

INTERVIEW: FOX JAW



Fox Jaw, a rock and roll band from Limerick, are celebrating their 10th year together. Ronan Mitchell, Morgan Nolan, Shane Serrano, Manolis Pates, and Kieran J. Sims have a very busy year ahead, with gigs all over the country. It's their first ever performance at Electric Picnic and they go on to play their anniversary show and launch their EP in Dolan's on 17th September. We caught up with band manager Shane Serrano to find out a little bit more.

Tell us a bit about your background, how did you get started?

Morgan and myself used to be in a band years ago, and we would've played the odd few shows with Ronan's old band as well. Our bass player at the time left the band and had moved away.

Ronan's old band was also disbanding at the time, so we got in touch and asked if he would be interested in helping us out with a few shows. After that run of shows he suggested the possibility of starting a new band.

At that point we felt we had exhausted our current projects and were very much open to starting a new band and that's when Fox Jaw Bounty Hunters started, playing our first show in September 2006. There have been a few lineup changes since, with Manolis and Kieran joining us and shortening the name to Fox Jaw in 2014.

We live double lives with our own careers as well as our musical careers. So currently we work in different sectors of the music, film, television, web development and medical sectors - we are a varied bunch!

10 years in the music business is very impressive, especially for a band. What's your secret?

I'm not sure we can say that we have any particular secret as such. We have just been lucky that we have never felt the band go stale. We feel that we are constantly progressing, constantly writing better music and constantly impressing ourselves and we really enjoy it. Nowadays the music industry is very transient, and bands need to make an impact online very fast for them to get anywhere. So I think that makes musicians constantly want to change band names every couple of years in an attempt seem new and make a bigger splash with their music. We feel that has its pros and cons. Sticking it out and the hard slog of bands and musicians doesn't seem to exist so much any more in Ireland. There are only a few bands that started around the same time as us that still exist, and there certainly is a bit of pride in knowing that we are still here, and not going anywhere any time soon.

Where do you get your inspiration for your music?

Musically we draw inspiration from everywhere, a lot of bands from Ireland, the UK and the USA. And as much as we may sound like a rock band from anywhere in the world, at least through our vocals and lyrics it is very important for us to be Irish. We are Irish; there is no need in trying to pretend that we are from somewhere else. So you might find common Irish phrases or references to places in our lyrics.

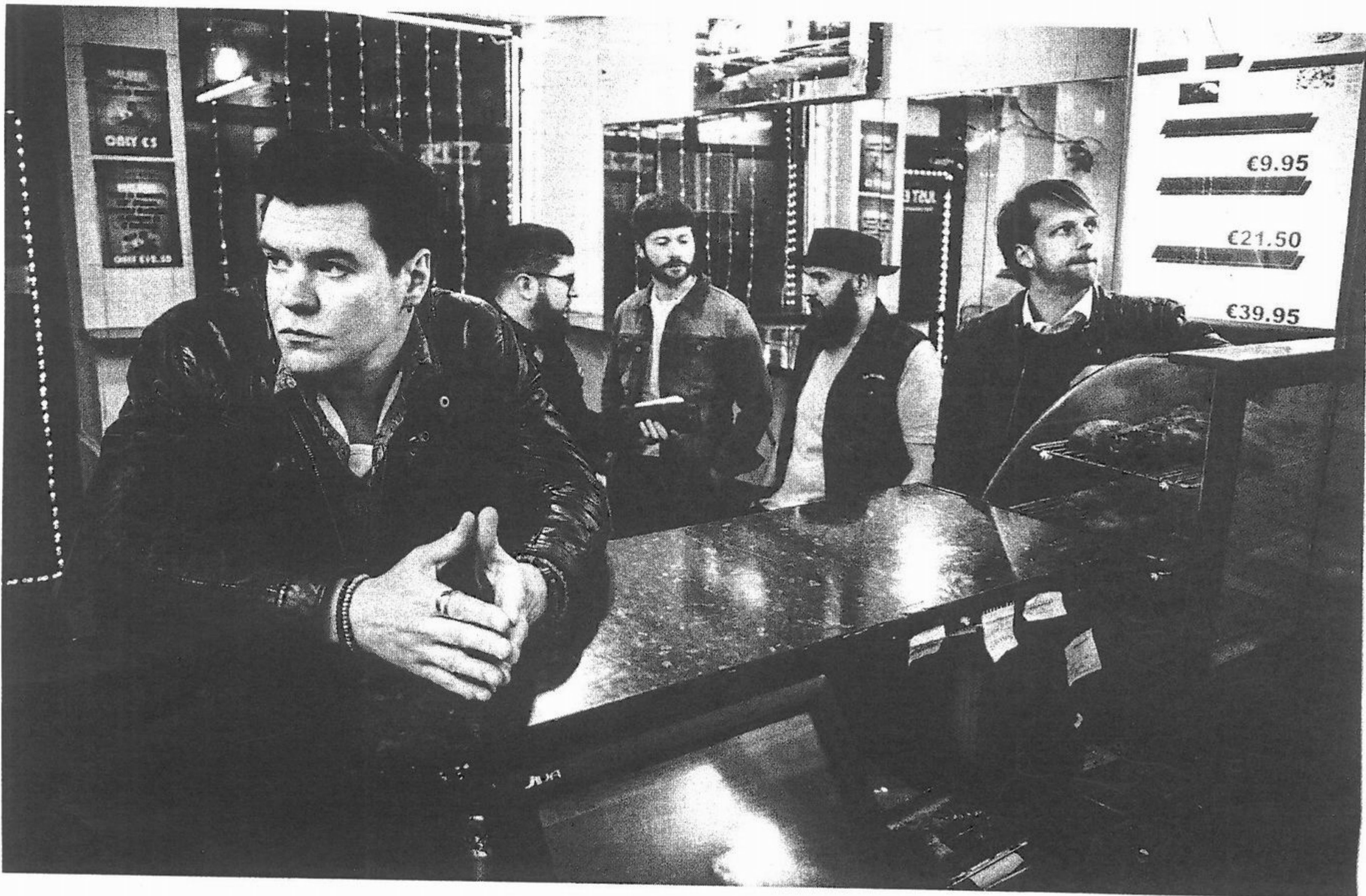


What advice would you give to budding musicians who want to make a career out of their music?

I suppose the most honest advice would be to not expect to make a career in music. Get into music and be the best you can be, write the best songs you can write, and collaborate with people that you truly enjoy spending time with. Put in loads of hard work and expect absolutely nothing in return. It sounds crazy but it's true. Musicians are entrepreneurs. Business entrepreneurs can spend hours upon hours of their lives at what they truly believe in and it doesn't faze them in anyway because it is what they love to do and they believe in it. If you really want to get into music with the possibility of it being your life, you need to get into it and give it your absolute everything, and be prepared a long road ahead. If you really love what you do, then every step along the journey will be enjoyable. If you expect too much, then it can all end in a very bitter way.

How is Electric Picnic different from the other festivals you've played at in Ireland?

Electric Picnic has been one of our favourite festivals for many, many years. It went from being the really cool alternative boutique small-scale festival, to now the biggest festival in Ireland. Strangely in fact, we have played almost every festival in Ireland in our time as a band, but Electric Picnic has always escaped us for one reason or another. This is our first ever time playing at the Picnic, and no better time to come than on our 10-year anniversary.



What is the best venue you've ever played at?

I would have to say it would be Dolan's Warehouse in Limerick. We've played in venues all over Ireland, Europe & North America, from teeny tiny stages to old men in bars, to massive main stages at festivals, but for us we have always felt most comfortable on the warehouse stage. It's the perfect size for us, has a great set up and we feel very much at home there.

You're launching your EP and celebrating your anniversary in Dolan's on 17th September. You've played all over Ireland and the world, how is it different playing in your hometown?

I think it goes back to the same reasoning as to why we are still a band, we still get to play shows all over the place and see new faces every time singing our words back to us, and Limerick is one of those places, only more amplified. Every time we do hometown shows there are more and more people that we have never seen before, and they are definitely some of our favourite shows over the last few years.

What's next for Fox Jaw?

We will have shows all over Ireland in September, and then we are taking a break for the rest of the year and coming back in the spring of 2017 with some new live shows. In the background we will always be constantly busy writing new material and hopefully getting in to the studio in the New Year for a new album.

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