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VELVET CHAINS – A CONVERSATION WITH NILS GOLDSCHMIDT

By RALPH BEAUCHAMP



Nils Goldschmidt is one of the founding members of the audacious **Velvet Chains**. The band is a five piece that hails from Las Vegas. Besides bassist Goldschmidt, the revamped group is comprised of Laurent Cassiano (Guitar), brother Larry Cassiano (Rhythm Guitar), Jason Hope (Drums) and Ro Viper (Lead Vocals). **Velvet Chains'** sound is full of heavy riffs, melodic guitars, soaring vocals and driving rhythms.

Velvet Chains just dropped their first single from their forthcoming new album. "Last Drop" is a powerful track that showcases Viper's strong vocals and the band's outstanding songwriting. In 2021, the band released their debut album entitled *Icarus* which yielded such extraordinary hits as "Tattooed" and "Strangelove". The record also featured a guest appearance from Guns N' Roses guitarist Richard Fortus as well as Jeff Rouse and Mike Squires of Duff Mckagan's Loaded.

AMP was honored to have Nils Goldschmidt sit down for a fun and informative interview. Hope you enjoy.

AMP: Velvet Chains call Las Vegas their home. Do you feel that the city is becoming a major music hub?

NILS: I'm honestly beginning to believe that Vegas is becoming a little brother to L.A. There's a great music community here and awesome venues. You also have all the casinos and arenas. Vegas will never replace L.A. but it's a great alternative

AMP: The band has recently gone through a lineup change. Has that redirected the band's musical perspective in any way?

NILS: Totally. I now feel we have the lineup that can take us where we need to be. I love who we have onboard right now. We've upped our game 100% and our influences are all aligned. Everybody brings something to the table. Everyone knows their role in the band.

We get along great and we are all willing to put in the work necessary to go places. In addition, the band has definitively grown sonically. It's all a plus.

AMP: Your new single, "Last Drop" is a firestorm. How would you describe your music?

NILS: Our first record was like, "Let's put something out there and show them what we got". If you listen to *Icarus*, it sounds like something from the 90's. This time around, we switched things up. We wanted to be faithful to our influences but we also wanted to sound a little more modern and relevant. The band searched for the right producers, video directors and so on. We just dropped our new single, "Last Drop" and we will be releasing one new song each month for the next few months. They're all something you would hear on Octane. In other words, we have modernized our influences.

AMP: What's the band's creative process like?

NILS: It varies. For 80% of the songs I usually sit down with a bottle of whiskey and try to get some inspiration. I'll start putting down my thoughts on paper and start writing lyrics. I open myself up to pen, paper and creativity. Then I get some melodies and ideas in my head. I then reach out to our friend and songwriter, Drew Lawrence, with whom we have been working with for years. He helps put some structure and additional melodies to the tracks. Other songs come from our drummer, Jason, and the other members in the band.

After Drew, we bring in a producer. On "Last Drop" we worked with Kane Churko who has been in the studio with Five Finger Death Punch and Papa Roach. He helps morph the track in order to create a more relevant sound. He brings us some ideas and we go back and forth. The end result is an amazing song. We are happy with the process and people seem to enjoy what they hear.

The other production team we have been working with is Darren and James over at Monster Sound and Picture here in Vegas. It's funny but you can tell the difference between the two producers. With Kane, it's a little more modern and when we work with Monster, it's a little more Velvet Revolver. It's hard and heavy rock. We believe by going back and forth between these two producers, we remain loyal to the sound that we love and we give everyone a little bit of everything.

AMP: What's your favorite song to play live?

NILS: That's a great question! it depends on our mood and where we are playing at. We just got back from Rockfest in Wisconsin. There was 50,000 people all over the place. Playing "Tattooed" off our first record on that stage was killer. When we are playing small clubs and venues, "Last Drop" and our next single "Back On The Train" are awesome. I'm really torn because "Last Drop" is such an intense song while "Back On The Train" is such heavy rock and roll. In reality, I love all our songs.

AMP: Speaking of Rockfest, how was your experience there?

NILS: It was our first festival. It's something we will never forget. We went into this not knowing what to expect. It's a big festival with a lot of big name acts. What the nicest people! Everyone treated us like we were headliners. It was incredible. They were so impressed that a band from Vegas would play their festival. They were all kind and

generous down to the concert goers, promoters, bands and security. We totally loved it. Hopefully, we can play it again next year.

AMP: Your new album is out in October. How excited is the band?

NILS: Dude, we are absolutely stoked. Plus we really enjoy doing the music videos for the songs. We released "Last Drop" two weeks ago. For the video we worked with Brian Cox who filmed Hollywood Undead and Bring Me the Horizon among others. For "Back On The Train" we hooked up with Dean Karr who has that gory touch. He's done Marilyn Manson and Queens of the Stone Age. We already shot another one with Brian Cox. So not only do we give the world a new song, we also put out a short film that's a little crazy. To put it plainly, we are super excited about everything that is currently happening!.

AMP: What's the most trouble you ever been in?

NILS: I probably have to ask my wife. I'm sure there's a long list. I'm probably in trouble right now for something I don't know about. I'm always in trouble. I really want to know what I'm going to fuck up next! She probably has it already written down somewhere. In reality, I love her to death but trouble always seem to know where to find me.

AMP: What is the best piece of advice you've been given by another musician?

NILS: Be It! Become It! Just go out there and be the person you want to be. Then enjoy it. That is when people will see you the way you want them to. I'm becoming a little philosophical and I haven't had any whiskey yet. Ask me again after a few drinks.

AMP: Where do you see the band in two years?

NILS: I dream big. I want to be the band headlining all those huge festivals. We have to tour Europe and South America. We have to play everywhere. In this business you have to think BIG. **Velvet Chains** is ready to rock,