

the Sunday MUSIC



EXCLUSIVE
by ANNA GAULT

ABBA tribute act Bjorn Again admit that donning 70s hairstyles for the last 30 years has been, ahem, dyer.

The band – a parody of the Swedish pop supergroup – have been keeping the pop disco era alive for almost three decades and have had the barnets to match.

Singer Agnetha Falstart – a spoof moniker for real group member Agnetha Fältskog – explains how the group don't wear wigs to get the 70s look. Those hairdos are for real.

She says: "The hardest thing about being in Bjorn Again is having the same haircut for so many years. You've got to keep it authentic."

Founder Rod Stephen – whose stage name is Bjorn Volvo-us – adds: "We ditched wigs because the natural hair looks better."

The band, *main pic and inset*, have continued to thrill fans even after Abba split in 1982 and have lasted three times as long as the real pop legends.

They will bring some 70s nostalgia to Scotland next weekend as they play Party At The Palace in Linlithgow, West Lothian.

'We have played a few rock festivals'

Although the real Abba, *below*, have had a few reunions over the years – the latest in 2016 – founder member Benny Andersson says the parody is the closest fans will get to seeing ABBA together again.

Rod says: "Abba only lasted for ten years themselves but the songs are now thought of as timeless, like The Beatles and Queen."

"We see kids, parents and grandparents getting into our set. "And we have played a few rock festivals with a younger audience. They enjoy it because it's just great fun to bring back some variety from the 70s."

For a tribute act, Bjorn Again have played several high-profile gigs over the years.

They supported Shania Twain on tour, played at the Cannes Film Festival and performed at a charity event held by JK Rowling.

Rod adds: "We played at Stirling Castle for JK Rowling who was throwing an event for an MS charity. She invited all the people from the Harry Potter films to it. "That was a great one and one to be proud of."

"I didn't want to bother her but I had bought a Harry Potter book and she signed it for me."

After three decades on the road, Rod has watched band

We're Bjorn to run & run



members come and go and seen the industry transform around him. He says: "A lot has changed when you look at touring 30 years ago compared to now."

"Technology helps a lot with the logistics and back in the early days we were just doing small clubs with 200 to 300 people but over the last decade we have been lucky enough to play to quite large audiences."

But he admits that the years can

take their toll from time to time. Rod explains: "You might feel tired but when that first song starts, the adrenaline kicks in and you're raring to go."

Agnetha adds: "Rod keeps himself fit – he's down the gym and he's in better shape than me and I am younger."

And staying fit is also crucial for squeezing into the skin-tight jumpsuits favoured by the disco favorites. Agnetha says: "We've got a few different sizes of costume and we've always embraced all types – curvy, tall, short. So if we have eaten too much on holiday we can wear something a bit more forgiving on stage."

"But I've never felt pressure in the shows to be a certain size – we can just be ourselves."

● For tickets for Party At The Palace, on August 12 and 13, see partyatthepalace.co.uk



WIN TICKETS TO



BJORN Again are one of a number of top acts playing at next weekend's Party At The Palace. The Kaiser Chiefs and Amy Macdonald will headline the two-day festival, which overlooks Linlithgow Palace in West Lothian.

And we've teamed up with the event's organisers to give away some tickets to the event. We have four pairs to give away to lucky readers.

To be in with a chance of winning, simply answer the following question: How old was The Dancing Queen in the famous Abba song? A) 19, B) 17, C) 27.

HOW TO ENTER: Email your answer, name, address, daytime contact number and answer to win@the-sun.co.uk. Please put 'PARTY AT THE PALACE' in the email subject header. Competition closes at midnight tonight (August 6, 2017). UK residents only and excluding any employees and their families or anyone professionally connected with this promotion. One entry per person. Four winners will be selected at random from all entries received after the closing date. The prize is four winners each receiving a pair tickets to Party At The Palace either Saturday or Sunday, August 12 or 13, 2017. Dates will randomly selected. Entrants must be 16 or over. No cash alternative will be offered. The Scottish Sun are under no liability whatsoever in connection with any loss, damage or injury which is suffered as a direct or indirect result of the prize. Usual Scottish Sun rules apply. Editor's decision is final.

ELLE EXXE

WHERE: London/Edinburgh.

FOR FANS OF: Charli XCX, Paramore, P!nk.

JIM SAYS: Elle Exxe is one of many homegrown talents who will appear at the inaugural Carnival Fifty Six festival in Dundee next weekend.

She gets the chance to shine along with fellow Scots acts Prides, Baby Strange, White, Model Aeroplanes and Honeyblood.

Festival favourites The Fratellis are the highest-billed Scottish act at the Camperdown Park event, joining other big-hitters such as Mark Ronson and Rudimental, plus DJ sets from Basement Jaxx and Hot Chip. Clean Bandit have had to pull out, but the great news is they've been replaced by indie legends The Charlatans as Sunday co-headliners.

London-based Edinburgh lass Elle Exxe is no stranger to Dundee, often coming to the city to write and record with her friend Gregor Philp, guitarist with Deacon Blue.

She told me: "I'm really looking forward to Carnival Fifty Six. All my pals are coming and it's got an amazing line-up. It's going to be flippin' fantastic!"

I've been a fan of her music for a while. Edgy pop with loads of attitude, she released her debut album *Love Fuelled Hate* last year. She describes



NEW MUSIC

By Jim Gellatly

it as a concept album, best listened to in one sitting. She said: "I'm obsessed with contrast and contradiction. When I started writing I was conflicted with emotions of love and hate, so I decided to create an album to explore that dynamic and tell a story of love turning to hate."

"I got some amazing reviews. That recognition was a blessing but it still feels like an underground secret. I'm on my own little record label. It's fun getting messages from people as they start to discover my album for the first time."

She pulls it off live as well. I caught her playing an explosive showcase at last year's Wide Days music convention in Edinburgh. Pop music it may

be, but it's far from sugar-coated. She's got more of an electro-clash thing going on, but doesn't mind being tagged as pop.

She explained "I always hated the up-turned noses you used to see when you'd say you love someone like Rihanna. She's a badass. Pop isn't as cheesy as it used to be. There's more variety than ever before. Pop isn't necessarily a sound any more, it's a structure. All it needs is a catchy hook and there you have it, it's pop!"

Carnival Fifty Six isn't the only festival Elle Exxe is playing this summer. She's already appeared at the Isle Of Wight Festival, and played Untold in Romania on Friday. Wednesday she plays the opening day of the massive Sziget Festival in Hungary. Still to come on August 19 & 20 she's on the MTV Stage at the V Festival in Essex and Staffordshire. Elle Exxe plays the main Mardi Gras Stage at Carnival Fifty Six in Dundee on Sunday. I'm there doing a DJ set on Saturday, but don't let that put you off! Ticket info at www.carnivalfiftysix.co.uk

More: www.elleexxe.com

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

www.amazingradio.com

www.jimgellatly.com



Watch a video of Elle Exxe at:
www.thescottishsun.co.uk