

WEAVING A WEB OF SUCCESS

REMEMBER WHEN

DEREK AJ LISTER looks back at Bradford rock 'n' roll group The Tarantulas.

Based in Ilkley, the story of The Tarantulas is a tangled web, but when it is unravelled it is an absorbing story!

They came together in the summer of 1963 as Shadows sound-alikes. They were Pete Dickinson, lead guitar, Stan Dobson and Tony Idle, rhythm guitars, Clive Steele, bass guitar, and Andrew Horton, drums. Feeling the need to broaden their repertoire, they approached singer Brian Bailey, a perennial winner at the Wharfedale Music Festival. Brian took up the challenge and coarsened his voice to perform rock 'n' roll!

The group's debut was a private party at the Bluebird Café in Ilkley on the evening of November 22, 1963, which unfortunately coincided with the assassination of John F Kennedy - the news of which somewhat detracted from the group's performance.

From then on they became a regular act at the Blue Genes Club in Ilkley, where Gene Hartley championed their cause and spread the word, leading to bookings at the Stoney Lea Hotel in Ilkley as featured act.



They also supported other groups, such as the Four Pennies, Rev Black and the Rocking Vicars, and The Wheels from Belfast. The Tarantulas also played at the Leeds and Bradford Mecca ballrooms, and also the Coffin Club, Top Twenty Club, the Dungeon and the popular

Majestic ballroom, all in Bradford. Big Daddy's Club in Halifax was a particular favourite.

Brimming with confidence, The Tarantulas entered the Battle of the Bands contest at Keighley Victoria Hall, where they emerged

winners in the process, beating The Grumbleweeds, who had yet to adopt their comedy persona.

Within weeks, in April 1964, The Tarantulas entered a larger contest: Beat Unlimited the Yorkshire Sound, organised jointly by Star

The Tarantulas started out as Shadows sound-alikes and became a successful group in their own right. Image: Derek AJ Lister

Cinemas and Coca-Cola. They reached the finals in Brighouse, their opposition comprising The Zendas from Morley, Clive and the Crestas from Sherburn-in-Elmet, the Fabulous Phantoms from Bradford, The Ravens from Huddersfield, The Gleneagles from Leeds, The Astrals from Leeds, and Danny and the Talisman.

Winning the contest, they received a cash prize and a TV appearance, a test recording for Fontana Records and promotion by Star Cinemas. The members of the group are still waiting to enjoy the latter three accolades, but the cash prize came in handy.

From then on widespread venues included Cleveleys, Blackpool, Bradford and Leeds universities, and the Cavern Club in Liverpool, where they shared the bill with the Clayton Squares and The Hideaways.

In 1965 Pete Dickinson left the group, followed by Tony Idle. George Speller joined them on keyboards. Later The Tarantulas amalgamated with two members of The Ladykillers to form, with a change in fashion and music, Mouldy Warp.

* Derek AJ Lister and collaborator, musician Reuben Davison, profile singers, bands and musicians from Bradford's 1950s and 60s music scene in their website: www.whenbradfordrocked.co.uk

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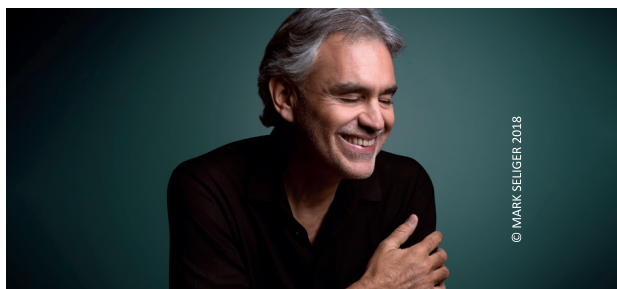
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