UK blue-eyed soul band MAMAS GUN broke out in 2009 with their lovely 'Routes To Riches' long player. From that set, 'Pots Of Gold' remains a classic soft soul ballad. The band are all set to release a new album in May and though busy making preparations for the launch and a mini promotional tour, the five some – leader Andy Platts, alongside Terry Lewis, Chris Boot, Cam Dawson and Dave Oliver met up with SJF to share their excitement. But, of course, first things first – we needed some back ground and band history....

TERRY: We formed back in the days of MySpace in 2007. At the time it provided a great platform for musicians to connect and share their music and that's how we all got to know each other. We borrowed our band name from an Eryka Badu album, because it sounded good. Our original line up was Andy, Dave, Jack, Rex and me -Terry. We got together based on our desire to play Andy's songs and the first album, 'Routes to Riches' was the product of that. We
recorded the album on very small budget initially and then we were signed to Decca/Universal and suddenly things felt very exciting and we were able to finish the album in bucket list style, adding a 14 piece string section and dream team mixing by Jack Joseph Puig at Ocean Way in LA and mastering from Bob Ludwig. Sadly our major label ride was cut short when Decca hit financial problems before the album was even released and since then we've been an independent act on our own label Candelion. By the time we were writing our 3rd album Rex was replaced with Cam on bass and then Chris came onboard to replace drummer Jack in 2016 and we began work on our 4th. Right now in 2018 we feel we are our strongest musically and personally. Our latest album 'Golden Days' is the album we've always wanted to make but somehow always got diverted into other musical segues.

I believe Andy studied at LIPA (the Liverpool Performing Arts Academy set up by Paul McCartney)... What was that like?

ANDY: LIPA for me was a right-place-right-time situation. Partying hard, experimentation - all pars for the course. The fact that I was doing it with musicians from around the globe only enriched the experience. I spent a lot of time being crap at some stuff and excelling at others. But it all served to sharpen my interest in music making and song writing to the point of obsession. Obsession (self flagellation) is how you get better at things. Well it works for me anyway. The very best thing about LIPA was meeting the woman who became my wife. We've been together 18 years and we're still kids.
Did being in Liverpool help/hinder/influence your music. There's a great music buzz and a fabulous creative heritage on the city... Phil Redmond calls it one of the world's great centres of creativity.

ANDY: The Beatles are King. They're my desert island disc band. Having that as a historic background was just plain cool, and you felt it. Back in 97-00 before the city got pumped full of new money, it had a small footprint. The venues and backstreets were the arteries on which we all thrived. I love Liverpool and Scousers are amongst the warmest and deepest souls on the planet.

Now the new album... you're fourth, I think. For those unfamiliar with Mamas Gun... how would you sell it... what's its USP?

CHRIS: 'Golden Days' is the first self-produced record for Mamas Gun. It has taken where MG have been with previous records to feel confident enough to do what we did on Golden Days. For various reasons, when Jack Pollitt left the band in 2015 and I joined in early 2016, inevitably it was a very emotional time. Joining a band that had been established for nearly a decade (at that time) takes some real opening up on a personal level. I have been a fan of Mamas Gun since the 'Routes to Riches' days and I produce as well as hit things so it was clear to me where I personally would have loved to have seen this new album steer, musically speaking. Over the course of the following months from my joining, the five of us collaborated and started to formulate a direction that resonated on all levels and felt was most honest. Andy is a very perceptive person and I believe his writing during this period encompassed everything that was happening emotionally during that time, which perfectly lent itself to the production style we were adopting. We began recording in a similar situation to majority of bands out there - with minimal budget and minimal resources, in a room no bigger than 30 sq metres. We enjoyed working with those limitations, embracing them and letting them enforce the direction and decision making - We'd been referencing a lot of records that were done to tape - committing to the imperfections and learning to love them - this whole ethos worked well sonically and with our budget and a tight deadline that we were working to deliver to.

OK why go for 'Golden Days' as the title track....

CAM: We feel the name 'Golden Days' really encapsulates the process of making this album. It's just been a joy from start to finish... we've been having a seriously great time!
Does that tune define your sound... or is there a better sonic definition of the "Mamas Gun sound" on the album?

CAM: There's definitely quite a lot on that tune that represents the album's sonic qualities. 'Golden Days' has a dark vibe and there are a few tracks on the record that are a bit sunnier. We've definitely gone for more of a classic 60s/70s Soul thing on this record, as it's the music the 5 of us truly connect on. We went into this recording process with the idea of making the album that we want to hear, that you can put right back to the beginning after it's finished. We aren't trying to please anyone but ourselves on this one.

Your PR people say that 'On The Wire' is "Brexit retorting"... what's that all about... I thought it was about decision making in general....

CHRIS: 'On the Wire' was written during the Brexit referendum, in a general sense it is about decision making so it's great that you got that from it, but as far as where Andy's head was at during the writing of that particular song, he was very driven by the... situation... that the UK was delving into during that time."

'Diamond In The Bell Jar' is possibly the most oblique, sombre track.... tell us about that one...

ANDY: There was a line in Sylvia Plaith's 'The Bell Jar' which sat festering in my head for a couple of days before a song idea blossomed. The song wrote itself somewhere between Junction 27 and the Dartford Crossing on the M25 on my way to a rehearsal. I played the sketch I had in my head to the band. We all jumped on it, gave it a harmonically-fragrant middle 8 and arranged it very quickly. I have Sylvia Plaith and her "oblique and sombre" novel to thank for that little gem of an idea which started the ball rolling, hence the title 'Diamond In The Bell Jar'. It's unlike anything else that I've written and is one of my favourites on the album.
"MAMAS GUN; GOLDEN DAYS is released on May 18th...
full review here @ SJF very soon."