

BABYMETAL, from page 10

tour, only the Fox God knows!" she says, citing the name of their current tour and the mythology that underpins Babymetal's very existence. The Fox God is said to have recruited the girls as heroines of a metal revolution. Their show is often introduced with a video explaining their mission.

With a devout fanbase, they've succeeded. But nevertheless there are some (grumpy old elitists) who deny the ways of the Fox God and Babymetal's inclusion in the world of metal. Last month White Zombie frontman-cum-horror movie director Rob Zombie caused a stir when he fired back at his own fans who posted negative comments on Facebook after he had his picture taken with Babymetal.

Su-Metal says: "First of all, thanks to Rob for being so kind to us. We really feel happy for his support. There may be people who don't like what we do, but that is all fine for us because we just want to continue doing what we believe is the right thing."

Zombie also told fans that the girls had 90 per cent more energy than most of the bands he's played with. Where does it come from? "All the yummy food in the countries we visit and from all our fans and people who come to our shows. We just want to have fun with all who show up at our shows."

Another fan is Judas Priest frontman Rob Halford, with whom they have an upcoming performance. One of the reasons they seem so accepted in a genre dominated by gruff hairy men is the respect they pay their elders.

"We are extremely honoured for this amazing opportunity. I must say I'm nervous but I'm even more excited. Every band is cool and we are happy to be able to share a stage with so many legends."

If they could collaborate with just one of those legends living or dead? "We respect so many of them, how can we choose just one?"

Having formed in 2011, Babymetal has had a niche fanbase in the UK for a while, but success in the West really started in 2014

when their song Gimme

Chocolate!! - a catchy, fast-paced dance-pop number backed by riffs that would make Slipknot or Slayer jealous - went viral. Since then there's been no turning back for the band, who fans categorise in the genre of Kawaii metal.

"It's a fusion of cool metal sounds with cute influences - for example, in our dance and look. We strive to be the only one doing what we do, as our aim is to create a new genre called Babymetal."

The developing maturity of the band - fellow members Moametal and Yuimetal are now 16

and 17 - shows in their new album. The music is less of a distinct layering of J-pop and metal and more a cohesive blend of the two. Plus the riffs have got even heavier.

"We build our songs together with our fans through our live performances. Everything that we learn and absorb through our world tours is reflected onto our songs, for sure."

With Western success comes a dilemma for some. Many foreign bands end up singing in English to reach a wider audience, but others like German band Rammstein, Download headliners on the Friday night, stick to their native tongue and still achieve great success. It seems Babymetal has no plans to change.

"We made an English version of The One, because that song is about getting everyone to come together through our music and we thought that English would be the best to reach out to all our fans all over the world. We have no idea if we will make more English songs in the future but we take pride in the fact that we are from Japan and the Japanese language is very important to us."

Success doesn't seem to be going to their heads either. "There are so many musicians out there who are amazing in what they do so it's not only us," says Su-Metal with characteristic diplomacy. "All we do is believe in our work and our music, and strive to bring the best music and the best performance to everyone."

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