

# POINT BLANK TEESIDE:

**Edition #2**

**Mouses**

**The Rezillos**

**Sorry Escalator**



## EDITOR:

### Point Blank:

*adj.*

1. aimed or fired from close range.
2. straightforward, explicit.

*adv.*

3. with direct aim.
4. without hesitation or deliberation.

Dear readers,

First up welcome to the second edition of POINT BLANK TEESSIDE and thanks for all the positive (and negative haha!) feedback we received following #1. The general consensus was that folk appreciated it and have enjoyed having something different to read.

The eagle-eyed will notice an extra four pages have been added to this one which has allowed for a couple more features and bits and pieces. Hopefully 24 pages will now become standard, or we can even look to increase it for the next edition.

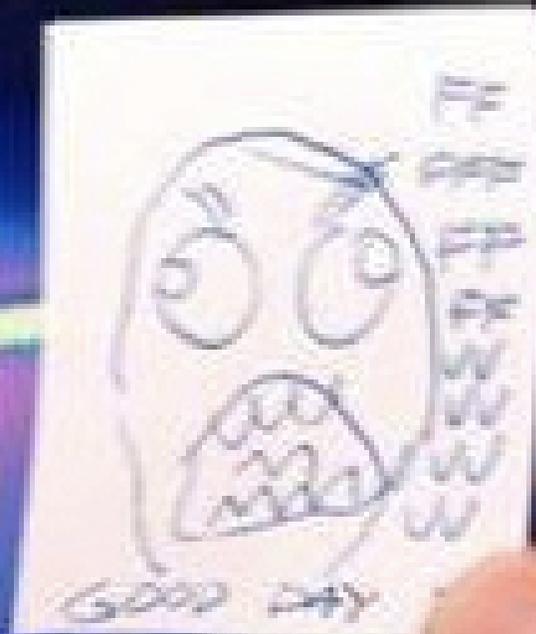
A huge thanks to everyone who has helped out in whatever way. Loads of folk have been kind enough to let me use their pictures (one of the downsides of still having a Nokia 5310 is that the photos I take are absolutely shocking) and quite a few new writers have chipped in with reviews, thoughts and scribbings.

A particular shout out goes to Mal Lythe who has let me nick a few gig reviews from his 'Dig That Groove' music blog. Without these, the extra four pages wouldn't have been possible. Be sure to check out his site and facebook page.

Happy reading,

*Steve Blank*

*All the views expressed in this fanzine are those of the individual writer and do not represent everybody involved.*



## CONCERT:

### The Godfathers

Westgarth 09/01/17

For various reasons, it'd been a few weeks since I'd been out to a gig, so what better way to get back into the swing of things than with a night out in the company of rock n roll legends The Godfathers.

With snow outside and a pint of Tetely's Imperial in hand, the night was already off to a cracking start and The Strawberry Mynde were first up. Last time I saw them at Musiclounge I wasn't that impressed, but fair play, they were much better this time around. Perhaps it was the crowd, perhaps the atmosphere, perhaps the beer, I dunno. But I enjoyed their cool brand of dark mod. Heavily bass-driven and hypnotic, there were a few decent tunes tucked in there and not a bad band to start off proceedings.

Whilst shielding from the snow on a fag break, I was approached by one poor sod who asked me what time the The Likkor Men were due on to start. After establishing the fact that The Likkor Men were playing down the road at TSOne, he informed me he had just forked out 15 quid to get inside the Westgarth and looked pretty down-trodden indeed. But fair play to promoter Steve Harland who refunded him a tenner (for the two bands left) so he could toddle off on his merry way. An easy mistake to make I suppose.

Longtime-Westgarth faves Johnny Seven were next to plug in and were as ferocious as you'd expect from the off.

'Can't Escape Rock'n'Roll' is a belter of a song which has you humming away in the toilets and 'Where Did All The Skinheads Go', a nostalgic ode to ska and slade which got the crowd onside. In between the bullet-punk numbers which came thick and fast, there were a couple of slower garage-inspired groovers too such as 'LSD' which you can check out

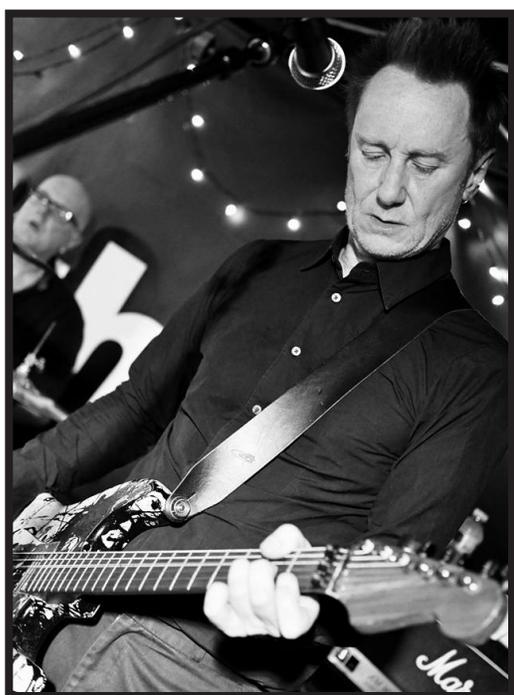
on their facebook. Final tune 'Hang Loose' is also worthy of a mention.

According to the band '...Skinheads' is the only song that still gets played from when it formed in 1978. But while the band dates back to the original days of punk, there was a new addition to the group tonight, Mike, who stood in for guitarist Johnny who was off somewhere snowboarding. And a grand job he did too. Thumbs up to all involved for an energetic and enjoyable set.

But to be fair there was really only one band the crowd turned out to see tonight and it didn't take them long to get on stage. First tune 'Cause I Said So' had everyone's attention and provided a quality high-fuelled groove which was present for the rest of the evening.

"Apparently we haven't played Middlesbrough in over 30 years," Peter Coyne informed the audience. And it certainly felt like some of those present had waited that long to see them.

There were a few newbies thrown in towards the beginning of the set with current single 'You Don't Love Me' going down well and B-side 'Some Reaction' actually sounding better than a lot of the more well-known songs. The single was taken from the new album which, according to Coyne, was tonight available in Middlesbrough - "the first place it could be bought on planet earth".



Quite a strange little thought if you stop to consider it.

'Walking Talking Johnny Cash Blues' was dedicated to Steve Harland (who quite rightly got a good round of applause) and was a storming country-inspired romper of a tune. Perhaps my favourite of the night. 'You Don't Love Me' was definitely another stand out track - slightly slower and more melodic than some of the other picks. The lads clearly had a good time performing and the crowd a good time watching. A cracking turnout (115 tickets sold!) and an all-round success. Here's hoping it's not another 30 years till the next bash.

S.B.



Photos: Steve White

## INTERVIEW:

# SORRY ESCALATOR

**Two weeks ago I received a message from a Mr Ryan David Welsh informing me that his band was releasing a new single. After doing a bit of research and checking out their EP (which is cracking by the way), I got back in touch with a few questions...**

**Sorry Escalator originally started as a solo project. Can you tell me how it blossomed into a full band?**

When we first started out we were a two piece myself and Sean Graham (on drums), we used to play out of a pub, in a disused barn in Lazenby. Then in 2013 we began tracking demos in Middlesbrough with Matthew Brown. Matt invited Shaun Lockwood to try overdubbing some guitar, and Alex Weatherley turned up on bass duties.

But because of all the beer and cold weather nothing got released of those sessions. But Lockwood totally had something that complimented my sound so he joined as lead guitarist, we tried out a few bass players but it's funny how we found the latest addition to the band Jamie Hogg of Edinburgh.

We were tracking the Sorry Escalator self titled EP in the studio we frequent, Jar Mills studios in Leeds. Jamie was working at the studio as a sound tech, and half way through our recording session he asked to

join. It seems as though things are finalised now, which has definitely been breathing new life into our songwriting ever since.

**You're based both in Leeds and Middlesbrough. How does that work?**

Well ever since the addition we have been swapping really sometimes we rehearse in Middlesbrough at Lorne Street Studios and other weeks we'll rehearse at Jar but we've been focusing on songwriting as of late.

**How have things changed since releasing your EP in June?**

We had a kind of delayed response, but none of us are really mad on PR we're making plans for our next release so we can do it a lot more "professionally".

We seem to be doing better online in Europe, or Canada, its pretty amazing how the internet can reach people and some people can hear your music. We've been played on BBC Radio Introducing North West, and my favourite has to be the fan made video on YouTube. The song 'Sissy Spacek' was the second song I had written for this band.

**Always good to see a band record a proper 'EP' with more than three songs (which in my opinion should be classed as a single). How did you choose to record the EP?**

I couldn't agree more with you pointing that one, an EP is an extended play so it should play out like one. It shouldn't playback like a 12 inch release, if it's a single release cool, they're good to have.

**The songs have a great 'wall of sound' feel to them in parts. Who are your main musical influences?**

I'm pretty sure we're all influenced by the underground 1980's to mid 1990's record label stuff. Creation, 4AD, Factory, Domino, Warp. I think we all really love our music, I think principally speaking post-punk had a massive influence on me. The band is kind of focused on all those elements of underground guitar music, and trying to bring it back in an original way. We're influenced by bands such My Bloody Valentine, Dinosaur Jr. The Jesus and Mary Chain and Sonic Youth the same way we're influenced by Brian Eno, Wire or Elliott Smith and Grouper.

SRY  
ESC



Live photos: Hana Marie Photography

**I read you are 'influenced by everything both ugly and beautiful about life and sound'. Care to elaborate a little more on that?**

I don't know maybe we were out of it that night, it was a while ago. I think some of the most discordant and gritty sounds can elevate music to this static audible experience, I think life's like that a lot of the time. I don't know how I managed to compare the two like!

**You say you're looking to record an album now. How are the plans for that going?**

Well we're in the process of writing a new set of songs, but we're hopefully going to release our new single called 'Generation Winter' in February. It's kind of a precursor to the full release.

**Have you played many gigs in the NE? Anywhere you've particularly enjoyed? If so, can I ask why.**

We have always enjoyed playing Middlesbrough, we played at Mima (Middlesbrough Institute for Modern Art) during Middlesbrough live at 2014, we played Stockton Weekender but only as a two piece but we all really want to play more in Stockton-on-Tees. We've played The House of Blah Blah, a lot of good events have been put on there this last year. The



Opal Tapes event with Basic House and Patricia was amazing.

We have always enjoyed playing The Westgarth Social Club, some great bands play there nights put on by Stephen Harland and PUS. Also the more art/experimental nights by Feed and Auxiliary they're pretty amazing.

Overall though we don't want to bore people, we're going to start playing more shows to coincide with the new release.

**Anything else you'd like to add?**

No just, keep up the good work with this publication!

S.B.



**Additional EP info:**

"More interesting details regarding the EP; it was recorded at the end of May in just 10 hours and was recorded in one room with 90% of it being done live. Only the bass and vocals were overdubbed.

I wrote all the words and the songs are mostly about dependency, loss, addiction and frustration."

## CONCERT:

### Echolines

Musiclounge 07/01/17

Dragging people out to the pub wasn't a problem (my mate's grand return from his five week break in Thailand and all that) but dragging them down to the concert was. So first up, a couple of pre-gig ales in The Looking Glass to welcome him home, and then I'd head off to the gig with an aim to meet up with the rest of the crew at a later hour.

The Looking Glass is a great addition to the local pub scene and the board games are a class little feature which, along with the decor and music, have helped give the location a real 'homely' feel. Definitely a place to stick your head into for a look. But, I wasn't here to pull out Jenga blocks or get drawn into squabbles about chess tactics, so with that attitude in mind, I made my way down to Musiclounge to see who was on.

Choosing a spot wasn't difficult so I grabbed a table at the back just in time to see Sound Reaction hop on stage. The Jam / Wellar influences were clearly there but it would be unfair to file them solely under the 'mod' bracket. Traces of rock and indie filled in the gaps and the boys done good. A decent little set with one standout being 'Punk Rock Radio' which, I believe, was penned by the bass player. There's hope for us four-stringers yet.

One of the cool things about Musiclounge is that the bands are always found to be hanging around and mingling with those that have parted with their hard-earned. So I had a good natter with Echolines front man Charlie who informed me about the band's upcoming 'CostaSilencio' EP launch gig in Newcastle. That's probably been and gone by the time this zine makes it into the shops / pub toilets across Teesside, but you can find out details about it online. The lads were clearly excited about their recent recording and that came across as they plugged in and started to entertain.

Musically you can see where Echolines are coming from but their



sound does vary from one tune to the next. Solid riffs reminiscent of a heavier Killers with an obvious nod to your classic indie sound. On more than one occasion guitarist Richard played tribute to John Squire and there were a number of great jangly indie songs such as 'Mrs James' and 'The Last Coyote'. 'New Horizon' and 'Red Lights' were belting songs and I defy anyone to listen to 'Rather Have You' and not still be singing the backing harmonies in the taxi home five hours later.

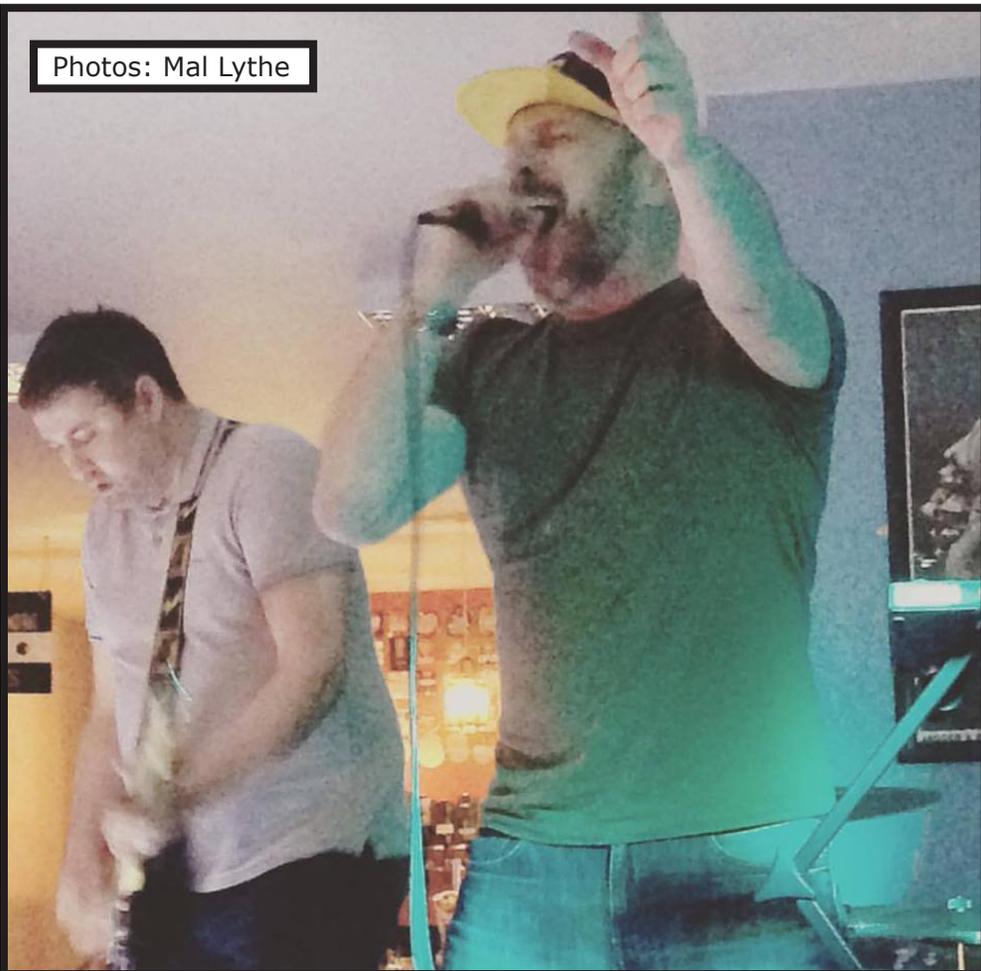
'Make You Mine' was apparently the first song the lads wrote together and the hard edge was quite different from their softer sound. The rhythm section worked well together and at times it was hard to take your eyes off Jon as he worked his magic on bass. Peter Hook influence anyone?

Unfortunately it wasn't the biggest of crowds but credit to the band who gave it their all despite this - it really came across and you could see they were enjoying themselves.

A bit of POINT BLANK TEESSIDE trivia for the geeks - the boys actually made it into the first edition, purely by accident. A photo of them on stage (under the name The 30 Year Men) can be found accompanying the Musiclounge interview. So there you go.

S.B.

Photos: Mal Lythe



# SOUND OF THE UNDERGROUND:

## Syd, Stockton and Success.

Several years ago I was inspired to write something about Syd Barrett, former front man of Pink Floyd. It was my first full length screen play which involved months of research that spanned the whole era from the late 60s through to the early 70s.

Discovering the story behind the first gig at the then dilapidated Roundhouse in October 1966 (hailed as the first ever 'electronic rave' in history), the sell-out poetry reading event at the Albert Hall and the huge 14 hour Technicolour Dream (arguably the pinnacle of the 'Summer of Love') at the Alexandra Palace was a real inspiration. From starting out in tiny back street venues with only a handful in the crowd, to within months filling the largest venue in London demonstrated the power of the movement that was taking place. I was fortunate enough to have several conversations with Jon 'Hoppy' Hopkins, the man who led the charge and organised the underground events during those years – one of the most inspirational people I have met. An activist in every sense of the word, not only did he organise the above events but also created the 'International Times' magazine that informed the scene of happenings and events that were taking place.

They weren't just 'gigs' that were organised, they were happenings. The bands were the backdrop, the sound-



track to the event. I was brought up on rock music, but being fortunate enough to attend Manchester University in the 90s my tastes changed and I regularly attended rave events – Megadogs, Herbal Teas Parties etc. where the DJ and band were the backdrop, the people were the event. Similarly Pink Floyd were the house band for the underground scene in the 60s playing long drawn out improvisations whilst hiding behind a psychedelic light show.

The underground in the 60s was short lived. I remember the words of stand-up comedian Daniel Kitson; 'The more people know about something, the shitter it becomes. Like Coldplay for example.' Bands get fa-

mous and it's a different game, no matter how it's sold.

I attended Sonic Union in Stockton last year and the vibe felt to me akin to how it must have been in those dilapidated venues in London, and I realised what an amazing creative scene there actually is in the North East. Watching Girl Sweat and the Temple Pleasure Ritual band made me think of the raw energy of the Crazy World of Arthur Brown (a Whitby lad as it happens – who was the inspiration for many to follow including Alice Cooper).

Syd Barrett was at the fore of the scene at the time. His story was all about creative exploration versus worldly success, and where the line is drawn. As soon as worldly success beckoned he lost interest as his irregular head just was not wired for the larger, more popular, but more predictable world that beckoned.

After spending so many years in London, I'm quite happy to keep up the image of it being 'grim up north' if that's what it takes to stop the mass commercialisation of an exciting music scene.

G.H.

**SONIC UNION**  
SAT 30TH APRIL / 6.30PM / £7.50 ADV £10 OTD  
THE GEORGIAN THEATRE / THE GREEN ROOM / THE SUN INN  
FLAMINGODS / PURPLE HEART PARADE / PARASTATIC  
THE GIRL SWEAT PLEASURE TEMPLE RITUAL BAND  
GREASE / SILVER TREES / VELVOIR / DUSST  
THE ALICE SYNDROME / FIGMENNT / GREEN FUZZ / PIXELATE

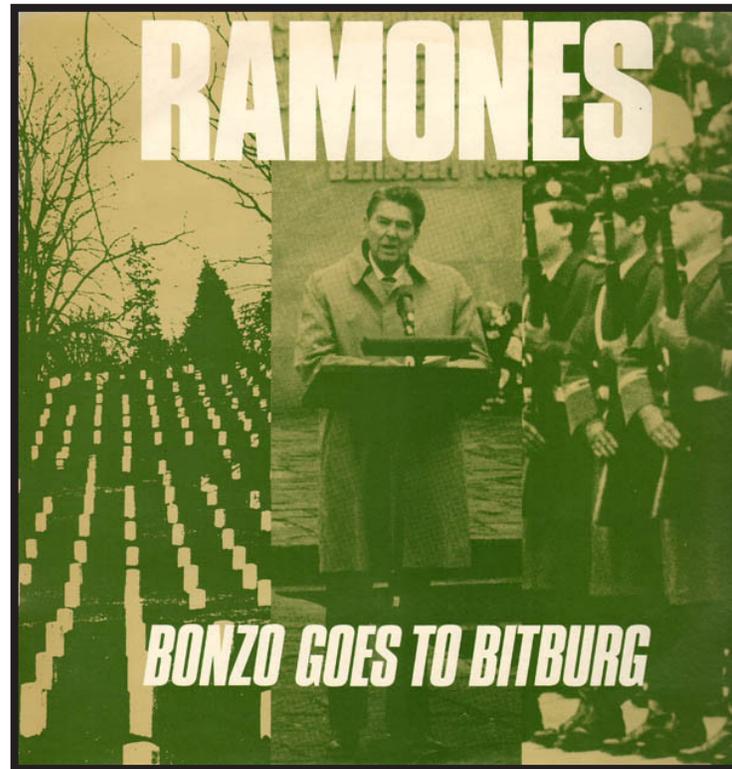
# ELEVATOR MUSIC FOR THE MASSES:

## Solid Soundtracks

As well as the usual array of booze, birds and baubles, my Christmas holidays were filled to the brim with overrated footy matches and cheesy films. One film which did stand out however was *The School of Rock* - a movie so full of clichés it makes *Green Street Hooligans* look like a BBC documentary.

It didn't stand out for its gripping story line or the acting talents of Jack Black (many of the kids well outshone the main protagonist) but for some cracking tunes in its soundtrack.

Don't get me wrong, there was some dross. But hidden amongst it were some proper old-skool classics and unlikely gems. 'Stay Free' was the first to excite me. Whilst far from the best in The Clash's cannon, it's a worthy shout and a fine nostalgic tale of friendship lost. 'Substitute' (The Who) and 'Immigrant Song' (Led Zeppelin) need no introduction and a belting cover of The Stooges' 'T.V. Eye' had me scouring around on Youtube once the closing credits were up.



Topping the list though was The Ramones, a band that has continually fascinated me over the years, yet has never really managed to hold my attention for more than a few songs. I think my apathy towards them hit its peak a few years ago when donning a Ramones T-shirt seemed to give you direct access into the Hipster School of Wankers. I remember a mate of mine turning out in such a T-shirt and not even being able to cite one member of the band, despite their names being splashed right around the f\*\*k off big logo on his chest. Hmmm.

Anyways, the song in question was 'My Brain Is Hanging Upside Down (Bonzo Goes to Bitburg)' and it was a song I had completely forgotten about. Slightly different from your usual Ramones fare, but so full of hooks it actually hurts. I remember reading the story behind the tune (Reagan's huge balls up at visiting a cemetery where SS guards were buried) and being drawn in by not only the melodies on offer but also by the rebellious nature of the lyrics.

While The Ramones weren't particularly known for their political lyrics, the deep underlying tension between Johnny and Joey (and other members of band) has always fascinated me too. How a band that seemed to hold so much disdain for each other managed to keep it together for so long, while writing so many great pop tunes, is pretty incredible.

I've still never got round to watching the *End of the Century* documentary, but it's definitely on the list. Perhaps a film to chalk down for next Xmas.

S.B.

## CONCERT:

### The Season

TS:One 12/01/17

Thursday evening which can only mean one thing it's Whirling Dervish time. The second of 2017 brings two acts this week. The first being **Michael Gallagher**. I was sadly late for Michael's set and I missed his first few songs. I walked in during his Strokes cover. The set was full of originals and a few covers sang in his unique take on the indie style. Michael even managed to slip in a cover of a Blossoms track. I fully enjoyed the set as I always do and I believe Michael will be one to look out for in 2017. The second and headlining band were making their Whirling Dervish Debut **The Season**. I found the set filled with covers and a few originals intriguing. The sound is very funky and bluesy with a mix of Indie rock. It's an interesting mix. I will say I enjoyed the originals more than the covers and would like to hear more. I truly felt like they have a sound that could help them stand out in any line up. So an early finish for Whirling Dervish and a smaller crowd. But over all a good night of live music.

M.L.



Photo: Mal Lythe

## THE PINK REVIEW:

I know we're in Teesside but let's talk about other places too.

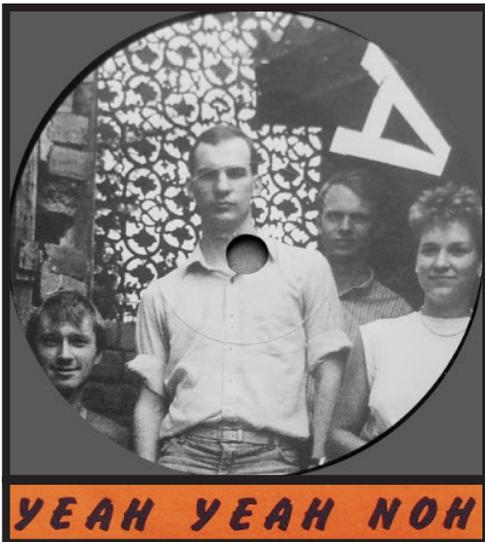
Let's talk about small town stigma, - or small town music stigmas. Do you know what? I spent 4 years studying in Leicester and loved it. For the time being 2011-2015, not much was happening there music wise -

occasional Wire / Shonen Knife / The Lovely Eggs gig, surrounded by familiar middle aged faces. Seemed like the young local music scene hardly existed or I didn't have the luck to experience it. I never managed to make real musical friends at uni, I had to travel to Birmingham or London to see my mates at the gigs. To be honest, Leicester did not suffer a great lack of small suitable venues - it just lacked the zeal to organise things (except a few promoters I knew - heads down). This didn't bring me down at the time, as I decided to join my older folks in some bands and discovered some amazing stories about the old good times, early 90's Leicester Poly (John Peel loved the venue?) gossip, and I could only listen and be amazed and form a connection. One day The Charlotte reopened, and another day Prolapse reformed, gathering people together in one time and place. And these stories I have heard brought me closer to what the Leicester scene really looked like before. Before Kasabian there were great bands - even The Slits performed at De Montfort Hall.

Indiepop scene left its mark too with legendary Yeah Yeah Noh (Oh-my-god-i-managed-to-support-them-on-their-reunion-gig), Perfume and Blab Happy among others.

And don't forget Disco Zombies. While being there my friends were putting up a great mod-northern-soul-alternative disco called Biff Bang Pow! with live music, and I remember the cyclical Brighton Beach and The Buzz. The scene was still there, it was kept carefully under a bell jar by all those cool people who had lived it and kept it alive for chosen few. I felt privileged being a part of a very small thing, which is also happening where I live now in London, with friends' bands being gathered around Fortuna Pop records. It's great to belong and take part in something bigger than a music phase, something precious, full of people's memories and emotions. This is happening pretty much everywhere isn't it? Slough or Stockton are not an exception. We just need new fresh generations taking over the groove and appreciating it.

W.D.



## INTERVIEW:

**I recently caught up with local noise / rock act Weld to see what the boys had to say for themselves following a brief stint away from the scene.**

**You've just got back from playing The Museum Vaults in Sunderland. How did that go?**

It went pretty well, we were slightly rusty after a 6 month hiatus, but all in all it was a success.

**The band's been going since 2012, but you and your brother have been in various outfits over the years. How have you managed to hold that together?**

With being brothers, there has always been a bond between us musically, sharing similar interests and so on. We have disagreements from time to time (that's why Weld split up last time!) but sharing that same musical interest and growing up together has helped us to keep each other in check.

**There are three of you in the group, but who is the creative force behind the music?**

Everyone has their input equally on the music. We all have our own ideas on where a song should go, and what it should sound like. Coming to an agreement on a final song is usually the hardest part!

**How do you write your tunes?**

Nigel, our guitarist, comes up with the riffs for the songs, and then they are built on around this. Our drummer, Jonathan, gets the drums down, which can sometimes alter the song depending on what type of rhythm he decides to play, and finally, Chinner, our bassist and vocalist, writes some (hopefully) interesting lyrics and gets the bass locked in with the drums.

**I read online recently that you've got a single (Red Handed) com-**

# WELD



**ing soon. Have you got any news on this?**

Our single will be out within the next couple of weeks. Only thing missing at the minute is the vocal track, so once that's down and it's all being mixed and mastered, expect to see it up on our facebook and bandcamp page real soon.

**I see you're playing in Westgarth (March 24 and May 20) and Musiclounge (Apr 1). Have you ever played either of these venues before? If so, any thoughts on them you'd like to share?**

The Westgarth is a local favourite of ours. We've played there quite a bit over the past year or so (probably overstayed our welcome!) and they're always up for getting some unique bands on, the type you just don't really see often. Musiclounge is a nice little venue, we played on their soft opening a good few years back, and it's a good little venue, especially since there isn't too much to find in Stockton, music wise.

**What are the best venues right now in the NE? And why?**

Think Tank in Newcastle is a great little venue, we've seen all sorts of great bands here, such as Sick Of It All, Ignite, h2O and so on. Places like The Museum Vaults in Sunderland in The Black Bull in Gateshead always get some great bands on. Westgarth social club is another highlight for us. We always prefer the smaller, more intimate venues, where you can get really close to the bands and get a fantastic sound as well.

**Anything you'd like to add?**

There's loads of great live music out there in the North East, but it's a shame that it never really seems to get recognised. Maybe it's a sign of the times and the fact that music has changed so much, but it would be great to see a stronger support for the scene, to hopefully get people properly interested in live music again.

S.B.



**CONCERT:**

**Ordinary Affair**

Musiclounge 13/01/17

It's never an easy task being the first band to step up to on stage with the job of setting the pace and getting the crowd going. So fair play to Free Jay, who were only a young bunch of lads.

The sound was your usual mix of jangly indie, Oasis and RHCP covers and while they didn't set the world alight, they had a laugh trying. Special mention to the new bass player, who had apparently only joined one week before. Not bad going considering.

But the real fun actually began when the second act beamed down onto the stage and began to entertain with their cool brand of space rock. Hailing from somewhere between Newcastle and Jupiter, Moon Rover played a cracking mix of shoe-gaze / grunge with riffs paying homage to the likes of Smashing Pumpkins and Foo Fighters.

'Little Green Men' with its quiet / loud fuzzed-out guitar lines showcased exactly what these lads were all about and after only a couple of songs they had captured the crowd. 'I am an Astronaut' (?) was another great song. There were plenty to be honest but I was too busy lost in the swirl to make any real notes. Say what you like about Musiclounge, it really isn't afraid of sticking on a good mix of bands.



Ordinary Affair were the last band playing and from the off they were class. 'Teenage Kicks' is a good start to any set and from there they had me on board. From there it was just song after song - all the tunes you wanted to dance to in one go but had never had a chance to.

Need more evidence? A Jam medley containing 'Down in the Tubestation at Midnight', 'Modern World' and 'Start' did the trick. 'All or Nothing' went down well as did 'Much Too Young'. There was even a Kinks song thrown in, although no 'Village Green' despite many requests. Pah. Two quid for this?

Joking apart, they played great and I found myself dancing and jumping up and down to loads of classics.

After the gig I ended up in the usual haunts where I was treated like a king. A discount beer in one pub (the tills were closed) then an after hours pint in another. I've obviously been back in Stockton too long.

*S.B.*



## INTERVIEW:

I'll hold my hands up right now, up until not that long ago I wasn't that familiar with Mouses. More fool me. So when I was told by two different folk that I needed to interview them, I thought it was only fair to investigate.

**It was a strange introduction. Or lack of introduction, as the case may be. One evening I was sat in The Wasp's Nest with a beer (cider?) and was told that the duo were recording some kind of Christmas single just around the corner in The Green Room. Being the obtrusive sort that I am, I went to have a look but was met with a locked door and no way to enter. What was going on inside sounded good, I'll give them that. But after 15 mins of waiting outside and feeling like a naughty schoolboy, I decided to cut my losses, head back to the warmth of the bar and Facebook them instead.**

Fast forward three weeks and tonight seems fitting. We're parked up in said pub on a dark Wednesday evening surrounded by a quiet crowd who are down for the football. There's a nice atmosphere and the boys are in good spirits, more than happy to go into detail about what I had been missing out on.

"We wanted to do something a bit

# MOUSES

different, but it took longer than expected," drummer Nathan tells me. "We had to decorate the room." The 'Mouses Xmas Session' basically involved the boys recording a couple of covers ('Fairytale of New York' and 'Merry Christmas Everyone') whilst being filmed. A quick look online shows that the lads doing pretty much the same thing back in 2015.

Has it helped them any? "We've got a few more people signing up to us and the songs are getting shared about." Good stuff. It sounded class from outside anyway.

For anyone unfamiliar with the band (\*cough cough\*) here's the low down: Two local lads from Billingham playing no-frills rock n roll and having a great time doing so. They've also had a bit of BBC airtime too. Oh, and played at Leeds / Reading.

"Bob Fischer put us forward for that... just a couple of weeks before," Nathan explains. "It was the most nervous I've ever been," says guitarist / vocalist Ste. "We were rehearsing the night before in my house, playing till 11pm. It was three hours of horrific nerves!"

Obviously playing at either festival is a major achievement, but did one of them stand out for the lads? According to Nathan, both were good in their own way; "We knew a few folk in Leeds and a few bands there, so we had a few friends and family come along. Last year people were ringing us up and then asking about Leeds and Reading. Promoters

and people in general were more excited about things."

Ste echoes the thoughts of his band mate. "It was nice to play [at Leeds] for people you know. But it was also nice to play [at Reading] in front of new people."

### Home Turf

When a local band has achieved any amount of success, it's always interesting to hear their views on the scene where they started making their name. So what are Teesside's strengths?

"There are quite a few gigs for up and coming bands," Nathan tells me, as I return back from the bar. "Plenty of promoters working together and supporting each other. I think when you go to other places, you notice just how good the North East scene really is."

But rather than stay put, the lads are keen to continue trying out pastures new. "We did three tours last year and we want to keep pushing ourselves to other places," he says with enthusiasm.

"It's a great way to re-invent yourselves. The first time we played in London, nobody knew us and they didn't believe we were from Billingham till we started talking! We did this thing called the 'Random Drum-Off' where people shouted in between songs. Someone was shouting 'I'm better than you! Get off the stage or I'll blow your tits off!' I just replied to him 'Consider them off!'," he grins. "It was at some old German deli that had been converted into a gig venue." Sadly there's no footage available.



However, whilst researching the band before the meeting, I did come across a few videos on YouTube which the boys had obviously invested a fair bit of time in.

"Hollywood was my favourite," Nathan tells me. "Another potential favourite was Algebra as well, but we had a week off to do it and Hollywood was a shorter song. [Regarding Hollywood], we managed to get the location through my work at Wynard Hall, so we were able to stay late. We did get some funny looks though."

Ste elaborates; "Basically we had a week to make a video for a single. The single was originally going to be Algebra, but we decided on releasing Hollywood at the last minute instead as the song is only a minute and a half so it wouldn't take us as long to film the video!"

The short clip - which documents a young writer and his frustrated, angry partner - is shot in a dark film noir style and is a great introduction to the lads. It also ends in tragic circumstances. "As members of staff were walking through, they were all looking confused," Ste says as he laughs at the memory. "We had less

## "Get off the stage or I'll blow your tits off!"

of an idea of what we were doing when we were filming the video for Poison. We just turned up with loads of cat-themed things!"

A quick fag or two outside and it's back indoors to chat once again about the local scene and who the best acts are right now. According to Nathan, Velvoir are most certainly up there at the top. "They're just insanely good at what they do. We're quite good friends with them and they're just one of the best bands. They put on a really good show and have good interaction. They're just loud!" Blimey. Any other reasons? "In seven or eight minutes... you just feel hypnotised. They move to some kind of ritual." Remind me to check them out.



Photo: Hana Harrison

For Ste though, Durham's DIY pop punk boys Martha sit top the list.

"I've been a fan for a while now. I saw them at Stockton Calling and they were really fun and catchy. I bought the vinyl and have been listening to it more and more, especially the lyrics."

### Future Plans

So what's in store for the band then? Any targets or ideas?

"Well we'd like to play a few bigger gigs round here rather than lots of little shows," says Ste. "And also do a double A-side and see where we go from there. We're writing some new stuff too and we're going to go away to Europe [Netherlands, Belgium, Germany] to tour for the first

time in April too."

"That'll be interesting. Like playing round here, but times 10," Nathan exclaims, eyes wide with excitement. But before signing off, the lads inform me they have actually been to Europe before, so know what to expect. "We played the Olgas Rock Festival but had done a gig the night before in Leeds," Ste tells me. "Then we drove straight to Stanstead but didn't sleep so had been up 42 hours before doing the festival after party. Then we got six hours sleep before doing the actual festival." Rock and roll. "Then you got stung by a wasp," Nathan laughs.

"Yeah, a massive German wasp!"

S.B.



## CONCERT:

**Dan Donnelly**

**The Storytellers 28/12/16**

For some reason, when I read on Facebook that Dan Donnelly was playing at Storytellers in the evening I got a pang of excitement and spent the whole day at work looking forward to the show. I'm not entirely sure why. I'd never heard of Mr. Donnelly before and the only Wonder Stuff songs I can actually name are 'The Size Of A Cow' and that novelty one they did with Vic Reeves (which, incidentally, I've now had stuck in my head for bloody days). But anyways, for whatever reason I took the notion and got myself along.

A couple of pints around town to blow off the cobwebs, then down to Storytellers to see if my excitement had been justified. I was pretty surprised at just how busy the venue was (a wet and windy Wednesday night between Christmas and New Year?) but the place was packed out and the atmosphere lively. I also found out that since joining The Wonder

Stuff, the musician had relocated to Middlesbrough (not something you read in the papers every day to be fair) and was now performing in the Stockton-on-Tees pub based male voice choir, Infant Hercules. Fair play. Can't say I've ever been a huge fan of male choirs, but an opportunity for a future POINT BLANK TEESSIDE interview perhaps? I'll be checking out Youtube before making any commitments on that one.

Anyway, as well as the usual bunch of midweek Christmas pissheads lording it up, there was every chance that there was a bit of a local following out too to help cheer him along. That could well help explain the large crowd.

Parked up at the bar didn't provide the best of views but once he got on stage, the tunes flowed thick and fast. A good mix of alt-folk deep fried in country (think a few 'Yee-haws') helped keep the foot tapping and your drink topped up.

As well as the originals, there were plenty of covers thrown in to make sure the layman was happy; Van Morrison, a decent George Michael tribute and that Formula One tune by Fleetwood Mac. I know it's hardly cutting edge technology but the addition of a drum machine and one of

those nifty little pieces of kits which allows you to record a backing track to play along to certainly elevated the songs. I've seen plenty of solo acoustic gigs over the years, but it's clear Mr Donnelly is a professional who knows his stuff.

Midway through the evening, Jake Holt stood up and ploughed out a few tunes into the mic. It was a decent little set which broke up the proceedings nicely, but it was good to get the main offender back onto the stage to see out the the night with more of the same.

A spirited version of SLF's 'Alternative Ulster' kick-started a mini mosh pit and a neat Johnny Cash medley went down well. Final tune 'Hey Mate' received a good laugh (check out the live version recorded at The Masham pub on Youtube) and an 'Auld Lang Syne' encore rounded the evening off perfectly.

Pity it was a school night, as come last orders I was fired up and in the mood for more. But common sense prevailed and a taxi home was ordered. Decent night and I'd seriously recommend getting yourself along to see him play next time he picks up a guitar.

S.B.



Photo: Adam Parkin

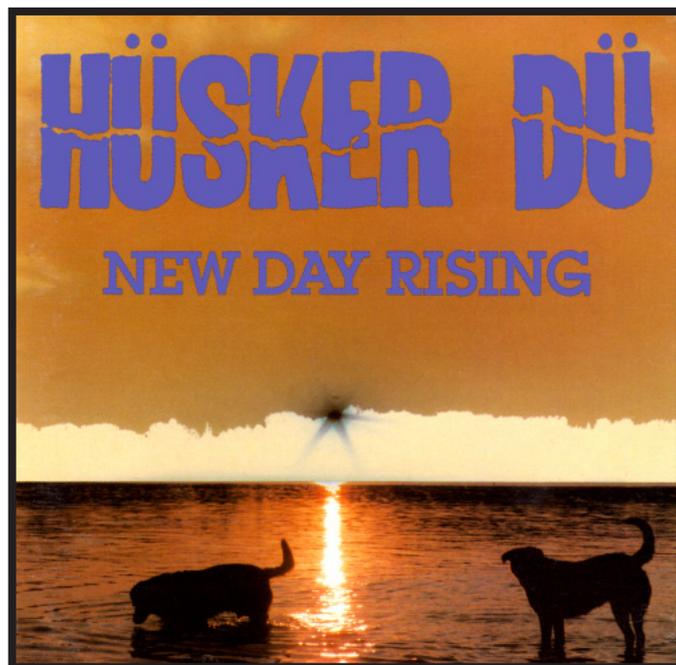


## FAVE ALBUMS:

Here are three records that I love and that have had gigantic impacts on me. All these musicians make original music; I wish all musicians would.

**1. Brian Eno – Here Come the Warm Jets** – I’ve been listening to this record since the 70s. I just love the blatant disregard for anything sensible or predictable on this record. Crazy sounds, lyrics and tunes abound. Eno is a genius and I don’t hold it against him that he has produced some horrible bands, it’s just his day job, but his musical abilities are astounding. My favourite album of all time.

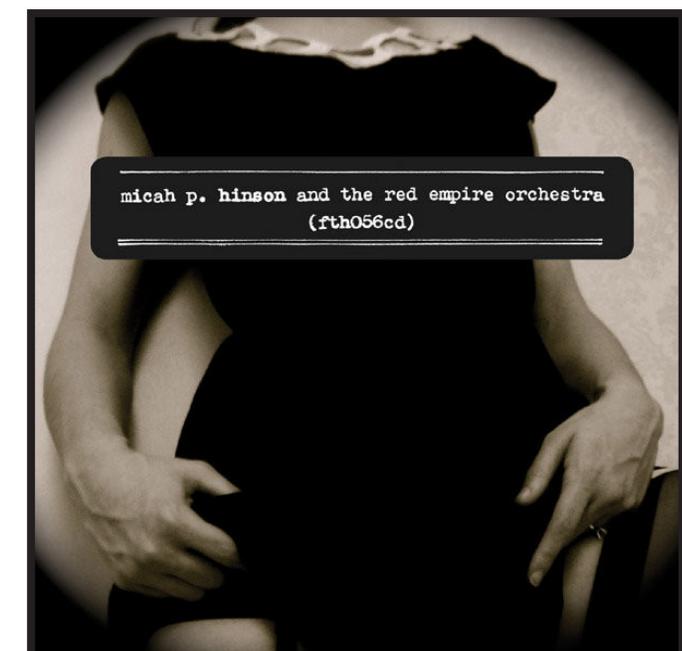
**2. Husker Du – New Day Rising** – my life changed as soon as the needle hit the opening track of this album. The fury and noise matched with tunes and emotion really spoke to me. I listened to them every day for years. Saw them just once, to a sparse crowd at Sheffield’s Leadmill, but seeing Bob Mould furiously UNLEASH on stage with an Ibanez Flying V made me want to do the same, and so I do to this day. They were, in my mind, a band that far exceeded the sum of the parts, and the parts were all brilliant.



**3. Micah P Hinson – Micah P Hinson & The Red Empire Orchestra**

– My first (and last?) discovery through Spotify – one day I was determined that there must be something new that was decent so I started trawling through Spotify using “related artists” to see what I could find. This record stopped me in my tracks. He has the voice and soul of a man 3 times his age and uses it to deliver some clearly raw emotions. Music is, in my opinion, a way of conveying emotions and somehow tunes help to do that. This record is a masterclass in doing that. The man himself is a bit of an enigma, but I love that I can go see him in intimate venues, when dross is packing much bigger venues. Seeing a great band in a little venue is worth its weight in gold, you’ll take the memory to your grave.

A.M.



micah p. hinson and the red empire orchestra  
(rth056cd)

## CONCERT:

### The Rezillos

Westgarth 16/12/16

Every year I drive hundreds of miles to watch gigs so I'm not sure why this is only my 4th visit to the Westgarth which is, after all, only 20 miles from where I live. I've decided to put that right in 2017 and prioritise Westgarth gigs over others (unless it's Buzzcocks). Why? Because it's a great venue that puts on great gigs that are promoted by great people. Tonight I arrive with my daughter (who is wisely realising that there is more to music than X-Factor) at 5pm having said I'll help out with any pre gig work that might need to be done. By this time the Rezillos are already here and all the loading in has been done so the only useful thing I do is drive to the local supermarket to buy a can of hairspray for Eugene Reynolds and some light-bulbs for the merch stall.



Photo: Dave Shaw



Photo: Steve White

We hang around for a bit. Death to Indie arrive followed by Johnny Seven. There's a bit of drum and guitar sound-checking so we head to Ak-bars for a rather delicious curry.

We return to watch Death To Indie. If you haven't seen them before then do so soon. A great combination of punk and pop that's delivered with attitude and a real enthusiasm that's infectious. Look them up – plenty of tunes on YouTube, SoundCloud and bandcamp. They work hard, they deserve to be bigger.

Johnny Seven don't disappoint. Teesside band, formed in 1978, split in 1980 they reformed 31 years later to support .... The Rezillos. There's a fair few people here to see them and they go down well. Melodic punk rock with some obvious influences (The Clash). I'll admit it's only the second time I've seen them but I'll make sure I see them again. Based on tonight's performance they have at least one new fan. After taking a few photos I turn round to see my daughter clapping her hands, tapping her feet and having a right good bop. The whole of their set tonight can be seen on YouTube. Take a look. Good stuff. They're back at the Westgarth supporting The God-fathers on February 9th. Definitely a gig where it'll be worth arriving in time to catch the support bands.

The Rezillos start with guitarist Jim

Brady telling us all "what a fucking shit year 2016 has been" then asking if there's anyone under 18 in the crowd. I point to my daughter. He makes the point again. He's right. For a lot of reasons it has.

This is the third time I've seen them in 12 months. The last time was at Butlins Alternative Music Festival back in October where they were one of the highlights of the weekend. They never fail to entertain. From opening song 'I Can't Stand My Baby' you know it's going to be a good night. This is a band enjoying themselves. Fantastic chemistry on stage. Fay Fife shakes and moves like a 60's pop icon – exaggerate the dance moves from programmes such as Ready Steady Go and you'll get the picture. Eugene Reynolds in his leopard skin patterned jacket, ripped t shirt, orange trousers and trademark wrap around shades looks little different from those first performances on Top Of The Pops 38 years ago. Drink 20 cups of strong coffee in half an hour and I imagine you'd probably feel and perform like guitarist Jim Brady does tonight. A perfect accompaniment to Fife and Reynolds the three of them front of stage means you'd never be bored watching this band even if you'd never heard a single song they'd ever done. And throughout it all bassist Chris Agnew and drummer Angel Patterson keep the infectious rhythm beating along. As for their

set list it's the perfect mix of songs from past and present. First album Can't Stand The Rezillos is well represented. Songs you'd instantly recognise even if you didn't know the band – Top Of The Pops, Destination Venus to name just two.

Getting Me Down, Mystery Action, No, It Get's Me, My Baby Does Good Sculptures all keep our feet dancing, arms shaking and vocal chords singing along. Glad All Over needs to be started again after some timing issues. No 20 000 Rezillos Under The Sea tonight which is a shame but it's absence does not take anything away from the gig.

Songs from their new, excellent, album Zero (2015) fit perfectly into the set. Take Me To The Groovy Room, Zero, Life's A Bitch.

They finish with Somebody's Gonna Get Their Head Kicked In Tonight. Last year, at this venue, this left Fay Fife with a broken tooth after a too close encounter with an enthusiastic crowd. Thankfully tonight no such thing happens.

Too many bands from 'back then' now rely on their old, 'classic', crowd pleasing songs when they play live. Not so the Rezillos. The Rezillos are as good now as they have always been. It's not just music for old punks. It's music for today and it's still relevant. My daughter is 13. She summed up the Rezillos as follows – "Fun, poppy, bonkers, great to dance to and very, very entertaining". She loves her Rezillos t shirt, her signed flyer and photo she had taken with Eugene (did I mention that they are also really nice people?). Perhaps if we all took our youngsters to gigs such as this the songs and music would continue to have a (bigger) audience and more and more youngsters would see just how crap and irrelevant shows such as X Factor really are.

The next day I post some photos to various Facebook pages including @TheRezillos and @JimBrady. I get a message back apologising for the bad language.

S.W.

**THE REZILLOS**

PLUS SUPPORT FROM  
**JOHNNY SEVEN**

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Photo: Dave Shaw

COMING UP:

## STOCKTON CALLING

One of the things I used to love about coming back to the UK at Easter was the annual family get-together up in the the bonny town of Oban on the west coast of Scotland. Not much of a live music scene there granted, but some quality little boozers and a great opportunity to get out the hiking boots.

This year though I was gutted to learn that my little jaunt up north clashes with the yearly Stockton Calling Festival, especially as the full line up has pretty much been released and looks like it's going to be a good one.

The inspiration behind writing this little piece was a suggestion which popped up on my Facebook earlier today, suggesting I watch a live version of Cast performing 'Alright' at the Isle of Wight Festival last year. I was a bit dubious at first, but viewing it took me right back to watching the band in the Boro Town Hall about 20 years ago and to be fair it seems little has changed - save for one of the guitarists now looking like he lives in a Lord of the Rings novel. These lads are playing at the ARC



and purely for nostalgia's sake, I really would love to see them churning out some of their hits on stage once again.

Thornaby outfit Cattle & Cane need little introduction and they're all set to perform at the newly-reopened Georgian Theatre. There's been a lot of speculation over what the new-look Georgian and I'm sure those experiencing it to a backdrop of Cattle & Cane, Allusondrugs and Mouses are going to be impressed.

The Sun Inn has always been one of my favourite Stockton pubs and a worthy contender for any pub crawl starting point. It's also no stranger to the live music scene and it's no surprise to see it getting involved for this event. Local favourites Avalanche Party are one of the must-see acts and Hull's Black Delta Movement would certainly be one to enjoy a pint of Bass too.

Ten Foot Tom & The Leprosy Crooks have won me over for the name

alone and a quick look on YouTube confirms they don't look like they'll be letting any crowds down in the near future.

Plenty of options in the Green Room too with Casual Threats being one of the top choices. I still haven't managed to catch this band (I was just out of hospital the last time they played Musiclounge and under strict instructions to stay away from not only the booze, but anywhere it was made available). Sadly I'm going to miss out on them at this event too but hopefully I'll get a chance to rectify that in the not-too-distant future. Ridley Woof is also on hand to supply a good dose of laid-back blues and soul (an ideal artist for a venue of this sort in my opinion) and garage / psyche / rock outfit EAT FAST are sure to be f\*\*king quite a few heads up late doors.

Ku Bar will no doubt be the last port of call for those who make it through the day in one piece and Sheffield indie-rockers Milburn will have already enticed many in through the main doors well before last orders.

But keep an eye out on neighbouring venues Storytellers and The Vault that are also hosting acts and Musiclounge at the end of the road too. Don't have room to print the full line ups, but you'll no doubt have seen them already. As mentioned before, I'm genuinely gutted I'm going to be out of town for this one, so be sure to have a pint or two (doctor's orders) for me.

S.B.

Cattle & Cane



## CONCERT:

### King Mojo

Musiclounge 20/01/17

The weekend was fast approaching and I'd put the feelers out. Asked around for any decent gigs that might be worth a look or a write up.

I had a few replies and most of them recommended King Mojo so, due to locality, it got the thumbs up. Sorry Space Bats - I guess you'll have to wait till next time.

By the time we got down, Strawberry Mynde were just about finishing up their set. Decked out in matching red and black T-shirts, the lads had made an effort and the two or three tunes I caught entertained. Decent enough stuff but nothing to drag you away from that trusty table positioned at the back of the room.

It was a quick turn around though and as soon as King Mojo started with 'There for You' the floor got busy. A great opener - catchy, urgent and the type of song that sticks in your head well after closing time. A decent a well turned out crowd filled the room and the lads pumped

out tune after tune. Plenty of Weller / Clash influence of show and what I saw was enough to get me on my feet and moving along - some real quality songs, with Gloria being another personal highlight for this writer.

One slight criticism was the keyboards which were just too quiet. Not often you get a decent set of keys on the stage and would have been good to have had them a notch or two up in the mix. But the backing vox and harmonies did go some way to help make up for this minor complaint.

The last two times I've been down to Musiclounge the crowds have been a bit sparse, but fair play tonight, there was a decent turnout and it did help elevate the show. A good indication of how busy a venue is? The queue at the toilets. Twice I had to nip into the ladies as the mens was occupied.

Never seen or heard of these boys before but the recommendations were warranted. Didn't get a chance to chat to the lads after the gig but after hunting them down on Facebook it turns out they're looking to record an album sometime soon. Expect an interview about that in the next edition.

S.B.

**Friday 20th**  
**January**  
a night of clashing guitars  
and Hammond screams  
Teesside's  
very own  
**KING MOJO**  
plus special guests  
**the Strawberry Mynde**  
at the  
**Musiclounge**  
Doors open 7.30pm till 11pm  
admission £2  
21D Yarm Lane, Stockton, TS18 3DR



Photos: Jack Hall

## CONCERT:

**Amelia Coburn**

**The Green Room 08/01/17**

Yes I've just come back from this show but I just wanted to write a few words about the two sets Amelia Coburn played tonight. I saw her perform for the first time yesterday in Stockton's Friendly neighbourhood record store Sound it Out so I really wanted to go to this show. It looked like that wasn't going to happen as it was sold out. But lucky for me a ticket became available an hour before the show. So I stopped watching Toy Story and got myself down to the show. **First set** started with an original song that set the tone just right. Everyone was silent as a mouse which is always nice it shows

respect. She went into a Blondie cover (Call Me) now for anyone who knows me knows I love Blondie. The set went on with a good mix of originals and covers. I like how she makes the covers her own it's almost like you're not hearing covers. She finished the first set with three David Bowie covers performed to perfection. I will add how good her Life on Mars cover is especially when she hits the high note in the word Mars it's incredible. **Second Set** started with another original song she said is about pirates. Stunning song that was also performed at the Sound it Out gig. The second set just like the first a few originals and covers and finished with three Beatles covers from The White Album. Overall the gig had a nice warm atmosphere and a top act. Amelia will be performing in Stockton's Arc on the 1st April I'll keep you updated on that on Dig that groove's Facebook page.

*M.L.*



## NO SUCH THING AS HEROES:

A few weeks ago I found myself riffling through a few old CDs I hadn't heard for years and came across a split EP by Sun-factor / Carver which I picked up for a few quid back in about 2001. This was when the Open Season boys were drawing in bands from all over the place to play locally and the punk / emo / DIY scene up here had never been healthier.

The whole record is great. But the Carver side is particularly significant as the opening guitar riff of first track 'Noah's First Wave' inspired a tune I helped write / sing many moons ago.

Not only that, but the vocal melody behind it was direct inspiration for another tune of mine. Indeed, anyone who has ever had the pleasure of listening to me belt out an unfinished version of 'Allens West' at sound checks and practice rooms in Poznań over the years will know exactly what I'm talking about.

For whatever reason, the EP had been left in the back of my

wardrobe and neglected until this recent chance encounter after the pub. But sticking on those three Carver tunes again brought back a whole pile of emotions and I decided to see if I could contact the band to confess my sins.

Tracking down drummer David didn't prove difficult (his details were inside the cover) and one email later, he had replied and was offering to post me a copy of Carver's other EP 'Songs for Rusty' which, for whatever reason, I had never purchased\*. I was able to explain about me stealing some key bits from one of his old tunes, he didn't seem too bothered, and my conscience felt cleansed.

While 'Road to Moscow' (the tune which used the guitar line) got a good few airings on various stages around Poland, to this day 'Allens West' has never quite been finished off. The lyrics are done, the melody was pretty much stolen and one of my former band mates even

had the good grace to write a chorus for the bugger. But while there are no official recordings knocking around, it's still there, bubbling away under the surface just waiting to be documented. I reckon when I do finally fly my acoustic back to the UK and get to work on my solo album, this will be the first song laid down.

*S.B.*

*\*This CD actually arrived here today and will be getting a spin as the PBT #2 PDF is being sent out. Many thanks.*



## INTERVIEW:

# JAMES LEONARD HEWITSON

Following a great gig in The Green Room I began hassling James Hewitson for an interview. Here's what he had to say...

### How come you started writing music?

There was a lot of buzz around local artists near Hartlepool (that's where I'm from) c. 2006/2007 - The Chapman Family, The Lurios etc. so it was all quite aspirational and exciting as a young person to try and do your own band. This project, however, comes from when I moved up the road to Newcastle and realised I was more or less on my own, so I had to make a project that worked around me.

### What was your reason for moving up there? And how involved in the scene are you up there?

I moved up to Newcastle for uni a few years ago, came back home, then went back again as I just like living there. I know a lot of other people participating in the scene, and it's fun, but I'd like to put a few more events on myself (watch this space).

### Who are your main inspirations?

The whole cast of 'The Comic Strip Presents...'; there's something magi-



cal about that series. I'm also really inspired by 10cc at the minute as I watched their recent documentary on BBC Four. Initial bouts of musical inspiration came from 90s Britpop though, all of it, as well as Queen and Foals.

### You say you love math rock and Oasis... Who are the best bands you've seen live?

The Hives, Foals, Late Of The Pier, Pulled Apart By Horses. I once saw The Dead Weather at a special guest set at The Park Stage at Glastonbury too; that was pretty special.

### I saw you play just you and your drummer. How did that differ

### from a full band gig?

Normally there's also another guitarist, a bassist and keyboardist, so normally there'd be 5 of us in total! Obviously the sound is fuller, more lines going on, more dynamic etc. when all of us are playing. I don't have to compensate as much and can relax more! Ha!

### How does your music get written? Is there a particular formula?

Normally I will sketch the song out (lyrics, chords and structure) take it to my drummer, we'll make another sketch, I might change things, sketch it again (phone recordings), then I might see other members of the band individually, show them a part I have in mind, then bring it altogether in the practice room.

### What are your ambitions with the band?

To break even (in general), to get around Europe before Brexit and to release a first album.

### Have you given it the album much thought? Any plans for this?

Album - no plans. I've given it some thought, but when it needs to happen, I'll know.

S.B.

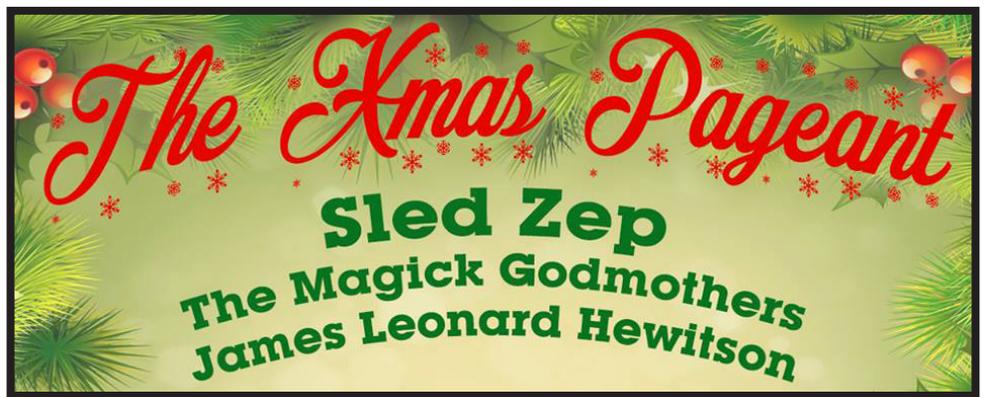


Photos: Andrew R. Dorrian

## CONCERT:

**Sled Zep**

The Green Room 23/12/16



The Wasp's Nest seems to be the place for a decent pint pre-Green Room gig in Stockton these days. And so it was before going down to see what was on offer at this cosy little venue on the night before the night before Xmas. To be fair, I don't think I even bothered checking in at home after work - I'm pretty sure it was a case of heading straight down to the pub and waiting for the fun and games to begin.

We weren't really sure what to expect, so we parted with our cash and got inside just in time for the opening act to plug in. James Leonard Hewitson was first up and he was spot on. From the off the set was captivating and enticing - warm, enjoyable tunes reminiscent of early Pulp or Hefner. I later learnt that James was without his full band (save for his drummer) which made the performance even more interesting.

There was an effortless style to the guitar and vocals which helped the songs flow. I'd love to see the full band on stage, but - in an odd way - feel quite privileged to have seen what was on offer in the Green Room.



The Magic Godmothers followed up. And Yes! A great blend of punk / blues with a smattering of soul thrown in for good measure. I saw these boys performing not too long ago just south of the river and was stunned by just how tight they were. Well tonight was no different. Just as well, as I'd hyped them up no end to those I'd dragged along to keep me company. But they didn't let me down and it was a rip-roaring performance. I don't know the set list but being stood up at the front allowed me to dance along and enjoy the atmosphere with everyone else.

If you get the chance, get yourself along to their next gig. They really are a band to get the party going and you won't regret it.

The final act of the night? Well Sled Zep weren't really my bag to be fair. We gave it a shot, but come the fourth song, it was full circle and back to the Wasp's Nest for another round of Addlestons cider and Sharp's lager to discuss the evening's offerings.

Final verdict? The Magic Godmothers: Ten out of ten. James Leonard Hewitson: A great gig and looking forward to checking out the full band next time they're in town. Top stuff.

S.B.

## CONCERT:

**Hayley McKay**

Musiclounge: 14/01/17

A cold night in Stockon spent watching three very talented acts. I've never seen these three before so I was looking forward to seeing something new to me. I got to the show in time this week about five minutes before the Box of Frogs set. I looked over to the stage and saw the bands set up. Once I saw the **Box of Frogs** equipment I was intrigued because you had two guitars that looked very custom made. The moment they started to play up until the end of the set I thought to myself I know a good few people who would enjoy these. The sound has a blues feel with an old rock influence. If you ever get the chance to see them I

say do it. The set was a lot of fun to watch. Also the middle of the guitar was a freeking dog bowl. It was when I was watching the set I realised that whilst some people were in Redcar watching Honey G I was experiencing something special and very creative. Second up was **Gary Grainger**. This set was much more of a chilled out

set. You can see how much Gary Puts into each and every song as the set progressed. My favourite song of the set was his second to last song it was sang with so much emotion and passion . Well every song was really but that one stood out for me. Now the headline act **Hayley McKay** she was joined on stage with her band. I was really looking for to this set after hearing her latest single Unspoken before the show. The set started with a cover of Joleane then went into a set full of original bangers. It surprised me a little because it had such a huge range. It would go from a nice chilled song to a more dancy pop song. Sadly the attendance

wasn't great so there wasn't much dancing going on. But credit to Hayley and band they still put on one hell of a show. Over all the show was organised very well but it could have used more faces in the crowd but the people who turned up seemed to have a great time.

M.L.



## 20 EDITIONS:

Getting POINT BLANK TEESSIDE #1 up and running felt great, but while it was indeed the first ever edition, it was actually #20 in the POINT BLANK series. For about eight years ago, the first ever edition was put out in Poznań (Poland) and while it was never released as frequently as I had hoped, it always had a decent little following.

It would be great to get POINT BLANK TEESSIDE out every quarterly or so but for the time being, realistically, I'm going to aim for three a year.

Being the hip, on-the-ball types you'd expect us to be, there's now a facebook page set up. So please feel free to like us and leave any comments / suggestions there for us to see.



## CONCERT:

**Velvoir**

Musiclounge 27/01/17

Now even though I wasn't feeling 100% for this gig I managed to get the energy for this solid line up. First band **Nancy** are a band I've seen many times before. But this is the first time I've reviewed them. I'm very happy that it is because this is by far the best I've seen them perform.

What sometimes looks awkward was replaced with good old rock n roll and fun. The band clearly have an influence from 70's / 80's era rock music with a dash of punk shot in for good measure. What I noticed and learned from this show is the more the band enjoy themselves the bet-



Photos: Ian Allcock

ter they sound. Quality set if they can keep playing like this with this much confidence there's no reason they won't go on to be a top Teesside act.

Speaking of top Teesside acts it's now time for **Casual Threats**. A few months after dropping one of my favourite albums of 2016 the band still continue to surprise me with sets like this. They have perfected the art of putting a set together. By that I mean they know how to start the set with a bang and where to put the slower songs and the fast songs whilst keeping the onlookers entertained throughout. A new song added to the mix which had me thinking could we end 2017 with album #2. Let's see let's just see. But overall another fun performance from the guys.

Anyway final band of the night **Velvoir**. What can I say about these that I haven't said many times before? But I'm going to anyway. There's a reason why these fill out every venue they play and there's a reason they headline these type of line ups. That reason is that Velvoir are just that damn good. Every time

we watch them we all find ourselves hooked to the funky bass lines, chilling guitar and erotic undertones that makes them stand out. I mean how often does a band get called back for three encores? This is only the second time I've ever seen that happen.

Anyway the whole gig was fantastic and organised brilliantly. Best crowd I've seen in the Musiclounge in a long time.

M.L.



**POINT BLANK TEESSIDE TEAM:** Steve Blank, Weronika Dudka, Mal Lythe, Graham Hornsby, Alan Morrison, Steve White

