

# Interview with Yeasayer

Interview with Yeasayer, July 2012



Yeasayer release new album *Fragrant World* in August. It's the band's third studio album in five years and again highlights their uncompromising attitude to songwriting.

Frontman Chris Keating, bassist Ira Wolf Tuton and guitarist Anand Wilder are joined by new drummer Cale Parks on the record. This time Chris explained the band wanted to "explore the mid-tempo and go further with the whole electronic experimentation." The UK's burgeoning electronica scene and acts such as Jamie XX have influenced this direction. Singles *Longevity* and *Henrietta* give a glimpse into this new laid back and minimalist sound far removed from 2010's epic and energetic *Odd Blood*. "We think it's important to not repeat ourselves, so we're always trying to create songs that sound different and interesting," said Chris.

Yeasayer embarked on a world tour in June and promised fans that they would hear reinterpretations of old and new songs: "People should expect something different from each performance – songs never really sound exactly as how they do on the album. Chris says the plan is to keep pushing the boundaries of what the band can achieve while reminding their audiences that music is a "spectacle to savour and not take for granted." This move is partly motivated by their frustration that the experience of music has become desensitised: "It's not as special or intimate any more," laments Chris. He

added: "It's good that bands have to work harder now and tour to promote their music – whereas Elvis never even left the county."

Being desensitised is a theme that runs right through Yeasayer's new album. A track called *Fragrant World* didn't make the final cut but acted as "grandfather" to the other songs. The idea behind it, Chris explained, is that your senses play a critical role in triggering memories which are a fundamental aspect of the human condition. However, in today's world of tasteless food and odourless environments, he says: "We're in danger of stripping away part of our humanity."

Strange dissonant sounds punctuate each track on *Fragrant World*, creating an ominous feeling throughout its 48 minutes. Chris admits this "dark depressing period" in American politics influenced his writing. Reagan's *Skeleton*, for example, describes the dead President marching towards you with glowing red eyes. And themes of corruption, greed and the emergence of an oppressive right-wing political movement in America are also present. However, if this is Yeasayer's darkest album yet, fans shouldn't expect sombre performances during the tour. Rather, the band hope to ease people's anxieties by reminding them that music and the experience of music is a "powerful and positive tool to incite change."

Yeasayer will play venues in Dublin, Glasgow, Manchester and London in December. Make sure you don't miss them.

\*A version of this article originally appeared in NARC Magazine.