



"I was at school with Amy Winehouse and Adele. It was crazy!"



delay? Did you throw out your first attempt?
 "Yeah, we did, actually! We embarked on the record then Paul our drummer had a nerve-ending problem in his arm and couldn't play. And then we did some recordings with Jim Abbiss – a great producer who did the first Arctic Monkeys record – but it didn't work. So we scrapped it."

Was that hard to do?
 "It was difficult but it was the right thing to do. We were figuring out what we were and what we wanted to do. We weren't happy with the way we were being perceived. We felt like, we've had this success, we're touring a lot, but where's the soul in this? We put a lot of pressure on ourselves."

Did you think you were becoming too commercial?
 "When we first started the third album it was like, 'We're doing what we've done before.' I felt we'd slightly rushed our second album and that we had a lot more in us. Things needed to be solved before we made another album."

So the producer had to knock you out of the rut you'd been in?
 "Yeah. We were in a bit of a rut. After we'd scrapped those first five or six songs, I called Tony Hoffer and said, 'Tony, I'm stuck. I don't know what to do.' So he came over and we sat in a room with his computer and my guitar, and just talked. I told him, 'I wanna make a record like no one's ever heard'. He introduced me to different sounds and we ended up writing most stuff over that time period."

On a more personal tip, you've moved from Brighton to trend-obsessed London. Is that difficult for a band like yours?
 "Are you saying we're not trendy? Hahaha!"

No, I'm saying you're not trend-obsessed!
 "The beautiful thing about living in London is you can do your own thing. It's a big city. At the moment I'm liking that. Plus all my friends live here, so it makes sense."

What was it like going to The Brits School [in Croydon]?

"The main good thing was the kids I went to school with. I got to be in classes with people who are great musicians. On the downside, the teaching was pretty basic. I played Sofa Song, or Naive, for them [the teachers] and they sent me to a songwriting class! Both those songs are now on an album that's sold two million copies. Rather than inspiring creativity they wanted you to go towards boxes."

They thought you didn't tick the boxes properly?

"Yeah. I'm not bitter about it, I just think the teachers weren't very good, but the facilities were really cool. I used to sneak my band in there to rehearse, even though they weren't from the school. Free rehearsal space when you're 16 is a huge deal."

But it was the other students who really made it for you?

"Yeah, it was great meeting so many people. At that school, in my year we had Amy Winehouse and Katie Melua. Adele was a few years below me. It was crazy, when you think about it. So many people came from that school."

Just to finish off, I read an interview where you said you were like a hit machine, constantly writing catchy songs...

"I was taking the piss! I was so annoyed when the journalist put that in the article. Things you say come back to haunt you. Several interviewers today were talking about this 'fight' with Alex Turner from the Arctic Monkeys. You say a small thing – it's a story we both laughed about at the time – and it's made out that we had this fist fight. It's weird. But it's juicy, innit? Juicy!"



Junk of the Heart is out now.

KOOKIN' up a treat!

The Kooks are back with their long-awaited third album, Junk of the Heart. But have the fiery foursome kept their grip on those radio-friendly killer hooks? Frontman Luke Pritchard reveals all.

Words by: Hanspeter Künzler / The Interview People

What would you say is different about your third album Junk of the Heart?

"Big question! We recorded the album in a very different way. We tried to bring in the roots of the band but make a very modern record. That's why you can hear synthesizers and drum loops. Tony Hoffer, the producer said, 'The Kooks have to do something different; take a left turn!' And it opened up the songwriting."

It's a quieter album with lots more acoustic guitar than before.

"Very true. I wanted to step away from the rock'n'roll thing and make a really atmospheric album. It's an amalgamation of softer electronic music and folk songs. You get this clash of two different styles. Especially on stuff like Runaway."

There was talk about you working on the third album a couple of years ago. Why the