

# the Sunday MUSIC



## ONE2WATCH by CHRIS SWEENEY

**SIMONE DOW** reckoned she needed her gritty Scots upbringing to conquer the male-dominated Australian rock 'n' roll scene.

The Falkirk-born star is a serious guitar shredder in heavy rock group Voyager.

But she admits it was a tough slog to be taken seriously.

Simone – who moved to Perth Down Under aged six – said: “It’s been a lot better recently but I definitely had to have thick skin as rock is a man’s industry.

“People are shocked when they see a woman. They tend to think you’re either a girlfriend, one of the door staff or the merch person rather than being in the band.

“It was tough starting out. I had to sell myself twice as hard when I’d audition.

“I did have a chip on my shoulder for some time because of that.

“I used to play 500 notes to show I could play my instrument.

“Nowadays there are more girls in bands. That’s thanks to people like Joan Jett –

and that’s helped.

“Now we’ve got women behind the scenes like managers and booking agents.

It’s awesome to see that.”

Simone has also noticed more females coming to their shows.

Some even claim she is an inspiration. She explained: “I’ve noticed a huge difference in the number of women at our gigs.

“At one point in our scene in Perth I was the only girl in a band.

“It’s great now to play a show where a girl comes up and says I’ve inspired them – that’s what it’s all about. We want to touch people with our music.”

Voyager’s new album *Ghost Mile* is out on May 11. It was crowd-funded by their fans – who gave them more than a quarter more than they asked for.

Simone, 33, said: “You don’t hear about bands getting massive cash advances like they did before. It’s a lot more DIY, which in some ways is great.

“The connection between fan and musicians has never been greater.

“It’s so expensive to operate a band. We don’t want to plead poverty but you need money to make music. Recording an album costs thousands. Ours was like a pre-

order – it’s not like the fans are giving us money and won’t get anything back.

“They can do Skype chats with us, get the handwritten lyrics or we just did a listening party where we hang out and have some pizza and beers while we play them the album.

“It’s just a way of getting around costs without a label. If people like your music and love your band they will put the money in.”

Simone knows they have some Scots fans after doing a few small gigs here back in 2014. And she’s desperate to come back on tour.

She said: “For people who have heard us, the new album progresses well from the last one. It makes sense – it’s not like we’re doing acid jazz now.

“The songs this time

are more cohesive. The easiest way to describe us is a heavier metal version of Muse.

“We got synths and electro music going on, clean singing and some really heavy riffs.

“We wear our influences on our sleeve but we’re constantly told we don’t sound like anyone else.

“We know we’ve got fans over in Scotland and the UK, as we see them buying our records online, so we want to come back over. We’d

love to jump on a support slot with a well-known band. We’re hoping to come back over at the end of this year.”

Simone also revealed her parents got her started in music.

Dad Richard appeared on big TV shows like *Opportunity Knox* and *STV’s Thingummyjig* with bands back in his younger days.

She said: “My dad was in loads of bands back in Scotland when he was young and my mum was a singer in a band as a teenager too.

“They were always picking up the guitar and singing at home. They’d have parties with lots of music.

“I’ve spent more of my life in Australia but I’m still proud to fly the flag for Scotland – and rocking out.”

● To get Voyager’s new album, go to [voyager-australia.com](http://voyager-australia.com)

# ‘It’s great if I’ve inspired girls’

## ONE2HEAR

**RICHARD ASHCROFT** is on a blistering run of form at the moment.

Last year’s album *These People* is going down a storm. And he’s given his fans even more excitement to lap up.

The ex-Verve frontman has released a special remix of big song *Out Of My Body* – and it sounds superb.

Listen to it now at [facebook.com/richardashcroft](http://facebook.com/richardashcroft)

## ONE2SEE

**WILDFIRE Festival** has just unveiled its line-up – and it looks like rock ‘n’ roll heaven.

*Toseland*, led by former world superbike champ James Toseland, will headline, alongside Danish metal stars *Forever Still*.

Tickets are £70 for the weekend, with kids only costing £1.

It’s held at *Wiston Lodge* in *Biggar* from June 23 to 25. Get all the info at [wildfirefestival.co.uk](http://wildfirefestival.co.uk)

# THRILL RIDE ON THE CAROUSEL

## CAROUSEL

**WHO:** Bradley Kennedy (vocals/guitar), Paddy Brown (guitar), Andy McGonigle (bass), Kieran Mitchell (drums/vocals).

**WHERE:** Dundee.

**FOR FANS OF:** Catfish And The Bottlemen, Oasis, Blossoms.

**JIM SAYS:** Formed through a mutual love of pop music, Dundee lads Caroussel were one of my highlights at last year’s Tenement Trail festival in Glasgow.

An explosive set of indie rock anthems won me over instantly.

Singer Bradley Kennedy, 25, said: “We are all into different stuff but we try to write pop music with a bit of an edge. We all love the melodies of The Stone Roses and The Beatles. The response has been amazing.

“We’ve played loads of really busy gigs already and people seem to know the words to the tunes.”

With three singles released over the past year, the band are now set to release a debut EP, *Show The World*. The six-track collection is the first release on Assai Records.

The label has been set up by the vinyl special-



## NEW MUSIC By Jim Gellatly

ists of the same name. Already with a shop in Broughty Ferry, they’ve just opened a new outlet in Edinburgh.

Caroussel drummer Kieran Mitchell, 20, said: “Keith, from Assai, has helped us out from day one so it’s great to have the debut release on the label.

“It was a deliberate move to release the singles first.

“We reckoned that as a new band a full EP would have been a bit much for folk to take in. We focused on bringing out great singles to start with and it’s grown from there.”

Guitarist Paddy Brown, 23, added: “The EP is basically everything we’ve done as a band to date. When Assai approached us about releasing an EP

we headed into the studio to write another few tracks and perfect some rough ideas. I think we’ve now got six really good tunes.”

Caroussel actually performed for the first time as a band at Assai last year as part of Record Store Day.

It’s fitting that the EP is issued for this year’s Record Store Day next Saturday.

To coincide with the limited edition 12in vinyl release of *Show The World*, the band will be doing in-store appearances in both the Broughty Ferry and Edinburgh shops.

Bradley said: “We are all really excited. We’d have been happy with a CD so to have our tracks on vinyl is massive.”

Caroussel then play a full EP launch at Conroy’s Basement in Dundee on Saturday, April 29. It’s followed by a short Scottish tour next month to promote the release.

Dates so far confirmed include Elgin, Inverness, Wick, Dunfermline and Perth.

**MORE:** [facebook.com/carouseldundee](http://facebook.com/carouseldundee)

● Jim presents a weekly showcase of New Music on *Amazing Radio* Sundays 2-4pm.

[amazingradio.com](http://amazingradio.com)  
[jimgellatly.com](http://jimgellatly.com)

▶ Watch a video of the band playing at: [www.thescottishsun.co.uk](http://www.thescottishsun.co.uk)

