

NI ROCKS Interview with DOUG ALDRICH (The Dead Daisies, Burning Rain etc)

Written by NI ROCKS

Wednesday, 31 October 2018 21:44 - Last Updated Saturday, 19 January 2019 06:10

A few years ago I had the good fortune to sit down with guitarist Doug Aldrich and record an interview whilst he was in Belfast with Whitesnake. Five years later, he is now a member of The Dead Daisies who will be playing in The Limelight, Belfast on 22nd November. I was keen to catch up with him for a chat to talk about The Dead Daisies as well as Burning Rain and a few other things. I spoke to Doug via Skype on 26th October, a few days before he headed off to the Kiss Kruiise with The Dead Daisies. Following that the band head off on a European tour that takes them up to Christmas.

The interview can be read below or heard on the Friday NI Rocks Show for 2nd November which is now on our MixCloud page - <https://www.mixcloud.com/NIROcks/interview-with-doug-aldrich-on-the-friday-ni-rocks-show-2nd-nov-2018/>



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The interview has been transcribed and posted below.

The May 2013 interview with Doug can be read here - <http://www.rockradioni.co.uk/interviews/1216-ni-rocks-interview-with-doug-aldrich.html>



Playlist for the Show on 2nd Nov –

KISS – God of Thunder (Live)

GASOLINE OUTLAWS – Nothing On Me

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SAFIRE – Heartbreaker

RED DRAGON CARTEL – Feeder

THE DEAD DAISIES – Can't Take It With You

Interview with DOUG ALDRICH Part 1 (9 min)

THE DEAD DAISIES – Resurrected

Interview with DOUG ALDRICH Part 2 (7 min)

THE DEAD DAISIES – What Goes Around

Interview with DOUG ALDRICH Part 3 (11 min)

BURNING RAIN – Heaven's Garden

REVOLUTION SAINTS – Freedom

BOB DAISLEY & FRIENDS – The Loner

HEAVEN'S TRAIL – Lethal Mind

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CRAZY LIXX – Love on the Run

BON JOVI – The Price of Love

WHITE WIDDOW – Fight For Love

CITY OF THIEVES – Fuel and Alcohol

WILD HEAT – Call of the Void

HYPNOS – Set Fire to the Sky

ENTERFIRE – Open Sky

ATLAS – Bad Habit

WHITESNAKE – Best Years

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{youtube}1L7TQhi03-w{/youtube}

NI ROCKS – Hi Doug, thanks for taking the time to talk to Rock Radio NI.

DOUG – Thanks for having me on, it's good to hear you guys.

NI ROCKS - We've quite a few things to talk about, but the main focus is on The Dead Daisies and the upcoming tour. I just played the single "Can't Take It With You". What can you tell us about that track?

DOUG – Normally I don't pay that much attention to the lyrics, believe it or not! Even famous songs that are known for amazing lyrics, I'm mostly more interested in melodies and stuff. I do really love that song and being in the band I have to know what the lyrics are about. It's about excess and grabbing everything you can, in excess while you can, because you can't take it with you. There's nothing we can take with us; family or nothing. John and Marti Frederiksen put together that lyric. We had a riff; actually that riff was a riff that John had started with and I took it and tweaked it my way. Then we built the song and the lyrics kinda came into play a little bit later. John had already put it together and I really love it. It's got like a classic Corabi vibe to it and it reminds me of something that could have been on....it sounds like The Dead Daisies, but the way that John sings it reminds me a little bit of his days with Mötley Crüe.

NI ROCKS – The latest album was released in April. How long were you in the studio for with that album and who were you working with in terms of production etc?

DOUG – That was the same guy that did "Make Some Noise" - Marti Frederiksen. He's a really great song-writer and producer and he has an

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amazing complex in Nashville, where we holed up for both those records. Both records took about, in total six weeks. We wrote for ten days prior and then went to Nashville and set up live. We'd go through the tracks and see which ones we thought were our favourites. As we were picking our favourites we were starting to jam through them and once we got the arrangement in place we'd just record it live. With that kind of process it moves really fast, because in one take you get the bass, guitars and drums. Then you can do the overdub guitar or obviously lead vocal and background vocals. The whole process in the studio was about a month and then they mixed it for a couple of weeks and topped and tailed everything.

NI ROCKS – I recorded an interview with Marco back in January (<http://www.rockradioni.co.uk/interviews/3279-ni-rocks-interview-with-marco-mendoza.html>) and he said a large part of the success of The Dead Daisies was that it was a well oiled machine, with people who worked well together and very little BS. Would you agree with that?

DOUG – Yeah absolutely, there's no time for too much BS (laughs) with The Dead Daisies. The management team is really...no one works harder than the manager of The Dead Daisies and he keeps us extremely busy and he is always two steps ahead of us, wanting to plan more things. We're constantly working and there's not a lot of time for BS; we really can't afford it. And the other thing is, we've all been around together and respect each other as regular people as much as musicians. We leave our ego at the door when we get on The Dead Daisies bus or plane.

NI ROCKS – You mentioned writing for the album earlier. In terms of writing, is there a standard approach with everyone getting involved at the same time or do people bring ideas that then get fired around? How does it work?

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DOUG – It's interesting, because with technology and stuff people in many situations will e-mail ideas back and forth and do that. Like when I was in Whitesnake, David Coverdale and I would get together and make a demo and he would joke around and say these demos sound as good as most peoples' records, but it was true. Then the band would come and we'd re-play the stuff. With The Dead Daisies it's exactly the opposite and there is no right or wrong way by any means. It's just how The Dead Daisies like to operate; everybody together all the time. Our process is that we get together, all five of us, with management and sometimes with the producer and we sit down and start with some basic ideas, like some riffs or it could be a drum beat. I would never bring a finished idea to The Dead Daisies because that would take the fun out of it. Part of the fun of this thing is that everybody is invested in the songs and everybody puts their best effort into each song; and we just let whatever songs are the best be on the record. We'll start with a riff and then I'll pass it to John or he'll pass one to me and I'll play it and Marco will say what about doing something like this for the next part and David Lowy will say I really like this chord progression from that other song that we were jamming on, maybe we should try that and put it together. That's what we do; we craft some music, stuff that we like and sounds good to us. Then at that point we'll usually have melodies and stuff that we're singing over just to see if it has potential and we'll document those ideas on an iPhone or whatever. That's all we do as far as demos go, we just document them on some kind of recording device and then when we get into the studio we actually learn how to play it and we figure out a drum beat and start jamming on it. So really the first time that we play it properly is when its going to tape...or computer as it were (laughs).

NI ROCKS – There's always at least one or two covers on the recent Dead Daisies albums. Who picks which tracks you're going to cover?

DOUG – We all throw in some ideas, but John has a great handle on stuff like that because he is the one that has to deliver the vocal. We're not going to give him a song that would not fit his vibe or whatever. Generally we would jam through stuff. Like what we did with "Bitch" (*The Rolling Stones cover on "Burn It Down"*) we just hyped it up; I like to say Daisyfied, that version and made it heavier and a bit raunchier and when John started singing it that was it, we thought this song has got to be on it. We had never played it, but once we did and we heard John singing it we knew that was definitely going to be one. On the previous record "Make Some Noise" we did a cover of "Fortunate Son" (*Creedance Clearwater Revival*) which the guys had been playing with Richard Fortus and Dizzy on tours and they knew that it worked really well, so we cut that song in one take. "Join Together" (*The Who cover on "Make Some Noise"*) we spent a fair amount of time on trying to keep the integrity of the song, but also to put our stamp on it. Same thing with "Revolution" (*The Beatles cover on "Burn It Down"*), that was a bonus track actually and I'm not sure that it's out fully in Europe but it's floating around the internet I'm sure.

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NI ROCKS – We'll play another track from "Burn It Down" now. I'll let you pick one and tell us why you picked it.

DOUG – I'll say "Resurrected". It's just a nice, kick ass track to start the thing off. It's kinda got a little flavour of what the whole record has. It's heavy and aggressive and got a good hook to it on the vocal.

{youtube}fKBB_KI_Hx0{/youtube}

NI ROCKS – Next up for you and The Dead Daisies is the Kiss Cruise next week. The Dead Daisies have been part of that cruise a few times including in 2016 when you'd joined the band. How would you describe that as an event?

DOUG – It's amazing. I'd never been on a cruise before. I'd been on boats in Europe where you're just travelling, but I'd never been on an actual cruise ship. It's amazing. You're very confined in terms of you're not going anywhere, but it's all good people. They're all Kiss fans, and obviously fans of the bands that are included on the trip, but they're all Kiss fans, every single one of them. It's very well done and very well managed – everything runs on time; unless there's a weather situation or something. It's awesome. I had a great time, though I was nervous about it the first time because you're going out to sea and you're disconnected from your family and I wondered what if you need a little privacy

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or something, but it's really chilled and really mellow, it's a great thing.

NI ROCKS – Straight after the cruise you're heading over to Europe to kick off the UK and European tours; at the Hard Rock Hell Festival actually on 10th November. That tour brings you to Belfast on 22nd November. You're no stranger to playing in Northern Ireland. What are your main memories from playing here?

DOUG – Guinness!! Even though it's more famous in Dublin, I've had the best Guinness that I ever had in Belfast believe it or not. I don't know why, it just happened that way. I love Northern Ireland, it's amazing and the people in all of Ireland are very nice. I've been very blessed to be there several times and always had a great time. The fans are top shelf. When I actually sit down to think about it and say that I can go to Belfast and play there a few times, it's awesome. It's definitely a luxury to be able to visit that country.

NI ROCKS – This year The Dead Daisies are promoting what you're calling 'Daisyland'. What can you tell us about that?

DOUG – That's a really fun thing. How it has worked in the past, it may be a little different this time so bear with me, but you can find the details on <https://thedeaddaisies.com/>. 'Daisyland' has worked like this – the first 100 or so people that showed up to the venue got in early and we would do a kind of impromptu jam, pre-party. We'd play some songs, answer song questions, sign some autographs and just hang-out and have a sing-along. We'd set up in front of the stage to do that kinda semi-acoustic'ish. Then we'd take a break, do the meet and greet and then do the proper show.

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NI ROCKS – So the support band come on after you've done 'Daisyland' then?

DOUG – Yeah. Sometimes there's a kind of VIP meet and greet situation and sometimes we have a promotion that we're doing. Then we'll do the full show. A lot of times it has just been An Evening With The Dead Daisies so we can do whatever we want to do.

NI ROCKS – The press release accompanying the tour promises a two hour show each night. Any rock fan worth their salt would be mad to miss it!! Is there anything else you can tell us about what you've planned for the tour?

DOUG – We always try to change it up a bit and we've got a couple of surprises for this tour. It's going to be some time before we're able to return so we want to make sure that this is a really special tour. So we've a couple of surprises but also included in that is the 'Daisyland' factor. Also we're probably going to be doing some acoustic performances within the set, just to mix it up. People really like that. We started doing it this year. We did it in Japan once and it was really cool and kinda breaks up the show a little bit. It gives people a chance to catch their breath and then the show picks up for the second half.

NI ROCKS - We actually met up and recorded an interview in Belfast back in 2013 when you were here with Whitesnake. The night we spoke though you were doing a guitar clinic here in Belfast. Is that something you're still doing, or has time not permitted recently?

DOUG – I haven't had time to do that recently, but I will be doing some stuff like that in the future I'm sure. It was awesome to be there and the

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fans there are really my friends that come out to see me and make it really special for me. It's an awesome opportunity to meet up close with people and talk about guitars. I'm sure that I'll do it in future again sometime.

NI ROCKS – We'll play another track from The Dead Daisies latest album now. Again I'll let you pick one and tell us something about it.

DOUG – "What Goes Around" is a heavy track. There's a really funny story. We were in our writing studio where we were getting ideas together and the engineer at the studio had a fuzzbox and said guys check this out; this is really cool and he gave it to Marco saying it was going to change his life. Of course, I've got about a bazillion pedals at my house and they're all different and they're all interesting, but Marco plugged into this thing and his bass just kinda took off. It went crazy and was feeding back and all of a sudden he started playing this riff which turned into "What Goes Around". The funny thing was that when he stopped playing he'd pick up some kind of radio station. We were in New York City at the time and he picked up some radio station that was speaking in, I think it was Spanish, I don't know what it was, but it wasn't English. We had recorded that, because it was so interesting, onto the computer and that's what ended up on the record.

{youtube}eWrTAsai4M{/youtube}

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NI ROCKS – When we did the interview in 2013 we talked about a lot of your earlier work so we'll not go back over that, but at that stage Burning Rain had just released the album "Epic Obsession". On that album you and Keith St John were joined by bass player Sean McNabb and drummer Matt Starr. I noticed recently on Instagram that you had posted a picture of Brad Lang and mentioned Blas Eias. Are they now part of the band?

DOUG – Yes they are. They worked on the new record that is coming out on March 25th on Frontiers.

NI ROCKS – That was my next question. March time then?

DOUG – Yeah, March 25th is the release date. I wanted to work it so that it wasn't going to interfere with The Dead Daisies at all. Because last time, like you said, when we released the last record it was in the middle of a Whitesnake album process. And as with The Dead Daisies, if I'm working on an album process, it's kinda hard to promote the record properly. So I wanted to time it so that I could do some things with Burning Rain to promote the album. It's gonna be great. Those guys played great on it and Keith St John sounds amazing. The last two records we mixed ourselves and did everything ourselves, but this time we've got Alessandro Del Vecchio who I've worked with on Revolution Saints and he is mixing it and mastering it. And it's nice to be able to pass off to someone with good ears who can hit it fresh.

NI ROCKS – Is there likely to be a single from that album sometime soon.

DOUG – There will be, but I don't know when. It'll probably be later in the Fall. The record is called "Face The Music".

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NI ROCKS – I look forward to that. Are we likely to see Burning Rain getting out on tour?

DOUG – I would love to do that. I'm actually looking at doing some guitar clinics and bringing Keith with me. I would do a little bit of a guitar, meet and greet, clinic situation and then Keith would join me for acoustic promotion for that record. That'd be in the Spring before The Dead Daisies ramps up. The Dead Daisies has a plan that starts in May I believe, so we'll probably just do some promotion first and then The Daisies have a break I can book some Burning Rain shows. But I definitely want to bring the guys over. It's a great group of guys and the new songs are going to be really fun to play live.

NI ROCKS – You mentioned there Revolution Saints which is yourself and Dead Daisies drummer now Dean Castronovo as well as Jack Blades. There are now two albums out. Are we likely to see anything more from Revolution Saints in the near future?

DOUG – It's possible. I don't have a definite answer for you really. It's a speciality project and not really a band per se, but people really enjoy the music. Even though we haven't toured or done anything to support it, people still seem to be ok with that; they just generally enjoy listening to the music. It's possible, but The Dead Daisies definitely have plans for more things in the future and more new music in the future and there is only so much time we have. So I'm not going to say no on Revolution Saints, but there is no plan at this time.

NI ROCKS – I've seen your name linked to few other projects recently. One of those is "Moore Blues For Gary – A Tribute to Gary Moore" by Bob Daisley and Friends; which is released next week. How did you get involved in that and which track or tracks do you play on?

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DOUG – I play on “The Loner” and I requested to play on that song. Bob Daisley called me and asked if I’d be interested in participating and I was of course flattered and said yes in a heartbeat. He said what do you want to play and I told him “The Loner” would be awesome if nobody else had already picked it. He said no, that would be great. Eric (Singer) tracked the drums and sent me the track and I put guitars on it and then Bob put his bass on it and Don Airey put keyboards on it. We did it all in our individual studios because Bob is in Australia, Don is in England and Eric and I are in LA. I think he did it while I was on the road and then I did my parts after he sent it to me.

NI ROCKS – There’s a great cast of people on that album.

DOUG – Yeah, to be honest it was a couple of years ago that it happened and I wasn’t sure when it was going to come out. I haven’t heard that; I remember the version that I had with the drums and finally I asked Bob if he could send me the keyboards so that I could have a listen to make sure the guitars were working with the keyboards and once I heard it I thought this is really cool. But I haven’t heard it since so I’m looking forward to getting the record.

NI ROCKS – Do you have any other projects coming up, or I suppose you don’t have time for anything else?

DOUG – Well, I do some sessions and stuff. I have a friend who does some Christmas records and its kinda like, I’m sure you’ve heard of Trans Siberian Orchestra, it’s kinda like that . He does the music and asked me to play on a couple of tracks; so I’ve got that coming up. I recently played on a Doro record, on a song. So I do little sessions here and there, but I’ve been just trying to top and tail the Burning Rain thing and get that done. Then starting in 36 or 48 hours I’m going to be full on Dead Daisies.

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NI ROCKS - Are you still doing the Raiding The Rock Vault at all or has that stopped now?

DOUG – I have done one week this year, in May, and that is all that I've been able to do. They're really doing well. They just won Best of Vegas again for a fifth year in a row. They asked me to come in during November but obviously I can't do that, but maybe I'll come in next year for a week in January or February or something.

NI ROCKS – We mentioned that The Dead Daisies tour finished just in time for Christmas which means you get home to spend some time with the family. What is the first thing on our schedule for next year then; is it Burning Rain?

DOUG – Family is my most important thing so when I get home I'm going to take time to regain their attention. It's hard for them and it's hard for me to be away so much, but as I said we're going to have some time off from The Dead Daisies and I will focus on family. There will probably be a little bit of promotion for Burning Rain later in January. And we have the NAMM Show in January, which is a trade show, and I'll be performing there. And there's actually a really cool event that one of the companies called SoloDallas who make a pedal and a device that, I don't know how to describe it, but it makes your sound a little more gain and it's a little sticky. They took the design from an old wireless unit. They're putting on a festival that is all AC/DC songs played with an orchestra. It's in Anaheim, California at the end of January during the NAMM Show. It includes myself and Richard Fortus and a lot of other people such as Simon Wright who was the drummer in AC/DC for a while. It's a tribute to AC/DC with an orchestra and it'll be really fun.

NI ROCKS – That's all the questions that I have for you and I thought we'd finish with a track from Burning Rain and one from Revolution Saints. I'll let you pick which tracks you want to play?

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DOUG – From Burning Rain let's go with "Heaven's Garden". That's a track that I really like from the first record. From Revolution Saints let's go with "Freedom".

NI ROCKS – We'll play those. Thanks for taking the time to talk to Rock Radio NI, it's been great talking to you again.

DOUG – You too, thanks so much for everything and I look forward to seeing you guys at the end of November. Can't wait to be there and can't wait to get my Guinness. I always do in Belfast. I've been to some of the famous spots in Dublin and it's go but there's something about that Belfast one, maybe it's colder! Thanks you guys and see you soon.

{youtube}Mq_gG9sTEqQ{/youtube}