

# KASABIAN

Lead singer Tom Meighan takes a break from promoting the band's brilliant third album to tell Football Punk about his love for Leicester City...

**So Tom, why Leicester City?**

"I started watching Leicester when I was eight or nine-years old. You're born into it. All the band support Leicester, apart from one rogue Leeds fan..."

**Do you remember your first game?**

"It was around 1989, and we beat Port Vale 4-0. Tommy Wright scored, Colin Gordon got one as well. Strange result because we were usually crap under David Pleat! More often than not we'd just fold."

**Is it true you did work experience at Filbert Street?**

"Yes, in the club shop, putting price tags on clothing and stuff. I remember making tea for Martin O'Neill and taking it into his office."

**I've heard rumours Martin's a bit of a fan...**

"He called me up on New Year's Eve - I couldn't believe it! He just rang to wish us all the best for the year."

**How did this relationship with O'Neill start? Surely you didn't make that much of an impression as a tea-boy...?**

"We played a gig at Birmingham NEC and he came along. His daughter is a fan and we got her into one of our shows in America. He's an amazing character. I've never met anyone quite like him; he always looks after me and Serge. He said if I was a footballer he'd sign me!"

**But unless my memory's playing tricks, he wasn't that popular in his early days at Leicester...**

"No, but I did make a point of telling him that when we were at Sheffield United and losing 2-0 and the fans were booing him, I wasn't at the game. I couldn't have been - I had a Saturday job in a fruit shop at the time! I think he believes me. Luckily I got sacked from the fruit shop the week after so I could start going again! But he's up there with Sir Alex Ferguson and Brian Clough for me - he should be knighted."

**What about his successor at Leicester, Peter Taylor?**

"Don't get me started. He spends fucking 25 million pounds and next thing you know we're relegated. It was horrendous going to watch. We've had it really bad for seven years since then. Last year I was at Stoke away on the last day of the season when we got relegated, and it was heartbreaking."

**You must be a happier man this season?**

"It's been fantastic. Everyone has stood up and been counted. It's onwards and upwards now."

**How many times have you been this season?**

"It's obviously difficult because we've been working on the album, but I've been to eight home games and five away. Apart from losing at Peterborough (March 28) we've held it together really well. I think what Nigel Pearson has done is fabulous, but for me getting back

into the Championship is nothing to celebrate because we shouldn't have been down in League One in the first place."

**Is Serge (Pizzorno - guitar & vocals) the best player in the band? I'm judging it on THAT volley on Soccer Am...**

"People keep going on about that fucking bastard goal he scored! I'm sick of hearing about it. But no, we all ain't bad, but Sergio's pretty fucking good. He was having trials at Forest and stuff."

**You've got a decent left peg on you so I hear...**

"I first kicked a ball when I was three. My old man was screaming to my mum, 'Pat, he's got a left foot, he's got a left foot!' He was well excited, but then he saw me play and it was, 'fucking hell I don't believe it, he's dancing on the football pitch, clapping his hands!' He thought I was gonna be special until then."

**Is it true you asked Gary Lineker to manage Leicester when you were a bit worse for wear?**

"Yeah, I asked him, but he just said no and scurried off. He hated it. Mind you, I was hammered and I stunk of whatever the fuck I'd been drinking. He wasn't in the best mood anyway, because he's a mardy fucker at the best of times. You can quote me on that - Gary Lineker's a mardy arse."

**So if Mr Lineker's not your favourite ever Leicester City player, then who is?**

"Frank Worthington. My dad said he was amazing, so that'll do for me. Otherwise, from my era, I'd say Muzzy (Izzet) is one of the best midfielders we've ever had. Neil Lennon was great, Steve Walsh too."

**And who's the worst?**

"I don't even want to name them mate; it's sickening some of the players we had under Peter Taylor."

**What's the greatest footballing moment you've witnessed at first hand?**

"Steve Walsh's winner at Wembley in the play-off final against Derby (1994). The rivalry's obviously massive between the clubs, so a brilliant moment."

**And what's your funniest moment?**

"I went onto the Leicester pitch at half time to do a cross bar challenge. I had my big white shoes on and I slipped right on my arse, head over heels - bang! They kept replaying it on Soccer AM."

**You've got a sell-out summer tour with Oasis to look forward to. Do you talk football with Liam and Noel?**

"I spoke to Liam this afternoon funnily enough. Yeah, course we do, we all love our football. We get on great - we're like part of a clan."

**And your third studio album, *The West Rider Pauper Lunatic Asylum*, hits the shelves on June 8. Are you happy with it?**

"Yeah, we've had a really comfortable break; we've been off 13 or 14 months after five years on the road. We needed to chill out a bit, make a new record in our own time, and the results are amazing."



Words: Richard Lenton ■ Photo: Hamish Brown