

# STEREOPHONICS

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## **Kelly Jones - Singer / Guitar**

*"Jones's voice is a killer instrument too, simultaneously raw and mellow, while his lyrics nail the disdain, boredom and affection inherent in small-town life."* Q Magazine

## **Stuart Cable - Drums**

*"On tunes such as 'Not Up To You' his drum patterns breathe life into the song and momentum into the show."* Times

## **Richard Jones - Bass Guitar**

*"...just like any other bass player - hanging back and looking cool."* Richard defines his role.

Stereophonics signed to the then nascent V2 in the summer of '96 and good things have not stopped happening since then, but this story of stories goes way back. Kelly Jones, Richard Jones (no relation) and Stuart Cable have known each other since infancy and have played together since their early teens, rehearsing in Stuart's bedroom, in Cwmaman, South Wales. A luckless few years hugging the M4 back and forth to London under the moniker Tragic Love Company came to an end with a swift name change (taken from the brand name of Stuart's Granny's gramophone) and a few date on their doorstep.

"When we started doing interviews, everybody thought we wanted to escape because we didn't like where we came from. That's completely not the case. Opportunities are crap, I've got to be honest, there's not a lot there. But for peace of mind, knowing you're safe in your house, having a good time and a close community environment where everybody talks to you, it's brilliant." Kelly Jones

Kelly and Richard were born a few yards and a few days away from each other, Stuart arrived a couple of years earlier. The three's earliest musical experiences were shaped by the record collections of their elder brothers; taking in Creedence, The Kinks, Led Zeppelin, AC/DC, Stevie Wonder and gigs on the working men's circuit. Kelly commented "We hated it at the time, but we learnt a lot - if you didn't entertain people in working men's clubs, you got thrown off the stage." With a history of music coursing through the Kelly Jones family (former market trader, one-time boxer and budding scriptwriter) it was probably inevitable that he would end up singing and playing guitar. Stuart (worked on a building site, delivered school dinners) had sung in other local bands before taking the stool in Stereophonics. Ever the pragmatist, Richard (scaffolder, coalman, electrician) took up the bass because everyone else had guitars. Kelly got him in the band because he was "the coolest fucker in the village".

*"They've taken the apparently parochial, provincial and mundane inside-page headlines in the local paper and turned them into massive, rampant, breathless, bog-eyed anthems."* NME

*"Kelly Jones writes with an uncluttered humanity which never fails to strike an emotional chord with his audience."* Vox

Cover versions came first and then originals inspired by Kelly's surroundings but seemingly summoned from a rich vein of rock'n'roll storytelling - *"Some of these songs might be the stuff of ancient murder ballads, deep and mysterious."* NME. These songs included 'A Thousand Trees', a song about loyalty testing, village opinion-splitting drama which entered the charts at No 22 in August '97, the suicide note of 'Local Boy In The Photograph' - No 14 February '98, and the twisted vision of a wedding reception (Too Many Sandwiches). In marrying these dark visions to the most ravishing guitar pop music, Kelly created something unique and captivating, personal yet universal. 'Word Gets Around' their debut album (released in August '97, entered the charts at No 6) is dominated by stories of rumour, desire, whispers, murder and suicide plus of course, memorable blasts of thrilling tunes.

*"For a debut album, this is scarily self-assured, rich in details from rock's ragged tapestry but performed with an unbridled energy that implied they've just invented it. Openers 'A Thousand Trees' and 'Looks Like Chaplin' reveal R&B throb, soul ache, American alt-rock thrash and in guitarist Kelly Jone's voice, hollering metal."* Q Magazine

*"I never knew their fans idolised them so much till I saw them at Cardiff Castle and I saw 10,000 people singing along to obscure B-sides. Kelly could have just stopped singing."* Darren Broome, BBC Wales

1998 was a good year for Stereophonics, it began with the most votes in the Melody Maker Best New Band Poll, winning the same category at the Brit Awards in February and claimed a hat-trick in August when they won the Best New Band award at the Kerrang Awards. In November the band entertained the crowd for the Wales v South Africa Rugby match at Wembley Stadium. In April '98 they made a documentary film following their first few months on the road which won a Welsh BAFTA and they made it a double in '99 with a film of the Cardiff Castle show. Add to this the hits, the sold out gigs and tours, the new countries and a brilliant second album, Performance & Cocktails. 1998 was a big year, 1999 was even bigger - what about 2000? The band is writing new material for their forthcoming album and will be touring later in the year...

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