

Rules of a rock god

Noel Gallagher may have slowed down after 15 years in the Best Band in the World, but his ego is as huge as ever, writes SALLY BROWNE

WANT to know the Ten Commandments of Rock? I can't reveal them to you unless you're a rock star. Oh, all right. Here are a few:

- Thou must wear shades at all times (especially indoors).
- Thou must own at least one black leather jacket.
- Thou must have a taste for the finest wines and the hardest drugs.

These were given to me by that learned older brother in rock, Oasis guitarist-songwriter-everything-man Noel Gallagher, 39.

It's what he tells young bands when they meet him for the first time, he says. "What, when they come up shaking, going, 'You're, like, the coolest man in the history of all the world.' I just go, [adopts super-cool, calm, God-like voice] I know. Stop shaking. What can I do for you? And they go, 'Please tell us how to be better rock stars!'"

"And I say, 'Well, you have to follow the 10 commandments I've set out for myself.' And they go, 'Wow, you're like a Jedi!' And I say, 'Well, yes I am.'"

Australian Oasis fans will share space with the Cool One when he performs at Brisbane's Tivoli with Oasis rhythm guitarist Gem Archer this week.

After more than a decade leading one of the UK's biggest bands, Gallagher can indeed claim Jedi status. He has weathered the storms caused by his tempestuous younger brother, Liam, as well as various musical feuds and the ups and downs of a fickle industry. Somehow, he's managed to stay down-to-earth and funny. British music mag *NME* dubbed him "the wisest man in rock".

He's on the phone to promote Oasis's new (whisper it) "best of". But didn't Noel say he wasn't going to release one until the band split? What's the story? Oasis are jumping ship from record label SonyBMG. Sony decided to release a "best of" and the band had the choice to be involved or not. So Noel got involved.

He chose the 18 tracks on the collection, entitled *Stop the Clocks*, which begins with *Rock 'n' Roll Star* and ends with *Don't Look Back in Anger*. The other members didn't get a say.

"Well, they're all my songs! I can't have (bassist) Andy Bell telling me that *Rocking Chair* is better than f---ing *Half a World Away*."

What about Liam, the band's singer?

"F--- him. He's an idiot," he says, almost to order.

Liam recently turned 34. Noel didn't get him a gift. "We don't have that kind of a relationship, I'm not even interested in how old he is. 'Cos I know deep down he's still acting like a f---ing 14-year-old."

The highlight of his career, Noel says, has been meeting his own idols, such as Paul Weller, Neil Young, Morrissey and Johnny Marr. In his 15 years in the band he's learned "nothing and everything".

"When you start off, it's all magic. To be in a band and 'in the music scene, man', it's all magic. I guess you learn cynicism as you go along. You learn a lot of things that you thought were true, they're not true at all."

So what's a day in the life of a Jedi-cum-rock star like?

"I haven't got like a fireman's pole running down through my house; I don't descend from the heavens into my kitchen in a catsuit and eat breakfast and then go maraud around London and act like a rock star. Underneath it all, we're kind of all the same. I get up in the morning, I eat breakfast. I watch the news. I smoke some cigarettes. I have some tea and the phone will start ringing in the office and they'll tell me what I've got to do today, and if I don't have to do anything, I just go and annoy my girlfriend."

I tell him that Oasis have been nominated for the British *Q* Magazine Award for Best Act in the World Today. He says: "Well, what can I say? We've won that award quite a few times, so the novelty has worn off."

There will be more Oasis albums. But he's in no rush. He has slowed down, but his ego is as big as ever.

"It was pretty f---ing big to start with, I've got to say. And I have mellowed a great deal and it's still huge."

Would you expect anything less from the Best Band in the World Today? You might like to know that Oasis did win the award.

Noel Gallagher plays the Tivoli, Fortitude Valley, on Tuesday. *Stop the Clocks* is out now.



Wise guy: Oasis guitarist/songwriter Noel Gallagher

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