

STARCRAWLER

BIO

If you’ve been listless and laid low by apathy, there’s only one prescription – more Starcrawler!

The dynamic young L.A.-bred quartet has been wiping the jaded looks off audiences across their hometown since making their live debut back in 2016, dragging the unsuspecting into their universe with hooks that sink into the synapses and refuse to let go – and enough electricity to light up the entire Sunset Strip.

The jolts they deliver come from a number of directions, none more direct than singer Arrow de Wilde, whose penchant for intense, sometimes assaultive, physicality is matched by a full-throated hard rock wail that tightropes between glam-rock sensuality and full-metal-jacket menace.

Arrow de Wilde and drummer Austin Smith laid the foundation of Starcrawler after a chance meeting revealed a shared aesthetic. They’d put the next piece into place a few months later when Arrow noticed a promising-looking recruit ambling down the hall of the performing arts high-school they both attended – carrying a tuba case.

Enter Henri Cash.

“I was trying to get this big awkward case down the stairs, and she approached me and said, ‘you look like you play guitar,’” recalls the youngest member of the quartet. “We started jamming and coming up with songs pretty quickly. I’m really good at writing riffs [And I think] we mesh well because there’s something that each player can do uniquely.”

It took a few months to mesh completely, with the addition of bassist Tim Franco, a LA native who entered the fold with interests as varied as classic rock, bossa nova and off-the-charts indie rock. They ended up playing their first shows not long after – packing fans and friends into shoebox-sized clubs, and packing massive energy into their first single, “Ants,” a blink-and-you-miss-it blast that Elton John aired on his Beats One show.

“We all like songs to be short and to the point, songs that really grab people right away, then get it over with,” says Arrow, a towering blonde with a penchant for outrageous stage antics. “But that doesn’t mean we don’t pay attention to the way they’re structured. I love Led Zeppelin, and they were obviously able to do long songs without losing people – which I know we’re capable of doing.”

They prove that throughout the Ryan Adams-produced Starcrawler, from the strutting “Cool Kids” (a smartass rejoinder to anyone who’d put themselves in that category) to the anthemic “Let Her Be,” which wraps four minutes of curled-lip confrontation and pulsing riffs into a package that would sound perfect blasting from a muscle car on the 101.

“I’d say Ozzy was my biggest influence early on,” says Arrow, by way of explaining Starcrawler’s one foot in balls-to-the-wall rock. “I first heard his music in eighth grade, and maybe it was the timing, my age, where I was at the time, but I got obsessed. I’ve listened to a lot of other singers, and I’m sure some of them have left a mark, but everyone has their idol, and for me, I’d say it has to be Ozzy.”

The envelope gets pushed in different directions, too, often by Cash, whose skittery playing can recall Jack White (an admitted influence) one moment and vintage Captain Beef heart the next.  “Chicken Woman” pushes forward inexorably, a mass of sonic lava that brings with it an atmosphere of doom underscored by Franco’s enveloping bass riff. On the other end of the speedometer, “Love’s Gone Again” zooms by like something out of the Road Runner’s universe, a blur of action and a cloud of dust.

“Recording live definitely helped us playing as we normally do on stage, the energy, the attitude,” says Austin. “Working with Ryan Adams made us feel very comfortable, so it sounds near identical to the record when we play live. It’s not like we have to replicate anything, it just felt like a very natural process.”

Aside from the stage blood and hospital gowns – one of many guises favoured by Arrow, who considers herself as much a visual artist as a performer – everything about Starcrawler feels visceral, organic, sprung whole from the terrain of their native Los Angeles. The heart of that city, at the core of the album, has never beat more fiercely than it does on” I Love L.A.,” a paean that provides a rougher-edged, equally loving bookend to Randy Newman’s song of the same name.

“There’s really no place like L.A.,” says Arrow. “It’s fascinating. It’s one of the darkest places you can imagine, and at the same time, it’s sparkly and glamorous and enticing. I think that’s what Starcrawler is all about capturing.”

They capture that, along with the universal vibe of being young enough to take risks, smart enough to know how to turn those risks into rewards and tough enough to come out of any mess still looking great.

Ryan Adams, a kindred spirit who’s been doing the same for ages, figured that out even before he took them into his studio, telling the world in the simplest possible terms, “Starcrawler are so fucking insanely good. Soon they will rule this galaxy.”