

by **COLAN LAMONT**

SINGER Ben Fletcher is looking forward to time on the road — in a shabby old van.

The 21-year-old — who is just back from a string of European dates — says some bands like a top-of-the-range, luxury bus to take on tour.

But Ben, who is one half of electronic pop outfit Aquilo with pal Tom Higham, reckons travelling in a scruffy motor is more exciting.

He says: "We loved the idea of sitting in a van and going all around Europe in it."

"Touring is all we've ever wanted to do since we were kids so it was nice to get in a sweaty van with eight or nine guys and see the world."

"It's a little less glamorous but still very exciting."

"We prefer it that way instead of just getting on a big tour bus, like we did during our tour of America."

"It was fun but you just woke up in the next city and there was no in between — you didn't see anything."

"The European tour was so amazing and two weeks was a nice time to get away. Now we're ready for Glasgow."

The band, formed in Silverdale, Lancashire, will perform at the city's King Tut's later this month.

And Ben admits they don't get to visit Scotland often enough.

He says: "We've only ever played

in Glasgow and Edinburgh but they've always been really good shows."

"And we'd like to play elsewhere as well."

'We take everything at our own pace'

"Shows are the only way we can see more of the country as we don't have any Scottish music mates."

After releasing their debut album *Silhouettes* last year, the pair have been in the studio for long stretches working on new

material. They already have enough for a second album but want to take their time with production.

Ben insists there's no rush after they waited so long to release the first one.

He says: "The studio has become our lives now. We just make music all the time, even if it's not specifically for a record and whether it makes the light of day or not."

"We moved to London 18 months ago, where we have our own studio and we basically live there."

"Our first EP was put out five years ago and we've just taken it

really steady. We've made a real point of not being one of those bands that act like a rabbit in the headlights."

"We've just taken it at our own pace and like the idea of everything being a slow build."

And music is the most important thing in life to the duo, who used to be in rival bands in their home town.

Ben adds: "We've got so many ideas and side projects so there's never a reason for us not to be in the studio."

"It's weird, it's quite addictive and if we are ever away we miss

it. We go places with mates and stuff but apart from that it's just music."

"We made our first album in four years."

"I was 17 when we first started making it and a lot changes in four years — you grow up and mature a lot."

"Once we'd finished the first record, we didn't want to tour it, we wanted to make another one straight away. It all came really naturally and before we knew it we had our second album."

● **Aquilo play at Glasgow's King Tut's on April 13.**

Our tour is **van**tastic



THE AMORETTES

WHO: Gill Montgomery (vocals/guitar), Heather McKay (bass), Hannah McKay (drums)

WHERE: Linlithgow, West Lothian

FOR FANS OF: Joan Jett, AC/DC, Girlschool

JIM SAYS: I was lucky enough to see The Amorettes very early in their career.

I caught them at a battle of the bands in Bathgate nearly 10 years ago. As one of the judges I remember being hounded out of the venue by their fans when they didn't win. I do recall that the girls were lovely about it though.

Needless to say, they've had the last laugh. I can't even remember who won, but it was The Amorettes who left the lasting impression.

From that raw rock 'n' roll outfit I first witnessed, they've developed into one of the best hard rock bands the country has to offer.

Gill and Hannah first met while studying music at college in Edinburgh. Hannah's sister Heather came on board a few months later.

Since then The Amorettes have gone from strength to strength. They released their fourth album, *Born To Break*, on Friday.

It's an outstanding record, queued-up perfectly by the current single *Everything Thing I Learned*



NEW MUSIC

By Jim Gellatly

Learned From Rock And Roll. The track was co-written by Black Star Riders (and former Almighty) frontman Ricky Warwick.

Singer Gill said: "Everything I Learned is a tale that resonates with a lot of people who picked up an instrument in their youth and felt an affinity with it. For me, I knew it was always something I wanted to do. It takes over your whole life, leaving everything else somewhat irrelevant. I think Ricky's lyrics really do sum that up perfectly."

Ricky had previously written with the band, and another old friend came in to produce the new album. Thunder's Luke Morley had also worked on their previous release *White Hot Heat*. Gill said:

"As someone who's been in the industry for so long, and as someone who has accumulated such a huge back catalogue of fantastic songs, it's a real honour that he wanted to work with us and that he felt our songs were strong enough."

I love the fact that it's not a straight-ahead rock record. There's more dynamic to it, which should find them a wider audience. Yes, it rocks, but it's the strong melodies that define *Born To Break*.

Gill said: "It feels like a new chapter for the band in many ways. We've focused so much on trying to make an album that we're all really happy with, and we had a great time recording it."

"There are still songs on there that sound like 'old school' Amorettes to our fans, but there are more gentle moments on the album, and others that pull in interesting new directions."

"I think *Born To Break* is certainly the most commercial-sounding record we've made, but still has all the energy and balls of our earlier albums."

The Amorettes kick off a UK tour with Australian-American rockers The Dead Daisies tonight at The Garage in Glasgow.

MORE: theamorettes.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