

DIRGE

[Devilish Interviews Reviews Gigs & Entertainment]

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Issue 2
May 2023

KILLER MUSIC

Viddy Welll, My
Brother. Viddy Well.

FREE!

FREE!

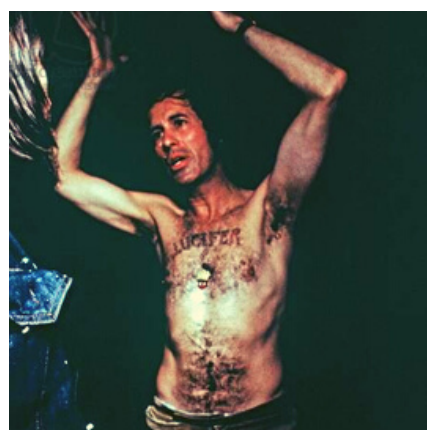
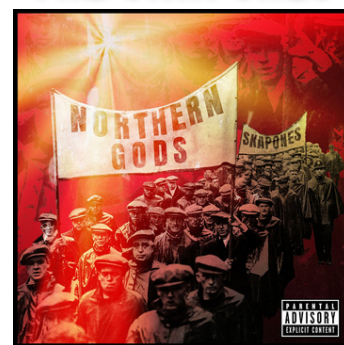
FREE!

Altallerstang

IT'S FREE!

OSTRICH

THE SKAPONES



MUSIC REVIEWS

STUFF

INTERVIEWS

TU

FILMS

noun

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

So we made it to Issue 2. I was heartened by the reception of the first one. I even had to get more printed as demand was so high! So thanks to everyone for their feedback and kind words about Issue 1. Issue 2 and 3 further issues have been generously funded by a Darlington for Culture grant. Thanks to them and to Creative Darlington we can keep DIRGE going to the end of the year.

It seems that calling a spade a spade is actually quite popular amongst local folk, in the music scene and in general. I hope I didn't offend anyone in the process. If I did then that's a shame.

More of the same in this **DIRGE**. Once again if you have anything you want to write about, local or otherwise just chuck me an email and I'll see what I can do. If you want anything reviewed, send me a **song**, a bio and a picture and I'll put it in the next issue. If you have a gig or an event you want reviewing just holla and I'll see what I can do!



'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'.

**SUMER IS
ICUMEN IN**



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"Great King Rat died today,
Born on the 21st of May,
died Syphilis, 44 on his birthday."

APPEARING SOMEWHERE INSIDE...

Mallerstang

Killer Music

Ten Word Reviews

Blues Night Records

Ostrich

Kenneth Anger

Dennis Nilsen

Graeme from Golden Age of Nothing

The Skapones

We Start Fires

White Rose

Easter Round-up

Peter Sutcliffe



www.darlodge.co.uk

DIRGE MEETS...



We catch up with the gloriously named **Johnny Gash** from the even more gloriously named **Mallerstang** - The Pride of Cumbria.

Is living in Mallerstang as dystopian as the name sounds?

Yes, it is. A cursory glance at us will probably give the impression that things are pretty dark and bleak. However on closer inspection the humour is there and probably more apparent live (so I'm told ha ha). Honestly we have a laugh, that's what keeps us going. It has to be fun.

Which bands influenced your song writing as you were growing up?

For me personally it's bands with big vocal harmonies. **The Beach Boys** were my first influence, going back to when I was little, it's what my parents listened to. To me there is no greater sound, no sound that stirs you as much as the sound of people singing together. It's very uplifting.

After that I fell in love with guitar sounds, and the riff. Old Rock n Roll songs led to that. That is what brought me and Troy together. I think he has a great sense of riff. Troy is a riff-a-day.

In terms of drummers, Nick McBrain and Clive Burr, Tommy Lee and Chad Smith, love his playing. Stephen Perkins and Lars Ulrich of course. Then there's **Steve Gadd**, who is one of my favourite players, along with Joe Morello, and Jimmy Cobb, who was Miles Davis' Drummer. I'm also influenced by Latin percussion and percussionists, they have a smooth consistent flow in their playing. Airto Moirera and Giovanni Hidalgo are good examples.

Has being called Johnny Gash been a help or a hindrance in your life?

Well, it's been my name for as long as I can remember so difficult to say really. Would my life have been any different if I was called something else?! No I don't think so. It's like anything in life If you own it, and it's really yours then it's cool, it's part of your identity and you embrace it. I think I just try to play the hand life has dealt me best I can. I used to think I needed to come up with a stage name if I was going to be a musician, but as fast as I could come up with something, people played on my name, and so it just became what it is. I was christened Jonathan, so people in arts and entertainments have always called me Johnny Gash. Why fight it?

Your studio recordings are quite layered. Being a two piece how does this transition when you are bringing the heat live?

To fully recreate everything live would take about a dozen people. Back in heavy rock's halcyon days bands used to say that if they couldn't play it live then they wouldn't put it on the album. The age we live in now is the other extreme where many live performances amount to the artist being present whilst their music is played. We're somewhere in the middle ground on this. We want the audience to get the full experience of the song, so we play and sing together, then anything we can't do is covered on a track. We're just using technology to our advantage. It seems to work well for us. As the drummer, I get to sit at the front of the stage instead of being stuck at the back.

Which venue do you enjoy playing at the most?

A field, at Hutton in the Forest, a festival venue 9 miles from where I live. So handy, and it's my favourite because there we played to the most people there, over ten thousand. I also have happy memories playing to a sold out **Shepherds Bush Empire**. I love all the older theatre type venues. The architecture, the history, the excitement that permeates through the place. Recently I visited Glasgow Barrowlands. Talking to the people who worked there, they were all so enthusiastic about the place and what it means to them. I enjoy playing any live venue though, they are all great places! Playing our home venues is always going to be one of the favourites for me, because people come and see you that you maybe know but don't expect to see.

What are your plans for 2023?

Gig as much as we can. Get out and playing, meet as many people as we can, see where it takes us and enjoy the ride.

www.mallerstang-official.com



Troy Slater (Guitar) on the left and Shawn Michaels (Drums) on the right

THE LAIR OF LOCAL

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



Hayley McKay - Homemade Show

Darlington starlet Hayley McKay returns with her new flava 'Homemade Show' and as we have come to expect from the velvet voiced local celebrity, the mercury on the Chintz-o-meter is high.

The accompanying music video is sweet and sickly in equal measure as The Mack appears with her trusty acoustic guitar surrounded by kiddies like a lost Christmas Top of The Pops performance from 1973.

The lyrics are a bit on the cliched side and I think the key of the song could have possibly been lowered a little as there is some slight straining of the vocal cords in the higher registers.

Homemade Show is one of those songs that you can put on full whack and dance around the living room with your wee ones while high on Haribo, and whether you want it to or not, sure gets stuck in your noggin.

It will go down a storm! **2.5/5**

hayleymckay.co.uk

El Sombreron - El Sombreron

Darlington native, 14 years old El Sombreron has done a stellar job of his first E.P. Mixing live bass and guitar with programmed beats and live percussion, he has an inimitable style paired with enigmatic lyrical content which is a welcome antidote to some of the trite, faux emotional lyrics one often hears. **3.2/5**

soundcloud.com/elsombreron

Vice Killer - The Red Sky

I liked this one. The Coral-esque, bluesy and nostalgic yet also very fresh and dynamic.

The bass on The Red Sky in the words of Supergrass will have your stereo pumping.

I do think they wait a bit too long to reintroduce the "Red Sky" hook as I think this is the best bit about the track. Really nicely produced (by Jake Bugg's producer but I won't let that put me off) with analogue delays abounding on the guitars. Some combo organ would have sounded great in this track but then again, it might have made the song TOO much like The Coral. They did add a nice bit of piano though.

The Red Sky is too long for my taste, it could have been wrapped up nicely in under 3 minutes. Over 4 minutes and it really needs to be something as good as La Femme D'Argent by Air or Chameleon by Herbie Hancock.

Added points for using handclaps which are hopefully making a comeback after years of tarnish by Gary Glitter.

I'd quite like to see this gang live, which they are doing at a headline show at Hartlepool's IDOLS on Friday the 12th of May, but alas, I am going to The Forum the next day. You should try and get down if you are local to Hartlepool. **4/5**

facebook.com/ViceKillerBand

Marina Josephina - Fool Like Me

A homely slice of inoffensive 90's tinged jazzy pop provided by the soothing, sweet voice of Marinaaahh. **2.7/5**

[@marinajosephina](https://twitter.com/marinajosephina)

Docksuns - Real Thing

Poppy and vivacious, Sunderland's Docksuns succeed in providing the summer vibes early with this unashamedly Brit Pop and Indie influenced tune.

It kicks off ominously with a filtered intro that sounds a bit Freeview shopping channel-esque, but relief washed over me in an awesome wave when the instruments came in. Real Thing is never going to set the world of music on fire though, it's quite generic and it's all been done to death before.

As a throwaway, poppy, dancey Indie number though it should keep a few people entertained for a wee bit. So that's a good thing. **3/5**

facebook.com/docksuns

Jacu - A Good Day to Bury Bad News

Atmospheric, cosmic guitars, dreamy synth pads, well programmed drums and angelic backing vocals created in the bedroom (sounded a bit saucy, that) by Jacu are the order of the day.

You could draw obvious lines to The XX with the male and female interspersed vocals. Jacu even sounds a lot like what's his name from The two exes.

Then again, 3 Minutes in Kyoto sounds like an unreleased Harmonia track from 1975, one of the collabs they did with Brian Eno. The sound design is organic and expressive.

The female vocalist is very capable and has a pleasant tonal quality. Jacu's voice is a little bit simpish for my taste but he can hold a tune and it works in the spacey, melodious setting.

Hopefully we will see some other Darlo producers coming through! **3.7/5**

[Search Jacu on Spotify](#)

Sam Nix - Small Town

The musical backing track on Small Town is actually highly evocative of times gone by! Guiding me on a nostalgic trip back in time to when...

I was stuck on hold for 2 hours on the phone to Jobseeker's when I was on the dole.

You know that repetitive, inoffensive muzak that they play on a loop when you are in queue on the phone. Small Town is essentially that with quaint lyrics placed over it.

2.3 isn't a great score but it's better than Nix! **2.3/5**

samnixmusic.com

Jeshika Jaynes - Where is the Edge

I'm not entirely sure what's going on with J.J's Facebook page but she has over 7 thousand likes on there, yet only 3 people have left a like for her new single, which is bizarre, but hey ho, let's go.

A bit of a non-descript arpeggiated guitar riff orientated verse begins to what eventually builds to a 1980's style power ballad chorus which reminds me of something that I can't quite pin point. Possibly Pat Benatar?

The drums sound a bit clunky and I think the track could have built to something more. Jeshika could have capitalised on the power ballad theme and gone with some huge backing vocals, DX7 electric piano and a rambunctious key change. **2.6/5**

facebook.com/jeshikajaynes

THE GREAT BEYOND

I've heard there is a universe outside of The North East.



Dennis Nilsen - Suite 36

Dennis Nilsen's best mate sent me this piece of music so I thought I'd do a review of it in its own right. This particular oddity has quite literally arrived from the great beyond.

Well for a start, mix wise it sounds like a **Casio Keyboard** recorded via a tape recorder. Oh wait. It was. We can let Des off with that one then.

Apparently Nilsen very nearly acquired a 4 track tape machine in the mid 90's but the prison wouldn't let it in on security grounds so I guess the different parts of Suite 36 were recorded using the Casio's on board sequencer augmented presumably by using layering and splits.

There are timpani, there are attempts at horns. Grandiose and pompous, while paradoxically exuding a child like innocence in certain parts that is **weirdly upbeat**. The synth tones Nilsen manages to pull from the Casio MT640 could probably pass for an actual analogue.

Apparently he used to have a good supply of cannabis in prison. This could well be one of those occasions where you get a bit high, write some music and think it's the best thing ever but when you return to planet Earth you realise it's actually dogga.

It's not carried off with much musical class, the sound quality is at best questionable and it fast becomes very samey and convoluted.

Fair play to Des though he's done well to coax a half decent tune out of a home keyboard and a cassette recorder whilst in the confines of his prison cell. Would I listen to this for fun? Of course not. But it's **extremely interesting** all the same.

2.8/5

Regi Weking - Hello My Darling

I had an email from what I at first thought was some sort of phishing scam. It appeared to be Indonesian and they started the email with the sentence "**Do you miss your loved ones?**"

I thought it was an advert trying to promote some sort of pseudo-scientific, after life clairvoyancy service attempting to capitalise on people's grief.

Turns out it was a segue to a man called Regi Weking promoting his song "Hello My Darling".

Apparently it was very Beatles influenced. So with great interest I stuck on my Audio Technicas and fired up Spotify. The song is nearly 3 years old but it is a bit of an oddity which I like so I am writing about it. It actually needs to be heard to be believed. He is essentially singing a by numbers Beatles rip off in a very thick **Indonesian accent**.

It actually gets stuck in your head and is unfortunately very infectious. Infectious like AIDS. Give it a listen and decide for yourself. **2/5**

soundcloud.com/regiweking



TEN WORD REVIEWS

Compression Session - Hadrian's Kaleidoscope. **Jangly. Post Punky Goodness. Sleek Kaleidoscopic Video. Let's hear more!**

Craig Roddam - Where Do We Go From Here. **Poppy. Derivative. Annoying vocals. Weird accent. Snappy mix. Heard worse.**

The Warrens - Heartless Lovers. **Acoustic. Vocals grate a bit. A tad dull. Memorable chorus.**

Cirkus - Avalanche. **70's effects and vocal harmonies. Later Manfred Mann. Outrageous stuff!**

Scott Cavagan - Guilty Pleasure. **2 Unlimited meets Shed 7 via Julian Cope. Fun Lyrics.**

Jen Dixon - Over You. **Commercial. Nerina Pallot. Later Fleetwood Mac. Rap bit sounds cringe.**

James Leonard Hewitson - Fill My Head with Sugar. **Melodious. Nostalgic. I liked the synth effects at the end.**

Sarah Johnson - Hurricane. **Upbeat and listenable alternative rock. Memorable vocals. Poppier PJ Harvey.**

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DARKINGTON

By Ann Cuthbert



We trawl Darlington's dark underbelly for tales of historic, salacious criminality...

We continue our Serial Killer theme with an enigmatic, compelling story that suggests that The Yorkshire Ripper operated in the area in the late 1970's.

A Saturday night in '77 at The Flamingo Nightclub, Victoria Road, affectionately known to locals as 'The Flammy'. (It later became Hogan's and is now a pile of rubble just waiting to be reborn, probably as a block of faceless, characterless, generic apartments. I digress.)

Back to the scene setting.

There is this bearded man, weird shaped hair, funnily clothed. (Pre-dating Hipsters by some 35 years). That man is none other than Peter Sutcliffe. No doubt enjoying some down time whilst in the town working as a long distance lorry driver. Sutcliffe was in Darlington and Aycliffe quite regularly in fact. 14 or 15 times apparently during his sustained reign of terror.



Stephanie Spencer - Sutcliffe's Victim?



Peter Sutcliffe - MONSTER

That very same weekend, a brutal murder took place in Darlington.

25 year old art gallery assistant Stephanie Spencer was bludgeoned to death with a large lump of rock on wasteland near a lorry park. Her body was found hidden in bushes close to Haughton Road. She was discovered there by bird-nesting boys on Sunday 29th May 1977.

Local man 34 year old Michael Hodgson was found guilty of her savage murder, despite protesting his innocence. His life sentence was later reduced to one of manslaughter. He still denies he was Stephanie's killer.

Let's return to The Flammy that Saturday night in May. Although the prosecution insisted that Stephanie was killed on Friday 27th May, three witnesses said they had seen her on the Saturday. And other witnesses later reported they had seen Stephanie actually at the nightclub. What's more, she had been arguing with that bearded, square-haired man, a man who certainly fit Sutcliffe's description.

So did the Yorkshire Ripper strike in Darlington?

We know the town was a regular port of call for him. As a matter of fact, records show that Sutcliffe delivered parts to Coles Cranes on Pendleton Road less than 48 hours after Stephanie was found. As a regular driver, he would know the whereabouts of lorry parks in and around town. Indeed, initial police investigations centred on local haulage drivers. The murder fit his modus operandi too.

During 1977, we know that Sutcliffe murdered 4 women and brutally attacked 2 more. The Byford report (1981) into the way the police investigation of the Ripper murders had been handled concluded that Sutcliffe was probably responsible for many more attacks on women, to which he had not admitted, not only in the West Yorkshire and Manchester areas, but also in other parts of the country, such as our town.

Was he really here in Darlington on that May Saturday? Did he perpetrate the vicious murder of Stephanie Spencer? Is that a question that will remain unanswered? It certainly seems that way.



The story made The Despatch's front page



Each issue we bring you
a classic Darlo band from
the distant past. This time
we feature...

WE START FIRES



We Start Fires always stood out to me because the keyboard player used an original **Roland** System 100 Modular Synth.

Consisting of Becky Stefani (Guitar/Vocals), Ashley Wade (Drums), Melissa Marx (Synths) and Nikki Vaughan (Bass) they were one of the few Darlo groups to acquire a bona fide Wikipedia page, they managed to achieve a heck of a lot during their time together. Born from the ashes of Haughton band Venus in Furs in the early 2000's they were a fun, glam - pop infused 4 piece with a good fan base.

They jetted off to Japan to support **Klaxons** who were stars of the then popular NME sponsored "Nu - Rave" fad. Travelled stateside for SXW festival in Texas (which was documented in an episode of the culture show on **BBC2**) augmented by regular plays on The John Peel Show on Radio One. Yes that's Radio One for our younger readers. Before it went shite. John Peel also mentioned them in his book Margrave Of The Marshes. The band also inaugurated a new monthly night at The Forum known as **Club Strut** that pulled in some quality touring bands from across the U.K.

Following We Start Fires split Becky and Ashley formed a short lived electronic pop band with legendary local soundman Nobby named **SilverShock** and released a sparkly electro number called Sunday Drive.

Me and my mates saw WSF a few times, in Darlington, Leicester and London, although I can't remember much about those road trips. Nothing I can repeat in DIRGE anyway.

I'm not entirely sure if any of them are still involved in music. I see Ashley sometimes in ASDA and I think Becky writes books now. So it has come to pass that their fire has died and turned to embers, but their memory will live on in our hearts. **LEST WE FORGET WE START FIRES.**

We Start Fires

ArticleTalk

We Start Fires were a female-fronted punk-pop rock 'n' roll band formed in [Darlington](#) in 2002. They consist of Becky Stefani ([vocals](#) and [guitar](#)), Melissa Marx ([synths](#) and [vocals](#)), Nikki Vaughan ([bass](#) and [vocals](#)), and Becky's younger brother Ashley Wade ([drums](#)).

We Start Fires	
Origin	Darlington, England
Genres	New wave , pop punk
Years active	2002–2008



OSTRICH

ROZ SPEAKS TO **WILL MCTAGGART** -
DARLINGTON EX PAT
AND SINGER OF THE LIVERPOOL BASED
BAND "OSTRICH"



Leafy times in Liverpool

How's Liverpool treating you?

I'm doing well thank you Roz, hope you are too! It's been 10 years since I left Darlington, so it must be alright considering I'm still here! Liverpool is a great place to live, lots of green spaces and things to do, and it's where we all met and eventually formed **Ostrich**. I do like to come back to **Darlo** whenever I get the chance though. It's Nice to see old friends and all the old haunts.

Is the musical heritage of the city an inspiration for the band?

So this is an interesting dilemma. Yes is the short answer, as it's difficult not to be influenced by the history. The problem that Liverpool has is its obsession with the past, and it's in danger of becoming a sort of living museum. There's very little focus on the here and now, and you notice nowadays a lot of touring bands will not have a Liverpool date on their calendar. Luckily we have a number of great venues that are still open and thriving, so the local scene is still very much alive, and there's great opportunities over in **Birkenhead** and the Wirral too.

I know you're from Darlo, where are the other members of Ostrich from?

So we have Lydia and Will, who play sax and bass respectively, and they're both from Wales. One from the South and one from the North. Both Welsh speakers, so they like to have secret conversations from time to time. Then there's Stuart (Drums) and Jake (Guitar) who are from down south. They're alright for **southerners** to be fair, and we get on reasonably well.

Are the band's influences shared or do you all like quite disparate stuff?

We have quite varied tastes. I don't think any of our top 10 favourite bands would match up, but there's some general cross over for sure. I do think it's a strength of ours, as we write collaboratively when working on new material, so everyone has their own idea of how a part should sound and it tends to produce the most interesting results. It would be awful if we all liked the same music, wouldn't it?

Best place for a night out in Liverpool?

That's a tough one. The Pubs are top notch around here, but venue wise there's a wee place called **Quarry**. It's based within an old railway arch in quite an industrial area of Liverpool. It's run by a bunch of lovely people who are all musicians themselves, and the sound system is massive. A must visit.

Do you plan on gigging up here at any point?

Yeah we'd love to. We definitely want to do some gigs in the North East this year. Just need to put the feelers out and get ourselves on somewhere.

What are your plans for 2023?

We've got a couple of new tracks being mixed as we speak, so they'll hopefully be released soon. One is about a local legend, **Chanel the African Grey**. You might have seen the video with that woman screaming Chanel!! Gig wise, we hope to do as many as we can this year. Next up we're off to Sheffield in April and a couple of local shows either side of that. Cheers!

www.facebook.com/ostrichtheband



This month we kidnapped and tortured renaissance man and singer of Stockton Goff lot "The Golden Age of Nothing" Graeme Wilkinson until he told us five of his top albums.



The Cure – Disintegration

It's a total misery fest but it's an album I always go back to. I can't quite believe it's been thirty-four years since it came out but no matter how many times I hear it, I never get bored of it. Three-minute instrumental intros... spidery guitar lines... wailing vocals... and lots of wind chimes... the perfect album!



Amon Düül II – Yeti

I got into Amon Düül II from reading Julian Cope's Krautrock sampler back in 1995. Yeti, their second album, is a krautrock classic that includes at least two masterpieces in Soap Shop Rock and Archangels Thunderbird. It's like Yoko fronting a more psychedelic, un-leaden Zeppelin. Their debut album, Phallus Dei, is almost as good.



The Beatles – Abbey Road

I grew up listening to The Beatles, and Abbey Road is the album that always made the biggest impression. I remember a long drive to Blackpool for a camping holiday when I was about seven years old and my dad played it all the way there and all the way back. The long one on the second side is a slice of McCartney genius. John, George and Ringo's contributions are not bad either!



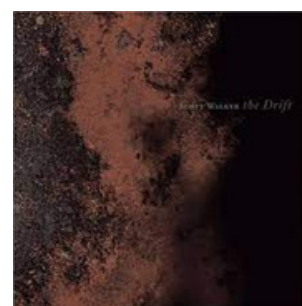
The Birthday Party – Junkyard

Ideally I'd have picked an album by Nick Cave, as well as one by Rowland S. Howard but I can only have five on this list so I'll pick one they're on together. From Howard's sheets of guitar noise to Cave's misanthropic rants via Tracy Pew's monolithic slabs of bass, Junkyard is a nasty wonder.



Scott Walker – The Drift

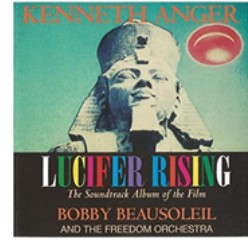
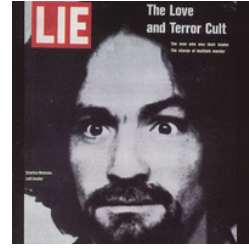
The Drift is one of the most unsettling albums ever made and at the height of Scott Walker's career. He's totally unrecognisable from his 60s pop star heyday. When I first bought it in Whitby, the man behind the counter asked me where I lived and when I told him Stockton, he said, "I should be able to hear the screams from there." Just don't play it when you've got a hangover.



MUSIC TO YOUR FEARS

Serial Killers & Music

"As you lie there naked, like a body in a tomb, suspended animation as I slip into your room" - Night Prowler - **AC/DC**



Dennis Nilsen used to be a bit of a prog rock type. His album of choice to listen to when he was building up to strangling his victims was Mike Oldfield's seminal 1973 masterpiece **Tubular Bells**. What a strange juxtaposition the soothing, calming yet ever so sinister tones must have contrasted with the malign thoughts in his head. Not to mention the connotations with The Exorcist. (Jeffrey Dahmer, the U.S Nilsen's favourite film incidentally was **Exorcist 3**. Which is in fact a very good horror with one of the scariest jump scares in cinematic history).

Nilsen's taste was rather varied. Ranging from quite middle of the road stuff like The Who (Their rock opera album 'Tommy' was a favourite) to slightly more left field artists like Laurie Anderson. **O superman** being a favourite of his. Which is also a slightly disconcerting song. Imagine falling in and out of consciousness with that ditty as an ambient soundtrack to your own demise. It would be horrific. What Dennis would do sometimes is place headphones on the inebriated young male and while he was enjoying the record he would remove the headphones and strangle them with its long thin cord, using the conduit of the music to squeeze the life out of the unsuspecting young lad.

In 1990 Nilsen received a gift of a **Casio MT-640** Keyboard from his friend Brian Masters. He recorded quite a few of his choons onto cassette. Nilsen called them 'Suites'. A pen-pal of Nilsen's and the man who now has his ashes on the mantelpiece sent me 'Suite 36' which I review elsewhere in this issue of DIRGE. Indeed the 'Kindly Killer' wrote a song for the newly captured Jeffrey Dahmer whom he felt a bit of an affinity with which was entitled '**Requiem for Jeffrey Dahmer**'.

I did find quite an interesting website that deals in Serial Killer memorabilia which was selling the actual Casio he used in prison... For **£4,000**! He should have released some records on an obscure record label and become the next **Burzum**!

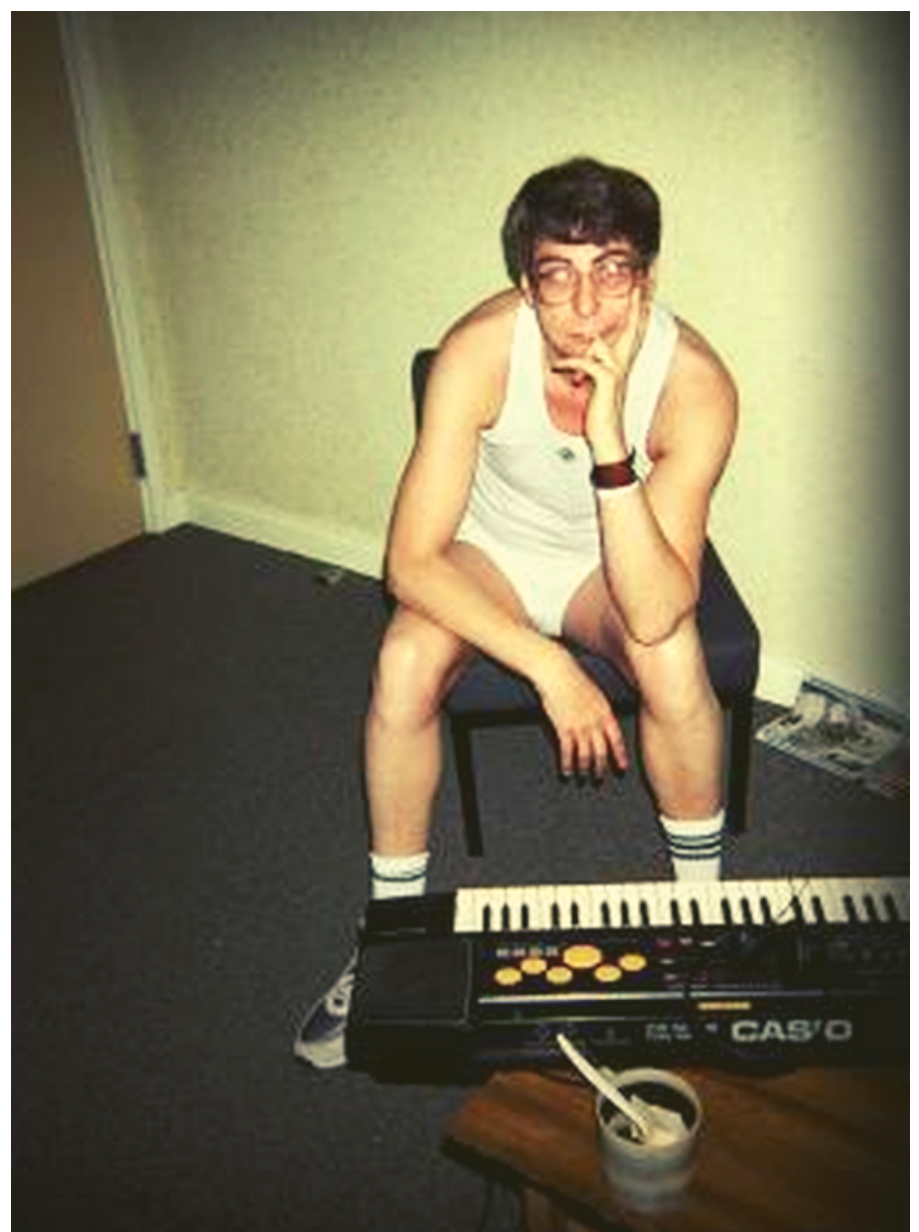


Nilsen wrote a song for Dahmer

Speaking of Mr. Dahmer...Jeff's room during his stint in the army was apparently adorned with Iron Maiden posters. Also quite a big Beatles fan, his favourite song was '**I Am The Walrus**'. J.D was also known to listen to Black Sabbath quite a lot, his most played jam being **Iron Man**. In prison as a contrast, maybe after he found God, he swapped the metal for Classical and **Whale** music.



Nilsen's Casio MT-640 Keyboard and 3 of his cassettes



Nilsen, posing in his pants with his Casio Home Keyboard

Richard Ramirez was a classic sex, drugs and rock n roll kinda guy. AC/DC cranked up to 11. I can just imagine the Night Stalker flying round the city limits of the city of angels, high on

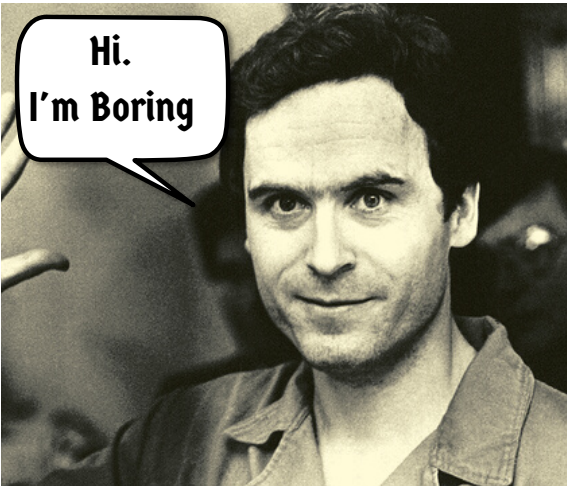


cocaine, blasting Judas Priest on his crappy car stereo, eating junk food and fantasizing about his next kill whilst simultaneously praying to Satan. What a multi-tasker.

Ramirez's AC/DC baseball cap found at one of his crime scenes was one of the pieces of evidence that finally put an end to The Night Stalker's reign of terror over Los Angeles.

Another apparent influence was leather clad proto metallers Judas Priest, particularly a song called "The Ripper" evidenced by the fact he used to scrawl the lyrics on the walls of his victims. Taking on a rock star persona himself at his trial, he seemed to appeal to some extremely warped sections of the female population. Fostering quite a large number of groupies each time he appeared in court.

Ted Bundy, possibly unsurprisingly was a little bit on the asmusical side. Apparently his audio treat of choice was Talk Radio. Never trust anyone who doesn't like music is my motto. It's served me well. You can tell a lot about a person's personality from what they listen to or don't listen to in this case.



"I would lie in bed for hours listening to news broadcasts exclusively. Meet the Press, or whatever. My favourite thing on Sunday nights was to hunt the radio bands for talk shows, call-in programs, documentary-like things. They're still my favourites. I'd listen to talk shows all day rather than listen to music."

I think that's what's known commonly as the banality of evil.

Much has been made about Charles Manson's apparent obsession with The Beatles, or to be exact their White Album from 1968. But he told a different story, claiming most of the mystique around it was actually fabricated by Vincent Bugliosi, the prosecutor in the Manson trials. I am on the fence. I believe he did forcibly make his followers listen to the album, and, for some reason Manson was obsessed with it, but whether he actually believed that The Beatles were predicting a race war and coding it into their music is a bit far fetched for me. I happen to believe Manson was at that time entirely compos mentis yet loved the idea of exercising his every whim and exuding control over his young, impressionable followers at any opportunity. Simply because he enjoyed it.

Manson has stated many times that he was never interested in The Beatles, that they weren't actually figureheads for his generation. Afterall he was a good ten years older than the rest of 'the family' and as a result he saw himself in the same mould as a 50's Beatnik, not a Hippie. Indeed he had not been a party to most of the 60's due to his various jail stints. Only seeing the light of day in 1967 to face a California transformed by flower power.

Manson's own music, a lot of which he penned while incarcerated in one of countless correctional facilities is actually really rather listenable. Besides one or two songs I'd much rather listen to Manson than Bob Dylan. Let's not forget that he (for a while at least before the Manson name became toxic) influenced Laurel Canyon troubadour Neil Young as well as having one of his songs erm, for lack of a better word murdered by The Beach Boys.



Manson on the prison church organ

Manson had a crooning, melodic singing voice which is showcased in songs like Look at Your Game Girl and Home is Where You're Happy. When paired with what you know he was capable of is a strange juxtaposition. Charlie was also a very proficient acoustic guitarist, having had plenty of time locked up in which to practice. He was also taught inside by old skool gangster Alvin "Creepy" Karpis.

Charlie was primarily a solo artist but also formed a short lived band with Bobby Beausoleil, who would later go on to murder Gary Hinman and effectively trigger the Tate/La Bianca murders. Bobby was never actually a card carrying member of the Manson Family, being on the periphery throughout, though he did venture to Spahn Ranch on a semi regular basis to take advantage of what was on offer and he did like many others, rate Manson as a musician.

Beausoleil would go on to compose the score for Kenneth Anger's Lucifer Rising, alongside Steve Grogan, who was also in prison for the murder of Shorty Shea whom he murdered while in the presence of Manson.

Grogan is now free and plays guitar in some sort of bluegrass band now these days.

A compilation album was cobbled together after Manson's arrest in 1969 which was entitled "Lie".

After they threw away the key, Manson played guitar off and on in prison, depending whether or not he was allowed his acoustic guitar in his cell. There are some extremely poor quality bootlegs available of his 'later stuff' but I wouldn't recommend them.

REVIEW

Photos by George 'Cajon' Stead

WHITE ROSE, PINK MOON, ELL HEMINGWAY

At The Forum

I'm not really a big fan of band reunions. Except when it's someone like **Pink Floyd** at Live-8. I vaguely remember the name White Rose from a decade back but as I was in my late 20's at the time and looking after a couple of kids and working in a warehouse, I didn't have much time for live music.

White Rose have now evolved into Pink Moon who are also on tonight's bill alongside Ell Hemingway.

So I collected my bus pass from the drawer like the old fart that I am, said my goodbyes and then took the number 7 bus down to The Railway Tavern, where I was meeting my good pal George for a couple of Prefabs. I would have preferred going to Steads but good friendships are often built on compromise. Besides there is a pool table and a decent jukebox, both of which the **William Stead** sadly lacks. We downed a couple of pints in there then took a short walk to The Forum over Borough Road.

First up was **Ell Hemingway**. Ell has a lovely, accomplished voice. Apparently her guitarist didn't turn up so she had to bag a last minute replacement. The crowd seemed to be having their own rather loud conversations which seemed a bit disrespectful to me as the music was quite low in volume. I suppose it would have been better suited to a quieter place like Uesuvio or a similar wine bar as opposed to a rock environment. It would have been good to hear some originals rather than a covers set.

Up next were **Pink Moon**. Not sounding at all like Nick Drake I'm going to guess the band weren't named after his 1972 album, harnessing More Charlatans vibes than folk rock. Catchy hooks with some rock solid drumming. Tight and well honed. The lead singer looks like he's just been granted parole for drugs offences and he's happy to be out of prison. Fair play though they have some decent ditties, if a little derivative.

White Rose were Nice and tight, although not as good as Pink Moon. I guess the latter have had more time recently to perfect their craft and put on a better show. They played a cover of Disco 2000. The crowd seemed to be mostly pumped up on this one. (Rip to Steve the **Pulp** bass player who died recently.) The front man looks like a skinnier version of Sam Smith. They certainly created a vibe with the crowd which was nice to see.

Edelweiss was the stand out track. But all the tunes were solid and I enjoyed watching it. All in all a good night was had by all! **3.7/5**



Ell Hemingway, who supplied the sultry tones



White Rose, reunited



Pink Moon in full orbit



WELCOME
TO →



Photos by Sarah Parilla

WE HEADED DOWN TO RICHMOND FOR A **DIRGE** DAY OUT AND CALLED IN BLUES NIGHT RECORDS

I don't venture to Richmond much. But when I do I always try and call in **Blues Night**.

It's a record shop/micro brewery operated from what is essentially a garden outhouse near to the town centre. It is a very welcoming outhouse however, as you can tell from the photos.

Tim doesn't charge for the ale either as that would contravene licensing laws so he will pour you a glass and put on some music (But donations are welcome.)

The **drinks** are great there, with inventive music based names, and it's strong too. It's open on a weekend from 2-8 on Saturday and 5-8 on a Sunday. It's located at 85 Frenchgate so get yourself down if you're a music fan and help out the local economy in the process!

facebook.com/bluesnightrichmond



GREEDY PIG

If you find yourself in **Whitby** and you also happen to enjoy consuming pork you simply must go to the Greedy Pig. It's located on a steepish hill off the seafront so you can pre-emptively burn off some calories before you arrive at this small but perfectly formed eatery.

I can't physically walk past without going in. My legs won't let me shun the **porky goodness**. Even after I had just eaten a large breakfast at The Angel Inn I still had to get a large pork and stuffing sandwich for **£4**.

5/5



5 Golden Lion Bank, Whitby

A SHORT GUIDE TO KENNETH ANGER AND HIS MAGICK LANTERN CYCLE

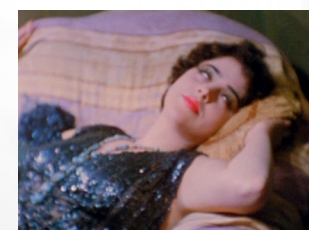


Kenneth Anger is possibly the most influential director you've never heard of. Having shaped the future ideas of directors, musicians and artists of all kinds. A devout occultist, he was involved in more than his fair share of scandal way back when. I'm going to give a short guide to Anger's Magick Lantern Cycle of films, which is actually nigh on his full back catalogue.

FIREWORKS (1947) - The 'plot' of Anger's directorial debut follows a young man who gets roughed up by a bunch of unruly sailors at the docks, presumably in a homophobic attack. Widely regarded as one of the first gay oriented films to be made. It's quite violent for the time and also features some really far out imagery, including Anger (who played the main role) setting light to a firework that he had lodged in his erm, groin area.



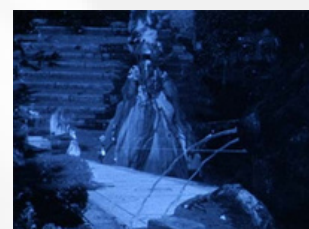
PUCE MOMENT (1949) - This is quite heavy going for even a hardened fan. It clocks in at 6 minutes but feels like 6 hours. It's basically an extremely artsy short film about a woman choosing what clothes she intends to wear for a night out. It has got some lovely cinematography but ultimately doesn't have much to offer the senses.



RABBITS MOON (1950) - Managing to somehow get access to a soundstage in Paris, Anger crafted a lovely little world from a small selection of props and costumes. Not actually completed or released in any meaningful way till 1971, Rabbits Moon is a stylised, evocative short film accompanied by a selection of 50's and 60's pop music which conjures up a sweet, sickly, ethereal mood.



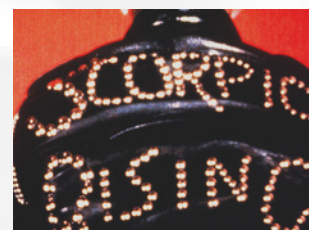
EAUX D'ARTIFICE (1953) - Probably the least captivating of Kenneth Anger's output. It essentially consists of an actress (Carmen Salvatorelli) walking round the Garden of the Villa d'Este in Tivoli with some Vivaldi playing in the background.



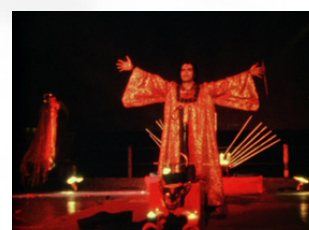
INAUGURATION OF THE PLEASURE DOME (1954) - One of my favourite Anger shorts. It's a groovy little meditation on occultism and esoterica. Filmed at Samson De Brier's Hollywood residence, it really is like nothing else from its time.



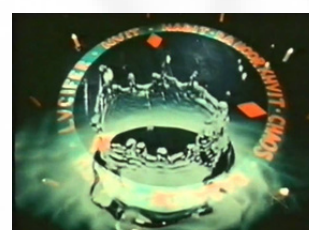
SCORPIO RISING (1964) - Anger is really starting to come into his own by the mid 60's. Capturing the early counter-culture zeitgeist perfectly with this dark, music led ode to biker culture. Its music video-like aesthetic had a real influence on Martin Scorsese who adopted it himself for 1973's Mean Streets.



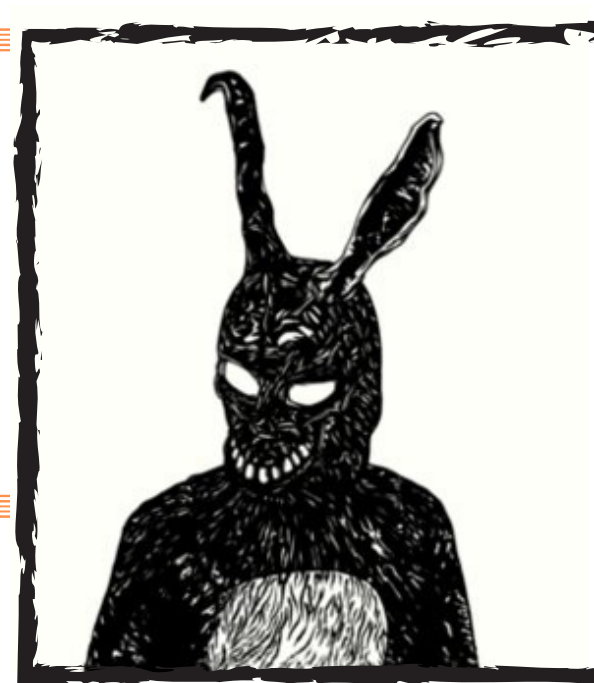
INVOCATION OF MY DEMON BROTHER (1969) - With one of the worst scores of any Anger movie performed by Mick Jagger on a Moog Modular, this is one of my favourites. Shot in San Francisco it features a cameo by Church of Satan leader Anton LaVey as well as Bobby Beausoleil, who was later entwined in the Manson Family murders the same year.



LUCIFER RISING (1980) - This occult and Thelemic based short film was actually conceived in the late 60's but with one thing and another it wasn't released until 1980 when Bobby Beausoleil completed the score in prison. A side note to this is, strangely, Anger sourced a young steel worker from Middlesbrough to play Lucifer. This film is easily his best. Beausoleil's score is very atmospheric. A masterclass in underground, occult cinema.



EASTER ROUND - UP



Kicking off the Easter proceedings was **The Pease Pudding Market** which seemed a bit spartan. Consisting of The Parmo Place, Piggy Blinders Burger Joint, a little bar and a few other vans. To my utter disappointment my favourite eatery wasn't there. That being Gunther's **Memories of the Black Forest**. Personally I have no memories of the Black Forest, having never been there, but when I put one of those Bratwurst in my mouth I feel like I am transported to the Uaterland. Maybe he will be at the next one? Musical entertainment was provided by one of Darlo's hardest working singers - **Eric Hynes** whose performance was in tents!

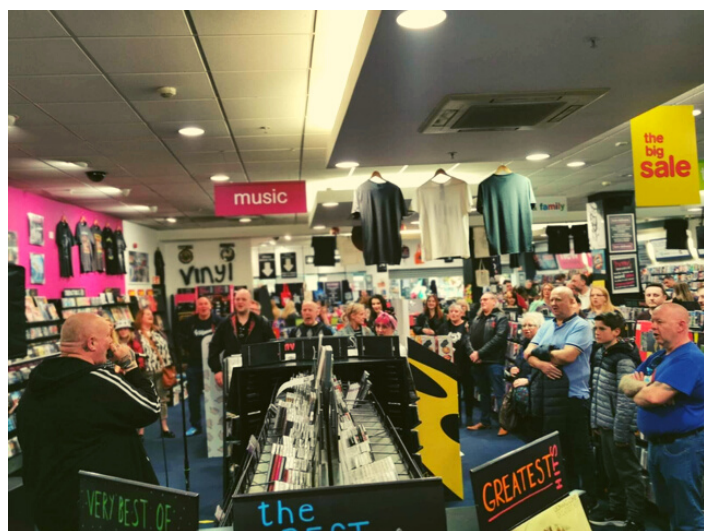
The next day we stumbled upon this large gathering of what appeared to be **Christians** near the Pease statue. There was a live band set up and lots of eager, joyful religious types all having a great time.

It really got me in the Easter spirit and put me in the mood for the frivolous events ahead!



Francis Jones was spotted under the railway bridge on Yarm Road where all them pigeons are on Easter Friday. Possibly attempting to raise awareness of our Lord Jesus Christ at this poignant time of the year, using the exact route J.C took on that fateful day 2000 years ago.

(Video still courtesy of Northern Echo)



Twas a good atmosphere in **HMU** for The Skarpys the next day, and a very nice sound considering they performed in the corner of a shop. There was a bit of a weird vibe permeating because it was essentially a matinee performance in The **Cornmill**, but the lads dealt with it well and put on an entertaining show. You can now call in and buy the album. Which I am reviewing in May's **Dirge**.

I love that HMU have started doing these. There was a time before the resurrection of vinyl and the surge in MP3 where I thought the chain store was going to have to close its doors. But it regrouped and evolved into something totally different with a **local** touch. So fair play to HMU Darlington.

The culmination of my Easter weekend besides Easter Dinner round my mother's was the annual Motorbike **Easter Egg Run**. All the local residents of North Road were out in force to wave to the passing bikes and trikes. The only unfortunate thing about it was when one of the riders fell off his bike in slow motion at 5 miles per hour just in front of us at the traffic lights. It transpired he was more or less unscathed so all's well that ends well!

All in all. A great Darlington based Easter was had!





I CAN THINK OF A LOT WORSE PLACES TO BE. LIKE DOWN IN THE STREET, OR DOWN IN THE SEWER, OR EVEN IN THE MIDDLE OF SPENNYMOOR...

In the words of Sly Stone this was a bit of a family affair. Our Dave's first experience of Straighten Out and my daughter Holly's first ever gig, joined by myself and the wife, us two being seasoned vets.

The Forum was filling up well by the time we arrived about half 7. It's always great to see other Strangers fans, old and young. Admittedly, mostly old. With pint in hand I took up my usual place down the front. It was time to keep my appointment with the MiB.

What I love best about Straighten Out is that they use a lot of original keyboards, guitars and amps from the late 1970's which gives the band an authentic realism that is much missed in the present incarnation of The Strangers themselves. Now down to one original member, they themselves are verging on being a tribute band. I just call them The **Strangler** now.



Concentrating mainly on the band's first 3 or 4 albums, there were a couple of surprises thrown in by featuring some later songs. Great **musicianship** abounds in this band and they're a thoroughly good bunch of blokes. I usually troll them after as I get excited by anything Strangers but they always humour me like pros.



Post gig backstage trolling

I had the chance to talk to some of my Strangers pals and new faces alike which is always good. My two kids had great fun and the wife enjoyed it too. Hopefully they will do a few songs off La Folie and Gospel next time. Hint **Hint**.

The Forum, Darlington - 11th March 2023

SBC	Walk on By
Nuclear	Sleazy
Toiler	Princess
No Mercy	Who Wants...
Skin Deep	Grip
Peaches	5 Mins
Dead Ringer	Tank
Bitching	Shut Up
Always Sun	Heroes
Raven	Straighten
Duchess	Hanging
Dead L.A.	
Nubiles	Go Buddy Go
DYW/DANAB	Sewer



TRACKS **ROUND UP**

With **Sarah** Wilson



We're looking forward to bringing more **Tracks** events to Darlington throughout the rest of 2023, big thanks to Dirge for giving us space to share some of them with you lovely lot!

Last weekend saw us host a very special **Noisy Daughters** song writing workshop run by Darlington musician on the up **Hayley McKay**. The workshop was well attended and saw participants of a variety of age ranges. It was great to connect and get creative with a wide range of women, girls and gender minorities to hopefully go off and put some of the tips Hayley shared into practice.

We've also recently had a beautiful, sold out **Hark! The Sound Of Stories** at the cosy fairy lit **Hash Bar**. Our Hark events link music and literature by programming artists who have created music inspired by poetry, a play or a book. The musicians performances are preceded by a reading of the pieces that have inspired the songs. The event works really well and brings together a great cross section of literature and music fans to share in a special, unique gig experience.

Coming up later this year we will be hosting a new free live music event in Darlington's market square supported by Darlington Borough Council. **Tracks In Town** will be held on Saturday 29th July and will bring a taster of our **Last Train Home Festival** right into the heart of the town centre. Expect rock, pop, soul and more, come down and discover your new favourite artist!

We are also so pleased to announce the return of our flagship festival Last Train Home, now in its sixth year. The festival will take place on Sat 2nd Sept and tickets are on sale now. Five stages over three venues featuring the best in regional and national original live music plus comedy from the wonderful Hilarity Bites! Venues included are The **Forum** Music Centre, The Hullabaloo and now new for 2023 The **Hippodrome** main stage! All performances are programmed to finish in time for people to catch the Last Train Home encouraging people from outside of Darlington to come along and enjoy the day.

Throughout August we will also be programming a selection of fab acoustic artists to perform every Tuesday afternoon in the **market square**. Come down bring a picnic, enjoy some mellow music and hopefully some sunshine.

To add to our bumper Summer of live music, we will be adding to the programming for the **RnB** Saturday event on the 10th of September and **Darlington Pride** Picnic in the Park!

tracksdarlington.co.uk

facebook.com/tracksdarlington

twitter.com/tracksdarlo

instagram.com/tracksdarlington

DIRGE does... **THE VAULT**

The Vault and I didn't get off to a great start when I nearly **whacked my head** off the rather low beam on the way in. Undeterred, we made our way to the bar.

Furnished with velvet seats and playing old-time jazz guitar music on the sound system reminiscent of Django **Reinhardt**, cavernous and quite cosy in places. A decent selection of beers and cocktails are on offer which are slightly on the pricey side but I had prepared myself for that prior to entering. There is a lovely old **Bechstein** baby grand piano situated in a bijou live area where I understand there are burlesque and **jazz** trio performances regularly.

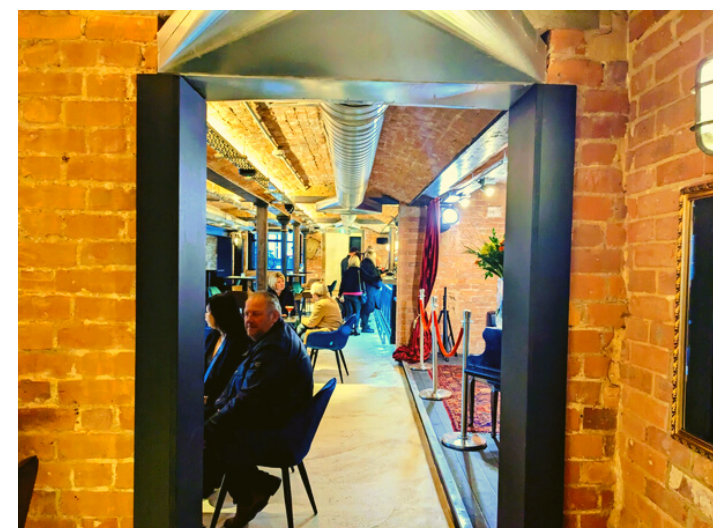
The Vault definitely stands out amongst its contemporaries within Darlington's night life sector. It would be good to eventually get bands of all kinds in there but that probably wouldn't sit well with the ethos they are trying to create for the place.

Parquet flooring in the bogs offers a nostalgic touch. If the décor was red you could imagine yourself in the bathroom of the **Overlook** Hotel, being accosted by Delbert Grady, who WAS the caretaker there.

No mirrors in the bogs yet but I'm told they're on their way. I started thinking maybe they had a few regular **vampires** frequenting the place who didn't want to be identified.

I'd recommend The Vault, it feels slightly half finished but when it is fully complete, could well end up being a very welcome, long term addition to Darlington's town centre.

3.7/5



ALBUM REVIEW : SKAPONES - NORTHERN GODS

THE SKAPONES officially christened their second album Northern Gods at an HMU instore in Darlington on Saturday April 8th. The two tone troupe played selected songs from the new release with a few oldies thrown in for good measure. I've listened to the album a few times now, so let's see what I made of it!



First off I must lay all my cards on the table and admit I am not the biggest fan of Ska music in general, nor am I an expert in the field. As with everything though I listened to it with an open mind and Northern Gods did start to grow on me. The musicianship is tight and professional throughout. I liked the Northern-ness of it. The Skapones are in no way by the numbers Ska revivalists, they appear to have forged their own niche in the Ska scene. I imagine the **northern-ness** is what they were going for judging by the title and the lyrical content within the tracks. It fits all the archetypes of the Ska idiom but it succeeds in not falling into the trap of being derivative.

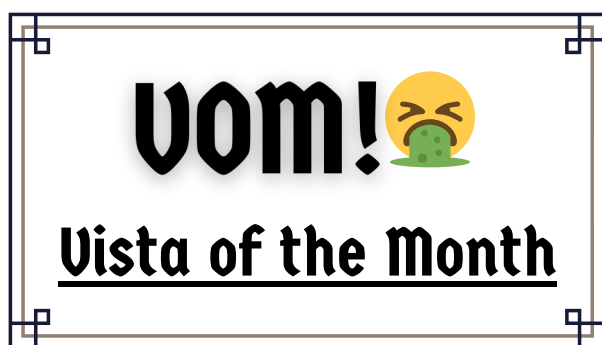
My faves on the album are Before the War and You can't let go. The former is a melodious and upbeat ditty with some gritty sounding Hammond Organ. You can't let go is a dreamy lament with **harpsichord** flurries that sound quite Manzarekeqsue to my ears. This song is a good showcase for Paul's voice which reminds me tonally of a mix of Ali Campbell from UB-40 and Tony Hadley (I hope that isn't offensive to him, I don't think so.)

In terms of production it has a very full, spacious quality to it which impressed me. It isn't too polished though and it sustains a rawness which you need with music like this.

I'd describe what they are doing as Ska with a social conscience, which is reflected in their recent charity single and the work they have been doing in collaboration with the Teachers Union. Recommended primarily for Ska fans and also casual listeners alike.

3.8/5

facebook.com/theskapones



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

This evocative photograph was sent in by Holly Cuthbert, aged 16 and a half from Darlington. Capturing splendidly **Lady Jane Hairdressers** on the corner of Barron Street and Brinkburn Road. It really does hark back to a simpler time of hairdressing. Thanks Holly!



The now defunct Lady Jane hairdressers, joining Brinkburn Road

Have you got a vom for us? Email it to darlodge@gmail.com

ALBUM REVIEW : SICK ROBOT - A FIELD IN YORKSHIRE



I understand 'The Robot' uses Reason as his music software of choice. As do I. It's fun and intuitive and sounds someway decent. I was half expecting a rustic vibe judging by the title of the album but it really isn't. I was envisioning music akin to the neo-folk horror film **A Field in England**.

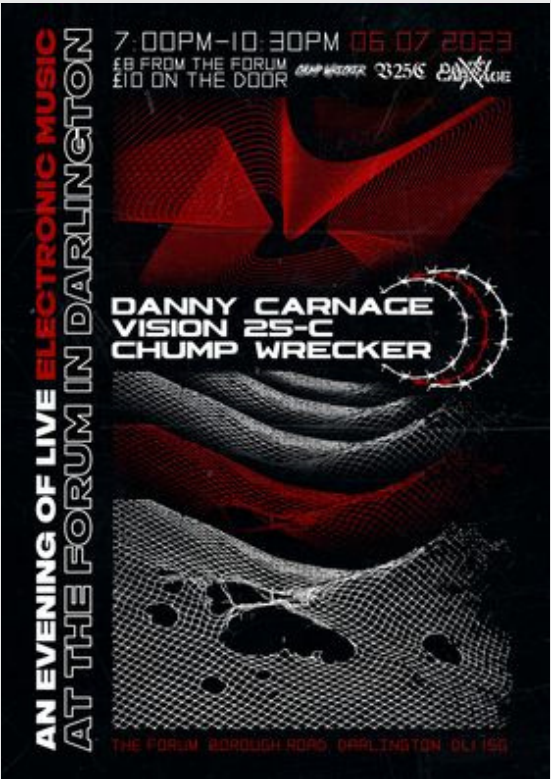
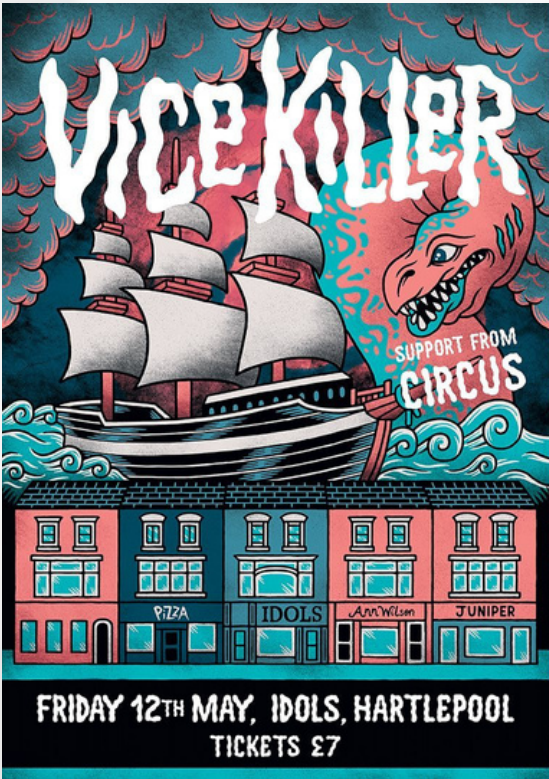
Thick sounding bass drums. Glitchy and hypnotic. Sometimes slightly too hypnotic and I started to zone out. Marrying distorted percussion with softer sounding synth textures.

I can hear a bit of the old psytrance in there too and quite a few four to the floor beats. The album does sometimes get a bit samey in places and I normally wouldn't listen to an album of instrumental electronica for more than 40 minutes.

This release would probably fit well on the **Giallo** Disco label which was one of my favourite labels till it disappeared up its own arse. It's a very varied album covering quite a few different electronic sub genres and The Sicko does it well.

Stellar sound design and wicked production all contribute to A Field In Yorkshire being a solid album. **3.7/5**

sickrobot1980.bandcamp.com



A LITTLE PREVIEW OF ROBERT EGGERS' NOSFERATU

1922's Nosferatu will forever hold a place in my heart as one of the greatest horror films of all time. And in one of those rare occasions where the remake is better than the original, 1979's version directed by Werner **Herzog** in my opinion surpasses it. I wonder if this remake will be even better still?

That remains to be seen but with a stellar cast including hot ticket Bill **Skarsgaard** (Pennywise in IT) and Lily Rose **Depp** starring with new horror auteur extraordinaire Robert **Eggers** on directorial duties it stands a half decent chance. Filming began in March in Prague. I Can't wait to see what it's like.

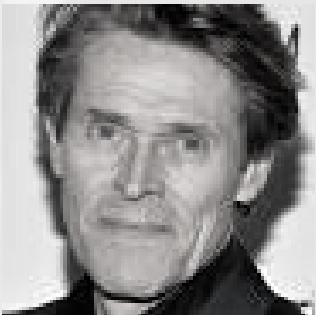
Upon seeing The Witch and The Lighthouse (both of which I enjoyed) you can tell that Eggers is fond of stark, monochrome tones and shadowy sets so I can see Nosferatu being more of the same. Which is fine by me! I wonder if he remakes The Cabinet of Dr Caligari next? Nicolas Cage as Cesare and Mr Tumble as the eponymous doctor would be my go to.



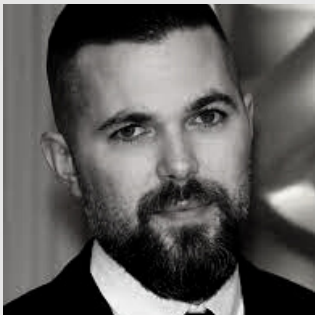
DEPP



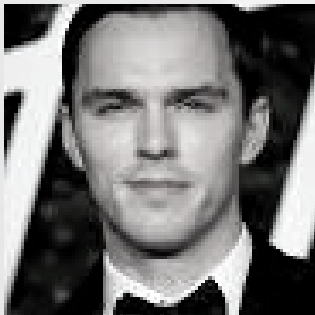
TAYLOR - JOY



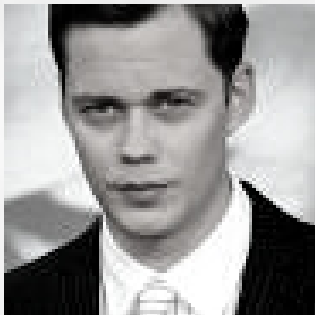
DEFOE



EGGERS



HOULT



SKARSGAARD

DIRGE POSTER



An amazing picture of **Bauhaus** students from 1927.

Looking like an edgy, post - punk sensation from 1981.