

COVER STORY

LUCKY 13

After a seemingly interminable wait of 13 years, **TOOL** return this month with **FEAR INOCULUM**, their most challenging, epic work yet. And with it, predictably, comes a lot of questions. **DANNY CAREY** and **JUSTIN CHANCELLOR** separate the fact from the fiction...

WORDS: JAMES HICKIE PHOTOS: THOMAS QUINN

And I ask you something?" intersects Justin Chancellor in his broad, unmistakably British accent. "How long should the album have taken?"

The question Kerrang! has asked of Tool's bassist, on behalf of fans worldwide, is why the world

has been waiting for Fear Inoculum quite as long as it has. The band's forthcoming fifth album is, without question, worth that wait—as growing as it is densely constructed, enveloping as it is cryptic, and primal as it is beautiful. In short, then, it's the most Tool album the band have ever produced. At almost 90 minutes it's far from short, though, and almost too much to process on first listen, offering no easy entry points or answers. It's also an album somewhat out of time because of the stock it puts in the album format, and asks much of listeners in an age when less demanding options are a slip button away.

It's also an album that has taken 13 years to arrive as the follow-up to 2001's *10,000 Days*.

It's clear from this conversation that Fear Inoculum has been made by four men whose separate talents and experiences continue to coalesce into something magical, despite any differences they might have as people. As Justin and drummer Danny Carey, for instance, if there's been a chat about not leaving it so long to make a record next time, and you get two very different replies.

"There isn't, but I don't think he needs to because I'm not getting any younger," says Danny in a drawl as he looks at his left hand. "The drums need to be attacked in a certain manner for it to sound like Tool, so it's important to have to happen much quicker on the next one. I hope we do another."

"I hope we don't," murmurs Justin.

"What's that?" laughs the drummer. Welcome to an audience with one of the world's most serious bands—which, as it abounds, isn't very serious at all. Set in a loft studio in their native Los Angeles, the duo behave like a pair of stoners shooting the shit in their rehearsal—cackling bene, cracking wise, and, especially in Justin's case, heckling one another at any opportunity.

"We toured for five or six years after the release of *10,000 Days*, and we're not a band that writes while we're on the road," says Danny, tackling the question of the album's epic gestation. "And then we didn't want to see each other for a little while."

"Quite a long while," adds Justin. "We were trying to come up with something and enjoy

being around each other, and sometimes it fell apart. We went home and said, 'I don't want to see you until we play that festival!'"

"And we went through some lawsuits," adds Danny (Tool were sued over artwork credits, which provoked into a multi-million-dollar action when the band were subsequently sued by their insurers over technicalities in the case. They countersued and eventually won.) "And

Jim Hens on Company Lot originally built by Charlie Chaplin, not only for his brilliant drum room but its rich musical history, which has seen it play host to The Rolling Stones and The Police. He's more comfortable letting his kit do the talking than his mouth, which, he suggests, is the cause of frustration at drum clinics where he's required to communicate via both. He is, however, patient with all lines of enquiry and as fastidious with his answers as his playing.

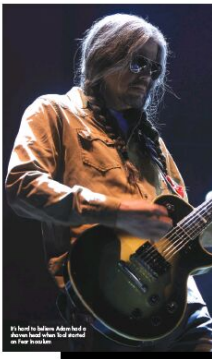
Danny is so on top of his craft, in fact, that on Fear Inoculum's instrumental track, Chocolate Chip Trip, he nailed his fast, complicated part in one take while everyone else was out at lunch. And while that tale might sound tongue-in-cheek, it serves two serious functions. Firstly, it's his ode to his hero Billy Cobham, the Panamanian-American jazz drummer who worked with Miles Davis, and whose playing changed the course of the young Danny's life. Secondly, along with Fear Inoculum's two other instrumental, *La Goin Inoculant* (a purely arranged, ambient, and Modingbeat) and *Modingbeat* (a strange closer that sounds like its been recorded in an aviary of distressed birds), it provides a sonic palette cleaner between epic tracks. Danny acknowledges ages are "big bites to chew."

"By putting some tidbits on them, it gives us all the opportunity to do something in between to catch our breath before we go into another 13-minute extravaganza," the drummer suggests. "There's a lot of heavy shit on this record, so I wanted it to be the same tempo as the rest of it."

"All these other bands are willing to go to do this or that, but our only concern is where we meet," adds Danny of what sets Tool apart. "When we get in that room, where it takes us, that's where it goes. Four years ago when we were looking at this, I wanted to try to do a record that was one giant song."

"Isn't that what we did?" says Englishman Justin, who's the exact opposite to Danny creatively. A composer at heart, he and guitarist Adam Jones were forever tinkering with Fear Inoculum's nine tracks—a process which, says Danny, would drive their other bandmates "fucking crazy." Justin still jokingly refers to himself as "the new guy" despite being part of Tool for 24 of their 29 years. He likes talking about music to "dancing about architecture," tending to take the piss to mitigate his discomfort with this part of the process. So when Danny says that responses to Descending and Inincubate, the two new tracks debuted on their most recent tour had "renewed his faith," Justin adds, "in Jesus Christ." When the drummer suggests the new 10-minute-plus songs don't feel like their duration, the bassist pops up to say they seem more like half an hour.

This subversive sense of humor undoubtedly bonded Justin and Tool frontman



It's hard to believe Adam had a shaven head when he started on Fear Inoculum

"NO-ONE TELLS US WHAT TO DO BECAUSE WE'RE SO HARD ON EACH OTHER"

DANNY CAREY

then we started working. We spent a good, solid five years on it, like on all the other Tool records. I wish I could say it's difficult 13 years, because there's nothing wrong with that."

Danny Carey carries the laid-back air of a gentle giant, which made his earlier dropping of the C-bomb that bit more explosive. A musician first and foremost, he chose to record his parts for Fear Inoculum at Henson Recording Studios, part of the



Justin was still getting the hang of camera lenses

