



RICHARD HAWLEY

As one-time guitarist for classic brit-pop underdogs Longpigs and the seminal Pulp, you get the feeling that Richard Hawley didn't really start loving what he does until he started as a solo artist. Now five album albums later, with another about to be released, we caught up with him before he embarks on a 16-date tour in October.

Richard's voice over the phone is not as deep as the as the rich timbre that dominates his new album *Truelove's Gutter*, and the voice on the album doesn't have the soft northern twang of the Sheffield accent that is also present with the occasional "yer'ner" that peppers his sentences.

You just finished, an album and your about to go on tour, which do you prefer?

They're both totally different things, but I love the creative side of things – I love writing, it's one of my favourite things to do.

You're coming to Birmingham to play the Town Hall have you played there since its renovation?

There you go you see - the only reason we are playing that gig is because of a girl on the forum [Richards Hawleys web-site forum]. She works at the Town Hall and she suggested it and put a picture of the inside of it up on the forum, when I saw it and I thought it was a great gig. So I e-mailed my manager and told him to have a look into it. I was determined to play seated venues, so the audience are treated with a bit of respect not just herded into a big shed. They can relax and enjoy the music and atmosphere. Interacting on the forum has made me very aware of the needs of an audience, and with my own audience the age range is very varied from very young kids to old people and everything in-between. Everyone just wants to relax and be comfortable so it's not too much trouble for me to play seated gigs.

How are you going to translate the album on tour? Are you going to take all the instruments?

It's a physical impossibility to take the Cristal Baschet and the glass harmonica with me, the glass harmonica was invented by Benjamin Franklin in 1750 and most of the instruments where built around that time. So it is a bit of a head

scratcher, but we're rehearsing now and it's sounding good. I'm taking David Coulter with me; he plays the Musical Saw and is a great musician.

How did you know that you wanted the Cristal Baschet and the Megabass Waterphone, did you have a sound in mind that you later matched up to those instruments?

Well, I didn't want to make it easy on myself; it was part of the challenge. I wanted to create a sound that was beautiful but didn't have much to do with orchestration. There is one track on the album that was obvious it needed a strings section and horns and all that, and I use a few strings in other places. But the sound I heard in my mind, a lot of them I didn't know what they were called, I thought I was going to have to invent instruments. I use Tibetan Singing Bowls at one point, and that came about from being in B&Q and I kicked a plant pot and it made a ringing sound, so I spent ages trying find an instrument that sounded like that. I probably could have made it even easier on myself by using that big f*cking bowl from B&Q.

I would have liked to have seen that credited in the notes "big f*cking bowl from B&Q".

Yeah I might get free plant pots for life.

Richard Hawley will be playing the *Birmingham Town Hall on October 7th* – 0121 780 3333 for details and his album *Truelove's Gutter* is out 21st of September.

Words: Danny Smith