

BAND HISTORY

THE BRIEF HISTORY OF THE RABBLE ROUSERS



Fig One: The James Lewis School for Boys

player) and the other members of the band. They saved me, not only from a life of musical boredom, but from the abuse of a disturbed teacher who made my existence a living hell.

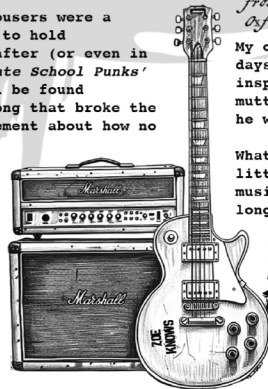
Punk inspired me to look at my violin as an instrument of daring musical expression, though I must confess I never really liked punk. Such a din, and can you actually coax music from a violin that has expectorated saliva rolling down the strings? I think not. However the 'New Romantic' era that followed punk in the early 1980's was my salvation. The daring creativity of my violin/synthesizer interface combined with the daring of my hairstyling and matching white plastic sunglasses and raincoat made me a spokesperson for the Youth of the Future. (The title of my debut album, by the way.)



Fig Two: The very act of punk expectation

was their unofficial anthem, and collectors copies can still be found decomposing in lesser charity shops. It was certainly the song that broke the band up. Chris Valentine wrote it as a tongue-in-cheek statement about how no one took the Rabble Rousers seriously because they weren't 'street' enough. 'Three public school wankers and an Aussie chick,' as the GOB CITY fanzine review somewhat reductively identified them. (Everyone seems to have forgotten that The Clash's Joe Strummer's dad was a diplomat). Singer Alex Welland and drummer Con Kelly hated the song, saying it would make them a joke. Only the guitarist, Zoe Dimico seemed to get the joke, which was enough for Chris.

Fig Three: Guitar and Amp belonging to Mr. Zoe Di.Mico



I'm thrilled to be asked to pen the liner notes to the Official Soundtrack to 'Private School Punk,' a documentary film about an obscure British punk band called the Rabble Rousers. Formed in 1976, they were largely made up of students from the James Lewis School for Boys, Harrow. They never released an album, only a handful of singles. But to me, they were the very spirit of punk.

This unknown story is close to my heart, because I too was a student there at that time, and my life was changed by Chris Valentine (the somewhat desperate American bass

Mutually Assured Destruction (MAD, MAD, MAD) B/W Sonic Self-Abuse (Sept 1977) was actually the band's first single, independently released on their Alex Welland-funded Flood Warning record label. It caused a little local heat in London, but couldn't get any radio play because of then ongoing negotiations over the U.S. nuclear bombing fleet using the U.K as a refuelling stop. The Follow up single 'Grievous Bodily Harm (G.B.H.)' B/W 'Skint' (Dec 1977) sank without trace. The songs 'Dinosaur Music' and 'Banality of Evil' appeared as a flexidisc attached to the cover of the Tygers of Wrath fanzine, but, unfortunately, all copies were melted down as a result of legal action by the band Pink Floyd, who did not appreciate being disparaged on 'Dinosaur Music.' The Rabble Rousers were a band who couldn't catch even a single break

And then...Lady Luck, if not smiled, at least smirked. A major label, Sturgeon Records, offered the band studio time with a name producer to record 'Private School Punks.' The band jumped at the chance to work in a big studio. The label released the song through a one-off single deal in Feb 1978, though it never picked up airplay. Still, it became the undisputed Top of the Pops in many of Britain's most exclusive schools. (Legend has it that Prince Andrew danced and sang to the song - with a bucket on his head - whilst at Gordonstoun School.) When Zoe's painfully autobiographical 'I Was A Pre-Teen Beauty Queen' was relegated to the B-side, she was done with the band - and with Chris. The (now guitarless) group split for good after an argument in the toilets of one of London's premiere 'rock n' roll toilets,' the Nashville Rooms, London W14.+++++ RIP the RABBLE ROUSERS.



Fig Five: The Royal Family teaches us the importance of duty, honor and service.



Fig Six: A not so collectible copy of Private School Punks from Crisply Meadows landfill, Oxford.

My only contact with Chris Valentine since our school days was a single phone call. I thanked him for all his inspiration and I asked what he was doing now. He muttered something about a soup kitchen. Don't know if he was serving at one or standing in line there.

What remains are the songs on this disc, each one a little gobet of spit sliding down the window of musical history - recounting the story of these long-forgotten Private School Punks.

RABBLE ROUSERS

NIGEL PALMER
Winter 2024
The Beverly Hills Club,
Tenerife



Fig Eight: Mr. Nigel Palmer, live at the Blitz Club, NOV. 1980

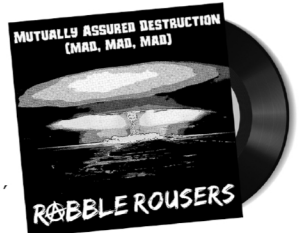


Fig Four: The somewhat collectible debut single

Chris Valentine fled to New York City to go solo, recording and singing the whiny break-up song 'Zoe Knows.' A brief reconnection with a holidaying Alex on vocals resulted in the equally self-pitying 'Ghost Life.' Six hours later, the musical pairing of Chris and Alex split again in the not so rock n' roll toilet of a McDonalds in Time Square. Shame, because these two never songs showed a musical progression. However, by then, a world yearning for some Cyborg Kisses did not care.

The original tapes for most of these songs were destroyed in a fire at Alex Welland's garden shed studio. A man, fitting the description of erstwhile James Lewis Deputy Headmaster Ronald Flood, was seen fleeing the scene, but charges were never pressed. This meant that in order for these songs to be saved from oblivion, they have had to be reconstructed and reimagined with cheap, but effective, modern digital audio technology. How blasphemous! Yet, also how punk.



Fig Seven: The Scene of the birth and death of many a rock band.