

## Interview with Bass from Djevara

GR: Quick and easy stuff first. Favourite cheese? (&copy; Gonzo and Zane Lowe)

Bass: Uh...probably feta, though I'm not really a big cheese fan. GR: Fantasy festival line-up? (5 bands, dead people and reformations permitted)

Bass: Tool, Rage Against The Machine, Therapy?, Kyuss, Nirvana. I'm finding it hard not to justify Soundgarden actually - I may have to leave Therapy? (only because it's fantasy). &nbsp; GR: Plus then you could have Audioslave play a secret set in the car park during Kyuss.

Bass: Oh yeah! GR: Recommend a website.

Bass: [www.amnesty.org](http://www.amnesty.org) (That's Amnesty International's website). If it was still around I probably would have said "AskJesus.com" because that was hilarious. GR: Have you seen Jesus dress-up?

Bass: Er... no? GR: If I can find the link I'll show you ([www.jesusdressup.com](http://www.jesusdressup.com) if anyone cares). What's in your CD player at the moment?

Bass: Nine Inch Nails - And All That Could Have Been (LIVE) (disc 1) GR: OK, Chevy Chase or Bill Murray?

Bass: Bill GR: Bill Hicks or Eddie Izzard?

Bass: Ooh. Shit...that's hard. I have to say Eddie at the moment (because I have heard a lot more than Hicks). GR: Elvis or the Beatles?

Bass: Beatles GR: Mark Thomas or Michael Moore?

Bass: Michael Moore GR: Controversial. Chinese or Indian?

Bass: Chinese GR: OK, longer stuff now. You better appreciate these- I wasted a good few hours at work thinking them up. How many different things are you involved in (O&B, Genin...)?

Bass: HAHA! Hmmm- Djevara, Orange & Blue Promotions, and Genin are my babies, but I'm also helping out with Subba Cultcha ([www.subba-cultcha.com](http://www.subba-cultcha.com)) Of course, my twin brother is also in a band called The Sour Grape Project, which I have to stand in for sometimes when he can't be arsed. GR: Oh yeah, I caught the set at Rootes Radical at Warwick University. (They do a great cover of "Killing in the Name" if you're interested. Djevara that is. I mean when they're the Sour Grape Project. Which they're not really. Oh, forget it)

Bass: Thanks for the review by the way. You'll be pleased to know we got the 1st 100 booklets reprinted - at great cost - and they are sitting here ready to be sent out - aren't we dedicated to our fans? GR: HAHA! OK, should probably ask, what happened to releasing the album on Copro / Casket Music?

Bass: Hmmm. Well, to cut a long story short, in the end we felt we outgrew the offer- Basically, we got to the point where we thought "Well, we've got the capital and I've the experience and determination... Why give away our product?" There were some other differences - issues about producers and style that made us think twice about that offer. (To clarify- the deal we were offered was a self-finance deal through Casket, with possibility of being considered for bigger deal with Copro later). For one thing, they were very keen for us to use their studios and their recommended producers... who are all very good at what they do, but we didn't think were right for us&hellip; GR: ...So you thought why not just self finance ourselves?

Bass: Yes, exactly... if we were paying for everything anyway, what was the point of giving it away? Of course, it was more complex because you have to get your own distro and PR it yourselves... but actually we thought we might have an advantage there too in some ways. We didn't want to sound exactly like their stable of nu-metal acts - cold, clean, clinical ... but identical. GR: Good old cookie cutter acts- so much easier to market. In that case, what do you think of the "Breaking Point" series on MTV?

Bass: I've never seen it! To be honest, I watch very little TV apart from the news, some documentaries and some comedies. GR: I don't recommend it. Its... soul-destroying, to see that even in the so-called alternative genre it's still about looks (when the fucking Portobella single "Covered in Punk" comes out, you'll understand).

Bass: To be honest, it's always been a fallacy that "alternative" can be "mainstream". The only surprise is that people don't realise this much is obvious. GR: Still on the subject of labels, are the charity donations going to be something for all Genin releases?

Bass: That's a good question...I would probably say, "not directly". Genin operates very much like a co-op, so the bands mostly own their own records, etc. Djevara is kind of a special case in some ways because we officially "own" the label. But even in the case of our own record the charity contributions come from Djevara's portion of income, not that which belongs to fans/supporters who invested in it, so this was a decision by Djevara because it is consistent with what Djevara is about. Almost all income from the other releases goes direct to the bands, and any that Genin gets is mostly for admin and costs. Having said that, it is consistent with our ideals to put money aside for further contributions. Phew - maybe an overlong answer! Does that make sense? GR: Just about. Quick one whilst I think about it- is the new website ever going to go up?

Bass: HAHA! I'd like to know the answer to that myself! Best is to email our web-site designer and ask him! GR: Onto the music I suppose- first, do women play bass better than men?

Bass: HAHAHA! Well, I can't make a general statement, but Kiara certainly gives a lot of her male counterparts a run for their money. What I WILL say though is that rock music is far too stale- male, middle-class, European... I think it is refreshing to be able to play in a band with some different characteristics - a feminine touch is definitely welcome, and quite intriguing. GR: Surely that's male, middle-class, AMERICAN...

Bass: I was thinking about that...I probably meant "white" because even American may imply all sorts of people who are not really represented in the rock scene. GR: Do you think there's too much emphasis on across the pond, rather than homegrown talent? (evidence - Download, probably about 75% American bands)

Bass: To some extent... but I also think that the argument is skewed. People tend to forget that- 1) America is much bigger (population), 2) America

has a much, much larger percentage audience for rock music and hence promotional/development budgets are much bigger, 3) Even these bands are a small fraction of the total number of American bands. I think it all makes sense when you look at the numbers, BUT- I do think we have to take a lot of the blame ourselves; there is very little investment and interest in emerging heavy rock acts in the UK. The perspective that sees rock as "exclusively kid's music" has been very destructive"... I think this encourages short-term marketing and stuff. GR: Perhaps not- with any luck, these kids will grow up and take over America.

Bass: Well, that's what we hoped about the post-war generation and the hippies (who are now in charge). Anyway, I think the "kid's music" idea is British. Awful rock acts like Nickelback and Staind have huge followings in the states. GR: And over here unfortunately. Off on a tangent for a bit there. Now where was I? Oh yeah... Since music journalists are lazy, there's always a need to compare and pigeonhole, and you always seem to get a few RATM comparisons. Do you find these detrimental, since people might think "its been done before", or flattering?

Bass: Both, in some ways...Obviously it is an influence and so it can help new people to find the band, etc, but it has also been harmful. I think there's been an exaggeration- we have many more influences and actually musically we don't usually sound much like RATM, but the big caricature elements of similarity are there so comparisons are inevitable (multi-cultural political rock band, cross-over rock, vocal similarities, etc). I've become philosophical, I don't think one should be arrogant- it's only a debut album from a young band, and maybe as main songwriter I've been guilty of over-influence. It's quite interesting that when Djevara first started we got more Nirvana/Offspring comparisons but as we took in more influences lazy journos have felt forced to take the easy "catch-all" of RATM. Since everybody says it, there must be something in it I guess \*sigh\* GR: Maybe RATM were also influenced by loads of bands and styles, so comparisons to them are easy?

Bass: Yes, definitely. To be honest, I think one problem is that very few bands sound like RATM, So if you do - it's kind of really obvious. Compare it to a new Emo band... they sound like EVERYONE. Ironically, this can make them seem more original. There is a peculiarly British scepticism about bands that seem to sound too much like one particular popular band - BUSH are a good example, selling millions in the states but hated in the UK. In the end, my answer is that I write and play music which I like, which moves me, and if it happens to sound a lot like whoever, so be it! GR: Any plans for new material? God Is White dealt pretty much with race and culture throughout. Any plans for ballads or instrumental prog rock epics?

Bass: HAHAA! Well, I do agree GIW had a very clear theme and sound, but I've no intention of repeating it... "GIW 2" is not going to happen ever. There are a lot of sides of Djevara that are also absent from that record for whatever reason, mostly the more "extreme" ends (overtly punk tracks like "Shivers" or metal like "PMS"). With the new line-up there seems to be more room for slightly more experimental, dark avenues to be explored. GR: Do you ever worry that some fucktard (for want of a better word) is going to miss the irony in the title?

Bass: It's already happened loads. GR: Any scary tales?

Bass: Claire Sturgess from Xfm refused to play the record because she would not support "nazi skinhead bands". GR: Has she been told yet?

Bass: I dunno. Geoff regularly gets asked why he's in a racist band when he tells them the title. I have to "explain" it almost every gig to one or two worried people, wondering if their tenner is gonna end up in the coffers of the NF, BNP or whoever. I've been advised that commercially it was a bit of a suicide title, but, to be honest, that's my weakness - art before commercialism every time. Having said that, I nearly called it "Is God White?" instead, which may convey the meaning better. We were advised that tracks like "God Is White", "The Niggers Will Eliminate Themselves" and "The Final Solution" were unlikely to make the Radio 1 playlist! GR: Who needs them anyway?

Bass: Quite. GR: OK, last few. How's the online petition to get you guys to the Reading Festival going?

Bass: HAHA! I have no idea ... to be honest, it was started by an (over) enthusiastic fan. I don't really think it was ever anything realistic, but we gave him our blessing to go with it if he wanted. The only problem is - I'm sure people think we're the ones who organised it and so we look like dicks all over the net going "sign our petition!"

GR: Maybe in a few years?

Bass: If the band is still around, yeah, maybe. I don't really know how they choose these things... I think it is quite hard to get in the right circles, especially for people as viciously independent as ourselves. GR: How long do you see this life of rockstar excess lasting, and what do you think you're going to do afterwards? Bass: Answer to both is: dunno. The only thing I am sure of is this: as soon as it starts feeling false or parody, then I'm outta here. I try to put 100% in to every gig, and I expect my band to do the same - it's our music and our expression, and the only time I really feel free but if it ever loses that, then there'll be no point... and there's no way I can predict when that might be.

## About the Author

Michael Freeman is a fan of Djevara.