

## Jake Bugg: One Man and His Guitar

Over the last 12 months, Jake Bugg's career has exploded. [Hatti Linnell](#) speaks to the Brit-nominated artist to find out just why he hates One Direction so much

Tuesday 5 March 2013

To say that Brit-nominee Jake Bugg's rise to fame has been rapid would be the understatement of this century. Scouted by the prestigious Mercury Records in summer 2011 after appearing on the BBC Introducing Stage at Glastonbury, his career has since been an unstoppable force.



Considering this, I was apprehensive about meeting Jake: he's certainly among the five or six artists each year who appear to be the next big thing. These artists are often seriously over-hyped to the point that they can only be severely disappointing and disappear into oblivion or become well-loved and make a career out of selling critically-acclaimed records, or, at least, a critically-acclaimed debut album. In fact, the only new artists recently to have received his level media attention are Lana Del Rey and Emeli Sandé, both of whom have gone on to play sell-out arena tours, as Jake is currently in the process of doing. Judging from this, he'll soon belong to the latter.

Jake's date in Leeds is the third of a month-long tour. "It's a good laugh, I guess. There are those little moments that keep you going and it's wicked", he says excitedly when I ask him about his feelings regarding the forthcoming dates. He seems quite at ease, making me a cup of tea and having a quick cigarette before we sit on the sofas in his tour bus. In person, he didn't seem to be the arrogant reborn version of Liam Gallagher – an image many journalists have portrayed him as in their work. This would've been easy for him to do, considering the high level of media coverage both he and his music have had in such a short period of time, but I find him modest and quiet-mannered, yet apparently unfazed by his newfound fame: "It's been brilliant, it's all I know and all that I want to do. As long as I can play music and live a happy life then that makes me happy. I don't really pay attention to it or read press or anything like that, so I just hope I can write my songs and that people will enjoy listening to them."

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Born in Nottingham in 1994, Jake grew up on a council estate in Clifton, and the influence of his childhood is evident in a few of his songs: 'Trouble Town', 'Seen It All' and 'Two Fingers' to name a few. Acknowledging this, Jake tells me that "a lot of the songs are about my experiences", before digressing further: "I think it's good to draw on those experiences and the things you've seen or maybe heard". Having begun to realise his musical potential at the age of 12 when his uncle showed him his first guitar chords, Jake's passion for the instrument was instantly evident. "It's still a hobby, it's what I love doing and it's fun. My hobby is my job but with that in mind it's a fine line. For half of it you've got to think it's what you love doing and what you enjoy but the other half is that it's your job and you've got to take it seriously and have fun at the same time."

One of the main things that's misplaced about the nature of media attention on Jake is that it is predominantly directed towards making comparisons with his influences; it's almost impossible to find an article about him which doesn't mention Bob Dylan or Noel Gallagher. In fact, many have described Jake's sound as merely a rehashed combination of the two. This view has support up to a point: the chorus of 'Two Fingers', the lyrics of 'Lightning Bolt' and the majority of 'Taste It' have points where comparisons with Oasis could be made. Having said that, it's difficult to understand the Bob Dylan comparisons - their writing styles differ, and vocally there are very few similarities. Ultimately, though, his music possesses a lot of original sound and definitely sets itself apart from a lot of music around today. When I mention this to him, Jake replies: "I think a lot of people would say the opposite" with regards to his sound being original. Perhaps soon people will stop defining Jake by his influences, and allow him the freedom to become his own artist.



When asked about such various achievements as his number one album, Jake seems nostalgic, describing the success of the eponymous 2012 release as "a miracle", but appears less excited regarding his unsuccessful Brit nomination which he didn't go on to take. "I think it's brilliant—obviously to be nominated you need to be in the top forty, so that's down to my fans and I can't thank them enough for that. But at the same time, awards don't do all that for me," with the classic nonchalance and implied understanding that he is more concerned with the quality of his music as opposed to public recognition. A respectable, yet grounded, stance.

But stories like his recent claims that One Direction are "terrible" and his involvement with a member of the ever-growing Harry Styles ex-club, Cara Delevingne, speak otherwise. Niall Horan of the X-Factor group responded with the expected intelligent wit (and understanding of basic English grammar) via Twitter: "Really buggs me that artists we're fans of, flip on us in the press!", causing all the twelve-year-old girls' keyboards across the land to go into overdrive. One Direction aren't the only victims: he also, controversially, recently lashed out at Mumford & Sons—a risky move considering he shares a large extent of his fanbase with the "posh farmers with banjos". Funny as these stories are, though, the question of what's trying to be achieved here has to be asked.

However, these contentious statements have been rare, and are often taken out of context and greatly exaggerated. When I ask him about other musicians he's a fan of, Jake's response is that he "really likes Michael Kiwanuka", going on to state how "I do listen to a lot of contemporary music, or I try to. A lot of it, I don't think, personally, is very good." Not that it's particularly revolutionary to dislike One Direction, but

it goes to show that, usually, when an opinion is asked for, an honest one is provided.

Of course, no interview would be complete without pressing for details of what the future holds. "Well I have this tour coming up, then a European tour, then I'll probably go to America, then a load of festivals." One of Jake's final comments gave insight into just why he finds himself disillusioned with a lot of modern music: "I love song writing, it's my favourite bit of what I do."

He's only 18 years old, but Jake's already wary of maintain a certain quality to his material. "I don't want to rush it, but at the same time, I don't want to keep people waiting. Better get writing some tunes... I would like to get a second record out." No doubt, he's had quite an impact and is continuing to leave his own individual stamp on the British music scene. Jake's next major challenge is to break America, a milestone that Mumford and One Direction have both passed. Certainly, his explosion onto the scene and platinum-selling debut album are good indicators for the name Jake Bugg to only become bigger and bigger.



## 2 comments

Ben

6 Mar '13 at 8:32 pm

The fact that people are raving about this guy as if he's in any way 'different' or 'good' illustrates perfectly the tragic state of the UK's 'popular music' culture at this time. Embarrassing.

[Report](#)

Andrew

29 Jun '15 at 11:19 pm

The fact that Americans like One Direction is an even worse indictment of American 'popular music' culture.

[Report](#)

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