

DIRGE

[Devilish Interviews Reviews Gigs & Entertainment]

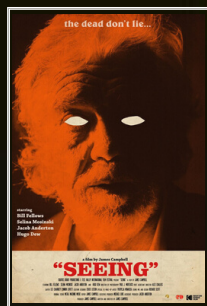
darlodirge@gmail.com

Issue 4
October 2023

The power of **DIRGE** compels you!



PROCESS
CHURCH



IT'S ALIVE!



DARLO VINYL



DIRGE
POP
CHARTS



GLAM HOCK

MUSIC REVIEWS

STUFF

INTERVIEWS

TU

FILMS

DIRGE

noun

a lament for the dead, especially one forming part of a funeral rite.

How was your summer? Went in a flash didn't it? Don't worry though because Halloween is upon us and this issue of DIRGE has a bit of a spooky theme to it!

There's been loads of stuff to see and do over the summer months hasn't there? A veritable smorgasbord of musical delights in both the market place and Darlington at large, not to mention Teesside as a whole.

This issue is a bit of an (Addams) family affair with both my son Davey and daughter Holly contributing and there's certainly plenty to browse through this month. There will be one more issue this year, which will be a Pseudo Christmas Special with a few daft awards being given to mark the end of 2023.

If you have something cool you want to contribute, drop me an email at the address below and I'll see what I can do.

But for now, get your fangs stuck into October's issue of Dirge.

IF YOU DAAAAARRRRRREEEEEE!



'Darlington for Culture is supporting the production of four issues of Dirge magazine to promote artists and venues in Darlington borough but accepts no responsibility for the content of the magazine'.

Front cover image from William Friedkin's 1973 horror masterpiece "The Exorcist".

"I want to apply for a permit to present my exhibit at the fair ---"

Issue 4

October 2023

APPEARING SOMEWHERE INSIDE...

Point Blank Fanzine

The Process Church

Count in Fives

Darlo Vinyl

Dirge Poster

T.U Round Up

Seeing

Siouxsie Sioux

Stock Image Interview

Ballet La Grana

The Lair of Local

Glam Hock Interview



@dirgemag



darlodirge@gmail.com



facebook.com/darlodirge



@darlodirge

AN EVENING OF
**WEIRD AND
WONDROUS
MUSIC**
FROM...

THE GOLDEN AGE
OF NOTHING
GOTHY/ALTERNATIVE THREE PIECE

**STOCK
IMAGE**
TEESSIDE BASED ELECTRONIC BAND

CHUMP WRECKER
INDUSTRIALISED DNB, BREAKCORE AND DRONE

SATURDAY 11TH NOVEMBER
CAFE ETCH, 5 GILKES STREET, MIDDLESBROUGH
DOORS OPEN 7:00PM - FREE ENTRY

THE LAIR OF LOCAL

This is a local page for **local** music. We'll have no murder **here!**



JENNA LOUISE - LIKE I DO

The velvet voiced songstress is back once again (alongside the renegade master Carl Pemberton) with another soulful, romantic, schmaltzy love song, accompanied by a music video that made me sick in my mouth a little bit. It's an easy listening ditty providing totes emosh content for the ageing masses. The gal has a sincere vocal and it's ably produced by Jenna and Pemberton but I'm waiting for her to release something I really like. Would I walk down the aisle to this? Hell no. Maybe ironically. **2.7/5**

facebook.com/jennalouisemusic

WAX HEART SODALITY - LIVE, LAUGH, LOVE

The wax hearted ones just released their debut extended play and it's rather good.

This is one of my favourite E.P.s to be dredged from the muddy depths of North East rock n roll in recent years. To quote Patrick Bateman it's a 'playful yet mysterious little dish'.

I dig the guitar sound on this E.P. Dynamic, at times effect laden and at others more subdued with some cheeky little licks spattered about like the blood on stage after one of Saunders' more visceral stage performances. Some strong vocal hooks, in yer face guitar solos, solid and inventive drums and the gorilla glue of the bass that brings everything together, which I think could have been higher in the mix as it sometimes gets lost, competing with the bass drum somewhat. But that didn't detract from my gloomy enjoyment. You should spread the All Souls Eve cheer and play this at your Halloween parties. Drink cheap whisky and mosh about, culminating in a mass Gorgy. (Goth Orgy)

facebook.com/waxheartsodality



4/5

STOCK IMAGE - HUMAN

The hardest working artist in local 80's tinged pop is undoubtedly Stock Image. A prolific songsmith and Miami Vice fan. But does his latest joint size up to his debut single 'Locked Away'? Let's find out...

Stockton-on-Tees' resident self styled synth guru is on fine form on this one. It should actually come with a sticker - "Warning, extremely catchy chorus, you will be humming this for hours and probably will end up wanting to die". You may well snuff it in the end, of aural pleasure.

I think the production and vocals need honing a bit but once he's mastered his art there will be no stopping him. **3.9/5**

facebook.com/stockimagemusic



Listen to the tunes we have reviewed here on our **YouTube** playlist **NEPOTISM** (North East Playlist Of Terribly Important Songs Monthly)

Link on our **Facebook** Page!

COMPRESSION SESSION - ROBO ELYSIUM

Lair of Local stalwarts Compression Session return with a new gift for the ears. But is it a gift you will cherish forever or an unwanted one that gets put under your bed and forgotten about? Let's see...

First off, I think I hear Rowdy Roddy Piper's famous line from 1988's They Live? I dog gone think it is. I'm sold already. (RIP Roddy)

It's lo-fi and shoegazey this one, and over six minutes long but there's plenty of mega reverb on the guitars and a couple of tempo changes, complete with a Metallica style headbanging segment to keep you interested. **3.8/5**



ANALOGUE BLOOD - CONTROL

The songs on Analogue Blood's debut album are all rather similar and share roughly the same tempo and quite samey vocal samples. 'Euphoria' wouldn't sound out of place blasting in a Berlin BDSM club being danced to manically by a Bruno lookalike complete with string vest, Mohican and glow sticks.

Some of the vocal samples give me Music 2000 for PlayStation vibes. Those free samples you get with the most clichéd vocals and sound bytes known to man.

The title track could easily be 1990's reality TV intro music accompanied by some creepy sounding, scratchy lo-fi vocals mumbling something like 'I need your soul'.

The opener "World Changer" is the best song on the album, with a lively hook and tune, but the other songs don't quite live up to it.



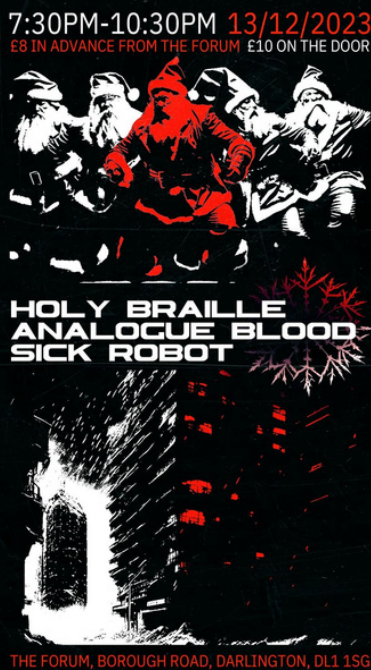
I've heard the music works better in a live setting and I'll definitely keep up to date with their releases in the future.

3.3/5

The vinyl album is available to purchase direct from Butterfly Effect Records.

facebook.com/analogueblood

WANT YOUR MUSIC REVIEWED IN DIRGE?
YES, OF COURSE YOU DO! SIMPLY EMAIL
YOUR LATEST RELEASE TO
DARLDIRGE@GMAIL.COM OR MESSAGE ME
ON THE FACEBOOK PAGE. WHAT'S THE
WORST THAT COULD HAPPEN?



TEESSIDE MUSIC PODCAST

Mal Lythe, creator of T.M.P is a passionate music fan who really cares about the local scene.

So much so he's started hosting a weekly show on **Spotify** celebrating new Teesside Music. An avid gig goer and **photographer** Mal also runs a music **blog** (link below) featuring Teesside musicians and creatives.

"The whole idea of the podcast is to keep people updated on what's going on in Teesside right now, especially when it comes to gigs. I think in the long run I'll be looking to get more people who are interested involved and offer a more honest commentary on what's going on locally".

Tees Music Podcast is available to listen to on **Spotify** on Wednesdays.

nebuildaplaylist01.wordpress.com

ROJOR - UNDER NORTHERN SKIES

Apparently Rojor is a legend of the North East music scene. Who knew? Not me, I'd never heard of the bloke.

Well, either way, Rojor has penned what appears to be a concept album loosely about Middlesbrough and the Tees in a cheesy pop style. Think late 90's era Simply Red with added auto tune. The music has a soothing quality which echoes the aquatic talk of sea and rivers, complimented by effected guitars and at times rather clichéd lyrics about love and that.

The production has a plasticity to it which runs through the album, lacking in depth and invention, essentially a pop production that's meant to carry the vocal, but Rojor's voice still sounds thin albeit pleasant enough.

At times 'Under Northern Skies' has almost a Christian rock air about it. You know when Bible bashing bands sing about Christianity in church to make the youngsters get turned on to God. It would make excellent Radio 2 music for the oldies in the afternoon to complement their post dinner naps. Roj would fit in great playing live on Pebble Mill if it was still going or something with Gloria Hunniford.

I wish him the best for the future but by my definition, Rojor is probably not befitting of legendary status, not yet, anyway! **2.4/5**

facebook.com/rojor



CRAIG RODDAM - WEIGHT OF THE WORLD

It's The Rodder's return and he still hasn't managed to shake that pesky and rather annoying American accent. You're not American Craig, so stop the charade.

Tune wise, it's exactly what I'd expected it to be. A meandering, derivative blend of REM and Brit Pop. I'm sure it will appeal to a certain demographic and I wish Craig all the best in the music industry. **2.5/5**

facebook.com/craigroddammusic



Denotes 'Turkey of The Month' status.

DAVE CRABTREE - I JUST WANT TO TELL YOU

RUN DNC presents his debut album. Produced with the aid of crowdfunding which helped him to raise half of his £5,000 target.

Polished and immaculately produced in the pop/rock mould of Canadian AOR superstar Bryan Adams.

The album sounds like it wouldn't be out of place playing over the end credits of a made for TV movie about a lost dog that finds its way home, encountering many perils along the way with a big emotional reunion with it's owner at the end.

It's inoffensive pop/rock that could actually be quite good driving/road trip music (as long as you don't fall asleep at the wheel.)

Is it a bit cheesy? Yes, but that's never a bad thing as long as the purveyor of said fromage is self aware.

All in all Crabtree's debut album is a listenable, well crafted offering that is suited to the onset of Autumn.



3.3/5

facebook.com/davidneilcrabtree

TEN WORD REVIEWS

FAILED TO IGNITE - LOVE BLIND Not my ting but catchy. For fans of pop-punk.

JENAMI - LOOKING BACK Inoffensive, country tinged. All been done before. Pleasant but dated.

BLACKOUT THE ARCADE - AVALON Arctic Monkeys style lad rock that should appeal to young'uns.

MARQ ELECTRONICA - NEVER GO AWAY House with an out of sync TB-303 and bizarre video.

MARINA JOSEPHINA - I WILL BE THERE Wicked voice but this song belongs at boring dinner parties.

CHRIS MARDULA - ONLY A CALL AWAY Important issues delivered in a cheesy way. Chris' best yet!

INDIA ARKIN - 143 Kinda boring rock/jazz infused ditty with rather generic vocals.



DIRGE POP CHARTS



- 1.) **WAX HEART SODALITY - LIVE, LAUGH, LOVE** 👑
- 2.) **GLAM HOCK - MAN UP, MAN DOWN** 👑
- 3.) **END CREDITS - FORSYTHIA** 👑
- 4.) **STOCK IMAGE - HUMAN**
- 5.) **SHANNON PEARL - KISS THE GROUND**

#DIRGEOFFICIALCHARTS

BILLBOARD 100



SHANNON PEARL - KISS THE GROUND

"If you're going to do something, do it well. And leave something witchy" – Charles Manson, 1969.

I have a great interest in the music of the occult, the occult in general and folk horror so I'm hoping for good things from the Mackem mystic. Does 'Witch Pop' work? Let's find out!

The album kicks off with a very poppy number named Celestial, a contrast somewhat with the rest of the album as the later tracks are definitely more straight forward folk /rock oriented. Vocally, shades of Helen Marnie from Ladytron with hints of Kate Bush seem to make up the characteristics of Shannon's voice. Traditional elements like acoustic guitar and violins married to a more contemporary sonic palette with age old melodies is a juxtaposition that could quite easily fail. Fortunately they work for Ms. Pearl.

Kiss The Ground is more of a mood album of atmospherics than a set of tunes that really get you by the scruff of the neck, and because the production is so similar throughout the album, parts of it start to sound a bit samey, but there are some very ethereal and ambient moments to be enjoyed.

Celestial is definitely the standout track, the instrumentation is lush and expressive with violin flurries and plucks, piano and acoustic guitar. And melodically it's the best track on the album. I'm looking forward to seeing what this Witch Pop pioneer comes up with for her difficult second album.

[instagram.com/shannoninthewild_](https://www.instagram.com/shannoninthewild_)

3.9/5

END CREDITS - FORSYTHIA



Not many people know this but Forsythia is a rare, until recently undiscovered flower that was named after the late great, intensely chinned entertainer Bruce Forsyth.

A brooding synth drenched intro dissolves into a heavy and raunchy, bluesy and grungey, stoner laced assault...

Then what is that I hear? A Club Tropicana style scratchy guitar part to accompany the verse. Far out!

What stood out on their debut album The Traveller (back when the band were called White Noise) was the technical yet no frills drumming of Fast Eddy. And this is the case once again on 'Forsythia' 4/5

[facebook.com/endcreditsuk](https://www.facebook.com/endcreditsuk)



DELUSIONS OF FEAR - BLINKERED

Greeted by a rather cheery single cover featuring the infamous gates of Auschwitz-Birkenau I was intrigued to what music would follow from Darlington based Ricard Lawless. I also noticed that this tune was released on 'Treblinkered' Recordings, another scholar of World War 2 like myself I wonder?

Beginning with a marching snare beat and twangy, surfy guitar, it starts off like a darker version of White Rabbit by Jefferson Airplane, only to change again into a doom laden nasty guitar riff that echoes the desolation of the cover image, augmented by orchestral strings which complement the guitar riff effectively.

Overall a nice slice of depressing, doomy rock. 3.5/5

[soundcloud.com/delusionsoffear](https://www.soundcloud.com/delusionsoffear)



ALTERNATIVE SPIRITUAL SESSIONS

TRAUMA INFORMED, INCLUSIVE AND NEUROSPICY FRIENDLY

SOME SERVICES AVAILABLE:



BOOKINGS PREFERABLE, DM OR EMAIL TO BOOK YOUR SLOT, WALK-INS WELCOME.

RAGE & LOVE SHOP, 33 BONDGATE, DARLINGTON.

FIRST SUNDAY OF THE MONTH, FROM 2PM

GLAM HOCK - MAN UP, MAN DOWN

Remember that shite, patronising song with all that life advice in it called Sunscreen? Yeah, turd wasn't it?

Man Up, Man Down is like a miles better version of that. Conjuring up nuances of Death In Vegas with unashamedly autotuned harmonised backing vocals, Glam Hock aka Wayne Coulson utilises a spoken word sample by Scottish comedian Brian Limond aka Limmy, which lasts for pretty much the entire tune.



Personally I would have liked more of a melody line featuring Wayne's vocals, but that's obviously not what he was going for on this track, so fair play to him. If this is a taste of things to come for his upcoming album then it should be a goody!

[glamhock.bandcamp.com](https://www.glamhock.bandcamp.com)

4/5

HAYLEY MCKAY - BOTTOM OF MY HEART

This is crazy. Hayley McKay has gone experimental. Think Aphex Twin conjoined with Throbbing Gristle. There's noise, there are melodies, complimented by dark, insightful and foreboding lyrics.

Of course, I just made that up.

Coming back with the tried, tested and one could say formulaic "Bottom Of My Heart". Hayley has sung over an upbeat yet paradoxically sombre country and western style Leanne Rhymes joint. Aside from the vocal being way too high in the mix it's produced and mixed proficiently.

Written by two other people and produced by another, Hayley is not exactly baring her soul or offering anything personal to her on this release.

It's not going to set the world on fire and it's all rather twee but it's inoffensive and listenable and well suited to a civilised picnic on a summer's day. 2.5/5

[facebook.com/hayleymckaymusic](https://www.facebook.com/hayleymckaymusic)





MIKE ELLIOTT
REVIEWS...

ANALOGUE BLOOD'S ALBUM LAUNCH!



TRACKS ROUND UP

With Sarah Wilson



Tees Music Alliance seem to be more bothered about **bacon sarnies** and **unlimited crisps** than music these days, which is a shame as they own two of the best venues in Stockton (The Green Room and Georgian Theatre.)

It's **The Green Room** where I find myself tonight at the launch of Analogue Bloods debut album 'Control'. Firstly I went to get a drink, where the guy behind the bar assumed I wanted a **Red Stripe**, I told him I'd have a pint of cider but every time I went back to the bar subsequently he kept assuming I wanted a Red Stripe. I could only conclude it must have been the **Jamaican accent** I'd decided on using for the night.

First on stage was **Chris Davison** who I'd seen perform with Analogue Blood before. His best asset is his voice, super powerful yet versatile. He used a few backing tracks which can be hit or miss generally, but he really made them work to his advantage. Highlights were Demon Wings and his version of **Cry Little Sister** from The Lost Boys. When he announced the cover from the 80's classic I had visions of Davison ripping off his shirt and pulling out a **saxophone**, which didn't come to pass, leaving me a bit disappointed. Overall one of the better sets I've seen locally. It's a shame he doesn't do more to promote himself within what's left of the local scene as his music would put him at the top of the pile of local bands.

Next up were **Analogue Blood**, who decided to be the penultimate band at their own album launch for some reason. Analogue Blood live is a ridiculous proposition. Guitarist and occasional vocalist **Ian** and drum pad guy **Lee** play over backing tracks which don't just include drums and synths but at times the lead vocals to the song. It's something that on paper is a terrible idea yet totally works in a live setting. The infectious energy they both exude coupled with Ian's crazy facial expressions and onstage banter sell the songs, even though the guitar driven EDM they play can be challenging to casual fans of the genre. A well executed cover of Breathe by **The Prodigy** ends their set in a fitting tribute to Ian's favourite band.

I then returned to the bar and resigned myself to a Red Stripe as I was tired of correcting the guy. Next up was **In Evil Hour**, who, judging by the wrong 'uns in the crowd, were a big crowd puller in their own right. I'm sure a load of true punks will disagree with my description but I'd say they were like a female fronted **Bad Religion**. Highly enjoyable and even the people who looked like they'd actually washed this week appeared to be getting into it too.

Overall a great night of live music in a sorely **underused** venue. I don't know why they can't have weekly local band nights on at the Green Room, but I have been told I'm a dreamer.

(And I do love a good packet of crisps and a bacon bap.)

Howdy and Happy Halloween! If you are a super keen **DIRGE** fan and get this copy on the day of release (**27th Oct**) you'll still have time to head down to tonight's Hark! The Sound Of Stories - Haunting Histories. **Hark** is our series of live music events bringing you live music inspired by stories where we twin an artist or band with a reading of a piece of work that may have influenced or inspired the musicians. We are thrilled to be bringing Hark back to **Darlington Library** now it has reopened. A beautiful backdrop for live music and a chance for gig goers to browse the books and enjoy a drink in between artists and readers. Tonight's event features **The Shining Levels** playing songs from their sublime and spooky album 'The Silence Of The Girls, eerie and emotive music from Northumberland's **Frankie Archer** and harmonious trio **We Three Things** performing a specially written murder ballad. Readings will be from 'Cuddy' by Ben Myers, 'Silence of The Girls' by Pat Barker, Robert Woodhouse's 'Haunted Darlington' and **Sylvia Clement's** 'Supernatural Darlington'.

If you've missed this Hark! event we have another very special one lined up for Friday 1st Dec featuring multi award winning folk duo **The Bookshop Band**, Newcastle's **The Cornshed Sisters** and **Mayshe Mayshe**. Check out our website and socials for more Tracks news, updates and tickets.

www.tracksdarlington.co.uk



Crisps



Analogue Blood featuring Ian 'mid gurn'. Photo by Mal Lythe

facebook.com/analogueblood

facebook.com/inevilhour

facebook.com/chrisdavo1



WE STUMBLED ACROSS SHANNON PEARL IN A LOCAL FOREST AND ASKED HER TO SELECT HER TOP 5 ALBUMS.

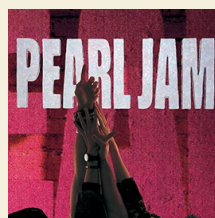


[instagram.com/shannoninthewild_](https://www.instagram.com/shannoninthewild_)

Being a musician and a creative, choosing just 5 albums from the plethora of great works that exist in the world, has been the equivalent of scaling Everest with no air in a snowstorm in the dark. So I must stress how this for me is a very current 'what inspires me at the moment' list. Having learned from my Spotify wrapped recently that I have indulged in over 2,000 different genres last year this is but the tip of the iceberg. So, let's begin!

Pearl Jam – Ten

This album has been a constant in my life. I always return to it time after time. Eddie Vedder's vocal is like a tonic to my brain. It has become a soothing comfort to my psyche in times of need and an inspiration to carry on if I am ever in doubt. I'm sure we all have an album like this one. Our very own musical comfort blanket. That's why I have put 'Ten' at the very top of my list.



Bay View – Project Smok

I'll never forget the moment I discovered Project Smok. I was driving through Scotland and 'Viewbank' came on the radio. Ali Levack's melodic piping stirred something primal in me. I could not keep still! Paired with skilfully played bodhran by Ewan Baird and beautifully nuanced guitar by Pablo Lafuente it was like a dream come true. Neo trad is so my jam and this was the perfect time and place to discover the trio, mountains flying by my window in the Scottish Highlands, which added even more magic to their vibe.



Ben Howard – I Forget Where We were

I love how Ben does what the fresh hell he wants. I was initially captivated by his folky sound with this album back in 2014. Since then, he has unashamedly made music exclusively for himself. His albums have become progressively more experimental, and I love this about him. His new music is equally as good as the more commercially viable albums of yonder years but is also completely different. His music always reminds me to stay true to myself and my own creative process.



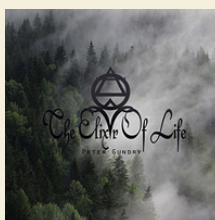
Ye Vagabonds – The Hare's Lament

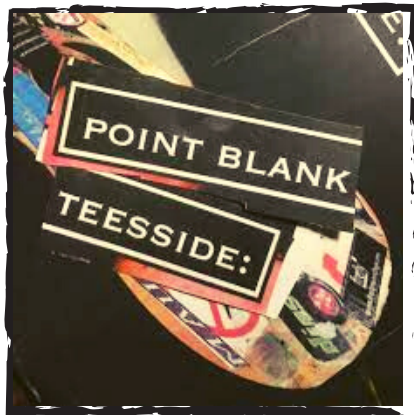
Something about this album feels like home to me. Traditional instrumentation always does. That, paired with the use of the beautiful Gaelic language interspersed throughout such a continuous vibe of warm soul hugging songs makes for an album that has been on repeat for years. Something about the soft production and gentle vocal on this record harks back to a time of simpler circumstance. It evokes a dreamlike, romantic state of mind that I have become addicted to.



Peter Gundry – The Elixir of Life

If like me, you like to pretend you're in a film and that you're a magical creature in a whimsical fantasy world then listen to Peter Gundry. This music is truly magical in essence and the soundtrack to all my rituals and ceremony. 'The last of her kind' is truly one of my favourite pieces of music ever. It's so emotive and the violin line never fails to make me well up. For mystical soundtrack vibes give this a listen.





POINT BLANK TEESSIDE IS A MUSIC ZINE
BASED IN MIDDLESBROUGH THAT COVERS
TEESSIDE (ER, OBVS) AND BEYOND!

DIRGE CAUGHT UP WITH STEVE, **POINT
BLANK**'S CREATOR AND HEAD HONCHO.

How much of your time does POINT BLANK take up?

Too much if truth be told. For something that looks like it's knocked up overnight it takes fucking ages. But I get so many different things out of it, it's totally worth it. If I put as much effort into my job as I do **POINT BLANK** I'd be sitting on my own island.

Is it going to be financially sustainable going forward?

Well I've always just seen it as a **hobby** and you generally pay to do things you love. I just fund it myself and have recently got some ads in to ease the pressure a bit. It's never going to make money, I wouldn't want it to.

What's been the highlight of writing POINT BLANK so far?

Just giving me a chance to get involved in the scene without having to bother picking up a guitar. When I first came back to **Teesside** I barely knew anyone, so starting the zine up gave me an excuse to get out there and watch bands and meet folk without being that weird random guy who stands at the back of the room on his own talking to himself.

Do you do it all yourself or do you have some writing minions?

I produce it / cut & paste it / do the interviews and gig reviews myself. But I have a great little pool of contributors who help out, generally with articles, thoughts and columns. It's a **fanzine** - the more voices involved the better.

What is your favourite scary movie?

'Halloween III: Season of the Witch'. This film often gets slated by horror fans because:

- a) It doesn't include **Michael Myers**
- b) It's shit

But I loved it and manys a night at uni were spent with my mates watching it, usually stoned off our tits.

Thanks for having me!

facebook.com/pointblankteesside

Vom! 🤮 Vista of the Month

"Each Issue we strive to bring you the most untouched, picturesque views our fair town has to offer".

This month we have a **Halloween** special. All together now
W00000000000000!

Can you guess where it is? Yes, it's the house by the cemetery (**Fulci** reference). Well, this one is actually inside the gates...

This abode is well known to be **haunted**...
By crack addicts and **feral** children.



It's actually on the market for £30,000



DARLO VINYL



I am no spring chicken, so I remember the days of record shops like **Northern Sky** on Duke Street (where I bought a Stranglers UHS that led me down a rabbit hole that I would never emerge from) and **Purple Haze** which was where the nail bar is now in Blackwellgate Arcade, not to mention **Vinyl Junkies** (which was also the name of a Darlington band circa early 2000's). At age 12 I used to frequent each on a Saturday morning to buy as much wax as I could afford (which wasn't much) but back in the late 90's before the resurgence of the popularity of the vinyl format you could pick a decent album up for a fiver.

Nowadays you have the now well established SaxoSoul records which you are probably aware of and we will feature them here, but there are also a couple of others off the beaten track that might not be on your radar where you just might pick up a **bargain** or two.



SAXOSOUL is a vinyl only store that opened in 2017 which you can find next door to the Tapas Bar on **Skinnergate**. It has a wide range of genres and is decently priced. It's quite attractive from the outside and has that real traditional record store vibe with quite a few rarities for sale.

ENTERTAINMENT OVERSTOCKS is a reasonably priced record shop on **Bucktons Yard** with a wide range of vinyl to be found, the guy in there is helpful and friendly so get yourself down if you haven't been in yet!



THE BOOT SALE SHOP is located half way up **North Road** and is a recent find of ours. There aren't really any external features that indicate it sells vinyl as he also flogs retro and antique items which account for most of the shop window space. But if you go through a little doorway inside you are met with an **Aladdin's Cave** of records. A lot of the albums are priced at the £10 - £15 mark which is great value and Charlie does try and keep his prices low.



HEAD BOOKSTORE up **Post House Wynd** has a good selection of Vinyl, Cassettes, CDs DVDs and books. It's a great little treasure trove of nostalgia. The shop recently moved premises (and upsized) slightly further up the Wynd so they seem to be going from strength to strength!





A very English cult

THE PROCESS CHURCH OF FINAL JUDGEMENT



Like the Manson Cult, the Process Church was inextricably linked with music, although as a collective were a darn sight less malevolent than 'The Family'.

Right through from the society's conception in 1966 they flirted with the likes of **Marianne Faithfull** and **Mick Jagger** through their waning popularity in the early 70's when they were endorsed and celebrated by **George Clinton & Funkadelic** (their artwork being used on the Maggot Brain sleeve) with a resurrection in the 80's with Throbbing Gristle's Genesis P-Orridge and **Psychic TV**.

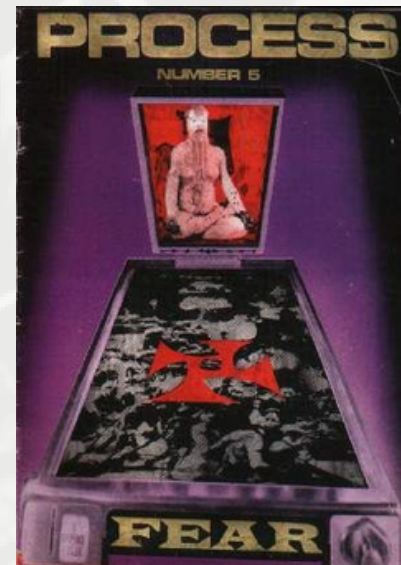
But who were these so called 'Mind Benders of **Mayfair**'?

Mary MacLean and **Robert De Grimston**, the founders of The Process met in the early 1960's, both belonging to The Church of **Scientology**. The duo established a kind of Scientologist splinter group called 'Compulsions Analysis' which later metamorphosed into what we now know as The Process Church of Final Judgement.

The group's doctrine was a mish mash of pseudo-religious, satanic and self help theories with their hub being Mayfair in **West London**. The 'Processians' adorned themselves in black outfits with purple capes, kept imposing looking **German Shepherds** as pets and established an all night coffee shop known as '**Satan's Cavern**'.

They eventually expanded their wacky operation and set up chapters in New Orleans and **San Francisco**, with their base being on the same street as Charles Manson at the time. Much has been made of the cult's links with Manson yet most of these theories have been debunked, although they once interviewed him in prison for a special 'death' edition of 'Process', their magazine, with Manson espousing his opinions on **existentialism**.

The Process gradually fizzled out in the early to mid 1970's when the golden age of self discovery and esoterica was fading away. But their story is a highly interesting one and I **urge** you to find out more about them.



RAGE & LOVE

INTERVIEW



rageandlove.net

We caught up with the guys from Rage & Love shop on Bondgate and they let us know how they are settling in!

The shop looks wicked. How's it going behind the scenes?

It's going great! We knew there was a community of people waiting for a shop like this from our experience running The Misfit Market, but it's far exceeded our expectations. We just try and keep the stock fresh and exciting and listen to what our customers and visitors tell us they'd like to see so we can evolve with their needs. The market is still going strong too and we will be continuing that each month.

Have you any plans for the shop in the near future?

Upstairs in the shop is something we're working on developing in the future. It's used as a safe space and social gathering point so we will be keeping those aspects and incorporating some other uses for the space. We already hold alternative spiritual sessions up there on the first Sunday of each month.

Despite some nay-sayers on the socials, I think, from the outside at least the retail sector in Darlo looks brighter than it has for ages. What are your thoughts on retail in the town in general?

The climate for independent business is tough of course, but Darlington has many really unique, small businesses and an incredible creative community.

Even our own little street of Bondgate has so much to offer, but it's always forgotten by the council, despite being a main route into town. (That's what we get for not being a Tory stronghold like the Imperial quarter!).

Bondgate has Northern Coven Tattoo, Refrill - for your retro and vintage needs, us, The Darl Knight comic book shop, Black Sails tattoo, The Queerish Bookshop, Oakley's retro barbershop, Cakes & Boba, Samantha Bowie hairdressing, along with The Dance Shop, The Majestic Theatre and more. It's a great representation of diverse small independent businesses working together to support one another despite the current climate.



DON'T LOSE YOUR HEAD!

Head Bookstore has moved. But you shouldn't have much trouble locating it. That's because they've only moved two doors down!



MEANWHILE ON THE 'DARLINGTON MUSIC SCENE' FACEBOOK PAGE...



Darlington music scene

BG News53 · 2 h · 🌐

We announce about legendary Celine Dion./ Celine Dion she has been confirmed as...[See more](#)



1 Comment



The hog is not for sale

PREVIEW



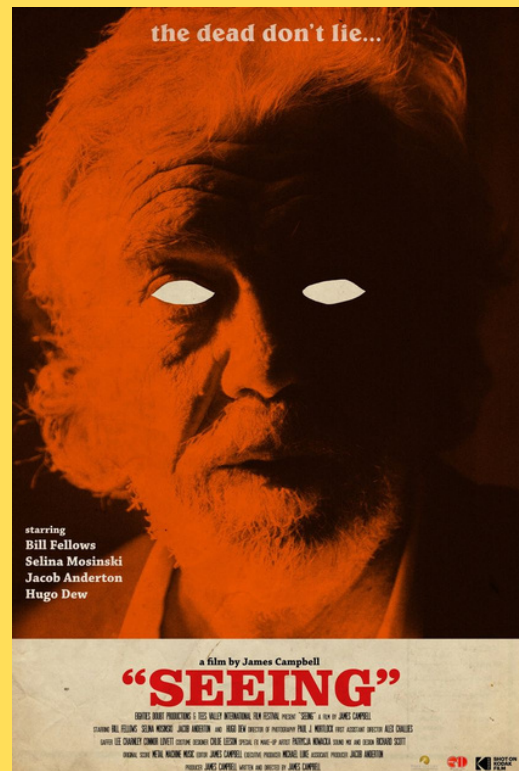
"SEEING" THE NEW FILM BY DARLO DIRECTOR JAMES CAMPBELL SET FOR PREMIERE AT TVIFF 2023

Seeing, a co-production by Eighties Doubt Productions and TVIFF is due to be premiered at **Tees Valley International Film Festival** on Saturday 28th October. The short was filmed entirely on location in Darlington which is a testament to Campbell's directorial skills, managing to make **Geneva Woods** and a terraced street near the South Park look like such natural places to film. James used his neighbour's home as the location for the interiors of the short horror/thriller which stars North East acting powerhouse **Bill Fellows**. (I remember him from Byker Grove but he now plays rough and ready Stu in **Coronation Street**). It also stars **Selina Mosinski** of online hit comedy 'Charity Shop Sue' in a dual role.

The film was shot largely on 16mm film, which, being a film nerd I found exciting. I was present at the filming at **Geneva Woods** (In my third outing as an Eighties Doubt extra) and it was a great laugh, my kids enjoyed it too and got to have a photo taken with Bill Fellows.

Campbell also utilised the Geneva Woods for his last short film "**Bushwhacker Blues**" to excellent effect (If you haven't seen it, it's available on YouTube with a soundtrack provided by Psych-Rockers **The Coral** no less.)

I wonder what local spots Jim will be using for his next slated release "**A Father's Debt**", which is set to be part of a trilogy of North East based films. I have read the script and it is **DARK**! Follow him on Facebook to keep up to date!



The official poster for "Seeing"

facebook.com/thetviff

facebook.com/eightiesdoubtproductions

VOM!



Vista of the Month

We have an extra special bonus **VOM** this issue, to commemorate the demolition of **Aruba** and **Route 66**, where you, I'm sure, like I, have had some messy nights back in the **90's** and 2000's. The area will look even more unrecognisable than it did before, with **The Plastered Parrot** and the **church** near Boots already razed to the ground recently.



TEN WORD FILM REVIEWS



Tar (2022) - Awkward. Sometimes shocking. Interesting from a musical perspective. Hilarious ending!

The Banshees of Inisherin (2022) - Quite hard going. Lush cinematography. Solid acting performances. Cautionary tale.

Birth/Rebirth (2023) - Curious horror/black comedy. Frankenstein-esque. Good fun. Blood and guts.

The Eternal Daughter (2022) - Slow burner. Tilda Swinton in dual roles. Sombre mystery chiller.

Talk To Me (2023) - Effective Australian supernatural horror. Gruesome. Spirit inducing. A good laugh.

Pearl (2022) - Mia Goth vehicle. Malevolent Carrie. Pseudo Lynchian Horror. Highly watchable.

Infinity Pool (2022) - Wtf Sci-Fi by Cronenberg's son. Disturbing, dystopian laugh riot. Watch!

REVIEW LAST NIGHT IN SOHO

Last Night in Soho begins in what seems to be a chintzy Mrs. Harris goes to Paris style comedy, which later transmutes into something rather different.

Eloise, a young girl nostalgic for the glitz of the 1960's leaves safe and innocent Cornwall for the bright lights of seedy Soho to study at fashion college which reminded me of Suspiria with the naïve fish out of water surrounded by worldly wise, bitchy girls.

She notices an advert for a room to rent and moves in to Dame Diana Rigg's (In poignantly one of her last roles) spare bedroom. One night, the flashing lights from the French restaurant next door seem to trigger some sort of hallucinatory dream in which she is transported back to 1960's swinging London where she lives out her fantasies and desires vicariously through the mysterious Sandy played by Anna-Joy Taylor.



After a few nights of similar dreams the previously meek and mild Eloise starts to take on Sandy's appearance and personality. Inevitably the fantasy starts going a bit tits up and turns into more nightmarish as she seems to begin to lose grasp of all sense of reality in life, spiralling fast into a descent of dark mental turmoil. I don't think that particular plot arc was in Mrs. Harris goes to Paris, was it?

Is she insane or capable of second sight? Are there ghosts from the past trying to tell her something?

3.5/5

Some lovely baroque 60's pop songs, inventive score and sound design added to the creative plot and stellar ensemble cast combine to make this a fun watch. Last Night in Soho is available to stream now on Netflix.

REVIEW M3GAN

Sign of the times horror which is incredibly silly and devoid of fright, unless the thought of the inevitable impact of **A.I** in the future scares you, which it should. **Blumhouse** seem to be taking over the horror market and usually their films are firmly tongue in cheek. Megan is no exception.

The film serves as a **Black Mirror**-esque satirical commentary on modern tech that's aimed at kids and the way parents rely on screens to get some peace. I found the most bizarre moment was when a **Charlotte Gainsbourg** track came on over a montage section. (Deadly Valentine, which is hellish, have a listen)

There's some giggles, some gore, and there's plenty to keep you watching. It's a 15 but it could easily still be family viewing for kids 8 and up, like a slightly bloodier episode of **Goosebumps**.

3.6/5

REVIEW RUN RABBIT RUN

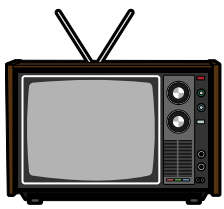
Australian '**creepy kid**' horror. It's a dark flick, visually and metaphorically, about a little girl who starts **freaking** her Mam out a little bit and demanding to see someone called 'Joan' who turns out to be the girl's estranged Grandma.

And when Mia, the freaky little girl starts drawing the obligatory pictures of black metal musicians wearing corpse paint surrounded by fire with sad faces you know shit is going to get real.

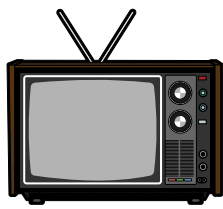
Mia then begins to take on the persona of Alice, her aunty who went missing years before when she was the same age as Mia. It's **predictable** and a bit boring, but worth a squirt if you have nothing else to do. You can find it on **Netflix**.



3/5



DIRGE T.V ROUNDUP



WORLD ON FIRE - BBC IPLAYER

I am obsessed with World War 2. What an exciting, yet conversely terrifying time it must have been to be alive.

World On Fire perfectly encapsulates this strange juxtaposition. Augmented by stunning visuals and gripping, overlapping and intertwining tales with strong characters brought to life by a cast of fine English, German and Polish actors. Although when **Blake Harrison** appears it is quite difficult not to think of that dance routine he did in *The Inbetweeners* all those years ago. (One of the pitfalls of being typecast).

Also, Is it just me or does **Sean Bean** now specialise in down trodden, low key roles? He played pretty much the same character in both 'Time' and 'Marriage' and ***SPOILER ALERT*** he rarely survives the first series.

First aired on **BBC** in 2019 the new season was released in July and can be found on the iPlayer, along with the second series which was shown recently on BBC1.

And if they ever make a biopic of Billy Mackenzie from the band **Associates** they would be hard pushed to find someone who looks more like him than the lead actor - **Jonah Hauer-King**.



3.9/5

IRVINE WELSH'S CRIME - ITUX

Bonny Scotland, the country that brought us the deep fried Mars Bar, Irn Bru, The Proclaimers and Irvine Welsh. Who released his latest offering via ITV simply called Crime. Set in the good old downbeat and downtrodden grey streets of **Edinburgh** it is quintessential Irvine. The language, the jokes, the violence and the flawed yet likeable characters. The story follows DI Lennox (played ably by **Dougray Scott**) in his search for an elusive child killer on the mean streets of Scotland's capital.



Season One and two is on ITUX now, but I turned the 2nd season off because it was rubbish.

4/5

TOP BOY - NETFLIX

Wa Gwan? Man's been a Top Boy fan for long innit so I was well gassed when I saw the latest and final series was streaming on **Netflix**. You dun know that it's one of the best TV shows of modern times.

4.2/5

THE 6TH COMMANDMENT - BBC IPLAYER

A true crime mini-series about a real piece of shit who pretends to fall in love with **OAP's** so he can essentially off them after he's persuaded the poor old fart to change their will in his favour.

3.5/5

DAS BOOT - SKY ATLANTIC

Serial adaptation of the classic book and film *Das Boot* with added characters and storylines from *Die Festung*, the follow up novel. It's excellent. I watched the first 3 series in 3 days. Highly recommended!

4.3/5

REVIEW

By Graeme Wilkinson

SIOUXSIE SIOUX TYNESIDE PRIORY



It's been a long time since Siouxsie last toured and even longer since she came anywhere near the north-east, so when it was announced she was going to play at the Priory in **Tynemouth** (of all places!?), it sold out pretty quickly. And on the night itself, the suitably gothic splendour of the Priory was packed.

The evening started with LYR, a sort of post-rock, spoken-word thing led by current Poet Laureate, **Simon Armitage**. They were very good. I especially liked 'Never Good With Horses'.

I've not seen Siouxsie since the Finale gig at the **Roundhouse** in London in late 2007 so was really looking forward to this... although having seen some dodgy online videos of how she was sounding these days, I was a little wary. Her voice wasn't exactly lingering around the right notes, shall we say!

Anyway, she bounded onto the Priory stage hiding behind shades and mock-complaining about how light it was. Then her band kicked into 'Voices (On The Air)' – the first time she's ever played it live – and the worries I had about her vocals started to vanish. '**Israel**' was next and although she did wander out of tune a little, everyone was having such a good time I don't think they cared. Predictably, the crowd was most excited for the old Banshees songs such as '**Dear Prudence**', 'Cities In Dust' and 'Christine'.

Siouxsie was quite talkative in between songs and I've never seen someone smile so much onstage. **Ice Queen**, indeed.

The songs flew by and then it was solo hit 'Into A Swan' after which she and the band trooped off for a couple of minutes while everyone went through the charade of calling for the inevitable **encore**. As if she's not coming back on! And it was still light!

The encore started with 'Spellbound' and ended with Siouxsie high-kicking her way through '**Hong Kong Garden**'. Then, having conquered Tynemouth, she was gone... hopefully not for so long this time!



Setlist

Voices (on the Air)
Israel
Arabian Knights
Here Comes That Day
Kiss Them for Me
Dear Prudence
Face to Face
Loveless

Land's End
Cities in Dust
But Not Them
Sin in My Heart
Christine
Happy House
Into a Swan

Encore:
Spellbound
Hong Kong Garden

We got invited to Stock's **yacht** on the Tees Riviera to find out what his plans are for the rest of 2023 and to get to know him a little bit better! (It was a good job I recorded the interview on my phone because after about 5 bottles of **ALDI**'s own premium sparkling wine I can't remember much about it, or how I got home.)

You paid your dues on the Stockton Karaoke circuit. Most notably what is now Dr. McGonigles and The Castle and Anchor. I bet there's a few stories you could tell from your club days. Can you tell us one or two?



This is the captain of your ship, calling!

Well let me tell you, once you can conquer the tough crowds of the Stockton **Karaoke** scene, you'll have no problem playing a local band night in front of a bunch of art college kids who've just recently discovered Bikini Kill. I've seen people escorted out through the window for failing to sing **Chasing Cars** with enough emotion. I remember when I first started making a name for myself it took ages for them to let me have a go. Now I don't even book ahead I just turn up and get on straight away.

You are soon to perform your first concert ever as Stock Image at NE Volume bar. Any butterflies?

I'm a scene veteran. You might not have noticed how long I've been around for as I don't constantly chase attention by switching my musical and dress style to whatever the current **trend** is, although when I started my last band I did **shave** my head and sing about my perceived injustices in the world. Anyway, the only thing that used to make me nervous about gigs before was one of my **band** mates fucking something up or being too scared to play but now I've got rid of them all I'm pretty sure every gig I do will be life changing for all who **witness** them.

You are starting to garner a loyal LGBTQIA+ fanbase, why do you think that is?

I've heard a lot of people from the LGBTQIA+ community complain about bands made up of straight white males playing **indie** music, and it's taken me a while but I agree with them now. I've seen some LGBTQIA+ music promoters on **Instagram** and their nights look wild. Way more interesting than anything anyone I know is doing. There is a lack of genuine danger in the local scene and I think that's probably the best place to find it. Also I've got a pink suit so I think that aligns me with them too.

Who amongst your local contemporaries do you enjoy listening to most? And who just really get on your tits?

██████████ are the best north east band around at the minute. **Done In** have been begging me to go to one of their gigs for ages but they sound dreadful so don't think I'll be bothering. How anyone can like that shite is beyond me.

I think the people who are supposed to be nurturing new talent in the **Tees** music scene spent too long putting the same old bands on over and over and now that those acts have either got too big to bother playing here or have all moved on with their lives they're finding it hard to fill the void. A lot of the **council** funded venues don't put local gigs on any more, but it does seem like there's a new wave of people and venues slowly rebuilding the Tees music scene, and as someone said to me once these things do tend to come in waves. I feel sorry for all the old bands who tried so hard to compromise their sound to fit into the local scene and now when they look back they'll have realised they spent all that effort making **middle** of the road **indie** for absolutely no reason.

Where's your favourite place to get away from the hustle and bustle of being a pop performer and have a bit of you time?

There is **no** me time! Everything I do, I do it for the local music community. I feel what I'm doing is really **important** and needs to be supported by everyone. The strong messages in my songs are the only way to make any kind of change in this world, so if you want to be on the right side of history, you'd better buy a Stock Image **T-shirt**.

WHAT'S ON - NOVEMBER & DECEMBER

DIRGE'S TOP PICKS FOR THE COMING MONTHS

SAT 11TH NOV - G. AGE OF NOTHING/STOCK IMAGE/CHUMP WRECKER, CAFE ETCH, BORO

WED 15TH NOV - BEN FOLDS, SAGE, GATESHEAD

WED 15TH NOV - A CERTAIN RATIO, SAGE, GATESHEAD

FRI 17TH NOV - SPACE, TOWN HALL, BORO

SAT 18TH NOV - THE SISTERS OF MERCY, NX, NEWCASTLE

SAT 18TH NOV - MARCO MENDOZA/THE MAGINOT LINE, FORUM, DARLINGTON

FRI 24TH NOV - THE CHARLATANS, CITY HALL, NEWCASTLE

THU 30TH NOV - HEAVEN 17, BOILER SHOP, NEWCASTLE

SAT 2ND DEC - KILLER RHAPSODY, GEORGIAN THEATRE, STOCKTON

SAT 2ND DEC - RECORD FAIR, INDOOR MARKET, DARLINGTON

SAT 2ND DEC - MADNESS, UTILITA ARENA, NEWCASTLE

WED 13TH DEC - HOLY BRAILLE/ANALOG BLOOD/SICK ROBOT, FORUM, DARLINGTON

SAT 16TH DEC - PUNK FESTIVAL FEATURING 999 AND BOILERMAKER, FORUM, DARLINGTON

WED 20TH DEC - OCEAN COLOUR SCENE, CITY HALL, NEWCASTLE



DAVE'S DISCS

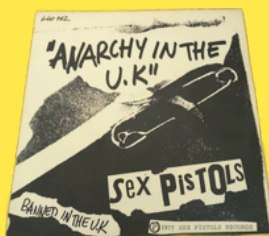
WE ASK LOCAL MUSIC MAKER AND AVID VINYL COLLECTOR DAVE C (AKA EL SOMBRERON) TO SHARE HIS FAVOURITE RECENT VINYL PURCHASE. THIS MONTH...

IT'S ANARCHY IN THE UK BY SEX PISTOLS. A GREAT DEBUT SINGLE. I'M A BIG PISTOLS FAN AND IT WAS ONLY A TENNER FROM THE BOOT SALE SHOP ON NORTH ROAD, WHICH I THOUGHT WAS A DECENT PRICE FOR THE CONDITION IT WAS IN. THE SLEEVE ISN'T EXACTLY VIBRANT BUT I LOVE THE B-SIDE 'I WANNA BE ME'. TUNE IN FOR MORE DAVE'S DISCS NEXT TIME!

LABEL - EMI

YEAR - 1976

B-SIDE - I WANNA BE ME



@theravenofgenetix1979

ROSE OBITUARIES

SOUND IT OUT RECORDS (Record Store) 1998 - 2023

BERNIE MARSDEN (Musician) 1951 - 2023

MICHAEL PARKINSON (Presenter) 1935 - 2023

JAMIE REID (Artist) 1947 - 2023

WILLIAM FRIEDKIN (Film Director) 1935 - 2023

SINEAD O'CONNOR (Musician) 1966 - 2023

JANE BIRKIN (Actor) 1946 - 2023

ROBBIE ROBERTSON (Musician) 1943 - 2023

MICHAEL GAMBON (Actor) 1940 - 2023

RUDOLPH ISLEY (Musician) 1939 - 2023

BOBBY CHARLTON (Footballer) 1937 - 2023



IN THE DOCK WITH...



GLAM HOCK

glamhock.bandcamp.com



I BUMPED INTO MY OLD FRIEND WAYNE COULSON AKA **GLAM HOCK** IN A PUBLIC TOILET SO I DECIDED TO QUESTION HIM ABOUT HIS LATEST ENDEAVOURS.

How's life by the sea? Does it provide you with some decent inspiration?

Indirectly yeah. I use the beaches quite a lot but I don't look at the sea and feel inspired. I do like it here though because there's plenty of space. If you need solitude, it's a 10 minute drive away and that's reassuring. For me, inspiration usually comes from within, from thoughts I've got rattling around my head. Living here gives me the space and the quiet I need to explore them.

What's the scene like in the North Shields/Tynemouth area?

I'm not sure to be honest. I work with more artists globally than locally. That Sam Fender lad grew up a few streets from here. He's not my cup of shit though. More impressively, Neil Tennant (Pet Shop Boys) is from here. As far as the current scene goes though, I'm afraid I can't help you.

I've been lucky enough to hear the demos for your new album. How is it all coming together and when can we expect to hear it?

It's coming together really nicely, thank you. 10 track album. 15 songs written and demoed. The track listing is pretty much decided. I've just got to record the final takes on everything then put it away for a few months and finally mix it. It's gonna be out in spring/summer 2024.

It's been a total joy to write. I've unlocked something recently that's made writing so much more enjoyable. I'm much more unapologetic with my lyric writing too, which makes it easier (and better). The working title for the album is 'The Witching Hour' but that could change. I'm playing with a few titles. Believ it or not, this will actually be my first full length album. I've only ever put out EPs before.

What do you find more fulfilling, mixing and mastering for others or Glam Hock?

That's a brilliant question. When it's your own material and you get to the mixing stage, you've already spent a lot of time with it, writing and recording the song. So you get used to the way it sounds in that certain state and any changes you make can sound abnormal. This is something I used to really struggle with. For example, you can get used to the sound of an out of tune guitar if you listen to it enough times. It's almost like you can't hear the song anymore and therefore can't tell what sounds good and what sounds bad. I'm able to work around that now though and when I feel demoitis kicking in, I'm happy to put it down for the day.

Working on somebody else's stuff is great, they have a vision and you're bringing it to life with them. If it's a well produced and well performed recording, I'd say I find mixing for others to be a more fulfilling experience. You have to leave your ego at the door though. What sounds good to me might not be what the artist has in mind for their song. So there can be a lot of back and forth. So the short answer is I love doing both but probably prefer to mix other artist's songs over my own.

What was the last gig you went to?

Sleaford Mods at Northumbria Uni in 2017. I feel uncomfortable in crowds so that makes going to gigs something I struggle with. I can't concentrate on the band, I'm too distracted by all the energetic people near me and worried about how I'm gonna get out. Yeah I know, it's shit isn't it? And people often don't believe me. But, I'm just being honest. Maybe I'll overcome it one day. I hope I do.

Anything coming up before the end of the year you'd like to tell us about?

Yeah boi!! I'm putting a track out in mid-November. A first glimpse of my new album. I'll keep you posted. £100 for a decent review in Dirge is actually very reasonable.

I'm attending a producer & home recording event with The Self Recording Band Podcast in Hamburg this month. Working on some stuff with them and meeting like minded folk. I got a pair of Adidas Hamburg trainers especially for it, so... I'm also considering starting up my own podcast in the not too distant future. But this is still in the planning phase so there ain't much I can tell you about it yet.

What's your favourite scary movie?

John Carpenter's The Thing. It's got such a cool vibe. I read recently that it was a flop when it was released. I think it came out when E.T. was still on at the cinemas so it got overlooked.



ON THE ROAD WITH Ballet La Grana

By **Holly Cuthbert**

Three times now I've been to see the wonderful **Mexican dance** group Ballet La Grana, who came to the UK to take part in the Billingham International Folklore festival. My interest for Mexico began years ago, especially for Día de los Muertos (the Day of the Dead). As soon as I heard the group were dancing at the legendary **Preston Park** museum, I was practically the first to turn up. We hadn't even got through the gates when I began hearing the beautiful Mariachi Rosales band in full swing. After we all checked in, we followed the sweet sound of the music.

And there they were, the troupe all dancing in the **Victorian street** with their stunning outfits and colourful Day of the Dead makeup. Everyone formed a circle around them and some of the dancers picked people out to dance with them. Me and my siblings even gave it a go. One young fellow showed off his rope skills, very good I may say! I was blown away by how beautiful everything was. They didn't hesitate for their pictures to be taken with the public either and they let the audience try their sombreros on. For the grand finale, the dancers and musicians all went to the front of the museum to perform. At the end, they once again danced with anyone from the audience who wanted to join in, including me.



A week later, they were appearing locally in **Darlington market square**. I would have been an idiot to miss it! This time they had alternate outfits and no makeup as they were doing the traditional dancing of their area, which is **Autlán, Jalisco**. After a couple of soundchecks, they took to the stage and I knew this was going to be another brilliant show. They began with their tap shoes, venturing off into multiple dancing styles. Such as a rather aggressive one, when the lads playfully pushed each other out of the way to dance with the girl, dancing along to the drum beat of the **Chirimía** band. There was also a cowboy theme with one of the dancers riding a fake horse, another was twirling a rope, and all the dancers were wearing traditional cowboy outfits. Another dance involved the señoritas slowly moving with candles on their heads, as the band sang a mournful song. It fascinated me. The vibrant colours and swaying of their dresses was like watching fireworks. At the end the señores all came out in a traditional outfit known as guayabera shirts and held their hats up high which made for a fantastic display. I'd say that was my favourite show yet. I bumped into two of them on my way to the bus. They were exploring the town (**Primark** judging by their carrier bags). Even though we couldn't speak each others' language very well, we had a pleasant conversation.

The last performance I attended was the Day of the Dead spectacular on the open-air arena stage in **Billingham**. That night was the closest I've felt to being in Mexico itself. The first thing that I did was admire the stage. Above it flew the traditional **papel picado** bunting which covers the towns of Mexico around the time of the Day of the Dead. It even had an altar (**Ofrenda**) dedicated to one of the festival's organisers who had died which was a thoughtful touch. The lights were so vibrant they nearly blinded me, in a good way. The mariachis took their places, and after an introduction, on the dancers came. There was a **Coco** the movie theme in the mix. One dressed as **Coco** and they danced to the well-known songs, all gathering together at its finale, holding candles and mini Spanish guitars. Later, several members of the ballet dressed as **Aztecs** and danced quite intensely to the haunting sound of panpipes. After four breath-taking performances that night, I was rather sad when it all came to an end. The dancers bowed for the audience and were even so kind as to let the public take final photos of them gathered together on stage.



I'd never really had an interest in dancing, until I saw Ballet La Grana. They've given me a totally different outlook. These were the best 3 days of my life so far, I'd say. If you have an interest in Mexico and its culture, watch out for Ballet la Grana Beatriz Ramirez de Autlán Jalisco! Or check them out online on Facebook and Instagram. **Hasta luego!**

DIRGE POSTER



Vincent Price getting a light for his **tab** from a **skeleton**.