

# MEN OF 20



## Can Men Of 20 Please Stand Up.

Like all of us, Men of 20 had to grow up at some point. Formally known as Animal Beats, the boys from Limerick were one of the top picks for Guinness Amplify this year. Cultivating their sound as they mature, making sure not to forget their roots. With a new name, new songs, and a bit more facial hair, they talk about their tour, the current EP and musical influences.

How and when did Men of 20 get together?

We all went to school with each other and began playing music together from a very young age. Paul, John and I began playing in a rock band at the age of 14, but it wasn't until roughly the end of 2007 when we began playing as Animal Beats. Over time then, as we grew older, we felt our music was maturing so we decided on the name change to almost re-brand the band, so to speak.

You guys were one of the top picks for Guinness Amplify this year, how did that make you feel?

It was amazing, of course. We hadn't heard about it until about nearly three weeks before the first set of dates. We had a quiet summer, so we were excited to get back into the swing of gigging! We had been booked for various shows all around the country, so in those four weeks we definitely improved our live set and had an amazing time doing them all.

You have an EP out called Cheap Carnival, tell me about the process of writing and recording this EP.

The EP is a small collaboration of material we had written since the band formed and it took quite some time to lay down the entire recording, with school and college holding us back a bit. For anyone who may know of the band from the early days, they'll know we had certain rawness to our sound. We felt Cheap Carnival had to feature a lot of our older tunes so we could almost move on from that part of our song-writing career and explore a broader sound.

Water to Sand is one of your most popular songs, you guys have reworked it a little bit, was this a conscious effort to make an already great song better?

Water to Sand, for us, is really a special song. We like to think of it as the older child in the family of 'Men of Twenty' material. We spend a lot of time focusing on the younger songs, tweaking them here and there; but we're always keeping an eye over our shoulders, on our eldest. We owe a lot of our success to that one song. It reminds us of our younger selves and we still love playing it to this day. We feel we've done enough to the song over the years; we generally kept to the same format. As they say, "If it ain't broke, don't fix it!"

Have you guys been in the studio recording new material? If so, when are we going to hear these new songs? And are you guys releasing an album?

Well, we're always in the studio anyway. We're very lucky to have access to The Big House Recording Studios, so it's handy for the four of us to lay down demos here and there. We will be back in the

studio, come January, to record a second short EP to give people a taste of our matured sound. After that, who knows - it may be a while before we release an album. It is something we're always discussing.

Who have been your major influences in the past couple of years, musically?

Well, this is where some people may sneer a little, but we have always said Kings of Leon have had a big influence on us. Even from their early days. We have our own little influences here and there; for example, John has always been a huge fan of The National. We were at one time likened to them, so that put a smile on all our faces. Conor has his rock and indie influences, but some people may not know that he's actually a classically trained pianist. So a lot of our piano and keys have that influence - which we love!

You guys have a new single coming out in March and a massive gig at the Button Factory in Dublin. First tell me about the new single and secondly are you excited about the gig in the Button Factory?

We wrote the song just before we went to New York back in 2013, so we're very excited to finally have a professional recording of the song. We decided to have this as our first release of 2015, because we feel it is a nice transition from a lot of the material we have released in the past year which has been mostly heavier stuff e.g. Watching You or Water to Sand. It's quite an intimate song and we had a great time recording it. We spent many more hours on recording this time around, so hopefully we did the song justice! Saying that, spending so much time in studio the past couple of months, we are very excited to start playing again. The Button Factory will be our biggest show to date and certainly the biggest performance since we moved to Dublin. The gig itself is in relation to the Searchlight Production deal we're currently involved in, so we're very thankful to all of the engineers and students who have been helping us with the recording and production of our material. The gig itself is on March 25th and it's FREE IN!! So we're quite eager to get a good few Limerick heads in the door.

What does the future hold for Men of Twenty?

As I mentioned, we'll be doing a single release, come March, which will include a new music video. We'll also be doing a second single release sometime before summer. Most of our time will be spent focusing on the (those) single releases and hopefully doing as many gigs and promotion as possible. Provided all goes well, we'll be doing a few festivals, maybe gigging in some areas we haven't before and generally just writing and demo-ing new material.

Interview with Olivia Chau

