

# TEENAGE FANCLUB

Scot rock veterans **Teenage Fanclub** return with their first album in five years.

*Karen Goodwin* finds out more.

*Words by Karen Goodwin*

**T**eenage Fanclub are back with a new album *Endless Arcade*. The Glasgow band grew out of the C86 scene and garnered attention with their influential 90s albums *Bandwagonesque* and *Grand Prix* on the Creation Records label. Beloved by fans and bands alike for their infectious, harmony driven songs that get under your skin, their new album is less 'teenage', more philosophical. I caught up with guitarist and songwriter Raymond McGinley:

**KG:** Hi Raymond! I'm on the third listen of *Endless Arcade* and loving it. The opening track 'Home' is seven minutes long, a break away from your trademark pop songs into something more psychedelic. Quite a bold statement for the start of an album, were you making a point about time passing?

**RM:** When we recorded the songs for the album, we didn't record what order it was going to be, we were just making a sound and groove. We all felt fairly comfortable with it. The ridiculous guitar solo I added to the end, it sounded like an introductory groove and we thought let's just play it out. Fuck it, sometimes you just get a feeling.

**KG:** "Endless Arcade" appears as a lyric on a couple of songs on the album including one you wrote 'In Our Dreams'. Did you and Norman (Blake) individually write songs around a concept before collaborating?

**RM:** It's exactly the other way around! A concept suggests itself after the album's finished. We decide things apropos of nothing, we don't necessarily know what's coming next consciously. People say it sounds like me and Norman are having a conversation. We're not, we're doing things innocently.

**KG:** It does! Although Norman's songs on the album are more melancholic, dealing with loss and heartbreak, your outlook is more philosophical, open to endless possibility. 'Everything Is Falling Apart' but the answer is hopeful. What's the story behind that?

**RM:** "I was sitting there one day and thought everything is falling apart quite literally, the earth will end, we occupy this tiny bit of the cosmos, our lives are insignificant. I had part of the chorus line on the guitar, the verses came out of being in a studio in Hamburg where we recorded the album. Driving a van from Glasgow, we stayed in an Ibis in Belgium, I was up late in the hotel room and thought I'd better do some work on that song! I got into one of those conversations about what was number one in the charts on the day of your birth (3 January 1964). Mine was 'I Want to Hold Your Hand' by The Beatles. When I was born, I had this long hair and people were saying 'he's like a Beatle'. So there's something about that in the lyrics too, me talking to myself as a child in the past, having long hair as a baby!

TEENAGE FANCLUB



**KG:** You did a Creation Records tour in 2018 playing all the albums back to back, the last show with longstanding band member Gerard Love, that must have been quite an emotional experience for you?

**RM:** Yeah, I mean it was, we played albums from *Bandwagonesque* (1991) to *Howdy* (2000). Paul Quinn and Brendan O' Hare came down. We hadn't played with Paul for almost 20 years, we had to relearn stuff from the past but there was a yearning to learn new songs. We knew it was Gerard's last show, it was a good time to start another record and get on with something new.

**KG:** The release of *Endless Arcade* marks the start of a new creative era for you as a band and a new lineup with Euros Childs (Gorky's Zygotic Mynci) on keyboards and vocals. How did that come about?

**RM:** We were talking about how to do this thing after Gerard left, we weren't going to see ourselves as a heritage band and just replace him. We were fans of Gorky's in the 90s and Euros is on our *Shadows* (2010) record, he sings harmonies on there so he was already part of the family. Norman called him up with this bombshell and he said yes! Euros is a really talented musician and he's got a great voice. One time I was on stage and my amp was moving about, Euros was standing behind me stamping his foot, moving around to the music. I love his passion, he really goes for it. We're lucky to have him in the band.

**KG:** You've been in Teenage Fanclub for 30 years, that's quite a long time to be in the same band. What's your secret?

**RM:** Sounds daft but a band is who we've collected at the time, you accept people for who they are. We've never looked beyond the process of the record we're doing now, right back to the start in 1989. We might have gone on a bit longer than we expected! I've never had an actual job, I was a paperboy and an engineering student. I had an offer of a job working on the Channel Tunnel in '85. I thought, Nah, if I get money, if I get seduced by money, I'll never get into a band. I made the decision to do this.