

NI ROCKS Interview with CHAS WEST from West Bound

Written by NI ROCKS

Wednesday, 13 March 2019 23:08 - Last Updated Friday, 05 July 2019 18:41

The band West Bound recently released their debut album, "Volume 1", through Frontiers Music. The front-man of the band is singer Chas West who has previously recorded with Resurrection Kings, Tango Down, Bonham etc and performed with bands such as Lynch Mob and Foreigner. This time, with West Bound, he is the driving force behind the band. I had the opportunity to chat with Chas via Skype on 12th March and we talked about the album, the band, his other projects and more.

That interview can be found on the Friday NI Rocks Show for 15th March and that Show is available on our MixCloud page - <https://www.mixcloud.com/NIROcks/interview-with-chas-west-on-the-friday-ni-rocks-show-15th-march-2019/>

West Bound are Chas West on vocals, Roy Z on guitar, Jimmy Burkard on guitar, Jason Cornwell on bass and Dave 'Chilli' Moreno on drums. The album also features keyboard player Stephen Leblanc and a guest appearance by Brian Tichy on drums for two tracks. Check out the band's Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/westboundofficial/>

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The interview has been transcribed and posted below.

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Full playlist for the Show –

TESLA – You Won't Take Me Alive

GASOLINE OUTLAWS – Breathe Again

DORO – Backstage to Heaven

ROCK GODDESS – Why Do We Never Learn

TARA LYNCH - Unbreakable

WEST BOUND – Beautiful Dream

Interview with Chas West Part 1 (6 min)

WEST BOUND – Never Surrender

Interview with Chas West Part 2 (5 min)

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WEST BOUND – Dance of Life

Interview with Chas West Part 3 (8 min)

WEST BOUND – Ain't Gonna Drown

RESURRECTION KINGS – Livin' Out Loud

TANGO DOWN – Bulletproof

TRUCKER DIABLO – Murder Ballad

THUNDER – A Lover, Not A Friend

SLAUGHTER – Days Gone By

MIKAEL ERLANDSSON – Eye of the Hurricane

MERIDIAN – Second Best

BALEFUL CREED – Levy

WITHIN TEMPTATION – Supernova

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BEYOND THE BLACK – Dear Death

STATEMENT – The Hero Inside

IRON SAVIOR – Stand Up and Fight

SKELETOON – They Never Say Die

PAT MCMANUS – Runaway Dreams



NI ROCKS – Hi Chas, thanks for taking the time to talk to Rock Radio NI. The band West Bound recently released their excellent debut album called “Volume 1”. Did the idea for West Bound originate with yourself or was it something you were approached to do by Frontiers Music?

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CHAS – It's something that I've wanted to do, but Frontiers; after I'd finished the Revolution Saints record that I did with Vinnie Appice, Craig Goldy and Sean McNabb; Serafino, the President, said he'd like to do something, just with me. I said that would be great and he said that he wanted me to have a producer and writer to work with. So I contacted my old friend and bandmate Roy Z to see if he would be up for it; and he was. And here we are now.

NI ROCKS – When was that first idea floated and how long did it take, from the idea emerging to actually getting the album released?

CHAS – The idea originally was when Serafino approached me in the late summer or early fall of 2015, but it didn't really get going until late 2016. The record was done in late 2017, early 2018 but it has just got released now.

NI ROCKS – You mentioned your bandmate, guitarist Roy Z, is a very successful producer and engineer in his own right. I presume he was in charge of things throughout production for the new album?

CHAS – Pretty much! I was there from start to finish and oversaw everything, since it's my deal and my band. But, yeah absolutely, he knows what he's doing and we've worked together before. We've written together before and I knew it would go smoothly. We have a lot of the same influences and things like that.

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NI ROCKS – You mentioned that you had worked with Roy before. You'd worked obviously in Tribe of Gypsies. How did working on the West Bound album compare to working for Tribe of Gypsies?

CHAS – It's a little different obviously because Tribe of Gypsies has a Latino influence and he wanted to make it a more universal sounding thing. Combining my Zeppelin influence along with some stuff that we both love like U2 and Guns 'n' Roses; things like that. This was obviously a bit different than that; it was a bit more of my influences, although like I said he has some of the same ones too. We combine all the bands that we loved growing up – Zeppelin, Whitesnake, Deep Purple, Aerosmith, Van Halen and put it all in a blender and mix it up and that's what we came out with. (laughs).

NI ROCKS – It's a great album, I really love it. Also in the band with you are guitarist Jimmy Burkard, bass player Jason Cornwell, drummer Dave 'Chilli' Moreno and keyboard player Stephen Leblanc. Had you worked with any of them before and how did they get involved?

CHAS – Yeah, I've worked with Chilli, I've known him for years. He was the drummer for Tribe of Gypsies on the last record also and we toured Japan together, him and I and Z. Jimmy Burkard, I met through Stephen McGrath who is the bass player for Billy Idol's band. That's how I met him and I thought he was great; he's got that Jimmy Page kind of style and that's what I need. Jason Cornwell, I knew from doing some shows on the East coast years ago; in New England mainly, and we got tight. Stephen Leblanc I knew for years; he played with Jason Bonham for a bit and I have an all-star Zeppeling tribute band with Brian Tichy, who is also on the record, called The Moby Dicks, and he played keyboards for that band. So, I immediately went to him when I wanted a keyboard player. He's not really in the band, but he is on the record; he's not really a permanent member, but definitely a guest player on the record. That's basically how it came about. I wanted guys that I knew I was tight with and I felt that camaraderie and that they were bro's you know, rather than strangers. I wanted pro's, but bro's! (laughs).

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NI ROCKS – In terms of writing the tracks, were the songs all newly written for West Bound, or had some been in the works for a while, and who was involved in the writing process?

CHAS – They were all pretty much written for West Bound, except for the two with Tichy and I; we did those a few years ago. They were going to be for another project and then we were able to use them for this. That other project didn't work out, which was a blessing in disguise now that we look back (laughs). Everything else we wrote from scratch. We had some songs that we had to scrap because Frontiers wanted a little more of an AOR sound, and they were a little more harder edged, bluesier kind of thing that we might use later on. For this record, they didn't really work and they didn't make the chopping block! (laughs)

NI ROCKS – Were there many that didn't make that cut.

CHAS – Just a few. It wasn't that many. "Dance of Life" was the first song that we wrote together actually and that passed the test

NI ROCKS – We're going to play a track from the album now and I'll let you pick which one and tell us something about it.

CHAS – I just said "Dance of Life", but maybe we should go with the first single and video which was "Never Surrender". That was Serafino's favourite and it's just about not giving up on your hopes and dreams and goals and dealing with the daily obstacles of life which will sometimes knock you down. I've had some brakes in the past, but have effectively had to go back to the drawing board again. It's that kind of perseverance that makes people successful and happy in life. It also has the message of us all coming together as one.

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{youtube}borURMcuTKA{/youtube}

NI ROCKS – The band did their first live gig a couple of weeks ago in Hollywood. Are there plans for more shows or a tour even?

CHAS – Oh absolutely. They're being set up right now. Actually, we've got two shows – the Viper Room in Hollywood on April 25th I think it is and then Count's Vamp'd in Las Vegas, Nevada on the 26th. It looks like there are going to be some shows on the east coast before that – like a week or so before that. Mainly in the New England area, because my bassist Jason lives there and he is involved in setting up as well as I am. They're being finalised right now. Absolutely, I want to take this band as far as I can take it worldwide.

NI ROCKS – Any chance of some European dates?

CHAS – I hope so! There's nothing confirmed right now. If you have any contacts as far as promoters go, please turn them onto me. I need all the help that I can get.

NI ROCKS – It would be great to see you in the UK somewhere.

CHAS – Absolutely, I would love to do that again.

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NI ROCKS – I'm hoping that the fact that the album is called "Volume 1" means that we can expect more releases from West Bound in the near future?

CHAS – Absolutely, that's the reason that I called it that. For that reason, so that people realise this is not just a one-off.

NI ROCKS – Have you any kind of timeframe that you can share in regards to writing or releasing the next album?

CHAS – I have no idea just yet. I would have to have meetings and sit down with the record company person. The record just came out a few weeks ago and if I had to make a guestimate I'd say a couple of years. Maybe 2020 or 2021.

NI ROCKS – I read that Tango Down are working on a new album and I'll talk more about that later, but have you any other ongoing musical commitments at the moment?

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CHAS – We're going to do another Resurrection Kings album this year. That is in the works.

NI ROCKS – That was my next question; that's good.

CHAS – Yeah, Craig Goldy just sent me some musical ideas a couple of weeks ago, that I worked on and sent back some melodies and lyrics for him. There's going to be a lot more. At this point that is pretty much it. I really want to concentrate on West Bound. It's the first time that I'm in the driver's seat and it's my band. If the show that we did at the Whisky was any indication, the audience reaction was over the moon; it went down really well. So, I really want to take that and concentrate on that.

NI ROCKS – You mentioned The Resurrection Kings. I recorded an interview with Craig Goldy when the album was released back in 2016 and he was certainly hopeful for a second album at that stage. Did that band ever get out on tour, I can't remember; I know he had wanted to.

CHAS – We did some shows; we didn't really do a large tour. We did a bunch of shows. Unfortunately that was one of the problems - scheduling conflicts. Vinnie had Last In Line and Goldy had Dio Disciples. Trying to work out schedules became a nightmare unfortunately. We were offered some big tours and couldn't do them. We were able to do some shows and we'll do some more. That was one of the reasons that I was careful about who I picked for my band, West Bound. As I said, I wanted pros and bros, but I also didn't want guys who were doing ten other things. I wanted guys who were pros, but I didn't want to go through what I did with Resurrection Kings, especially since this is the first time that I'm in the driving seat. It's my baby!

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NI ROCKS – We'll play a track from the Resurrection Kings album later on. Do you have a favourite track from the album or which one do you want to play?

CHAS – "Livin' Out Loud". I co-wrote that one and that was the first single actually.

NI ROCKS – We'll play that later, but in the meantime we'll get back to the new West Bound album and play another track. Again I'll let you pick one and tell us something about it.

CHAS – I would pick the last single "Dance of Life"; which was the first song that we wrote actually. That is a song about unification and coming together. Basically the Dance of Life relates to everybody's walk of life, whatever it is that you may do. I guess it has a bit of a spiritual message without being religious. That's pretty much it in a nutshell. Everybody goes through their own Dance of Life and coming together as one; as human beings.

{youtube}0yCA5QHqaJM{/youtube}

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NI ROCKS – I mentioned the band Tango Down earlier. You released your first album with them in 2016 – called “Bulletproof”. How did you end up working with those guys?

CHAS – Actually, it was through the manager. I was doing some shows with Jason Cornwell a few years ago in Massachusetts. He lives up that way and he contacted me and asked if I would be in to doing it. We went to dinner and had a sit down and worked it out. I said I wanted to meet the band and they came up. They’re all from the New York area and I’m from the East Coast too so I could relate to these guys right away. They were great guys so I said OK and we worked out a financial arrangement. And as they’re great guys I said I’d do some shows too.

We are going to do another Tango Down record - that’s the other thing I’m going to be doing! Sometime toward the latter part of the year.

NI ROCKS – It’s a band I admit that I didn’t know a lot about but I bought the “Bulletproof” album recently and it’s great. We’ll play a track from that one later too. Any suggestions on which one to play?

CHAS – I would say the title track!

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NI ROCKS – You mentioned there that there is going to be another Tango Down album. I noticed on their Facebook page that it talked about the writing process being almost done and that recording should start soon. Any timeframe on when that might be?

CHAS – I don't know. If I had to make a guestimate I would say the end of the year probably I'll end up doing some vocals. Probably before the holidays or something like that. In between West Bound touring because that is going to be my main focus.

NI ROCKS – You've worked with a lot of artists over the years, Bonham, Foreigner, Lynch Mob etc. And a couple of years ago you appeared on the Vinnie and Carmine Appice album "Sinister". Are there any artists at the top of a wish list that you'd really like to work that you haven't worked with yet?

CHAS – Jimmy Page! (Laughs). Joe Perry, Brian May! I've been fortunate to work with some of rock's royalty, or sons of! I pretty much know or have jammed with most of the LA elite musicians. Those are the three guitar players that come to mind, off the bat, that I'd be over the moon to work with. I could die a happy man, if that could happen. I came real close when Zeppelin was going to reform with a new singer as Robert didn't want to do it after the O2 Arena show. Jason had contacted me and said I think I can get you a shot at it if you're ready. I was like 'Oh, my God'; even to get in a room with them and jam with them, even if it didn't work out after that! I would die a happy man. But, of course Jimmy pulled the plug on it after that. Just the fact that it he had said that he might be able to work it for me, stand by for a phone call. It was one of those kinda deals.

NI ROCKS – Maybe sometime; you just don't know!

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CHAS – Yeah, anything is possible. Stranger things have happened.

NI ROCKS – What music do you find yourself listening to these days? Do you mainly listen to the classic rock bands or do you try to check out some of the newer bands as well?

CHAS – Mainly the classics, but there are a few new bands. I love Rival Sons. I saw them opening for Black Sabbath at the Hollywood Bowl and they blew me away. I think they're a great band and they're from Southern California. I know Greta Van Fleet and I know everyone says they're not as good as, and no they're not; they're not Led Zeppelin, but you can definitely hear the influences obviously. But they're kids! What I like about it is that kids their age are starting to listen to more than just pop and hip-hop because of that band and a few others. And they're going back and listening to the older classic rock records that their parents had! To me that gives hope for the future of hard rock and heavy metal; throughout the world, but especially in the United States where we've been suffering for the last decade. Those are the two that come to mind off the bat; there are a few others, but yeah I'm an old school guy. I love the old classics.

NI ROCKS – We all do, although it is nice to hear some new stuff.

CHAS – Absolutely, it's timeless. It really is. It really has stood the test of time. I don't know about some of the bands these days. I think a few of them will; we'll see, time will tell in twenty years from now if you'll still be listening to some of the newer bands.

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NI ROCKS – I'm not sure if you're still buying or downloading albums, but can you remember the last one album bought – or if you're not buying albums then the _____ you've added to a playlist on Spotify or whatever you use?

CHAS – I guess the last one that I bought was Rival Sons

NI ROCKS – Do you still buy many albums or are you a digital person?

CHAS – I'm trying to be old school sometimes, but sometimes it's just easier to do digital. But I still love, once in a while, going into used records stores and going 'oh wow, yeah'. I still use CDs in my car and I'm still a bit of an old school guy.

NI ROCKS – A bit like myself. I do like to own something and I've got caught in the vinyl craze too.

CHAS – Exactly. It's a combination but my heart is still old school. Something you can pick up physically and look at. Open up the booklet! It makes it easier digitally but of course the sound is nowhere near as good. It suffices for having it on your phone if you're going out jogging or hiking or lying by the pool or whatever. But it's not same as having the actual record. Even CDs weren't _____ as good sound quality, but definitely better than some of the digital downloads.

NI ROCKS – That's all the questions that I have. We'll play those tracks from Resurrection Kings and Tango Down now, but before we do we'll pick another track from the new West Bound album to play as well. Which one do you want to play this time?

CHAS – Let's do the song that I wrote with Tichy called "Ain't Gonna Drown". It's a good rocker. It's about.....we've all had bad relationships that wasn't good for you as far as your life goes or your dreams go. Maybe you had a great sexual experience (laughs) and the chemistry was there in that way, but otherwise, no, it was not good for you. That's pretty much what I wrote those lyrics about – from living it!

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NI ROCKS – That's great Chas. Thanks for taking the time to talk to us.