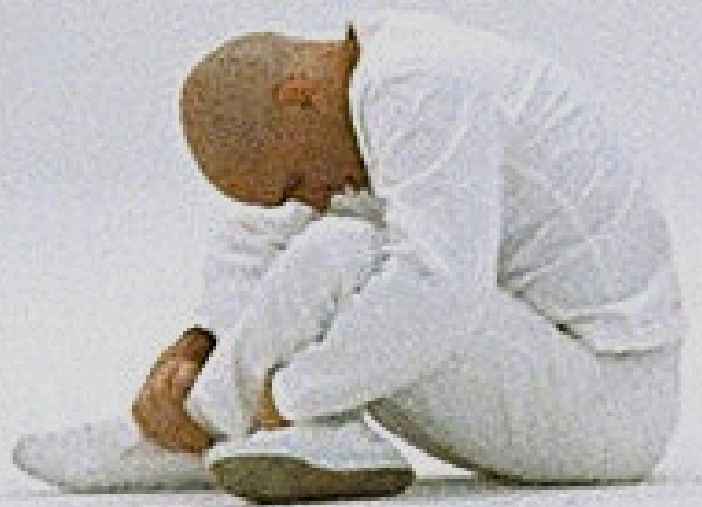


DIRGE



DIRGE

noun

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

Issue 7

May 2024

Hiya, readers! How are you doing? This year has been a little bit mental so far, hasn't it? January felt like it lasted for 3 years and since then 2024's flown over! We're nearly half way through it!

Well, there've been some interesting times here at DIRGE H.Q over the last couple of months, not least the 'Reviewgate' scandal. Just to clear that up a little bit, there was no 'feud' on my part with the other party, I just wanted to highlight an issue that I thought (and still do think) is rather unjust. Also, if you aren't happy with a review you've received of your band tell me, and we can talk about it. I don't bite!

The obituaries section is slightly less intense than last issue's, thankfully, but there're still a few notable entries. It was a terrible shame to lose Steve Harley of Cockney Rebel, who wrote one of the best songs of all time with 'Make Me Smile (Come Up And See Me)' in 1975, not to mention Mike 'Mellotron' Pinder from The Moody Blues who brought the sound of the Mellotron to the masses in the mid 1960s.

With one thing or another it's been a real test to get this issue out (I know right? #inboxmehun) but I'm sure glad I managed to have it finished by deadline day. I couldn't let DIRGE's loyal, long suffering readership down!

So, sit back in your favourite chair and settle down with May's DIRGE. You'll be ever so glad you did! **R.C**

Compression Session live image - **Fraser Jennison**

The Stranglers live images - **@dweddlephotography**

 @dirgemag

 darlodirge@gmail.com

 facebook.com/darlodirge

 @darlodirge

Cover Image -
Robert Duvall in
1971's THX-1138

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

APPEARING SOMEWHERE INSIDE...

THE BATTLE OF THE TRIBUTE BANDS

YUKIO MISHIMA

SUICIDE

LONDON CALLING

THE STRANGLERS

DRAGGED UP

KINGLSEY DOES COUNT IN FIVES

SPECKY CULT

THE BURBS

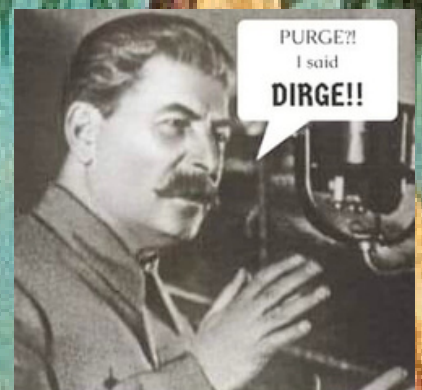
THE ZONE OF INTEREST

AMELIA COBURN

1970'S SCI-FI

DEFINITELY MAYBE

END CREDITS



www.darlodirge.co.uk

THE LAIR OF LOCAL

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



AMI LEIGH - DARK SOUL

Ami certainly likes to keep busy. If the Darlo singer-songwriter isn't gigging she's undoubtedly in the studio working on a new release!

'Dark Soul' is another of Ami's non-acoustic numbers. Actually, it looks like Darlo's premier Trip Hop Duo 'Moss' might have a competitor here! It's a listenable tune with some Mellotron style strings on it so that's a welcome bonus. It's too long though. Six minutes is for songs like Bohemian Rhapsody or Paranoid Android. **3.3/5**

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

SICK ROBOT - WARLOCK

Liam White, the prolific producer from Peterlee has returned with yet more eloquently orchestrated electronics.

It's glitchy, it's sometimes discordant, sometimes melodic but always enjoyable!



This E.P marks a change in direction for the ill automaton, employing much more varied timbres of sound and samples to create a piece of work that's very much like a soundtrack in places (the song 'Hexenmeister' in particular), but with Liam's usual well-constructed beats. **3.6/5**

[instagram.com/sickrobot80](https://www.instagram.com/sickrobot80)

A NATION RISING - LIKE NOBODY'S WATCHING

A Nation Rising is Simon Lee from Darlo, a studio based solo project no less. Let's give it a whirl!

Well, this really is driving music in the classic sense. Think 80's soft-rock that you stick on your 8-track cartridge player and then drive down the A66. Simon has really nailed that big hair rock sound. The programmed drums sound natural and it's got some gnarly guitar within with plenty of pinched harmonics. It's not the best thing I've ever heard but it sure is good fun.

3.4/5



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

J.W DARWIN - JENNY MOVES SLOW

I recently saw Joe at The Forum, just him and his acoustic guitar, so I was interested to see what his studio songs were like. What a stroke of luck when J.W emailed in for a SOLICITED review!

It's a catchy little choon. In fact, I've had it in my head quite a bit since I heard it. 'Jenny Moves Slow' is a poppy love song in the style of Passenger, who, incidentally I can't fucking stand. But, J.W has written a good song here, and he seems like a dead nice bloke so I'm not going to hold that against the lad. **3.4/5**

[instagram.com/j.w.darwin](https://www.instagram.com/j.w.darwin)

NORTHERN HOSPITALITY - LUST FOR LIVING

Here comes Johnny Yen again. Ah, wait... That's Lust For Life, innit?

It's another raucous one by the Pools bunch. And their singles seem to be getting better with each release, which is how it should be. Honing their craft and becoming more accomplished songwriters at every offering.

The mix has a lot of punch, the chorus is bolshy and in your face. Gaz's vocals are like a more nasal Liam Gallagher which can become a bit annoying after a while and the song could have been a bit shorter.

The chorus successfully carries 'Lust For Living' though and if it were a bit shorter and purged itself of those unneeded pentatonic guitar solos it would have got a higher rating. **3.5/5**

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

DAVE TOMBS - LET THERE BE LIGHT

'Let There Be Light' clocks in at a rather spun-out seven minutes which is a little bit long for me. I think the quality of the bass line is what kept me interested, however. It could have been a quarter of the length and been a lot more impactful.

I enjoyed this one, though. D.T has provided a rad bassline and breaky, sampled drums that are reminiscent of mid 1990's Depeche Mode, with hints of trip-hop and electronica. I shall look forward to his next release. **3.5/5**

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

JAMES LEONARD HEWITSON - SHE MAKES THE RAIN GO AWAY

I'm not quite sure what to say about this track. The less said about the video the better though so I'll try my best to describe the track itself.

It's a tastefully written pseudo-love song which although it has some elements that make the track attractive, doesn't quite hit the mark. It has a dryness to it that doesn't keep me engaged. If it was shorter, snappier and with a spacier, dreamier production I think I would have been on board a lot more. I haven't listened to the album yet, though, which is out on Butterfly Effect, now! **3.3/5**

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

SMILEY PEOPLE - CASANOVA'S DAY OFF

Mark from Smiley People sent me his new album called Toffee Apple. But alas, he sent individual MP3s and I couldn't be arsed to download them all, so I asked him what the best song was and he replied 'Casanova's Day Off'.

Wait a minute, I know that chord sequence from somewhere! Ah, that's it, 'Maybe She'll Come Back' by The Zombies. A classic song.

Casanova's Day Off isn't quite as well written, but it is quite charming in its own unique way. The production is child-like and naïve, and also extremely dry without any discernible reverb or spaciousness of any kind.

Mark obviously enjoys making music, so good luck to him with the album, which is out soon on all platforms. **3/5**



[@smileypeople](https://www.instagram.com/smileypeople)

MOUSES - FIENDS

One of my favourite documentaries is Werner Herzog's 'My Best Fiend', which covered the German director's tumultuous friendship with the crazed actor Klaus Kinski. Would this new Mouses song become a firm favourite too?



It's actually a decent garage tune (as in garage-rock, not Artful Dodger), which reminded me of early The Strokes, complete with a wacky music video filmed in one of my favourite local seaside destinations, the glorious Seaton Carew.

Although I've got nothing negative to really say about it, I'd describe Fiends as a single use track. One that I probably wouldn't listen to again. Not because it's bad, just because it's really not my thing. **3.3/5**

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

GRAPEVINE - LIKE AN OASIS

I bloody love Oasis! But this is 'Like an Oasis' so I'll just move on to the review.

The vocal is rather sharp, especially when Will takes a breath before he sings a line. It becomes a bit grating after a while to be honest. Sorry, Mr Vine.

There's an 80's era Steve Winwood synth solo that's pretty rad and the chorus is catchy enough, but it all sounds rather flat and a little bit 'try-hard' like Will's trying his best to fit a certain musical mould.

All in all though, it's a listenable slice of synthy pop. **3.1/5**

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

JODIE NICHOLSON - WHAT IF I

Jodie sings like pretty much every other indie-pop singer of the moment, with the over - pronunciation of certain vowels and consonants. It can prove tiresome, one of those tropes people look back on in twenty years and say 'ah yeah, the 2020's. Where singers did that weird lyrical delivery'. The music is pleasant enough, though. When it finally gets going it's an adequate listening experience, but by that point the song has all but ended.

3.2/5



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

KIM RALLS - MOLLY CASS

Evocative folk from the Teesside troubadour. Is that a frisson of synth I can hear on the chorus? Perhaps a musical saw? No. In fact I heard from the horse's mouth that it's actually a slide guitar played with an e-bow. Kim's voice is sounding better than ever too, guided by his very ably finger-picked guitar work.

It's well worth a listen if you're a hardcore folky or simply want to hear what a slide guitar and e-bow sound like. **3.4/5**

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

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WEATHERSHIP - THE SWIMMER

Aqua-based ambience from Weathership. It's a song that reminds me of late 90s pop in the vein of Embrace, Athlete and Shed Seven (my apologies if any of those bands are offensive comparisons for the members of Weathership).

To me 'The Swimmer' does border slightly on the prosaic, but just about manages not to fall over the parapet into the oceanic depths of humdrum by way of lush harmonies, contemporary, reverb soaked drums, understated strings and the capable, melodically on point singing of J.P Riggall.

The song has been produced and engineered really well with plenty of space in the mix which really adds to the atmosphere of 'The Swimmer'.

I believe the 7" single released via Butterfly Effect sold out quite quickly but you can still buy the digital version on Weathership's Bandcamp.

3.8/5



weareweathership.bandcamp.com



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MONTE GRISA - RESURRECTION

The Mona Grisa describe their sound as a "wall of sonic misery, which is influenced by life being generally shit." And I can't really argue with that, but is their debut the 'full monty' or a little bit 'Uncle Monty'?

The opener 'A confession' is essentially the Doctor Who theme sang by Ian Curtis. It's definite 'Closer' era Joy Division, there's no getting away from that fact. That said, I dug it.

'Deep' (unfortunately not a cover of the East-17 banger) is slightly more up-tempo than the first track, The live bass works effectively with the accompanying machine drums.

'Regression' sounds like it could be from New Order's first album. The chorus makes a welcome change from the dirge of the verses and provides a refreshing contrast, complete with wall of sound, delayed guitars.

The closing tune 'Shotgun' is a fitting way to end the E.P with a continuation of the themes already explored on the preceding three tracks.

I enjoyed listening to this debut E.P, though it did seem to almost slavishly follow the tropes of the 80's goth sound, with the fusion of the live bass, programmed drums, delayed guitars and Curtis/Murphy style vocals.

The band play 'Little Buildings' in Newcastle on June 2nd, supporting Social Youth Cult and will cost you a mere £6. 3.6/5

[instagram.com/monte.grisa](https://www.instagram.com/monte.grisa)

AMELIA COBURN - BETWEEN THE MOON & THE MILKMAN

I've really enjoyed Amelia's last couple of singles, my only gripe being the 'lower class' accent she employs in her music! (Jokes!) I am a staunch advocate of local dialects in songs, as you probably know if you're an avid read of this 'ere rag.

Ten works of atmospheric, soul-stirring neo-Northeast folk which are produced to a high standard using a myriad of stringed instruments (including Coburn's trademark Ukulele), percussion and keyboards.

'Between The Moon and The Milkman' is both nostalgic and synchronously contemporary. It's lyrically very evocative too, written with the naturalness of a seasoned pro.

I can't really find anything to moan about on this album. There are a couple of filler tracks, but there are on most albums. I'm not a big folk fan by any stretch of the imagination, but this is one of the best offerings from the Northeast for a while, of any genre.

For this humble reviewer, the standout tunes on 'Between the Moon and The Milkman' are 'When the Tide Rolls In', 'See Saw' & 'Sandra'.

Also, there's a fun music video to 'Sleepy Town' featuring the local acting powerhouse Bill Fellows that's well worth a butcher's hook. 4.2/5



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



DIRGE POP CHARTS



- 1.) DRAGGED UP - HIGH ON RIPPLE 👑
 - 2.) AMELIA COBURN - MOON & THE MILKMAN
 - 3.) STOCK IMAGE - MODERN LIVING
 - 4.) WEATHERSHIP - THE SWIMMER
 - 5.) MONTE GRISA - RESSURECTION
- SICK ROBOT - WARLOCK



SMILEY PEOPLE - CASANOVA'S DAY OFF (Sorry, mate)

#DIRGEOFFICIALCHARTS

BILLBOARD 100

REVIEW STOCK IMAGE - MODERN LIVING

Stock Image is unashamedly influenced by the 1980's, both musically and visually. Some might say, on the surface at least, to the point of cliché. But, there is nothing wrong with a bit of the old pastiche as long as it's accompanied by a side order of self-awareness and an added frisson of fun.

The E.P kicks off with a mini symphony titled 'Overture', which encapsulates all the themes of the following songs on the E.P into one bitesize, orchestral interlude. So there's really no need to listen to the rest of it. Just kidding!

'5-4-Me' is a funky little lament about exploitation in the workplace. It's full to the brim with hummable melodies and memorable lines. It would certainly get the dancefloor of Dr McGonigle's in Stockton up and dancing till the early morn!

As would 'Modern Living', a soul infused cautionary tale about the perils of too much booze, a song that resonates with me no end. 'Modern Living' is music for music's sake. Fun and produced to a stellar standard.

'What's My Name' is a banger too, drawing to a close a polished and engaging debut E.P.

You can see Stock performing songs from Modern Living at the launch show at Café Etch on May 18th, alongside Darlo lot Chumpwrecker and Moss.



facebook.com/stockimagemusic

4.1/5

REVIEW DRAGGED UP - HIGH ON RIPPLE

I love Ripples, me. Silky smooth chocolate by the Mars corporation that tops Cadbury's Flake. I can't say, however that I've ever attempted to get high on one before, but you know what these Scots are like, deep fried Mars Bars, Haggis and the satanic beverage that is Whisky (shudders).

Scotland has had its fair share of stellar musical exports over the years too, with Glasgow's Draggled up being one of the best of the last decade. On 'High on Ripple' the five piece have managed to conjure a cornucopia of cosmic genre contorting confusion. It has ups and downs, it has space, it has flurries where there's lots to take in. It's ethereal, but grounded. An album of many facets.

'Bible Study' is a case in point, demonstrated by Pixies-esque dynamics, 'two slightly distorted guitars' (Tubular Bells reference) and lush harmonies.

And just who is the eponymous Professor Boo Boo? They should make a video for this one, with a plot and everything, it'd go down great. It's a doom-laden nugget of psycho-horror, that's for sure.

Lisa's voice is an unassuming entity, but it's melodic and comforting, akin to Helen Marnie from Ladytron. There's also spoken word on the album, punctuated sometimes by lullaby-like vocal melodies.

'The Draggled Up sound' demonstrated on 'High on Ripple' negates any real comparison to their contemporaries.

As Forrest Gump once said, "High on Ripple is like a box of chocolates, you never know what you're going to get".

I recommend that you buy a large bottle of Buckfast, get this record, put it on your turntable and dig the music. Or even better see them live when they come to Sunderland on May 5th.



facebook.com/draggedup

4.3/5

NO RIPCORD - HELLO CURATE

Darlo newbies 'No Ripcord' have released a strong mission statement with 'Hello Curate'. Contained within the track's 3 minute runtime are backing vocals that channel early 90's pop-punkers Greenday, a gnarly bass tone and feverish drums accompanied by a guitarist with some good ideas but a little bit too much widdly soloing for my taste. It's a promising start to the band's musical journey! **DARLO! 3.5/5**

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REVIEW

LIVE & LOCAL

THE FORUM, DARLO

Kirsten is doing a fab job of putting these monthly originals gigs on. Have I been to every one of them? No. Because why would I go to see a distinctly average neo-grunge band simply in the name of 'supporting live music'?

The ones I have been to have been wicked. And this instalment was a bit of alright, too. The turn out was better than usual, the bands must've brought a few punters down, especially Falchion, the headline band. I went down mainly to see my pal's group Compression Session. I like what they do.

First into the fray was **J.W Darwin**. I told him his stage name sounds like he should be a romance novelist whose books end up in the Boyes' bargain bin. He informed me it was generated by A.I. So that's alright then. Darwin did an equal quota of original and cover versions. Joe has a strong, distinctive voice and his tunes are memorable ones (like his latest single 'Jenny Moves Slow') while his covers are performed with a relatively unique spin.

The filling in tonight's sonic sandwich was **Comp Sesh**. A very impressive live entity with live looping which wasn't played to a click track, making it even more admirable. They obviously spend a lot of time honing their live show and I'd recommend you go and see them. Check out their song 'Dreamtime'. It's a future local classic! Their set was one of my favourite local performances I've seen for a while (and I'm not just saying that because Dan the drummer is my bum chum.)

Unfortunately I missed Falchion's set as I was arguing with Stu from Compression Session about conspiracy theories in the bar area.

Sorry **Falchion**. I'll catch you next time.



Stu from Compression Session

Twas a good evening, this. If you like even one band on the 'Live & Local' monthly line up, try and get down. It's only four squid and what else would you be doing on a Thursday evening apart from wanking into ALDI's own Kleenex, watching old repeats of Dawson's Creek and crying your eyes out.

Ah. Just me then.

4.1/5

SUICIDE - SUICIDE (1977)

A RETROSPECTIVE

Suicide's debut release is an album of extremes. Flitting between sleaze, melodic and romantic innocence, dystopia and downright terror.

Direct from the filthy streets of Harlem, New York City, instrumentation on this album is sparse. Martin Rev made the best of a cheap home organ and a clapped out rhythm machine with beats that were usually out of time with the melody. All sewn up with Alan Vega's crazed, Elvis Presley tinged spoken word, heavily doused in tape echo to exhilarating effect.

Recording took a mere four days, ensuring that the resulting album was as raw and direct as it could possibly be and in keeping with the N.Y punk credo that this release is a product of.

For me, the highlights of the album are 'Rocket USA', 'Cheree', 'Ghost Rider' and 'Frankie Teardrop'. The latter tells a demented



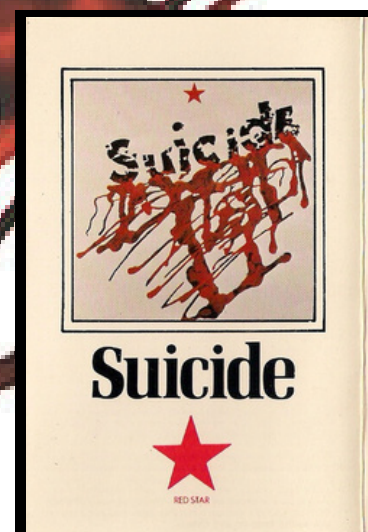
Martin Rev & Alan Vega

narrative about a mentally damaged Vietnam war veteran who kills his wife and baby. The story within this song inspired the screenplay for Troma's 1984 B-Movie 'Combat Shock', which you've gotta see!

Their second album is brilliant too, but sales were awful, and Suicide faded into relative obscurity...

Until (for some strange reason) Suicide began to be featured on television adverts. Both 'Cheree' and 'Dream Baby Dream' are now heard regularly on ad-breaks to promote perfume, of all things. Well, who would have ever thought it?

So, if you've not heard this album and it sounds like your kinda thing, put your headphones on and marvel at the sound of Suicide.



Original 1977 Advert

New York 'No Wave' personality Lydia Lunch is performing at The Cluny in Newcastle on Friday June 14th, 'playing the music of Suicide'.

INTERVIEW

END CREDITS



You recently lost a member. He didn't die or anything though, thankfully. Are you looking for a replacement or are you settled as a threesome?

Although it was hilarious to act like he had died, Adam is very much still alive and is doing well for himself which we can't help but respect. We've started playing with another guitarist, long time friend of the band, Joe Bradford. He's not an official member with 'Provenance' being his main band. Joe's been a massive help, live and in terms of song writing with me (Cameron) as we just gel really well, creatively. I also find the way I write is made for two guitarists, as much as we'd love to be the next Jimi Hendrix Experience.

Would you ever consider getting some live synth or keys in for shows? I can hear some used on some of your tracks to good effect.

It's funny you should mention that, because for Stockton Calling, Simon Pooley, Eddy's father, a wicked keyboardist, as heard in our song 'No More', joined us on stage. We're yet to search for a permanent member, however we think it would not only create better performances but also inspire us to try new things and hopefully inspire our fans too. But being in a band is a big commitment to just suddenly jump into as well as the fact the three of us combined can be unbearably dry humoured, so there's no time frame on when that day would be.

Are you a boozing band or stay at home, smoke wacky backy and write songs kinda people? Where do you like to drink when you're out?

The whole band loves to have a pint, especially at the Porky Pint in Billingham. That's our local where we pretty much always end up post-gig. However, I would say the music comes first, on a gig day you'd typically find Cameron and Eddy drinking green tea and water rather than a pint until after the set to preserve his voice. God, Cam won't even drink milk, believing it affects his vocal performance, which isn't very rock n roll but it's all for the sake of the music. We coin ourselves as 'Psychedelic' in certain aspects which is of course seen as music one would listen to high, but I can confirm that when the songs are written we are all sober. It's hard enough to focus as it is, haha.

In the words of The Zombies. Do you think this will be your year?

Well, "The Way I feel Inside" is certainly optimistic. To look where we've come from a few years back or even six months ago, we're still going strong, always improving and reaching new heights even after moving three hundred miles apart for university. We have three singles lined up for the coming months (and bangers at that if that's not too immodest to claim). Our first, Outsiders, was released on the 5th April, and we're playing Soundwave Festival and we just played Stockton Calling. I think the main point to remember is, it's not a straight path and there'll be ups and downs but to quote a friend, Billy Smith, "patience is key", and I couldn't agree more. We look forward to seeing what else 2024 brings.

SPOTLIGHT

WILTED ROSE TATTOO CLUB

I GOT IN TOUCH WITH THE LADS FROM **WRTC** AND ASKED FOR THE LOWDOWN ON THEIR NEW STUDIO!

"Wilted Rose Tattoo Club is an appointment only tattoo studio nestled in the heart of Darlington town centre.

We opened two years ago with the aim of creating a safe space which is a relaxed, clean and comfortable environment for anyone wishing to get tattooed.

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If you're ever considering a tattoo but don't know where to start, give us a message via our Insta accounts and we can help get your tattoo journey started!"

@wiltedrosetattooclub
@jp_tattooer
@miguel.Dela.Cruz





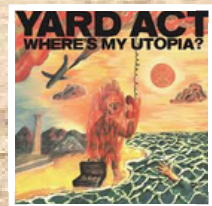
THIS MONTH WE HAVE KINGSLEY HALL FROM BENEFITS TO GUIDE US THROUGH HIS TOP FIVE ALBUMS IN THE WHOLE WIDE WORLD.



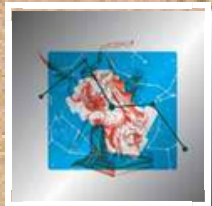
QUEEN - HOTSPACE (1982) I listen to Queen more than any other band and I honestly don't know why. They're amazing and terrible at the same time but I love them so much it hurts. Up until recently I was very much a 'Greatest Hits 1 is their best album' kinda guy but through lockdown I delved into deepdive podcasts about them and was introduced to albums I didn't even know existed. Hot Space is one such album. It's absolutely ludicrous, jumps from genre to genre on every track, critically mauled for decades, cruelly blamed for almost destroying their pre-Live Aid career, and magnificently disjointed. You can hear the egos battling against each other in the songs as Freddie and John want to push into hedonistic funk and disco, Roger plumps for cool new wave, and Brian, as usual, just wants to rock. Plus, there's obviously bucketfuls of coke flying about. It's wild to think that the same band that came up with Bohemian Rhapsody less than seven years later recorded something so fantastically naff as Body Language. Helluva bass line though.



YARD ACT - WHERE'S MY UTOPIA (2024) Cards on the table, I absolutely love this band. I love their ethos, their work rate, their humour, their ambition, their humility, their trench coats, their weirdness, their self-deprecation, their energy, their ability to make a magnificently odd record, put it out on a major label, and get it in the proper pop charts. To me, they're a British Flaming Lips or Beck, their songs have concepts and storytelling in them that would make most other songwriters run a mile. Where's My Utopia is a total triumph from start to finish, jubilant but bizarre, and in "Blackpool Illuminations" they have a work of heart warming pure genius. National treasures.



HANNAH PEEL - MARY CASIO : JOURNEY TO CASSIOPEIA (2017) If I had a weekday off from work, I'd walk into town to go to Sound It Out in Stockton, browse through the records and have a chat with Tom, the wonderfully charming and deeply missed owner of the greatest record shop in the world. He knew about the music I liked - the bands I'd been in, my goth tendencies, my love for Queen - he knew everything. He was my very own algorithm, hell, he was half of Teesside's algorithm. Anyway, every time I'd go in, I'd plonk a tatty old copy of the Flash soundtrack on the counter, and he'd tell me to stop buying terrible records. I'd ask him to recommend me something instead, Mary Casio is one of the many recommendations he gave me. It's an unbelievably beautiful piece of work, one of those amazing records that properly transports you to another realm. Sci-fi, electronica, drones, brass bands, a mirrored sleeve - basically all the best things in life etched onto a piece of vinyl.



FRANKIE & THE HEARTSTRINGS - HUNGER (2011) Every now and then a band from the north east comes along with a special kind of invention and creativity that just fills you with joy, pride and hope for the future. Kenickie, Futureheads, Maximo Park all had "it", but I don't think any act has ever captured the special spark that makes your head fizz more so than Frankie & The Heartstrings. Inside the euphoric dancefloor indie they created is something genuinely magical - it's there in the accent, the ambition, the politics, the brassy storytelling, Dave Harper's belting drums, the cocksure strut of it all. My old band played a few shows with them around the time of this album, and they were just as infectious offstage as they were on. Backstage areas are often dangerous places for egos and bravado, FATHs were the perfect antidote to all of that. Wonderful, beautiful humans. I miss them terribly.



SISTERS OF MERCY - FLOODLAND (1987) Many years ago, I was briefly a proper little goth. Dyed black hair, bangles, leather coat, white face make up, bought incense from goth shops in Whitby, the lot. I don't know how I came across the Sisters of Mercy as they'd pretty much given up making records by the time I got into them. They were a total spent force, not exactly fashionable either, I don't think they ever were. Maybe it was Andrew Eldritch's mirror shades, his silver stick, or perhaps his mad lyrics about things which sounded terribly important but probably weren't, either way, once I heard the colossal bassline of Lucretia My Reflection I was hooked. I could blather on about every single one of the songs on here: the bombast, the epicness of it all, magical goth pomposity. Music can occasionally connect you to your past in the most amazing ways: the songs on Floodland all bring back so many joyous youthful memories of me miserably moping around graveyards, tarot cards, and thinking leather trousers might be a good idea. Reader, I must stress, they are not.



the stranglers

CITY HALL
NEWCASTLE

Prior to this evening I hadn't witnessed The Men in Black since Dave **Greenfield** died in 2020. I wasn't sure of what to expect or how I would feel while watching them as we travelled up to Newcastle to experience the band on their **50th** anniversary tour.

50 years! Such a long and illustrious career the band have enjoyed over the **decades**. And now my son is a big fan, it gave the evening an added dimension.

In fact I more or less assured Dave that he would get to meet **JJ Burnel**, his bass hero. But did I manage to keep my fatherly promise?



Why aye! Before me and my son met up with the other members of our party we headed to the stage door and were informed the band had already sound checked but would be back about 7.15. So I went for a quick pint and we arrived back at the **stage** door. Eventually, a black people carrier came in to view, and, like a mirage, **JJ emerged** and had a chat with us, handed Dave a signature guitar pick and signed his **T shirt**. One happy teenager. Time for the **show!**

One thing was for sure, we were in for plenty of music this evening. A **jam** packed show consisting of two sets with a few surprises thrown in!

For some **strange** reason it was all seating. But, that didn't stop me from standing up and moving about. I even managed to successfully repel some stewards to get down the front for the final song 'No More **Heroes**'.

The sound was top notch, as was the atmosphere and the **musicianship**.



Big and burley

Yes, it was bitter sweet without Greenfield but I'd **definitely** see this line up again. In fact, I will be in **August!**

4.5/5

DEFINITELY MAYBE AT 30

Wow! 30 years since this brit-pop beauty was released. When people say albums like London **Calling** are the best of all time I have a little chuckle to myself, because this is astronomically **superior**. I remember it hazily from '94 as my sister used to play it all the time on her C.D player. I later saw them in **2005** which was an amazing experience.



What I don't get however is how they sacked Tony **McCarroll** (over the phone with a £500k pay off, which, admittedly was a lot of money in 1995) for being a rubbish musician, yet kept **Guigsy** and Bonehead for 1996's **Morning Glory**.

Tony's beats on Defo Maybe **were** bloody solid, no frills beats which is what the album needed. Alan White did a stellar job on Morning **Glory** but nothing McCarroll wasn't capable of. Noel of course did away with Guigsy and **Bonehead** long before I saw them at The Telewest Arena, but that was still a spiritual gig.

Anyway, **happy** birthday Defo Maybe!



A total legend. And JJ Burnel

REVIEW

THE ZONE OF INTEREST

JONATHAN GLAZER HAS POSED A **STARK** JUXTAPOSITION BETWEEN AUSCHWITZ COMMANDANT RUDOLF HOSS' IDYLIC HOME LIFE AND THE **BRUTAL**, INHUMANE ATROCITIES BEING PERPETRATED LITERALLY OVER THE WALL IN THE **INFAMOUS** DEATH CAMP.



4.4/5

Hoss' garden in the film. Overlooked by the imposing camp buildings

While Hoss and his family enjoyed fun filled summer days in their swimming pool and **picturesque** garden, just metres away what turned out to be over a million people met their end, becoming the smoke that billowed out endlessly through the chimneys. **Day** after day, **night** after night.

The screenplay was adapted from Martin **Amis'** novel published in 2014. Amis' book was only loosely based on the life of Hoss, whereas Glazer's film is much more historically accurate. The Zone of **Interest** is a striking movie, both visually and **narratively**, and is definitely up there with **Schindler's** List, Son of Saul and The **Pianist** among the greatest Holocaust movies of all time.

The film boasts a **stellar** German cast, some of whom you may recognise if you are a fan of **German** Film and T.V, including Christian Friedel as Hoss, who appeared in Michael **Haneke's** 'The White Ribbon'.

I would say that the film may be slightly **heavy** going at times if you don't have a huge interest in World War 2 **history**, and it can be quite 'art-housey' in **places**. I took my two oldest children to see it and they weren't quite as impressed by it as I **was**.



Rudolf Hoss

TVIFF WANT YOUR MUSIC VIDEOS!

Here's a link for any of our readers who'd like to submit their music video to The Tees Valley International Film Festival and a 30% discount code (TVIFF30) which will bring the cost of submission to just six quid!. All selected videos will be screened at the festival and the winner of the best music video category will be announced and duly presented with the award at the monolithic closing ceremony at ARC in Stockton in November!

filmfreeway.com/teesvalleyinternationalfilmfestival

tviff.co.uk

REVIEW ANALOGUE BLOOD **HMU**

A 2pm start heralded a **matinee** performance from the Darlo duo, who quite possibly scared the shit out of a few Saturday afternoon **Cornmill** shoppers with their aggressive **brand** of electronic rock. And why the hell not?

On **entering** The Cornmill at around ten past I was **surprised** I couldn't hear the raucous noise of A.B. I was expecting it to be a heck of a lot **louder**. Maybe HMU have had noise complaints from their **neighbours**?

I had fun and the **lads** put on a solid and accomplished performance. It's always good seeing **Ian** live as he always looks like he's having a great **time**.



OBITUARIES

DAVE MYERS (Hairy Biker) 1957- 2024

KARL WALLINGER (Musician) 1957- 2024

STEVE HARLEY (Musician) 1951- 2024

CHRIS CROSS (Musician) 1952- 2024

GEORGE NEWSON (Composer) 1932- 2024

JOE KINNEAR (Manager) 1946- 2024

O.J SIMPSON (Murderer) 1947- 2024

MIKE PINDER (Keyboardist) 1941- 2024

RICHARD TANDY (Keyboardist) 1948- 2024

DUANE EDDY (Guitarist) 1938- 2024

DIRGE'S HEAD CU*T MEETS **ROB** FROM SPECKY CULT!

I ran into Rob from 'The Cult' while doing my big shop in Netto. So I asked him a few questions.



Which of your songs would you put in a time capsule for people in hundreds of years to hear?

Big shop. It's cheeky and catchy but mainly it's our 'Dawn of The Dead'. Our 'mmm, consumerism - discuss' moment. It's also a laugh to play. Who would have thought that shopping would become the highlight of people's weeks? I was very critical but then I turned into that person. This happens a lot in my life, criticism then acceptance, haha!

When was the last time you were moved by a piece of art?

Me and my wife went to Vienna earlier this year. When we were courting we used to go on trips to art galleries. Art is very much her thing, but I wanted to get 'some' so pretended I understood it. We had hit most of the big galleries in Europe and also New York but hadn't hit many Klimt pieces yet, so Vienna it was to be. While we were there we caught Gottfried Helnwein's exhibition. It was so powerful. It freaked me out. Some of his work is scary, some of it so thought provoking and unsettling. It's the size, the detail and obviously the subject matter. It pushes a number of buttons, some of them you might not want pushed.

Where do you take inspiration from for your songs?

People watching, and when people say funny things. We put them in the vault for when a daft song line is needed. Recently, Carol has done a lot of the lyrics. She's dead clever, which isn't as funny as me being deaf as a post and mishearing everyone.

Your new album has gone down great, have you any ideas for the next one?

Yeah. We're trying to calm down because we're very prolific and we had started the next one before we even began recording A Different Kind of Difficult. It has gone down really well. We had a couple of emails from record companies asking us not to release it via their labels but we declined. These days we can release stuff and we aren't beholden to anyone. We were tempted to use one of the letters we received as an album cover which would have been very subversive but also pretty unprofessional. We talk tough though, haha.

Which North East bands do you dig at the moment?

Loads! The North seems to be buzzing with great bands. There are a couple of punk bands - 'Logoz' and 'Undaclass' that are right up our alley. 'Marq Electronica' is cool, too. Martin from Harbour Master Studios where we go to record has just released an album and the songs are awesome. He's a great musician, a great song writer and owns a studio. Yeah, we hate him. 😊



speckycult.com

KU PROMOTIONS PRESENTATION BY ARRANGEMENT WITH X-RAY

THE RIFLES

PLUS SPECIAL GUESTS

SATURDAY 18TH MAY

TICKETS £28.00 ADV | See TICKETS | FATSOMA+ | 14+ WITH ADULT | DOORS 7.00PM

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**PLUGGED
IN TO:
COMMUNITY**

REVIEW

BY DAN HUMBLE

MARTIN FRANCIS TROLLOPE ALBUM LAUNCH

SEA CHANGE, SOUTH SHIELDS



TRACKS ROUND UP

With Sarah Wilson



We're heading towards Summer although you wouldn't think it from the weather! We've been working hard to pull together more exciting music events in Darlo. Our next couple of events are bringing the music to the fabulous Darlington **Library!**

We have a fun filled **BIG Little Gigs** family music event on Sat 11th May. **'That 80's Band'** will be playing an awesome live set of classic 80s bangers from Duran Duran, Wham, Billy Ocean and many more! Dig out your leg warmers and rara skirts and introduce your little ones to classic tunes from a great era in music. Fancy dress is welcome! We have two shows, one at 5pm for the younger ones and one at 7pm for the night owls! Tickets on sale now from Skiddle.

On Fri 12th July we bring **Hark! The Sound Of Stories** back to the library. We will be hosting 'Me Lost Me' and 'Brick Band'. **Me Lost Me** is the project of Newcastle-based artist Jayne Dent who takes influence from folk, art pop, noise, ambient and improvised music. Support comes from **Brick Band** featuring Bridie of acclaimed band Bridie Jackson and The Arbour and viola player Nick Piece.

The live music will be interspersed with literary readings themed around the artists' work for a stunning night that is not to be missed. We will also be welcoming Crafty Merlin's along who will be providing a pop up bar for the evening. Tickets will be available very soon, head over to www.tracksdarlington.co.uk for all the details.

A big thank you to Darlington For Culture, Creative Darlington and Arts Council England for their support. **S.W**

What a lovely, intimate setting for some fine talent. **Amateur Ornithologist** were up first. Full disclosure, I now drum for this band. (I was a fan before I joined and I think they are awesome.)

Tonight's line up was a stripped back quintet set up and they sounded charming. Daniel's voice was as clear and beautiful as ever and the whole ensemble gelled well and sounded great.



They played loads of their best songs. The highlight for me being the sublime 'The Word Is Love' from their new album 'Hide'.

Next up was **Isabel Maria**. She sings tender, haunting songs with passion, punctuated by a hint of nostalgia. A beautiful voice and a talent to keep an eye on for the future. Personally, I think she'd benefit from having a backing band, but she did a great job on her own all the same.

Then came the man of the moment - **Martin Francis Trollope**, playing stripped back versions of songs from his new album 'Found Memories', on guitar with a bass accompaniment. Again, very tender and heart-warming. Some cracking songs, structured and played simply and delivered with cool.



And then finally, on barged the fantastic **Jack Fox**, cutting through the happy and relaxed atmosphere like a maniac whipping a cold towel on our warm and slightly drunk backsides.

His hilarious and bombastic Geordie hip-hop ranged from (slightly) self-deprecating to outlandish boasting but thankfully he was on the funny side and provided an energetic and a lively end to a great night out. **D.H**

facebook.com/harbourmasterproductions

WHAT'S ON - MAY & JUNE

DIRGE'S TOP PICKS FOR THE COMING MONTHS

- 05/05 **DROGGED UP**, MUSEUM VAULTS, **SUNDERLAND**
- 11/05 **THE K'S (ACOUSTIC)**, KU BAR, **STOCKTON**
- 17/05 **ONLOOKER/GAYDAR**, NE VOLUME, **STOCKTON**
- 17/05 **THE BLACK CROWES**, CITY HALL, **TOON**
- 18/05 **THE RIFLES**, KU BAR, **STOCKTON**
- 18/05 **SONGS FROM NORTHERN BRITAIN**, GEORGIAN, **STOCKTON**
- 18/05 **STOCK IMAGE/CHUMPWRECKER/MOSS**, CAFE ETCH, **BORO**
- 23/05 **GARY NUMAN**, CITY HALL, **TOON**
- 24/05 **SEX PISTOLS EXPOSE**, THE FORUM, **DARLO**
- 25/05 **KILLER CULTS WITH EMMA KENNY**, HIPPIE, **DARLO**
- 30/05 **MARQ ELECTRONICA**, STOCK IMAGE, THE GLOBE, **TOON**
- 30/05 **THE ZOMBIES**, PLAYHOUSE, **WHITLEY BAY**
- 30/05 **STRAIGHTEN OUT**, THE GROVE, **TOON**
- 02/06 **SOCIAL YOUTH CULT**, LITTLE BUILDINGS, **TOON**
- 08/06 **AMELIA COBURN**, GEORGIAN, **STOCKTON**
- 10/06 **PILLOW QUEENS**, THE CLUNY, **TOON**
- 14/06 **LYDIA LUNCH PLAYS SUICIDE**, THE CLUNY, **TOON**
- 22/06 **SAUCERFUL OF SECRETS**, GLASSHOUSE, **GATESHEAD** 🏰

The BURBS

35 YEARS ON!

ONE OF THE FUNNIEST AND MOST QUOTABLE FILMS OF ALL TIME TURNED 35 IN FEBRUARY. GARNERING A CULT CLASSIC STATUS OVER THE YEARS, IT IS BOTH AMAZINGLY 80'S BUT SIMULTANEOUSLY COMPLETELY TIMELESS.



Art, Ricky, Ray and Rumsfeld. The core protagonists!

What do you get if you throw a stellar cast, a fine director and a hilarious script into the cinematic mix? That's right, The Burbs! Almost as old as me, this classic dark comedy has stood the test of time and has been a constant source of entertainment for as long as I can remember. I had it on VHS (recorded from the tele!) and watched it religiously (not quite as much as I obsessively watched Back to the Future, however).

The film's director, Joe Dante is mainly known for comedy horror, including The Howling and the Kid's gateway horror Gremlins and Gremlins 2.

Dante selected some of the cream of the crop of 80's acting talent, including Carrie Fisher, Bruce Dern, Corey Feldman and Tom Hanks. Not to mention Darla the dog who plays Queenie (she also gave a great performance as Precious, the fluffy white pooch in Silence of The Lambs, not to mention Batman Returns.)



The Klopek, a weird, insular family move in to a Middle American suburban street and instantly become the talk of the cul-de-sac by mysteriously digging at night, concocting weird, deathly aromas ("It smells like they're cooking a God damn cat over there!") and other outlandish practices causing several paranoid members of the street to become suspicious about the family's nocturnal activities...

The musical score was provided by the legendary Jerry Goldsmith, although the classic and iconic musical accompaniment when Ray and Art finally pluck up the courage to ring the Klopek's doorbell is actually Ennio Morricone's track 'My Fault?' from a Sergio Leone's 'My Name is Nobody'.

The Burbs is a satirical observation of the small town, close-knit, middle-class mentality and fear of outsiders, successfully presented in a fun and often genuinely creepy way. The original ending of the script proposed Ray (Tom Hanks) be sacrificed, but the producers thought better of it (how could they have possibly killed off Tom Hanks and got away with it?). If you haven't seen it, then get it! Or I'll lend you my DVD if you like.

THE BURBS IN QUOTES



"THERE GO THE GODDAMN BROWNIES!"

"HEY, HEY, HEY. WHO THE HECK ORDERED THE BLOOD SHAKE? HEY, RAY, IT'S NOT SKIP. IT'S ME, ART. I'M JUST PRETENDING TO BE SKIP. SAY, YOU DIDN'T HAPPEN TO SEE AN ICE PICK AROUND HERE, DID YOU?"

"SARDINE?"

"I WANT TO KILL EVERYONE, SATAN IS GOOD, SATAN IS OUR PAL."

"I-I-VE NEVER SEEN THAT BEFORE. I'VE NEVER SEEN ANYBODY DRIVE THEIR TRASH TO THE CURB AND BEAT THE HELL OUT OF IT WITH A STICK... I'VE NEVER SEEN THAT BEFORE."

"WHAT HAVE YOU GOT IN THE CELLAR, HERR KLOPEK?"

"GOD, I LOVE THIS STREET"

"YEAH, APPARENTLY, ONE DAY SKIP MADE JUST ONE TOO MANY LEMON PHOSPHATES, EL SNAPO"

LLIVELY MUSIC PROUDLY PRESENTS

SUBTERRANEAN STREET SOCIETY UK TOUR

8 MAY 2024 SECRET SHOW, NEWCASTLE

9 MAY 2024 MOSAIC TAP, NEWCASTLE

10 MAY 2024 LIONS DEN, MANCHESTER

11 MAY 2024 RECORD JUNKEE, SHEFFIELD

12 MAY 2024

13 MAY 2024 SECRET SHOW, LONDON

14 MAY 2024 THE DUBLIN CASTLE, LONDON

15 MAY 2024 THE FOLKLORE ROOMS, BRIGHTON



The polls are in and the first 'Lythe Wire' was a huge success! Speaking of huge successes, this year's Stockton Calling was just that. I've already reviewed it on The Teesside Music Podcast so feel free to listen to it on Spotify. I will say though, 'Modern Art People' by Polyvinyl is a banger.

NE Volume have picked up on how popular and loved I am in the Tees music scene, and as a result they've asked me to put a gig together. After agreeing terms with them, which may or may not include my own private jet to get me from Middlesbrough to Stockton on the day, I agreed. I've got Hartlepool's Onlooker headlining with support from Gaydar and Mascara's Lies. Three top-tier bands appearing on Friday 17th May at NE Volume Bar. It will be mint. There's so many promoters coming from all directions and more venues getting involved in putting gigs on, including Play Brew who also sell pizza. (Music and pizza. Yowie wowie, right?)

In other news, Stock Image is holding his debut E.P Launch at Café Etch on Saturday 18th May. Word on the street is Mr Image is stepping up his game after a recent review and will be performing magic tricks between songs. Which is obviously fitting for his magician-esque appearance. Anyway, I'll see you at the front! **M.L**



Polyvinyl at Stockton Calling

facebook.com/lytheweekend

REVIEW

UNDERCOVER ORIGINALS #2

BY DAN HUMBLE

CAPS OFF BREWERY, BISHOP

Another fantastic free event at the large yet cosy Caps Off Brewery brought to you by the Undercover Originals team. Once again the place was buzzing as the first band **Lost State of Dan** took to the stage. They are very good. Great vocals over piano with smooth, bluesy-licks and sonic tapestries from an electric guitar. They went down really well.

Next came **Midnight Jazz Club** who were awesome. I hate to bring up comparisons but an instrumental Fugazi/Tool mash up sprung to mind. Some amazingly varied time signatures, musicianship and changes of pace. No cringey banter, clever samples between songs while they tuned up, and oodles of big, heavy melodies. You gotta see them!

Finally came **Machiner**, who are also rather good. Too much revolves around the vocals for my taste, but his voice is excellent so why not play to your strengths?

The songs are very well written with barely a strummed barre chord in sight. Again no banter, just great songs. Haunting, poppy, rocky and very listenable. We were also treated to visuals by the excellent **Digital Death Rattle** which improved the atmosphere no end.

Another wicked night! **D.H**

REVIEW

THE NASHVILLE SHOW

BY MICK ELLIOTT

THE GLOBE, STOCKTON

I'm a big country music guy and my Mam likes it when we do stuff together so I thought we'd both go to 'A Country Night in Nashville' at The Globe in Stockton.

We arrived during the first song and quickly sat down only to realise the couple behind us were talking at full volume. After about two songs ruined by these twats I turned around to the guy and said "Hey can you shut up?". After about three seconds of him looking at me in pure shock (at what I can only assume is the first time in his life someone's told him to be quiet) he suggested we go outside and have a fight about it.

This bloke was massive and I didn't fancy missing any of the show or going to hospital, so I just threatened to report him to security. He kept trying to have a fight with me so I just wound him up for a bit until my Mam told me to just ignore him.

The show itself was great as is The Globe as a venue and I'd definitely go and see the show again. My Mam also had a good time so for the most part a great night! **M.E**





THE CLASH - LONDON CALLING A RE-APPRAISAL

I hear quite regularly that London Calling is one of the best albums of all time. After listening to it many years ago (my aunty got me the CD for Christmas) I felt incredibly non-plussed and a little bit confused. It's not even the best album of 1979. That said, I decided to re-appraise this 'classic' album to make sure I made the right call all that time ago. What follows is an insightful song by song review for your delectation.

LONDON CALLING - This is an iconic title track. It does feel a little bit contrived, lyrically, but the music more than makes up for that.

BRAND NEW CADILLAC - A half decent cover of Vince Taylor's 1959 song, but it's boredom inducing and all rather pointless.

JIMMY JAZZ - A mediocre album track. It's got solid drumming throughout by Topper Headon, as has the entirety of the record.

HATEFUL - An upbeat rockabilly ditty, though instantly forgettable.

RUDIE CAN'T FAIL - A calypso/reggae effort which I wouldn't mind if I never heard again. Turns out Rudie can actually quite easily fail.

SPANISH BOMBS - I dig the historical lyrics, it's got an infectious chorus and some Hammond. One of the better songs on this album.

THE RIGHT PROFILE - Another album filler.

LOST IN THE SUPERMARKET - Sounds like this was probably an influential song on better bands like Pulp or Blur, so that's a positive.

CLAMPDOWN - Yeah, it's half decent.

Nothing special.

GUNS OF BRIXTON - It's got a driving dub infused drum and bass beat, that's about it.

WRONG 'EM BOYO - Another laborious and unneeded cover.

DEATH OR GLORY - Death please.

KOKA KOLA - I think I need some coke to stop me from falling asleep.

This album is all starting to sound the same now.

THE CARD CHEAT - A Phil Spector/wall of sound inspired tune that doesn't quite hit the mark.

LOVER'S ROCK - I don't understand. How is this album held in such high regard? This sounds like a Bowie b-side. Why release a double album if it's just full of mediocre album tracks? I'm genuinely perplexed.

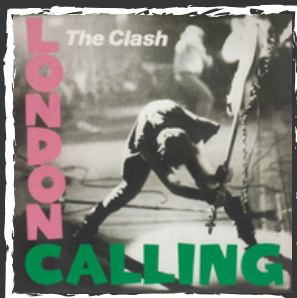
FOUR HORSEMEN - Please refer to the previous song. If you want to listen to a good track which is also called 'Four Horsemen' listen to The Gospel According To The Men In Black album by The Stranglers.

I'M NOT DOWN - More non-descript filler. Yawn.

REVOLUTION ROCK - There's Nothing revolutionary about this. Actually, it's very, very safe. Oh, it's a cover version too. Extra revolutionary.

TRAIN IN VAIN - Oh my! It's only the drum beat from 'Stupid Girl' by Garbage. You learn something new every day! This is a groovy tune, the second best on the album, and a good way to close it.

This could have been a pretty good single album. As it, is London Calling is just a rather boring double album. I tried my best. I'll give it another listen in another twenty years and re-evaluate it then. Or maybe I won't.



BY SARAH JONES

Headline act **Black Rain** assaulted The Bunker in Sunderland tonight, pushing its capacity to the brink. This was post-punk at its most visceral and unapologetic, as Black Rain commanded the stage with a raw intensity that left the audience reeling.

From the moment they took the stage, it was evident that Black Rain was here to make a statement. With their self-conscious yet aggressive demeanour, they delved into dark lyrical themes with an iconoclastic fervour that gripped the crowd.

Massive walls of guitar engulfed the venue, painting a post-apocalyptic soundscape that was as haunting as it was mesmerizing. The drums were precise and articulate, driving the music forward with relentless force, while the bass snarled and pulsated with a ferocity that bordered on primal as it was thrashed within an inch of its life. It was the baritone vocals that truly set Black Rain apart, delivering dark and introspective lyrics with a haunting resonance that lingered long after the last song faded away. It was almost unbelievable that such a wall of sound could be produced by just middle aged men from up North. Music made and shaped in the grim dark North.

Drawing comparisons to the likes of Joy Division, IST IST, Editors, and Killing Joke, Black Rain unleashed a 30-minute onslaught of sonic catharsis that left the audience questioning everything they thought they knew about music. This was avant-garde conceptualism at its finest, an assault on the senses that demanded to be heard.

Despite the intensity of their performance, Black Rain appeared remarkably at ease on stage, their debut gig feeling more like the culmination of decades of work rather than a mere beginning. **S.J**

[youtube.com/@black_rain_band](https://www.youtube.com/@black_rain_band)



A BRIEF INTRODUCTION TO YUKIO MISHIMA

DID YOU HEAR THE ONE ABOUT THE RIGHT-WING AUTHOR WHO DECIDED TO GET RIPPED, LAUNCHED A FAILED COUP ON THE JAPANESE GOVERNMENT AND LATER DISEMBOWLED HIMSELF WITH A SAMURAI SWORD WHICH CULMINATED IN BEING DECAPITATED BY A MEMBER OF HIS HOMOSEXUAL PRIVATE ARMY?

He didn't do things by halves, old Yukio. The even crazier thing is, Mishima was looking forward to committing ritual suicide, building up to it most of his life. Even making an art-house film in 1966 entitled Yukoko (Patriotism) where he appears to be rehearsing the exact way he was to eventually take his own life four years later. (It's on YouTube, and it's actually pretty gory and disturbing in a silly, over the top kind of way).

Mishima was born Kimitake Hiraoka in 1925. At the age of just 24 he had his first real literary success, the semi-autobiographical 'Confessions of A Mask' in 1949.



Mishima in Yukoko (1966)

During the mid 1950's Mishima took up weight training, partly to compensate for his small stature and physique (He was only 5'1"). This new pursuit became a pathological obsession for the remainder of his life, becoming obsessed with the idea of physical beauty.

Mishima married in 1958 and went on to father two children. He lived a parallel life, frequenting the gay bars of Tokyo while playing at being the family man.

During this time he continued to write, work out and fantasise about dying by his own sword, as well as trying his hand at acting and homo-erotic modelling (!)

Yukio finally achieved his morbid ambition when, in 1970, Mishima committed Seppuku with a 17th century Samurai sword. He was 45.

Further reading/watching - Confessions of a Mask (1949), Yukoko (1966), The Strange Case of Yukio Mishima (BBC 1985), Mishima - A Life in Four Chapters (biopic by Paul Schrader, 1985.)

IT'S ONLY WORDS

Some of the finest lines known to humanity



ULTRAVOX - YOUNG SAVAGE

The Jekyll-Hyde of you
I can't survive the tide of you
The vicious style of love, the whining
Pits and pendulums of lying
I don't see how you survive in
Hard-line worlds you're advertising
Sneaky features, facing, waiting
City sex is so frustrating

Young savage
She's like a steel wall
Speaks like a dance hall
Young savage
Anything goes where no-one knows your name

The mirror love of vixens
Gets over the mask of victims
Money rents you insulation
Tenderness, asphyxiation
Someone else's flesh to borrow
Sling it from your bed tomorrow
Live too fast for love or sorrow
Look behind the face, it's hollow

Chorus

The broken heart of you
Who stole, who stole a part of you
Changing blossoms into piss
And taking bites from every kiss
The past is dead, tomorrow's too far
All the chemicals that bar us
Coloured hair, cheap tattoos
That tell you all their points of view

Chorus

Condemned to be a stranger
Subway dweller, dead-end danger
Peeking through the dust of friends
Who never gave, they'd only lend
Every sneer is thrown away
With practised gestures of disdain
The outlaw stance is so pedantic
Hate the world, it's so romantic

Classic John Foxx era Ultravox. I first heard this tune on the soundtrack to 'Awaydays'. (It's a flipping good soundtrack and a pretty decent film).

REVIEW

THE FORUM, DARLINGTON

**straighten
out**

Well, it's that time of the year again. Off down to The Forum to get royally sloshed and enjoy one of the **best** tribute bands around.

The lads are an accommodating bunch and always humour me when I make **minor** critiques of the way they do certain **songs**. Which, to be fair is rare as they're such able musicians.

The **Forum** was almost full to the brim, of mainly 50+ men with their wives in tow. But there was a **handful** of different demographics. It's a friendly bunch too. Many of which I know from years of going to see Straighten Out there, not to mention the bar staff.

The lads took to the stage at about half 8, performing a great version of 'The **Man** They Love to Hate' from 1981's La Folie album, before steaming into a lot of the more **aggressive**, up tempo numbers from the early days of punk.

After a short fifteen minute break Straighten Out took to the stage once more for another intense



set of Stranglers classics. And what happened during Down In the Sewer? (refer to Rattus **Inheritus** review) but I got bundled off the stage **before** I could have my fun this **time!**

I think I'm going to have to **stop** doing that.

4.4/5

VERDICT!

Both bands are a lot of fun and all able musicians in their own right. For me though, **Straighten Out** have just a slightly higher level of musicianship, which is, at the end of the day, what it's all about. I think Straighten Out's set list was marginally better too. But I'd recommend seeing both bands if you're a hardened or casual Stranglers fan. All the best to both bands, see you again soon!

facebook.com/straightenout

rattusinheritus.co.uk

REVIEW

LAST POST MEMORIAL BAR, THORNABY

RATTUS INHERITUS

If you are a regular reader of this rag you'll know that A.) I love The Stranglers and B.) I actually prefer to see tribute **band** Straighten Out than The Stranglers these days. I first heard of the other leading tribute, Rattus **Inheritus** last year and pledged that I'd go to a **show** when they played **oop** north.

I'd never heard of this **Thornaby** based venue before. It looked like a quirky little place in photographs and it's only a short journey by bus, it's **free** and they let youngsters in, meaning Dave could come too. **Wahey!**

Well, after a **couple** of pleasant pre-drinks round Mick's swanky penthouse apartment we got the taxi over to Thornaby. The venue is a **cracker**. A right little wacky **place** full of armed forces memorabilia and good **vibes!**

The stage is a good size too with a decent sound system. The drinks were of average price.

They're a **bit** of a motley crew, the Rattus lot, all sporting different looks. And why not? That's what The **Stranglers** were fine purveyors of!

The band are very able **musicians**. What they lose slightly in accuracy at times they more than make up for in **fun** and enthusiasm. It was a set of mainly early stuff, which is to be expected and in the most **part** very much appreciated.

They did a **rad** version of Down In The Sewer, which was marred slightly by a drunk, lanky twat in the **crowd** who **muscled** himself onto the **stage** and took over the singing! (Sorry about that). They're all nice blokes and we had a laugh after. I ended up in Stock Image's hot **tub** which has **always** been a personal ambition of mine.

4.3/5



THE 1970'S

A DECADE OF SCI-FI

THE 70'S WERE A PARANOID DECADE. A HANGOVER FROM THE FALSE DAWN OF THE LATE 1960'S, DISILLUSIONMENT WITH GOVERNMENT AND AUTHORITY. THE COLD WAR CONTINUED WITH FERVOUR AND NUCLEAR WAR WAS STILL A REAL THREAT, PAVING THE WAY FOR PLENTY OF DYSTOPIAN SCI-FI!

FIVE OF THE BEST

THE OMEGA MAN (1971)

Just one of a handful of adaptations of Richard Matteson's 1954 book 'I am Legend', The Omega Man is very much 'of its time' but also very adept at conveying the loneliness of the main character 'Robert Neville' played by Charlton Heston. The world has been devastated by a plague caused by biological warfare and only a few survive. Some unfortunates contracted the virus only to metamorphose into half human, half vampire creatures only able to emerge at night. Neville, living all on his lonesome, gets trolled on a nightly basis by his former neighbour and his pseudo-vampiric cronies. An amazing Sci-Fi.



INVASION OF THE BODY SNATCHERS (1978)

Featuring one of the most shocking finales to any film I have ever witnessed, Donald Sutherland excels alongside Leonard Nimoy (Star Trek's Dr Spock) and Jeff Goldblum in this remake of the 1956 black & white classic. This reboot surpasses the original in nearly every way and even features a cameo from the star of the original, 'Kevin McCarthy'. The movie builds the paranoia and tension impeccably from the outset and features some extremely visceral special effects, music and cinematography. As well as cameos from Robert Duvall and Jerry Garcia from The Grateful Dead. It's a 'must watch'.



LOGAN'S RUN (1976)

The suave and smooth talking Michael York joins the lovely Jenny Agutter in this mid 70s utopian (and later in the film rather dystopian) classic, based on the 1967 novel of the same name by William. F Nolan. It's the year 2274 and human society has evolved to a point wherein computers take care of every day life, meaning the need to work has been rendered obsolete. A life of pleasure and relaxation is enjoyed by all. Except there's one minor snag. When you hit the age of 30 you are sent for 'renewal', a euphemism for being euthanised, to combat overpopulation. So 'Logan 5' and 'Jessica 6' hatch a plan to escape!



SOYLENT GREEN (1973)

The second film in this short list to feature Charlton Heston, featuring the classic, oft quoted line "Soylent Green is people". Part Sci-Fi, part detective tale, Heston plays NYPD cop Robert Thorn, living in the year 2022 in a world that is blighted by overpopulation, pollution and global warming (sounds familiar, doesn't it?). He's assigned the task of investigating the murder of a member of the Soylent Corporation who manufacture the only food stuff on Earth, 'Soylent Green'. Thorn is then sucked into a world of intrigue and conspiracy, culminating in a rather shocking ending!



THX-1138 (1971)

George Lucas first began THX as a film student. Directing the short 'Electronic Labyrinth: THX 1138 4E' in 1967, paving the way for the feature version in 1971. It features a stellar score by composing powerhouse Lalo Schiffrin, was produced by Francis Ford Coppola and starred Robert Duvall and Donald Pleasence. It's not entirely clear when in time THX is set but it's at a point in the future where sex is outlawed and the masses are controlled by mind altering drugs and intimidating, metal faced, android police officers. A sensationally atmospheric Sci-Fi.



DIRGE POSTER



TONY **IOMMI** IN A BATHTUB WEARING A **LEISURE SUIT**
WITH A **SITAR**