

the Sunday MUSIC



EXCLUSIVE
by ANNA GAULT

FAN power got former Mansun frontman Paul Draper back on the road — after nearly 15 years out of the spotlight.

The singer-songwriter was once riding high in the Britpop scene with the indie band but happily faded from fame following their split in 2003.

Paul spent his time working behind the scenes producing other artists' records but is now ready to get back on stage after Mansun's followers started a petition.

He said: "I didn't know if anyone would remember me because I have been away for so long."

"It was a fan petition that got me back on the road."

"Three years ago I produced an album for The Anchoress and when it was launched, I had the Mansun fans starting a petition on Facebook asking me not to work on someone else's record — to do my own."

Paul is playing his first gig north of the border since Mansun — who were part of the Britpop scene led by Oasis and Blur in the 90s — broke up.

'It was all pretty fraught when it ended'

He has watched the industry change massively in the last 20 years — and admitted he is relieved he won't have to appear on Top Of The Pops this time around.

Paul, 46, said: "It's been a long time and it's a very different industry now."

"The life-blood for me going forward will be things like, streaming, vinyl — which is a surprise — and playing live."

"Social media plays a big part now too — I've got Facebook, a website, a mailing list and none of that really existed before — when Mansun started everyone was doing fanzines."

"And I don't have to jump around on Top of the Pops like a goon anymore."

Paul came round to the idea of returning to the stage when his EP TWO beat The Rolling Stones' Blue And Lonesome on the vinyl album chart. He added: "I never



I'm shining in spotlight after Mansun

GOING SOLO . . . Paul, main pic, with Mansun, and his album, inset



thought I would be doing any concerts but when the EP beat the Rolling Stones, we thought we better get out there.

"Learning the words will be a big thing but I am going with the flow."

"I'll find some coping mechanism to blow away the cobwebs — maybe a wee glass of wine."

Paul's debut solo album, Spooky Action, managed to hit the Top 20 and his King Tuts Wah Wah Hut gig in Glasgow later this month has already sold out. But he promises Scottish fans he'll be back.

Paul said: "I am not recreating Mansun here — essentially, at my tender age I am launching a solo career."

"But there is a fan base there and there seems to be a few of them in Scotland. Selling out King Tuts is amazing."

"The place is a legendary rite of passage and one of the most famous shows you'll ever do in the British Isles. People should know that I plan on coming back for more gigs in Glasgow and Edinburgh earlier next year."

And Paul, from Liverpool, could be looking for love as he recalled charming a Scot following a previous gig.

He said: "I got myself a girlfriend after a gig in Edinburgh, who I went out with for quite a few years and is still a good friend of mine."

"I am single these days but you never know I might bag myself another Scottish girlfriend."

Paul confessed he rarely speaks to his former bandmates and joked that they won't think much of his new project.

He said: "We went our separate ways many years ago and there are still legal issues going on."

"It was all pretty fraught when it ended. Everyone was absolutely burned out."

"But everyone has got their own lives they are getting on with."

"It's like a divorce — you never really hang up with your ex-wife do you?"

"They will probably think my new stuff is rubbish."

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THE RAH'S

WHO: Jack McLeod (vocals / guitar), Jordan McIntyre (guitar / vocals), Andrew McLeod (bass), Neale Gary (drums)

WHERE: Prestonpans, East Lothian

FOR FANS OF: Stereophonics, Oasis, Catfish And The Bottlemen

JIM SAYS: After learning their craft as a pub covers band, The Rah's came together in 2011. The story takes us further back though.

The four-piece from near Edinburgh grew up together through nursery, infant school, primary school and high school.

Despite a couple of early EPs, they recognise that they've only really come of age in the past year. Jack explained: "Since early 2016 we have adopted an attitude that if it sounds good and we like playing it, we will play it... proud and loud!"

That's demonstrated with their recent recordings. Sweet Talker, released in March, was a brilliant statement of intent. A dynamic blast of indie rock with a great hook, it



NEW MUSIC

By Jim Gellatly

started opening doors for the band. Through the contacts they'd made, they even got the opportunity to perform it live at Facebook headquarters in London. The video has clocked up over 72,000 views. A great indication of how far

they've come is their new single The Time Is Now.

The song originally featured on their now deleted second EP Living The Dream in 2013.

Jack said: "We decided to give the song a revisit to spice things up. We added a rockier chorus and with the addition of keys the song stepped up a couple gears."

They forwarded a demo version to Dublin-based producer James Darkin, whose credits include Will.i.am and

Rihanna. He instantly said he wanted to produce it and flew over to record with the band at Glasgow's Maybank Studios. Jack said: "He was the one that made it into the face-melter that it is today!"

The song was then mastered by Pete Maher who's worked with the likes of U2, The Rolling Stones and Lana Del Rey.

Opening with a spoken work proclamation from Jack, The Time Is Now grabs you immediately. Jack originally wanted to do the speech in an American accent, but Darkin wasn't having it, apparently saying, "Braveheart or nothing!"

It's all the more effective with a Scottish voice, coming across like a scary preacher before launching into

the sort of rock anthem the Foo Fighters would be proud of. Their ambition is playing the biggest venues, but The Rah's are in their element with more intimate shows.

Jack added: "I love the big shows on big stages but the ones that stand out for me are the mad, sweaty, pint-spilling ones."

The Rah's play The Dublin Castle in London on September 16, and Jimmy's in Manchester the following night.

They're also booked to play Liverpool's Jacaranda on November 3, with more dates to be announced soon.

●**MORE:** Visit facebook.com/therahsmusic

●**JIM** presents a weekly showcase of **New Music on Amazing Radio Sundays 2-4pm.** www.amazingradio.com www.jimgellatly.com



Watch a video of the band playing at: www.thescottishsun.co.uk