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Interviews

Wanted Men: Velvet Revolver

Duff McKagan / Slash Interview and Photos

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The tube was a nightmare the afternoon I was asked to meet a pair of rock music icons. I was early because nothing would delay my surreptitious pre-meet with the music label PR. So finally tumbling onto Tottenham Court Road I made my way to the teeming London pub rendezvous and waited as dusk fell. I shifted from one foot to the other, excitement growing. Though there were no shadowy corners or a shifty document exchange, the atmosphere was thick with intrigue.



Finally, a beautifully Gothic-looking maiden who looked handpicked to support her hallowed duo appeared like the Third Woman and made a telepathic beeline towards me. But alas espionage would never be my thing. I fidgeted too much. Briefing complete, I made my way down Soho's Tin Pan Alley to the meeting. Around me the street was abuzz with the usual pedestrian traffic oblivious to who was inside the cult guitar shop towards which I was heading.



I stepped in, hit immediately by the fluorescent lights and smorgasbord of instruments. In corners here and there strains of guitar reached my ears, could it be them? No. Other musicians noodling in this Mecca. Finally ushered into a room, I waited, got my kit ready. Camera. Check. Recorder. Check. Duff MacKagan shuffled in five minutes later, slightly stooped, boyishly coy, armed with blond head tilt and sheepish grin. Slash followed full of swagger, quiet but confident in trademark shades and hat. Introductions were made and I set my kit to record as I started snapping, trying not to think about how these guys got me through gruelling university exams and existential angst.

I asked the usual questions. Why were they in London? To promote their new band Velvet Revolver and the upcoming debut album, *Contraband*. Duff lit up as he described the project. A super group comprising Matt Sorum of G'n'R, Scott Weiland Stone Temple Pilots' explosive front man and Dave Kushner ex Wasted Youth. This was not going to be plain sailing, in the best of ways.

Velvet Revolver the phoenix rising from the ashes of several bands, is still hot from turbulence and cutting it fine. I noted the absence of Scott Weiland and his well documented issues with substances and recent drug-related charges, which were dropped. Best not to go there. I was assured, the band is match fit and ready to start a new chapter and he is fully on board.



How did I like the album? Slash asked. My reply was obvious, "I love it, some really strong stuff on there and then that Beatles-esque ballad is great. I recognise each of you, similar but different. Like siblings."

"I like that." Duff again. "True we can be a lot like siblings, you know what I mean?" He grinned. I do. STP and GNR both have a reputation for being far from bland or playing nicely with each other.

"So are you guys pleased with it?" I swooped about with my camera.
"Yeah, we are. We're pretty tight. We're in a good place," added Slash.



"Hey, you getting a good angle there?" Duff looked down, "chins you know?" What chins I thought given he is as svelte as ever.

"Yeah we need to look our best!" Slash chuckled, flashing a megawatt grin, and striking a pose, abs sucked in.



I replied with assurances that they looked great and I would let them see, after we'd finished. The guys finally relaxed, got in the swing with those quirky camera angles and before we knew it 30 minutes had flown by and my date was over. It was time to pack up my gear and tackle the tube once more.

Tentative dates are expected from Mar 12 to Apr 27. Check out our news page for updates.