

the **S**unday MUSIC



RED AND BLACK ALERT . . . Paul-Ronney Angel gives it big guitar licks in Spain

Pictures: Paul Dubbelman/dubbel Xposure Photography

15 Shots from the hip

IT'S time to paint your town red and black as The Urban Voodoo Machine weave their dark musical magic in Scotland again.

The 12-strong band have just returned from a tour of Spain, where their bourbon-soaked Gypsy blues went down a storm, even taking centre stage in a brothel.

And they hit Scottish shores in two weeks for another tear-up.

In case you haven't seen UVM before, prepare yourself for what can only be described as a wild night you will never forget.

Seriously, plan a sickie for the next day, or call off that wedding, stick on your red and black gear and get mental in the company of like-minded deviants and reprobates.

Friendly deviants and reprobates though – a more welcoming bunch of musicians you will never meet. Anyone and everyone can be part of UVM.

Frontman Paul-Ronney Angel, the Norwegian singer-songwriter who put together this gallery of London-based rogues, said: "Spain was fun – we even played in a working brothel. One of the girls came on stage and danced with us."

"The shows went really well and we now

By **DAVID COYLE**

have an agent there so we hope to go back soon."

It's been 15 years since he put together the first line-up of UVM which has changed over the years, with members such as Jim Jones, of The Jim Jones Revue fame, moving on – and others sadly passing on.

Fiddle player Rob Skipper died of a heroin overdose while guitarist and founder member Nick March was taken by throat cancer – but the heartache the band have endured just fuels their extravagant, burlesque-inspired shows, making them a defiant celebration of modern life, no matter what it throws at you.

'We're not Americana and we're definitely not retro'

As P-R puts it: "When life goes to s**t, you've just got to have a drink and laugh about it."

It's strange time for the ever-changing line-up, which takes in members from Norway, Scotland, England and an Irishman who was recently made a Dutch knight.

They are marking 15 years on the road across Europe and the US (they've previously toured with The Pogues and New York Dolls) with the release of their latest album *15 Shots*, a compilation of singles from 2009 to 2017. It includes *Help Me*

Jesus, featuring Dr Feelgood guitarist and Game Of Thrones executioner Wilko Johnson on guitar.

They're one of the most exciting live acts in the country.

And despite what looks like a modern world falling in on itself in many people's eyes, UVM keep going, bringing their down-and-dirty gospel of bop 'n' stroll to the brethren everywhere.

P-R said: "We're not Americana and we're definitely not retro."

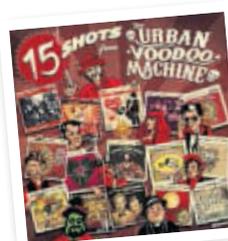
"I write songs about living in London right now, although having a s**t time, no money, heartbreak, mental illness, addiction and suppression from 'The big guy' is kinda universal and timeless." The

band have played Scotland many times before, and it's always a big occasion, with accordion player Slim Cyder having family connections in Aberdeen and saxophonist and fire-eater (see, I told you it was a show you wouldn't forget) Luci Fire Tusk very adept at slipping into native Glaswegian swearing at the drop of a circus trapeze.

As if you needed an excuse, the Urban Voodoo Machine bringing their rollicking show to town is the time to raise a glass and sing and dance.

You won't regret it.

● The Urban Voodoo Machine play *The Voodoo Rooms*, Edinburgh, Friday, April 13, and *Saint Luke's*, Glasgow, Saturday, April 14. For tickets see theurbanvoodoomachine.com



LEGENDS . . . band's new album features Wilko Johnson



BABA VÜK

WHO: David Ness (vocals/drums), Graham Duff (vocals/synths/guitar/bass).

WHERE: Midlothian/Highlands.

FOR FANS OF: Depeche Mode, David Bowie, Gary Numan.

JIM SAYS: With long-time friends David Ness and Graham Duff living more than a three-hour drive from each other, Baba Vük started life remotely.

David had been involved in many musical projects in his home city of Aberdeen. He also played with New York outfit Power Animals and drummed with musician and actor Richard Strange (of seminal 70s band Doctors Of Madness) on his Happiness project.

Graham, from Paisley, is best known for leading the currently dormant electro rock band Park Planet – and the seeds of Baba Vük were sown in 2016 after David shared a few demo tracks with him.

Graham explained: "For one reason or another, the chance to collaborate musically never came around until the last couple of years. I asked David if he would let me look through his old demo tapes."

"What struck me was the quality of the lyrics and



NEW MUSIC

By **Jim Gellatly**

David's creative vibe. He is so talented and thought-provoking. I looked at the arrangements and thought there was an opportunity to rewrite the music using his lyrics. I tried out six tracks and later added David's vocal where we thought it was more effective than mine."

These ideas were forged in Graham's Outhouse home studio in Pathhead near Edinburgh. After six months emailing ideas back and forth David headed down from his base in Nairn to complete the recordings.

David added: "Graham ended up reworking the demos to such an extent that it became a collaborative, shared effort. We formed Baba Vük

to release the songs as an album together." The result is a glorious collection of songs that make up the *Promesse Du Bonheur*. It's a contemporary take on new wave and post-punk that's not afraid to break musical boundaries. With hints of early Roxy Music, through to U2 and Nine Inch Nails, the album is an accomplished work.

Graham said: "Promesse Du Bonheur translates as 'the promise of happiness' and was inspired by the idea that art is the promise of Utopia."

"Perhaps one way to think about the songs is as movies inside your head, or like a dream."

They've taken that a step further by bringing in other creative friends. The artwork was designed by LA-based Scottish filmmaker and graphic artist Paul Allan, with video work by Highland-based filmmaker Charlie Wilson. It all comes together to create a multi-media project that complements the music perfectly. Baba Vük have yet to play live, but hopefully that is to come once they work out the logistics. These recordings have the makings of an amazing live show.

MORE: babavuk.com

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

amazingradio.com
jimgellatly.com

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