



JAKE GAUNT

Studied: Musicians Pathway playing bass.

Graduated: 2022

Jake loves writing and reading – every day. In conversation, he’s informed, funny and intelligent, with band references and author recommendations rolling off his tongue. If you had to ask, he would say that the most important thing he learned at ACM was that “you get out what you put into it” and the thing he’s learnt since is “You gotta keep going”.

On Jake's first day at ACM, he met drummer, Evie, and they've been best friends ever since, forming the band Nihilist, "our baby". When Evie left, she hand-picked drummer Bryce, also from ACM. To this day not a band decision goes by without running it by Evie.

"We have a contingent," that's what we call it, he offers up with a very happy face.

Because he read in an article that The Pixies got their band name from a random opening of a dictionary, Jake tried it too and got 'nihilist'. "Mmmm," he mused. "This is interesting".

"I was around 15 at the time and had just discovered punk rock and post-punk and from there started reading Albert Camus's *The Stranger*. I love that book so much, he says, offering up a detailed and animated explanation of the novel."

The current single, *Krazed*, will put you straight – in case you're thinking Nihilists are of EMO persuasion. Written by guitarist Paul, in this instance.

"*Krazed* was written before *Nihilist* was even a thing," Jake explains. "As soon as Evie and I picked our jaws up off the floor we played it eight times in a row. "

The single, along with two more songs (for your delight later in the year) were recorded at NAM studios in Wiltshire. Jake informs us that it's where Katie Tunstall recorded her first album, *Killing Joke* their 2012 album, and Royal Blood did their drums.

"We felt like naughty school kids. We spent three days going absolutely mad, it was brilliant."

So nihilists can have fun?

“I don’t see the word nihilist as a negative word,” he adds. “If nothing matters then why worry about.”

This is the opposite attitude of Nihilist fans. Copies of their first single Anxiety Generation sell for £20 on eBay. There’s a father-and-son combo who never misses a show. Since their first gig in Bath, where Jake and Paul (guitarist) are based, they arrive to discover a line of people waiting to get in. Within seconds of the band’s opening song, the room erupts. It’s always like that at their live shows.

“We perform every show like we’re going to break up. That’s how we’ve always wanted to play. All bets are off. You don’t know what to expect.

It’s loud and unforgiving.

“Geordie Walker of Killing Joke said, ‘God walks through the room when we start playing’, that’s how we’ve always felt. We’ve always been like we want it to be the most intense thing that people have seen.”

Barely taking a breath: “We attack our instruments with every fibre in our being, we will not stop until we feel like we have grasped almost every single person’s attention. Because of the way I play, this middle finger (*we get the middle finger waved at us with innocent glee*) is always flapping about in the wind, so after every gig it will be cut up, injured, bruised, bloodied... Sometimes, we are confrontational with each other. And obviously, we run off stage and stuff like that. We love doing things like that. Like all my bandmates, I have a full-time job, to fund the band, and to pay my bills and rent and sometimes that can feed into the creativity, and it can be a way out too - for all the anger and frustration. We must get ‘out there’ it’s a hunger not motivated by ambition.”

And as an aside: “I didn't talk until I was three, and my mom apparently would cry, and say to my grandma, ‘He’s not talking. He's not talking. What do I do?’ And she replied: ‘Honestly love, you’ll be telling him to shut up for the rest of your life soon enough.’ And as it turns out I never stop talking. I've never learned when to shut my mouth.”

This is not altogether true – it’s because of the enthusiasm, surely not a downside: stories, facts and ideas are there to share. At ACM Jake scored highly for collaboration skills – knowing when to sit back and when to take the lead.

“I am pleased about that because for me it’s a very important skill, all the best bass players in the world, the ones I admire, have that skill. They know when to sit down, and shut up, and they know when to kind of just go a bit mad. A bit like Mike Mills from REM or John was in Fleetwood, Mac, and Melissa Auf der Maur, formerly bassist with Hole and Smashing Pumpkins.

“And if you don’t know the band Hole, I can’t help you,” he declares to the world with aplomb.

Find out more [here](#)