

ACROSS the UNIVERSE

IT'S not often you come across a local, unsigned band who can fill pages of newspapers and magazines globally.

But for one Kirkcaldy three-piece this is the norm. They have had massive coverage everywhere from LA to Russia (Russian MTV, to be exact). In Scotland, they have had interviews in national tabloids, while in Kazakhstan national newspapers have been charting their every move.

And, on the eve of one of the most important gigs they will play, Universal You make it clear - they are working from the top up, and without the usual plethora of local gigs unsigned bands have under their belts, it's not easy.

The band - Paul, Gulzhan and Mark - were shot into the national, and international, limelight almost as soon as they started writing songs. Paul and Gulzhan's story, now well versed by dozens of journalists, attracted a lot of interest.

Paul, an oil worker, met Gulzhan in her home country of Kazakhstan, where they were both working in the oil industry. Gulzhan was a translator for the company, and now puts her excellent English to good use in Kirkcaldy, where Paul still works in the industry, and Gulzhan spends her time immersed in music and looking after their toddler.

After starting out as a band called Kinky Durakee the name was changed to Universal You and the press came calling.

"We know we are different," said Paul. "In comparison to a lot of bands who are just starting out, we are older.

"We are not indie, and we're not a more mature Oasis or anything like that, and because it's difficult to place us, it makes it more difficult to book us with other local bands.

"It would be great to get more local gigs, but it doesn't always work."

Despite not having the chance to always perform locally, Paul admits things are going really well.

Performing in front of 12,000 people is not something most unsigned bands would have the opportunity to do. Yet Universal You found themselves in that situation while in Kazakhstan, where they were blown away by the number of fans who turned up to listen to them.

And now the dream is to replicate that in Scotland.

"It was pretty exciting," Paul continued. "We never expected that many people to be there. There are some amazing musicians in Kazakhstan - and better people than my guitar skills!

"At the moment, we have a really important gig tomorrow (Friday) organised by international music group JAR.



"They have watched us progress from two previous gigs, so hopefully they will take on our music, sign and promote us. That would be fantastic."

Friday's gig, which feature a number of specially-chosen, must-see bands performing in front of record bosses, and in return be given the chance to showcase for a headline slot at the Maldives Breakout Festival, win a recording and publishing deal.

Paul added: "We use computers a lot now as

part of our rhythm section, so it has changed the sound a bit, but works really well. We all have the same ideas and the music has evolved because of that.

"We have this massive contrast now because Mark is a real rock guitarist, and that, combined with the other parts of the band all comes together.

"We now just hope that tomorrow night goes well and the A & R can see how we are progressing."

Universal You are at Studio 24, Edinburgh, tomorrow (Friday) from 6 p.m. for Industry Breakout Showcase. See www.universalyou.co.uk for more.