

Projects like this must be a great re-bonding experience, helping to bring people closer together.

“This whole project started some three or four months ago, because even though we didn’t start playing anything until we were at Kirk’s house, the bonding process started on the summer tour, sitting around and shoving shit at each other in terms of different songs, and ideas, directions and there were a lot of good moments in late night hotel rooms around the country. James saying he’d like to do some Tom Waits stuff, and him giving me a CD, I sit and listen because I don’t know him that well but I know James likes him so I’m trying to find stuff that would work for us.

“Then there were bands like Blue Oyster Cult where we felt they were really fucking cool, they had a lot of material that was suitable so it was a case of sitting down with four or five BOC albums in a room one night, so you sit down and listen to ‘Astronomy’ or ‘Dominance and Submission.’ If you go back to 1975 and BOC, who else was relevant with the time? Cheap Trick, Kiss, Robin Trower, Aerosmith, Ted Nugent and I think of all of them, BOC are among the bands from that time period who aged the best. So the bonding happened all summer. It’s been a lot of fun sitting and hearing Fate, Thin Lizzy and stuff like that again. There’s been a lot of sharing, sitting around and saying ‘here’s those five Thin Lizzy songs, why don’t you take a tape with you tonight and we’ll talk about it tomorrow.’”

#### What material got close to the mark?

LU: “I think with the Misfits we sat down with half a dozen of them, ‘Ghoul’s Night out,’ ‘Astro Zombies,’ ‘London Dungeon,’ and we ended up with ‘Die Die My Darling.’ One of the last songs to be picked out was ‘It’s Electric’ and sitting down and having an idea of how the project was shaping up, it was pretty clear that one thing we were missing despite the 12 minute Fate thing, was a shorter more concise NWOBHM underground metal song. We had the Segers and the wacky stuff like Nike Cave, but in terms of a 4-minute straight-ahead metal song there were three Diamond Head songs we tried, one was ‘Streets of Gold.’ We were listening to a Sweet Savage song called ‘Eye of the Storm,’ a Jaguar song called ‘Backstreet Woman’ and ‘Dutch Connection,’ there was a song on my record by a band called Witchfynde called ‘Leaving Nadir’ which is a great fucking song and one that I would really like to cover one day because I think it sounds like we could do it justice. But that song ended up sounding more in the BOC ’70s feel.

How important was that Bridge Benefit in gaining the confidence to move even further forward on more offbeat stuff?

“I think when you sit down to write the history of this band one day, you will have to say that that was a major cornerstone, and a pretty interesting one. The decision to play the show was reached with no effort at all. We were doing a photo session with Danny Clinch in San Francisco, we had some downtime, we discussed the request and everybody kinda jumped at it really quickly. I was a little bit surprised, and that was maybe six to eight weeks before the show. And then a couple of weeks later, phones started going off and guys were on telephones saying ‘why are we doing this? We cannot go up and play acoustic in front of 20,000 people?’ Wait a minute, we had made the fucking decision and whenever we’d faced a challenge in the past we’ve taken it on and fucking done it. There were one or two people who were pushing it to the point of pulling out and saying we made a mistake, it wasn’t for us and was something we could not pull off. So we had to dig deep. We got together the day after we mastered the “Re-Load” record over at Kirk’s for one fucking day, we had no idea what songs we were going to end up playing. All of a sudden James started playing a Lynyrd Skynyrd song, that came together, ‘Poor Twisted Me’ and ‘Nothing Else Matters’ came together really quickly. And there was this spirit that afternoon over at Kirk’s house of ‘y’know what? Maybe this isn’t going to be a complete fucking bust after all.’ Then when we went out and did it in front of 20,000 people for two days, it was almost like another chapter had opened. It was a case of ‘wow, there’s a whole other side.’

“The cool thing we got from that, more so than the whole physical aspect of playing acoustically, was reinventing older, earlier songs, reinventing songs, taking songs we’d played to death for 75 years or whatever, taking a song like ‘The Four Horsemen’ and completely reinventing it. Knowing that it was okay and fun and challenging to sit down and re-address, re-arrange and re-fuck with old stuff. Then slowly over the course of the last year it’s become more comfortable doing it in front of people, doing it as part of the Metallica set. And I will say it is now a genuine part of what Metallica has to offer, sitting down with acoustic instruments and playing some of our songs in a different format.” ●

