

CALM INTERVIEW

YOUNG GUNS

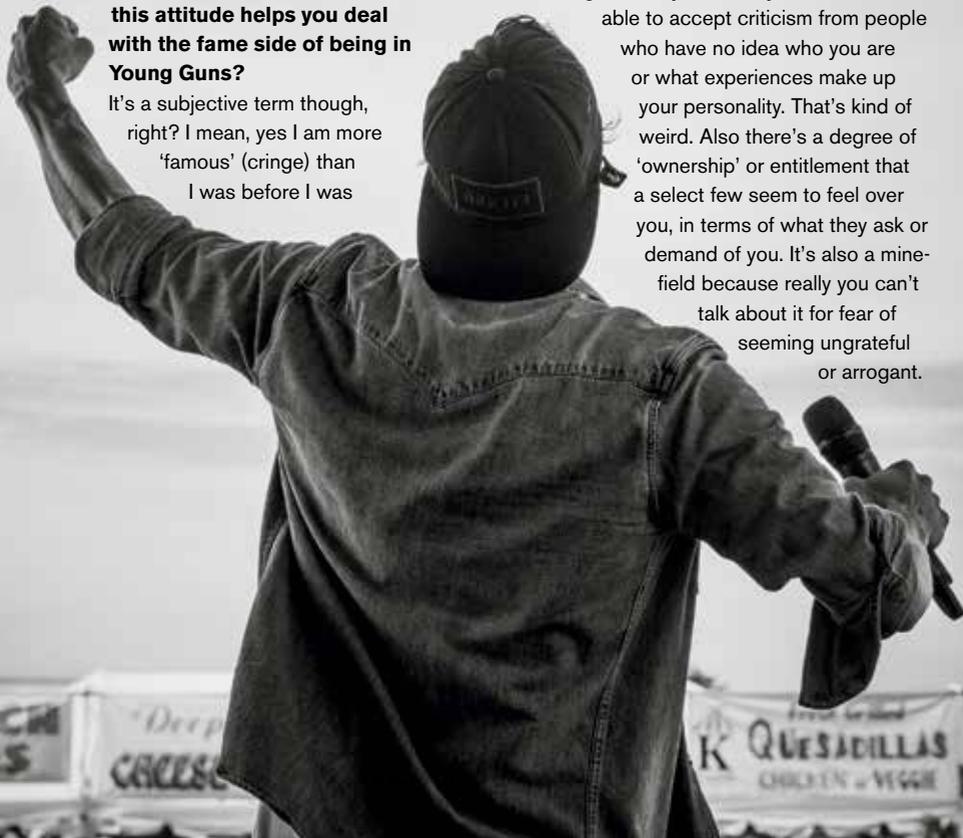
**Interview by Jojo Furnival
and Heather Fittsell
Pictures by Marcus Maschwitz**

Ahead of the release of the English rock five piece's new album *Echoes*, CALM caught up with Young Guns frontman Gustav Wood, to chat fame, embarrassing gigs, inspiration and gratitude.

You've been described as humble and once said that you were "just trying to write good songs". Do you think this attitude helps you deal with the fame side of being in Young Guns?

It's a subjective term though, right? I mean, yes I am more 'famous' (cringe) than I was before I was

in a band, and logically I'm more 'known' than someone not in my position, but I think the word famous doesn't apply to a band of our standing. If I can walk back the term a little and instead talk about the idea of being in the public eye in some small way... I don't know if that attitude helps or hinders. It requires a degree of self-belief to stand on a stage and do something as vulnerable as sing. Not only that, but you have to be able to accept criticism from people who have no idea who you are or what experiences make up your personality. That's kind of weird. Also there's a degree of 'ownership' or entitlement that a select few seem to feel over you, in terms of what they ask or demand of you. It's also a mine-field because really you can't talk about it for fear of seeming ungrateful or arrogant.



Sometimes I'm just uncomfortable like everyone else and I feel like maybe if I was more arrogant or detached that wouldn't be an issue. But that's part of the job and I love being challenged and constantly pushed out of my comfort zone because I've surprised myself with what, on occasion, I can do. Being humble is good because we're in a privileged position and it's important to remember that.

What drives you as musicians to continue recording and performing?

The desire to improve. The desire to feel like I've achieved something in my life. The desire to continue and progress something that has given me a sense of direction, purpose and meaning. It's also the most enjoyable thing I've ever done.

What has been your favourite experience as part of Young Guns, be it a particular concert, recording session, or place you've visited?

Well that's a pretty broad question, but at the moment I'm on our first ever warped tour and there's something about it that's reconnecting me with music in a big way. I feel a strong link to the teenage music-obsessed version of myself and it's a fantastic feeling. It's given me a renewed love and appreciation of the world I get to live in. I'm one of the people on my

bedroom wall when I was 14. I don't mean that in an arrogant way, just that being a part of something that I wanted to experience so much as a kid has really done something to my mindset and I'm very grateful and happy. I feel like I belong.

Who inspires you inside or outside of music?

Dustin Kensrue from Thrice will always be a lyrical inspiration to me. But I suppose generally speaking it's just anything that stirs something in me, emotionally. It could be a swell of a movie score or the sound of the wipers on the windscreen late at night pushing the rain back and forth... Anything I guess.

What's the most embarrassing/nervewracking/worst moment you've had on tour and how did you deal with it?

I suppose it's the usual stuff... jeans ripping on stage, falling off stage, forgetting lyrics. I've only ever said the wrong name of the venue/city once and that was in London where I grew up. I was nervous! Nerve-wracking wise, I don't get that nervous usually but supporting Bon Jovi at the O2 when we were playing little club shows was pretty terrifying. We so plainly didn't belong there though that it was almost not a big deal. Regardless we weren't very good. I just kind of pretended that I knew what I was doing!



At CALM we encourage guys to talk about their issues and express themselves in whatever way works best for them. Do you find it easier to deal with your emotions through music or do you have another outlet?

I'm quite an emotional person and I like to think that I'm moderately sensitive and pretty good at talking about things or listening to other people. I think that guys, especially young guys, are under an awful lot of different, complicated pressures. It's not easy for us to communicate, typically, with each other about how we feel. I see it in my band, and around me in general. Playing and writing music does provide me with an emotional outlet yes, but I do think that the best way to cope with or work through things, if you can pluck up the courage, is to talk to someone about things that are affecting you. Even just the act of talking about it openly I find helps, even without anything much in the way of feedback or response from someone else.

How do you deal with the pressures of fame, and the expectations to look or behave a certain way to reflect a brand? How do you stay grounded?

I just don't want to have to lie about who I am I suppose. I think we all have times when we do that to some degree or another but I'm

not about to start dressing or talking in a way that I don't want to, to fit in or be considered cool. If I'm uncomfortable with something, I'd like to think I won't do it. Some people will inevitably think you're something you're not, just like I no doubt did when I was a kid listening to bands I liked. I get and respect that. I just try and focus on being grateful.

If you could choose your dream one-off line up of musicians or bands still together or not, dead or alive, who would it be?

Maybe early 90s Metallica, At The Drive-In, Nirvana, Dookie era Green Day, 90s Smashing Pumpkins... bands that had a big influence on me growing up.

So what have Young Guns got coming up that you can tell us about?

Our new album Echoes comes out in September. We're proud of it and hope you pre-order it or pick up a copy when it comes out. We've just announced a headline show at the Borderline to celebrate it's release. We'll be touring with Billy Talent in October in the UK and EU and there's lots more in the pipeline.

Young Guns are playing in a city near you throughout October.

Get more info at weareyoungguns.com

