Coming to uni and studying the topic specifically has brought me endless opportunities. I have been published in The Sun's Something For The Weekend and the local Brighton paper, The Argus, on multiple occasions. This summer, through the contacts I made studying here, I ended up working at festivals and was an editor for The Isle Of

Wight Festival magazine.

We were shipped over to the Isle Of Wight and thrown straight into the deep end, doing interviews and reviewing everything we laid our eyes on. I also worked with the BIMM team at Truck, Y Not and Together The People festivals. I really worked as part of a team and met an amazing array of talented people.

BIMM has given me a chance to work inside the industry and learn from professionals who have amazing careers. The best advice I can give is to take everything that comes your way - take internships, volunteer to help at every event and most importantly talk and swap details with everyone you meet within the industry. Knowing the right people opens up a whole new world of opportunity and you never know, one day one of those numbers in your phone might be the portal to your new career.

**Sam Rowlands**

BA (Hons) Music Journalism Year 2

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## COMPETITION: WIN TICKETS TO SEE FICKLE FRIENDS

Fickle Friends play legendary venue Heaven on December 1st and BIMM Life has five pairs of tickets to give to readers absolutely free. To enter email [jacqui@bimmlife.com](mailto:jacqui@bimmlife.com) with the answer to the following question:

**Which famous producer are Fickle Friends currently working with?**

*\*The first five winners will receive a pair of tickets each.*

# RE-FRESHERS

Freshers' Week was a blast. Loads of bands, from BIMM, from Brighton and, we kid you not, from the upper reaches of the charts, helped the 'getting to know you' process go with a swing and a zing. Here's some evidence.



Peace



Peace



Peace



Frankie Furlow



Members of the Freshers' Pop Quiz winning team, Lethal Quizzle, with hosts Dan Grace and James Watts @ Dead Wax Social



Tiger Cub



Mindofalion

# FRIENDS LIKE THESE

BIMM alumni **Fickle Friends** are currently recording their debut album in LA with producer Mike Crossey (Arctic Monkeys, The 1975). **Sam Rowlands** talks to them about their new music, living the LA highlife and resurrecting Michael Jackson.

## You all met at BIMM; tell us how - and what were Fickle Friends like in the beginning?

A few of us were in the same class and some of us met at open mic nights. It was a gradual thing, we didn't really get going until Harry (bass) joined at the end of our second year.

## You uploaded a demo of Swim in 2014 and this year you released it as your first single via Polydor records; how did you get noticed and signed by the label?

It was two solid years of touring and doing everything pretty DIY. When we put the first version of Swim out it kind of got the music industry in a bit of a tizzy. They all came down to see a small show we did, but we just weren't ready for it. I think they saw that and left us to it – apart from our now booking agents, who signed us after that night. We have them to thank, really, because it has meant we've been on the road constantly. After a management change and selling out London Dingwalls in October last year it felt like the right time for a label to come on board and lucky for us they did.

## How does it feel to be working with such a highly rated producer like Mike Crossey?

It feels pretty mental. Mike has done some incredible stuff and we keep pinching ourselves

because a year ago we would joke about how one day we might cut a record in LA with him and now it's actually happening. He has breathed new life into some old tracks and inspired us to write some really fresh stuff too.

## Why was he right for you? Which albums/bands that Mike has worked with in the past in particular do you like?

Our label asked us for our top three producers we'd want to do our album with and Mike was top of the list for many reasons - mainly for his work on Two Door Cinema Club and The 1975, plus we had worked with his engineer before. I don't think there are many producers out there who are really nailing the indie/alt-pop crossover quite like Mike.

## What advice would you give other bands that are trying to make themselves heard?

Write some really great songs and play EVERY GIG EVER and make lots of fans, because fans buy music and share it with other people - they're the most important thing.

## What's the ultimate dream for the band?

To bring Michael Jackson back to life for a collaboration. And to play The Pyramid Stage at Glastonbury.

Fickle Friends play Heaven in London on 1st December. To win tickets, check out page 3 of BIMM Life.

Picture: Nick Walker



[www.ficklefriends.co.uk](http://www.ficklefriends.co.uk)

# SEOUL MUSIC

After their acclaimed gig at this year's Liverpool Sound City, BIMM band **Atlas Wynd** were chosen by the Sound City crew and South Korea's Zandari Festa to fly over and play a couple of shows, including an absolutely packed British Showcase. Here's what **Harry Sotnick** (drums) had to say about it...

"Korea was absolutely amazing, it's a trip we'll always remember. The culture was so different to what we were used to and we didn't have a clue what was going on around us a lot of the time, but that made the trip even better.

"Both the gigs at Zandari Festa went really well. The first gig was at a venue called The Freebird, this was for the special British Showcase put on by Sound City. We were on the line-up with some sick bands from all over the U.K – Coquin Migale and I Set the Sea on Fire were personal highlights of ours.

"We played the second gig the day after at Club Steelface. Steelface is on the fourth floor of a building in the centre of Seoul and had an amazing rooftop stage area that looked out over the city. This show was a lot more intimate and was another one we'll never forget.

"While we were over there we saw and became really good friends with a couple of Korean bands. DTSQ and Patients were both unreal. We saw DTSQ on the Saturday of our visit and were blown away by them. It was really cool to go all the way across the world and for the first band you see to be a garage rock band!

"Patients were a kind of pop punk three-piece: bass, keys and drums. We saw them on our last night where we had the intention of taking it easy because of the 6am taxi in the morning. But when they started playing, that went out of the window..."

So, working and playing hard pays off. For your chance to play festivals all round the world, get involved with BIMM's artist development team, audition for the gigs, get yourself out there.



Pictures: [johnjohnsonphotography.com](http://johnjohnsonphotography.com)





Pictures: Lucy Evers



## BRIGHTON ROCKS!

As summer fades and skies darken, metal comes to town – in the form of **Mammothfest**. **Mike Hall** looks back on the definitive heavy weekend.

The first weekend of October saw the return of Mammothfest, Brighton's only music festival aimed purely at metal fans. In a similar (but smaller) fashion to The Great Escape, Mammothfest is hosted in several venues across the city, although the long-term aim is to branch out to become an outdoor festival.

Started by local promoter Steve Dickson of Origin Agency in 2009, the festival has had its ups and downs, losing money in 2010 due to a date clash with Ozzfest. Forced to take a few years off to pay debts and regain enough money to run a festival again, Mammothfest returned in 2014, better than ever, and has continued to grow ever since.

This year saw the festival spread itself over three days at four different venues in Brighton. Like previous years bands played at The Green Door Store, The Haunt and The Prince Albert, all modest sized room. But this year also saw the addition of Concorde 2 as a venue, a sure sign of the festival's growth and ability to pull in larger crowds.

Another sign of growth was Mammothfest's booking of Venom Inc, a band with legendary status within the metal community. Dutch tech metallers Textures and Manchester slam metal favourites Ingested were another couple of big names to entice more customers.

But it is Mammothfest's use of emerging artists that makes the growing festival so popular. Dickson gives opportunities to a lot of local acts and their touring friends to perform at Mammothfest. Worthing act Bleed Again performed one of the most impressive sets of the weekend, which was a massive achievement when the line-up was filled with bands far more established than themselves. King Leviathan, featuring BIMM staff member Adam Sedgewick, also received some of the best reaction of the weekend.

The festival was a huge success in the eyes of Dickson and the rest of the Mammothfest team. The 25 members that help run the festival don't get paid, but they do, quite rightly, take pride in building the brand and the reputation of metal music within Brighton.



# PEACE TALKS

Just before they took to the stage at BIMM Brighton's official Freshers' party, **Peace's Harry Koisser (vocals, guitar)** and **Dominic Boyce (drums)** chatted to **Tatjana Harington-Steward** about their journey to fame and where they go from here.

**Welcome to Brighton. Are you enjoying yourselves?**

**HK:** I love it. We've always had a good time in Brighton because it's like London, but fun.

**DB:** There's something quite comforting about only being a short train journey away from London (where we all live) as well.

**Did you ever expect your success to blow up like it did?**

**HK:** I want to say no, but also, probably, yes.

**DB:** I think somewhere between confidence and arrogance is probably what got us where we are today.

**HK:** As a joke we'd be like, 'Oh my god, we're so good!' when we were first playing, and we were totally deluded. We weren't really that good, but I think it's that sort of delusion that carries you

into actually becoming a really good band.  
**DB:** You've got to believe in yourself.

**What's the best/worst part of being in a successful band?**

**HK:** You can't really ever complain, because you don't have to work a 9-5 week as such. But you completely lack any sort of structure as well.

Having a career in music is tricky because your stock rises and falls over time and it's something that's quite hard to understand. Sometimes you'll be the hottest band and then you get a bit unfashionable, but then you'll do something and all of a sudden you're really cool and popular again. It's a really weird thing to get your head around.

**What do you reckon you'd be doing if you**





Picture: Dean Chalkley



Picture: Sarah-Louise Burns



Picture: Sarah-Louise Burns

### weren't doing music? What would your dream job be?

**HK:** I honestly can't picture myself doing anything else and I take comfort in that. A while ago, The 1975's manager Jamie Osborne from All On Red Management said about Matt Healy [The 1975], 'For some people there is no other option, and he's one of those people', and that resonated with me.

**DB:** I like how within punk a lot of people get tattoos on their face so it leaves them with no option other than to be in a punk band.

**HK:** Frank Iero, who used to be in My Chemical Romance, did that.

**DB:** Blink 182 drummer Travis Barker was the one I was referencing.

### What advice would you give to other musicians?

**HK:** There's a saying: It's better to be new than good. I think at the beginning you've got to make sure that whatever you do, it's new. It could be really bad but as long as it's new, even if you're going to mix funk with country and heavy metal, give it a name and do something new. Then once you've worked out something new, really learn how to write songs, and then just apply the songs to that.

### How did you guys get attention as an up and coming band?

**HK:** We took every single opportunity. I knew that I was young enough to get away with being really annoying to people, so I'd email promoters like, 'Put my band on, we're the best band in the world!' – and then eventually they would just be like, 'Fine, alright stop emailing me, you can have the show'.

**DB:** We never had any kind of snobbery with gigs, we just took any offer. Quite often these days you'll hear bands complain about gigs where no one turns up, but that's all part of the process.

### What have you guys been up to this past year or so since your last tour ended?

**HK:** We rented a farmhouse in the middle of nowhere and we took all of our equipment that we needed and wrote songs. We all lived there for about six months in complete isolation and wrote about 30 songs, and then we've just been in various different studios over the past few months.

# GET YOUR COMMERCIAL BREAK

Want to get paid to play while you're studying at BIMM? Yeah, stupid question, good point. The good news is, you can - now meet the man who makes it happen.

Tom Beck, 28, is BIMM's Commercial Performance Manager. He's lots of other things as well, including a multi-instrumentalist who has had hit singles across Europe and played with Calvin Harris, Example and Feeder, headlined venues including the O2 Shepherd's Bush Empire, performed at festivals including Isle of Wight and V Festival, and appeared on shows such as X Factor, Britain's Got Talent, Hollyoaks and Ant and Dec's Saturday Night Takeaway. But, mainly, he's BIMM's Commercial Performance Manager, and what you want to know is...

## What does that mean exactly?

My job mainly involves helping students to get paid performance work with our network of private entertainment agencies and session fixers. BIMM has established partnerships with leading agencies who specialise in private entertainment, from weddings and corporate events through to cruises and overseas hotel residencies, as well as a long-standing network of session fixers, all of whom pay our students competitive performance fees.

## Wait. What? I can earn money while I'm studying at BIMM?

Absolutely. One of our main industry partners is Alive Network, who are the UK's largest private entertainment agency and have many BIMM student acts on their roster. Students represented by Alive Network generally have at least one gig a week and often two or more, with many averaging 60-80 gigs per year. It's the best paid weekend job on offer!

## How much money are we talking about here?

BIMM only works with agencies and fixers who pay at Musician's Union rates and above. This means gig fees are generally £200+ per

Tom Beck



Pictures: Luke Hodgkins

Shade



musician per gig but they do vary. Obviously, all fees are passed directly to students by our partner agencies, and BIMM does not take any form of cut or commission. To date, BIMM students have earned over £1,000,000 in gig fees from Alive Network alone.

## Would I need to have a full band already?

Who says you need to be in a band at all?! We have all formats of acts, from solo performers through to seven-piece plus bands. If you're struggling to find musicians to work with we're always here to help.



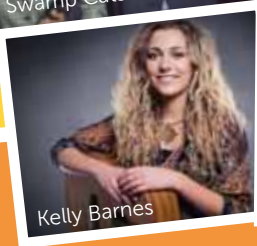
Swamp Cats



Juke Bossa



James Hunt



Kelly Barnes



Plug n Play

### What kind of equipment would I need to provide?

It really depends on the gig. Many larger corporate, cruise ship or TV gigs don't require students to supply anything but their own equipment, such as your guitar, amp and pedals. For smaller private bookings, clients often require the band supplies a PA as well as their own equipment. BIMM has negotiated discounted hire rates with various providers.

### Is it all the same kind of songs like 'Play that Funky Music'?

Not at all! It's really up to you to decide your repertoire. Acts who play in a pop/rock/indie style and feature a contemporary repertoire alongside classic tracks get the most bookings, certainly. However, if you're a jazz-quartet, for example, then have some fun and throw in your own interpretations of contemporary tracks alongside the standards.

### Would I have to pay for my own promotional photos and things like that?

Only if you wish to operate as an independently managed act, which we do advise against at the start of your career. Our main partner agency, Alive Network, fund professional promo including videos, showreels, photos, website and multi-tracked recordings for acts who successfully make their way through auditions. This is worth around £7k in total and is an investment from them into our student acts to ensure they get regular and well paid gigs.

### How do I know if I'm good enough?

Simple, we hold around one or two auditions per month with Alive Network. These are held offsite at easy to access rehearsal studios, and 96% of our student acts who showcase to Alive Network successfully make it onto their roster. For session

work, I liaise with our instrumental and vocal Heads of Department who suggest students best suited to the gig on offer, so be sure to be in their good books! If you're still unsure, just book a tutorial with me to discuss further.

### I'm sure! How do I start?

Drop me an email and we'll go from there. I'm on hand to help and advise on any aspects of the above and anything else you need to know, from applying for a session gig to finding other musicians to work with, just drop me a line on [thomasbeck@bimm.co.uk](mailto:thomasbeck@bimm.co.uk).

## 'IT'S A NO BRAINER'

**Marcello Costantinou, BA3** Songwriting, explains how the Commercial Performance Programme and Alive Network have proved invaluable to his career - and bank balance.



"Working with Alive Network has been one of the highlights of my career. In the past, I was performing as a way of earning money throughout my studies.

"However, until getting involved with the Commercial Performance Programme I was not fully aware of the fees I should have been earning. Since joining Alive Network's roster, I have been earning at least four to five times the amount that I was before.

"I would highly recommend all BIMM students making the most of this opportunity as it is a great way to make good money from doing something you love. It's a no brainer."



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**BIMM Life:** Can you tell us a bit about the background and aims of Music Venue Trust?

**Mark Davyd:** The Trust came together three years ago after some key people in the live music sector started to notice that venues were closing and new ones weren't opening. MVT is a registered charity which seeks to protect, secure and improve grassroots music venues across the UK.

**BL:** Can you give us an indication of the level of threat to small venues?

**MD:** We've lost nearly 40% of grassroots music venues in the UK. It's a real crisis that has crept up on us and then exploded. The problems are complex. We identified 21 factors that might lead to a venue closure. But those problems aren't complicated, they just require common sense solutions.

**BL:** Why are small venues important to the music industry in general and to BIMM students in particular?

**MD:** This is the research and development wing of a global industry. Without a first stage to play on, artists lack somewhere to fail, to build skills, to engage with an audience. But it's not only about artists and music, these places are central to an entire cultural journey. Many BIMM students who will end up as lighting engineers, sound engineers, crew or work in associated cultural industries, they all need somewhere to be inspired, to mix with like-minded people.

**BL:** Can you talk a bit about BIMM's involvement in Venues Day on 18 October?

**MD:** This is the third year BIMM students have been involved. The volunteers at the event are one of the main ways we can deliver on some practical issues that, as a charity, we simply wouldn't be able to do otherwise.

**BL:** From which artists have you received support and how do they help?

**MD:** We've engaged with a very large number of artists: from Frank Turner to Savages, Everything Everything to Public Service Broadcasting. Artists are busy people, but this is a cause that has struck a chord with the artist community, whether that's doing a concert for us, like the Fightback event at Roundhouse as part of Venues Day, or simply going on record as saying this is an important issue.

## GRASSROOTS MANOEUVRES

The Music Venue Trust is leading the fight against the closure of small venues up and down the UK – and BIMM is doing more than holding its coat. Founder and CEO **Mark Davyd** explains why we're all in this together.



# DIVINE INSPIRATION

**Divinity Roxx** is bass player and live musical director for **Beyoncé**. She has played for President Barrack Obama at the White House and appeared on The Grammys, the MTV Music Awards and Saturday Night Live. Recently, however, her career reached a new high when she flew 5,000 miles to appear as the guest speaker at **BIMM Brighton's Freshers' Induction** event. **Tatjana Harrington-Steward** managed to blag a private audience.

## Could you tell us a bit about yourself?

My name is Divinity Roxx and I'm from Atlanta, Georgia. I'm a bass player, an MC, producer, songwriter and performer.

## Do you have any music rituals or routines you practice before your performances?

When I'm on tour I generally try to stretch a lot, but my routines are kind of boring. I do vocal warm-ups before I leave the hotel, and I stretch because I'm usually really physical onstage, but that's about it. I always get with the band and make sure we're all together at least 30 minutes before the show so we can just connect, say a prayer and then hit the stage.

## What advice would you give to aspiring artists and musicians?

Just really hone your craft, study those who came before you and find your own voice. It's so important to find your own voice.

## How can aspiring artists and musicians contribute to the music industry as it is today?

It's definitely changed, and it's still changing and I think that's because of the contributions

of aspiring artists and musicians. The cool thing about artists is that they're creative so they're always finding new ways to share their music and to share their message. The messages are always changing, creative content is always evolving, and I think that's what we need. We need to keep evolving this music industry. For me it's all about the message and the music so keep evolving that.

## What can we anticipate from you in 2017?

More Divinity Roxx all over the world. World domination! That's the dream, right? Waking up in the morning and seeing the beach from the hotel window with a glass of Champagne... no I'm just kidding. I'm just going to be out there performing more, and teaching more - which I think is interesting for me because it's something I've never really been into or even thought would be a path for me, but I enjoy it. I enjoy connecting with young minds and sharing my passion and my craft and trying to get other people to think about this whole thing from a different perspective. So, you're just gonna see me out there. Follow me on Twitter - @diviroxx, Instagram - @diviroxx, Facebook, all that stuff!



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