Since the release of their self-titled EP in 2018, Sweden’s Gaupa - which translates as ‘lynx’ in English - have continued to pave new ground within the stoner and psychedelic scene, building their own unique cosmos defined by enchanting lyrical surrealism and mind-altering sound.

In 2020, their debut album Feberdröm pushed them into the international spotlight with its outstanding blend of progressive metal, doom, stoner and folk, steered by the entrancing vocal of frontwoman Emma Näslund. Just one year later, they found their label home at Nuclear Blast Records.

Following the arrival of 2022’s Myriad, with the track Exoskeleton reaching over a million streams on Spotify (the EP’s Febersvan now has over 4 million), Gaupa went on to deliver countless unforgettable performances with appearances at festivals including Sweden Rock, Hellfest, Wacken, Mystic and Desertfest, as well as on tours with underground heavyweights such as Uncle Acid And The Deadbeats, Blood Ceremony and Graveyard.

Now, they’ve reached a turning point in their journey. After former co- guitarist Daniel Nygren left in 2024 to focus on family life, Gaupa found themselves at a standstill, having to relearn how to orchestrate the band without one of its core members. In the summer, they began writing their first full offering in three years, a mini album titled FYR, a play on words with multiple translations meaning “lighthouse”, “to set something on fire” as well as the number “four” in Swedish.

The four-track mini album marks Gaupa’s fourth release, as well as the start of their next chapter as a four-piece band. However, despite their newly slimmed-down line-up, FYR is anything but slight; with the help of new mixing engineer Karl Daniel Lidén, it serves as their heaviest material to date. “It’s a lot dirtier than before, the sound is so aggressive,” explains guitarist David Rosberg. “Our previous releases were kind of slick, you could hear everything, very bright. But now it's come to be way heavier.”

As ever, Gaupa’s songwriting is spellbindingly intricate. FYR is introduced by mesmerising bagpipes with Lion’s Thorn, its tripped-out, spacious verses guiding listeners through a steady stream of psychedelia, before waves of hard stoner riffs crash down and tear minds in two. The mini album’s first single Heavy Lord produces one of the most hypnotic choruses of 2025 alongside an unexpectedly tongue-in-cheek music video, and third track Ten Of Twelve dazzles with astounding guitar work and monstrously weighty percussion. Closer Elastic Sleep is a genre-flipping masterpiece, as enthralling psych rock swells into crests of ripping djent metal and cosmic doom.

Showcasing more of Näslund’s playfully perplexing and surreal lyricism, FYR loosely explores the concept of time, “what is real, what is not, and what is a dream”. Though largely inspired by The Word for World Is Forest by Ursula K. Le Guin, a science fiction novel that focuses on themes of anti-colonialism and environmentalism, Näslund believes that listeners should discover their own meaning behind her dreamlike poetry. “You need to go through the lyrics, and you need to think, what does it mean to you? I want people to use their fantasy and imagination.”

As well as turning to the natural landscapes of their homeland of Falun for inspiration, FYR additionally revisits Gaupa’s fascination with animals. Explaining her process behind Ten Of Twelve, she says: “I wear feathers a lot of the times when we play live, and the rooster is the 10th animal in the Chinese zodiac. People used to think it was lucky to let a rooster into your kitchen, so I thought it was fun just to think of them as a bad luck rooster instead of a lucky charm.”

Recorded in the autumn of 2024 in Svenska Grammofonstudion, Göteborg and Estethuset studios, Falun, Gaupa describe FYR as a “patchwork of parts”, where each member has an equal part to play. “That’s the fun of making music, the collaboration”, says Rosberg.

The band also share production duties, preferring to keep everything within their own camp.

Later this year, Gaupa will continue to cement themselves as live extraordinaires, topping festival bills such as Stoomfest in London, as well as playing more dates across Europe.

By Liz Scarlett