

Formal interview with David ‘Ginger’ Walls, lead singer with The Wildhearts, 04/10/2004

1. I was wondering how you guys feel about the UK press these days and do you think they do enough for UK bands?

Ginger: They’re doing enough for new cute UK rock bands; there are a certain amount of closet bisexuals in the music press, especially in NME who are just too pussy to admit they would like to stick a cock in their mouths. I don’t think they do a lot for the heritage of British music but I think there are a lot of journalists who like to think the UK is like a mini America. Which is isn’t because we don’t have the financial backing to push our bands like American bands. I just think most British journalists should be shot and I think most of the ones that should be shot work for NME.

2. Is it important for you to stay pretty grounded and make sure you do always chat to the fans?

Ginger: Well yeah, we always stay in touch with the fans via the website; I always try and keep in touch with them. A lot of the time after a show you’ll go out and be talking to fans and most of the time it will be great. It will be a bunch of cool kids there to tell you, ‘you got me through some hard times’ or ‘you influenced my band’, or that they just like your music. There will be a certain faction of people though who just want to wind you up and it’s not a good idea to wind a Geordie up especially after he’s just been working out for an hour and a half on stage. They’re all just like ‘when’s Danny coming back?’ and ‘the band aren’t the same without him’. So sometimes I’m just in a mood where I think instinctively I shouldn’t go and talk to anyone just in case one of those arse holes is there and I end up getting arrested for giving them a good hiding. But I do like to meet the fans of course, they’re the reason we’re not allowed to split up because they keep buying tickets.

3. Do you think you’ve calmed down at all since you’ve had your children?

Ginger: Well yeah because I don’t want to kill myself anymore. With us it used to be an analistic approach to enjoying ourselves although we weren’t really enjoying ourselves on drink and drugs we were just trying to block out reality. Now I actually

like the reality of being a father so now if I get drunk or anything it's more celebratory than trying to run away from anything. We still get fucked up, but we just don't get fucked up before the show now, we like to celebrate a good show rather than celebrating being alive again the morning after the night before.

4. How much do you feel the press has in influencing what the kids will buy in regards to CD sales, merchandise and selling out tours?

Ginger: Well, depends on what magazine you're talking about. Something like Metal Hammer know who they're catering for and so write predominately positive stuff otherwise it won't get featured in the magazine and that's pretty cool. Whereas someone like the aforementioned NME I think are the enemy of music because they have it that there are certain bands they will not feature. There's a friend of mine called Dan Silver who started working for the NME and he did a really good review of our last album and the reviews they ended up printing were going against our band. Now they're not catering for a specific market they're reporting about music itself, they're supposed to be the NME which is this panoramic view of music therefore they should not be allowed not to feature music if people are buying it you know? It's politically criminal that they won't feature a band because the editor doesn't like them, which is maybe down to the fact that his girlfriend probably fancies one of us or something stupid like that. I think that editors of magazines shouldn't be employed unless they're at least 40 years old and know what the fuck they're talking about. I mean look at the success of The Darkness, being in every single publication on the shelves has really helped them and it's all been pretty positive. But the press cannot stop a band from making it, I mean just because for years they haven't featured the Wildhearts they haven't been able to stop us from getting popular. You cannot stop the kids from getting into something, they haven't got that much power, people aren't that blind.

5. Do you feel the press has a certain degree of responsibility in terms of what they should print because the rock subculture is a lot to do with excess in alcohol and drugs?

Ginger: Put it all out there, I think magazines should be more honest, I mean they're only reporters; it's not really propaganda if someone is just reporting something. If the lifestyle exists then write on it. Like The Streets who write about it openly in their

music you know, we do take drugs, we do go out at the weekend and drop E’s and stuff and magazines reporting on that won’t really make people do any more or less of it. You know education would be a nice thing, if there were more journalists interested in educating kids about it rather than just glamorising it that would help. The magazines don’t really have that much control over people, because people do have a social life and magazines are only one day a week.

6. Do you feel that bands that are coming out at the moment are perhaps more clean cut due to press influence and possibly some higher power to steering away from the old scene of excess and violence?

Ginger: Man you can stop people. It doesn’t matter what is or isn’t trendy you cant stop kids from fucking, or taking drugs, or getting drunk, or getting into trouble. You’ve got to experience all of that and I don’t think anyone’s life is going to be made any easier by reading about someone else’s, it might help if you’re going through a hard patch and you’re reading about someone who’s been through a similar thing that’s where journalism can help, but I don’t think it can really effect how people are when they’re young and how much they want to get out of their system and how much they want to experience. Nothing’s going to stop young people from being young, even if the music’s shit and the bands are shit, and the journalisms shit the kids are still going to have a good time they’ll just find a different way of doing it. This is why dance music took off I guess because of the whole cultural thing as appose to the sound of it. Personally I’m quite fortunate that the sound track to my youth was quite upbeat populist rock music that was really handy when you were a kid who just fucking wants to go out and get crazy. I’m not sure if I would have had as good a sound track if I was listening to ‘Linkin Park’ or something but it wouldn’t have changed my desires to go out and experience life. So I don’t think the press are really that bad, I mean you can’t stop kids from being kids. I think it’s a good thing to encourage kids to fuck up and make fools out of themselves when they’re young.