

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

The Leeds Scene

19th October 2005 I meet Eddie Roberts at the Wardrobe. He's talking to Malcolm Strachan about how "you're only as good as your last gig" and how you can have a run of great gigs but "ultimately it's all down to the night". "98% of the time you're not up to scratch" he says. To me this contrasts with the punters experience, who will probably *enjoy* it 98% of the time. I think this is the essence of an artist: chasing perfection. "Keep playing" as Malcolm says.

How does it feel, sitting chatting to these guys? Like there's a whole scene going on that isn't mainstream, and is almost marginalised by indie rock (or whatever's fashionable at the moment) and the popular music industry. Yet throughout the course of documenting this scene I've come to realise that it's seriously undervalued and more alive than I first imagined and that many of the artists involved strive to be successful whilst happily remaining firmly 'underground'.

Exhibition

To commemorate the Leeds scene, local artist Neil Hardy has photographed and painted portraits of many of the main players. He also conducted interviews with them, mainly between October 2005 and January 2006, the results of which are included here.

13th October 1993 I came to Leeds to study Fine Art and soon swapped my doc martens for a pair of trainers after going to Dig! at the Gallery. Leeds was a bit different then. The Arts Café was the first and only European style café bar that exhibited local artwork and the Town and Country club was one of the city's leading live music venues. Soon afterwards Dig! became the Underground, a watershed moment in Leeds' music history.

Today, there's the Wardrobe, the HiFi, the Faversham and Sela regularly

hosting acts ranging from jazz to cuban to rare groove to hip hop to funk and soul. There are characters like Reverend Chunky, a modern day sounding Solomon Burke, spreading a message of love and unity, and those naughty monkeys the Haggis Horns ripping it up wherever they go.

This scene is the true sound of Leeds. It's the sound of musicians coming together from all walks of life to celebrate and bring people together. A musically diverse collective of musicians; are they all in it for the same thing? Find out inside... Neil Hardy



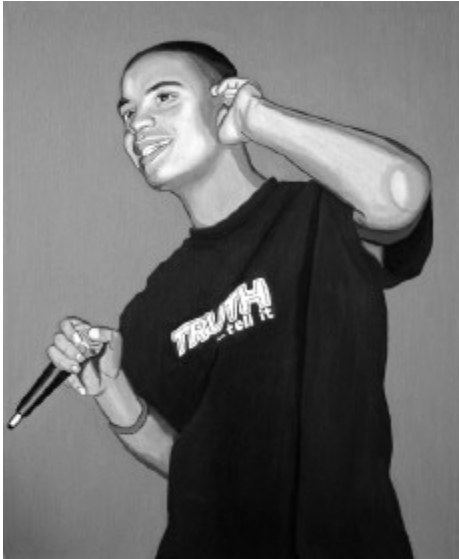
Avid followers of the Leeds funk scene

From January to April 2006 Neil also made an underground 30 minute documentary on funk band the Haggis Horns with Fergus Dingle of Prodigal Productions. Entitled 'Enter the Haggis', the film was successfully premiered at Sela in May 2006.

The painting exhibition runs from 30th September to 3rd November at Arts Café and from 4th November to 16th December 2006 at the Wardrobe. Neil was recently quoted as saying "After finishing this body of work I am well and truly funk'd!"

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Andy Brookes (Testament)



Venue: The Faversham for a Homecut Directive CND Charity gig. I meet Andy just before he is about to go on stage.

What bands do you play in?

I'm in 2 crews – the Homecut Directive, which is straight up positive hip hop consciousness and Today's Mathematics, which is nu jazz mixed with prophetic soul.

Who was your biggest influence?

The Beatles, Gil Scott Heron. My brother was into stuff like Sam Fox and the Pet Shop Boys. It wasn't really me. One day he was given a copy of 'De La Soul is Dead' and I listened to it and it was game over. I was 15 years old and I was sorted. I also got into stuff like Jazzmatazz.

How old are you?

I'm 27 years old. I was born in London, lived in Zimbabwe from the age of 6 to 9 years old. Then we came back to Manchester, where my dad was a teacher. We moved to Leeds in 1997.

There's too much Darth Vader out there and not enough Luke Skywalker, especially in Hip Hop. I'd like to bring the balance back to the force!

Why do you do it?

(Thinks) Life's made up of seasons. I've done everything from sell ice creams to studying English Literature at Leeds University with Corinne Bailey Rae. You go through different periods and have different callings. I guess it's God talking to me. He said, if you're going to do it, do it and represent and try to spread love. Think about life. Think about what you're doing. Do it righteously. Say something that matters and keep it real. It's not right for me to sing about being a pimp or a gangster. I've beat-boxed in New York and cried in church. Life's made up of different seasons. God's got his hand on everyone's life. Acknowledge it and seize opportunities.

Is music a spiritual thing then?

Hip hop is a very direct form of communication. It's basically someone talking to you and it's very powerful. It's a multiplicity of ideas. It can stop violence or start it and it's done both. Everything is spiritual, from shopping to politics, but for me Jesus is the answer. My goal is to share life and that comes out in the music. That's what I'm trying to do. On one level, I'm telling people about Jesus and on another I'm saying just be nice to people. I don't want to preach.

What have you been doing recently?

I've set up my own business officially. I've got a business bank account and have been working hard. I also do race workshops where I go to schools and give my life story in terms of race. I try to tell people to respect each other, regardless of race and religion. My dad's a white cockney and received racist abuse as a teacher in Mosside from black kids who didn't realise he was in a mixed-race relationship. When my mam moved over here from Ghana in 1970 she received racism from white people. It's still happening. A friend of mine got beaten up in Bradford recently for being black. I also work with the probation service, teaching kids to rap.

What records have you released?

Our first record came out two years ago called 'Come the Revolution' with Corinne Bailey Rae on it. It was well received in the press. Blues and Soul magazine said 'The world needs more music like this'. There's an album in the pipeline in 2006. I'd like to tour as well, God willing. Today's Mathematics is going really well too. Our first single 'Butterfly' came out in the summer.

What are your plans for the future?

Like I said, life's made up of seasons, so we'll just have to see how it goes. I'd like to make an impact in the UK and become part of the country's consciousness. There's too much Darth Vader out there and not enough Luke Skywalker, especially in hip hop. I'd like to bring the balance back to the force!

What would you like to look back on as an old man?

Standing in front of hundreds or even thousands of people by changing the world and doing spiritual, uplifting hip hop and people thinking about the message. I'd like to have challenged people and society. I want to have served God and people. We all need to get better at it. I'm on 2 journeys: one is a quest for musical credibility, the other is a spiritual journey. The first is nothing without spiritual weight. It says in the Bible 'All men are grass and will pass away' but the challenge for me is to be a lasting testament.

Favourite song 'The Revolution Will Not Be Televised' by Gil Scott Heron.

Atholl Ransome

Venue: The Wardrobe after a Haggis Horns gig.

Why music?

I didn't have a choice. I had to do it. It's all I've ever wanted to do. It's in my blood. My mum's grandpa was a church organist and was the pianist in a band called The Simpson Swingers.

Was he your main influence?

All my mum's side were a really strong influence. From being a kid I always wanted to play the sax. I started on the recorder and the flute. I was 12 years old before I got my first sax and I loved it.

I've heard you were a child prodigy. Is this true?

Na. My dad's brother was a flute player. Due to the enthusiasm of my family I kept at it. I was encouraged. I was actually really bad at the flute for years.

**Why do you keep doing it?**

Music's never going to stop. It's a choice. Do you jump on the bus or not? You know, like Tom Wolfe's 'Electric Kool Aid Acid Test'. Yet it's more than that. Music is never going to die. All you've got is you're here then you die, so leave something good behind. What are you here for? Who's going to remember you when you die?

Do you live a different lifestyle to other people?

My ideal life would be as a wandering minstrel in the back of a car, entertaining in return for food, board and beer. It's the rest of the world that's messed up. What I do makes perfect sense. I don't feel isolated from other people as people love it. Otherwise people would think I'm mad.

Is music a spiritual thing?

I'm about to have a kid. I have to ask, is my lifestyle suitable for that? My priorities are changing. Do we veil everything that's going on in the world?

How does what you do compare to the music of the past?

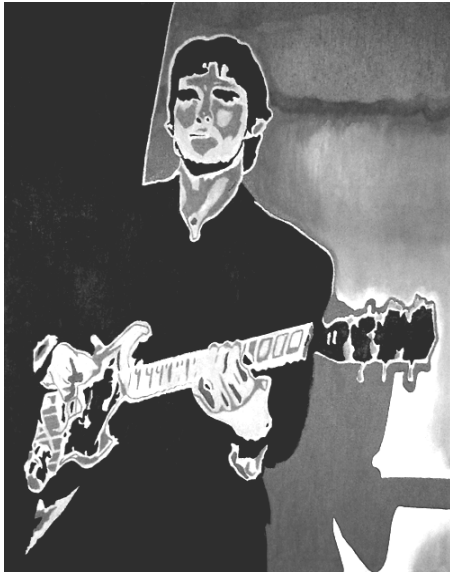
What we do in the Haggis Horns is different. We mean it and are trying to move forward. Our music is a continuation of the past. There's a whole bunch of people who share the same work ethic and belief - a group of people, individuals but whole. There's some leaders also, who act as a bridge between scenes.

What was your relationship like with Jason Rae at the Leeds College of Music?

Me and Jase studied jazz studies and graduated at the same time. Jason's much more adept. We chose different paths at college, but ended up at the same place. Jason won the yearly prize for most outstanding sax on his performance and essays. He absolutely *nailed* his performance. The rest is a blur, but like I said, we ended up in the same place.

Favourite song 'Air On A G String' by Bach

Ben Barker



Venue: Jason Rae's flat.

What instrument do you play?

I play guitar, but I also play drums and a bit of piano. I was 12 years old when I got my first guitar. I learnt from guitar lessons – I've had a few teachers over the years – and books. My best mate Steve Brown, a successful pianist in Manchester, taught me musical theory and harmony, but I picked up more from the musicians that I started gigging with when I moved to Leeds at 23 years old.

Where are you from originally?

Harrogate. I left school at 16 and worked as a furniture remover. Lots of my friends moved to Leeds and so I met loads of people, like Steve who went to Leeds College of Music. I'd played previously in bands in Harrogate and started playing in bands in Leeds. John McAllum from the college of music sang in the band I was playing with in Harrogate. This all helped bridge the gap between Harrogate and Leeds.

It's a close-knit community. Everyone knows everyone else... All the bands can be linked together in some way. You know, like Kevin Bacon and films.

What was the name of that band?

Body & Soul. We later changed the name to Stubble Funk. Gordon Kilroy played drums. We signed to an indie label in Rotherham that was actually funded by gangsters who owned some Manchester gangsters money. The day after we were dropped, due to financial difficulties, the Manc gang turned up and ripped the expensive mixing desk out of the studio and dropped it down the stairs. It got a bit messy apparently! The police were called in and there was a bit of a stand-off.

What did you do after that?

I bought a house and settled in Leeds. Using income from rent I set up a studio in the basement. Around this time John established a new band and got the Haggis Horns to play. I did the PA and played a few times. The Haggis Horns horn section formed around 1998. Wayne Clarke was the original guitarist. Bob Birch played keys and Bruce Renshaw was on drums. I also started playing in the Bugalu Foundation with Sam Bell the percussionist around the time the Wardrobe opened. In fact, the Bugalu Foundation opened the club. The original Haggis Horns line up lasted 2 to 3 years. I joined around 2001/2002.

Do you enjoy playing with the Haggis Horns?

It's great playing with them. We're writing much more original tunes now. I've also done the standard soul 'depping' (musician's term for 'standing in') in the meantime. It's a close-knit community. Everyone knows everyone else. It's actually quite incestuous. All the bands can be linked together in some way. You know, like Kevin Bacon and films.

Why do you do it?

I love music. I don't want a 9 to 5 job. Music is a great way to express yourself. It's an aid to a higher consciousness and it enables a glimpse into other sides of yourself that you might not see otherwise. It helps to open up your brain; it's meditative and trance-inducing. I get a buzz if the audience appreciate it. We feed off their energy and vice versa. The other end of the spectrum is the low vibes, but if all gigs were amazing there'd be no meaning and no point in playing anymore. This is what keeps me going. For me, music is a spiritual thing. It has helped me to think about things in a deeper way.

What are your hopes for the future?

I'd like to have some original music recorded and available to buy nationwide and eventually worldwide. I'd like to promote it by gigging around the UK and then around the world. This might then lead to remixing other people's records and playing with other bands. I'm happy with where I am. I've overcome a lot of struggles musically. I'm not a natural and have had to work hard. I've worked with some great musicians. I feel like I've just started and that there's loads more to come.

Favourite song 'Secret Life' by James Taylor.

Benson J Walker

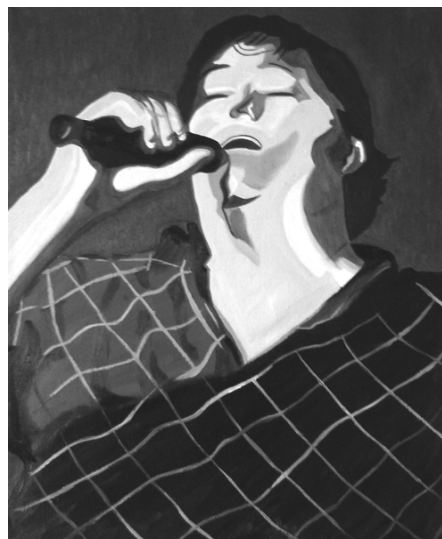
Venue: The Wardrobe.

What were your main influences?

Well I started out as a bassist, but I always sung as a kid. I played bass in gigs with this band, but the singer was awful. I was 17 years old. My dad was a pianist. He did jazz gigs and played around the house. No one really influenced my singing although my dad and sister sang. I was more influenced by black blues artists such as Howlin' Wolf and Muddy Waters. I got into them when I was 14 years old. I got a good response from my first gig as a singer and never looked back. I've always sung round the house.

Where are you from?

Leeds. I'm 29 years old. I was 22 when I started in the Leeds scene with Capri, my main band.



I close my eyes on stage and get into it and escape everything.

Why do you do it?

It's an utter passion, recreating the sounds that I love. I love music from soul and blues, but also funk from the Average White Band and Robert Palmer. He was really influential. He's from Batley which is 10 miles away. I love his first solo album, backed by the Meters and Little Feat – my favourite band of all time. I'm inspired by white British artists doing Funk and *knowing* they could do it in the 70's. I'm still interested in blues and soul. I also play in Jacuzzi 500 and Cosmic Debris, an offshoot of Capri.

Is music a spiritual thing for you?

Yeah. I close my eyes on stage and get into it and escape everything. I love the live thing, but making an album is a permanent endeavour. It can be heard in the future.

What's coming up in the future?

There's another 2 Capri albums, one live and one solo, already written. I've also written a solo album.

How would you describe your relationship with Dan Woodward?

We're like brothers, like Jason Rae and Malcolm Strachan. We're the 2 main songwriters. We share the same sense of humour and it shines through. We're on the same wavelength. We're also very different, but we meet on the same wavelength. We just do it.

What do you want to look back on when you're an old man?

The *whole* experience – it's a mixture. The gigs, which have been painful *and* amazing, the records, the people.

Favourite song 'Dixie Chicken' by Little Feat.

Central Soul Club

Pat Brady:

"The Central ran for almost three decades from 1971 up to 1990, starting with Tony Banks who sadly passed away. There was something going on every week. I was a DJ there from late '76 to late '78. I DJ'd Northern Soul on a Saturday night. On Fridays it was rare groove night and Paul Schofield and Ian Dewhirst DJ'd funk. The Central was a very important club at a time when the scene was changing in the North and when the Blackpool Mecca evolved from northern soul to funk. They were the first club to be playing Earth, Wind and Fire and we followed their lead".

Bob Birch



Venue: The Angel pub. Bob's just returned from touring America with the New Mastersounds.

Who was your main influence and how did you get into music?

My main influence is 50's/60's jazz. You know jazz boogaloo stuff. I was initially into rock music when I was 16 years old, like Zeppelin, Deep Purple and Pink Floyd. They were my favourite band. No one in my family really influenced me to play as my dad's a dentist and my mam's a schoolteacher. It just became an obsession in my teens. My dad loves jazz though. It brought us closer together.

Where are you from and why did you come to Leeds?

I'm from Northamptonshire. I came to Leeds College of Music to start a band. I left school at 16 to do an access course in Engineering, but realised it was a mistake as I was drawn to music. Back home me and my mates jammed a lot on the keyboard. We used to have battles to see whose hammond was the loudest! I came to Leeds and really got stuck into groove music, which is funk and reggae. There's nothing more groovy than reggae. When the musicians interlock, that's special. That's groove music!

Why do you do it?

No choice. It's an obsession. It's a curse that stops me from doing anything that's better paid! I could be doing something else. There are other things I'd like to do but music is so time-consuming and it comes down to doing it. I've worked really hard at getting to where I am at now. One of the worst things you can be is complacent. You've got to look at where you're at and what you've got to be grateful. Everyone in the band has come from different places, with different personalities, but we manage to pull together as a unit.

Do you think of your first album as a bit of a benchmark record?

Yeah. The first album's the best. It sounds really young and raw and powerful. I really respect the Haggis Horns, who played on it, but they're difficult to work with. I really hope their album does well. I mean that.

What's it like breaking out of the Leeds scene?

It's exciting and liberating to see all these places. My eyes are open and fixed on Europe now, particularly with 'Organ Donor', my other band. We've got a 5 year plan of recording and getting it together. We've been recording an album in our studio in Holbeck. There's me, Pete Shand on bass, Mark Cressell on guitar – he's one of Leeds' best kept secrets – and Sam Hobbs who's one of the best drummers in the country. Plus Jugunnaut on vocals from Africa. His lyrics are really political. We've done a few gigs in Leeds down the Wardrobe. They've been really supportive, especially Simon Beddowe who works there. He's into pushing little bands a lot. Yet I'm really into the travel aspect. Gigs are the same wherever they are. They really are.

How was the tour?

We've done 3 or 4 tours of America now. The first time we played there was in Chicago. This one was in the West Coast. It started off at the Boom Boom Room in San Francisco, which was crazy. Before the gig a guy called Alex who started the club with John Lee Hooker – a really cool guy, really into the music – took me and Eddie out. Eddie doesn't normally drink before a gig but this night was special. We had loads of red wine and oysters then drove back to the club, battered. They had a curtain round the stage and we could hear the people outside. I'm sat at the keys, the curtain goes up slowly and I see all these heads and suddenly realise "Wow, I'm in San Francisco". It was an amazing moment. After that we went to Washington State, then played in a casino in Hornbolt County, on Indian land, which was interesting, then Bellingham outside Seattle. The sound engineer at that gig worked on Pink Floyd's Dark Side of the Moon tour, so I was asking him loads of questions. Then we crossed the border into Canada and played Vancouver. I love Canada. It's a completely different vibe to America. They want to be seen as liberal and I think it's good. Their Prime Minister is called Paul Merton! We've also been to Italy before, which is a totally unique experience. The guys out there won't leave you alone. I think they're worried about you getting off with their women!

Are you proud of what you've achieved so far?

Of course. We all should be. We've worked hard. No one's worked as hard to push the band as Simon. We've done a lot of rubbish gigs. If it wasn't for him we wouldn't have done any of it.

What are your plans for the future?

Keep doing the gigs we enjoy in America with the Mastersounds. We've already got a date for High Sierra which is a Californian festival in June/July next year. That gig was crazy last year! We did four gigs there, which is unheard of and outsold everyone else in terms of CD sales. So we've been invited back! Our American success is all down to Dave Vandeburgh who's our American sugar daddy. He's a multi-millionaire who pays us to travel there and tour. He's really passionate about music. We've just set up our own record label over there with him. It's called Two Note which is the American version of One Note, our label over here. The main reason is to get our own music released. We don't really make any money out of it. We've also got a live album coming out next year, recorded in the Caves of Xonoi in Minorca. We're doing a gig there again next year.

What would you like to look back on as an old man?

To have some recorded music that I'm really proud of. The gigs come and go. I want to look back on a good back catalogue. Recorded music is for posterity. That's the point of doing it and that's what I'm looking forward to next year, along with lots of exciting gigs. That would be cushy to look back on. Also, Jelly Jazz, which is a promotional club night in the south of England. We owe it all to people like this, especially my wife Jenny, who used to be in Helen with Corinne Bailey Rae. Yet one of the best gigs I've ever done was the Eden Project with Lou Donaldson. I'll always remember that.

Favourite song 'Arnold Layne' by Pink Floyd.

Cara Robinson

Venue: The Wardrobe. It's the first gig with her new band. I catch her just before going on stage.

Who are your influences?

Roberta Flack, Donny Hathaway. Also my mum. She used to sing in a spiritual band Guru Maharaji. My mum's a Prami. She sang to her Indian guru. I also used to listen to a lot of Janis Joplin when I was growing up. My dad used to listen to a lot of bluegrass, country and western and blues as well.

What age did you start singing?

17 years old. I started singing in choirs, which I had to come from Bangor in Northern Ireland. I moved to Leeds in 1997 and studied at Bretton Hall. I went back to Northern Ireland for a year. I kept doing music with friends.

Why do you do it?

I don't know. If I don't do it I get depressed. It's a release.



My first gig was Bad Brains when I was 16 years old. I lost a shoe as I was being crushed at the front. This big guy grabbed my hair and saved me from falling down. He saved my life! I turned round to kiss him and he was a topless giant and I ended up kissing his sweaty belly!

Is music a spiritual thing?

It stops me thinking when I'm singing. I switch off and then I think "That's it!"

What have you been doing recently?

This new Motown thing Cara and The Robinsons. It's to get people up dancing. I've also made an album.

What gave you the idea for your album cover? You look like someone from the 1950's.

I did it for a laugh. My nana looked like that. She was a looker! (laughs).

At this point, Cara has to rush off to do the set list. It's an amazing gig and the first one with this line up. The music is Motown and funk. The audience are mad for it. I get Cara again after the gig...

How do you feel?

Alive. Relieved.

Why do you do it?

It gives me a kick. I love the music. I love the groove. I really get into it. I think that music's lost its feel nowadays. Old music's coming from the right place. Modern music is too calculated and diluted. It's not as in your face. You can really shake to older music. It's good fun.

What are your plans for the future?

To say no to gigs! I want to do gigs that I want to do, to focus on the music that I want to do. I'm still working it out. I'd like to create some magic in the studio. Just focus and get it done. Oh, and eat really well and drink cider and just be happy.

Is your lifestyle different to other peoples?

Yes, it's different. I tried a 9 to 5 lifestyle and turned into an old lady, gossiping and grumpy. I became bored and when I get bored I become mischievous.

What would you like to look back on when you do become an old lady?

The whole experience. Meeting amazing people, learning from different music and where people are coming from. Hopefully, I'd like to have mastered the music business and have passed it on to my grandkids. I'd like to have seen the world and had adventures.

Who else have you played with?

Well, my first gig was with Rachel, who's in the Bluefoot Project now and I got lots of gigs through that. I sang with Rhianna in Japan and around the UK. I also did 'Women on Top' with Corinne and then Andreyka, who has now moved to London. I used to play in a punk band that was a mixture of the Shangri La's and the Shamen! My first gig was Bad Brains when I was 16 years old. I lost a shoe as I was being crushed at the front. This big guy grabbed my hair and saved me from falling down. He saved my life! I turned round to kiss him and he was a topless giant and I ended up kissing his sweaty belly! We managed to get backstage, as the singer fancied my mate, and partied with Bad Brains.

Favourite song 'Stay With Me Baby' by Shirley Brown

The Underground

Gip Dammone:

Where did your love of music come from?

Our family owned coffee bars in the sixties. Also my dad opened the Blue Gardenia, possibly the first live r & b club in Leeds, in 1966. When I was a young kid I had a record player and started collecting records off the jukebox when the guy came to change the records. I'd get 4 every fortnight so I made sure I was there when he came! I was very into live music from the 1970s. As a teenager reggae was massive. I'd go down to a shop on the side of the market and buy a Trojan reggae or Stax single every week. I was a 'skinhead' back then, before being a skinhead was connected with fascism. It was a working class youth movement in the early 70's. White kids were into black music. I lived in Italy in 1973 to 1974 and saw Dylan, the Stones, Santana and Genesis, who were amazing in those days, as well as loads of Krautrock bands. In Leeds, the Fforde Green pub was massive for live rock n' roll bands back then. I remember seeing the Sex Pistols there in 1977. There was also the 'F' club, a punk club, where I saw the Stranglers and the Clash. In the early 80s I began just listening to jazz. All roads lead to jazz! I got into it through reggae and soul and started going down the path. I nurtured a hunger for it and would go to the library and get an Art Blakey album out and think "What the f***?". There was lots more to discover after that!

How did Dig! start?

In 1985 we took over a restaurant and nightclub called 'Coconut Grove' and, with the help of the Leeds Jazz organisation, started playing live jazz gigs there. Around this time I met Lubi and Chico who had also been punks in the 1970's and we started a live jazz night called 'Destination Out' on Wednesdays. This became 'Dig!' and we became the Dig! Family. During this period, around '89, Coconut Grove became the Gallery and we also started a night called the Cooker on Saturdays in the back room, which was then called Arcadia. In the early '90s Acid Jazz started getting popular and so did our club. Eric Speak (DJ Ez) joined us and as Arcadia got busier, playing hip hop and groove-based jazz, the live jazz in the main room got quieter! We had MC Solaar and Gilles Peterson, then D Note, Urban Species, Talkin' Loud and live Acid Jazz bands.

What's the best bit of Dig! looking back now?

The early days on a Wednesday were the most exciting. I've got such fond memories of that time. We had Bobby Bird and Carleen Anderson at its zenith. When DJ Norman Jay played we had 800 people queuing up the street! I got a bit disillusioned with it after that. It just became less jazz and more funk and beats. Also, meeting Lubi and Chico and deciding to start DJing before the live music and watching the crowd getting younger. It was exciting to see young people dancing to hard bop and latin boogaloo!

How did the Underground come about?

There was an empty cellar beneath the Town and Country club so I went down with the owner one day and talked him into building the Underground. Then we launched the Yardbird Suite on a Saturday night, which was basically the Dig! Family from Dig!. On Fridays we had the Cooker, Thursdays Casa Latino, Wednesdays Uptight, which was northern soul, Stax and Tamla, and Sundays the Sunday Joint. We DJ'd and booked a lot of bands that are still going at the moment. We kick-started the scene. The musical imprint of the whole scene started at the Underground. We had loads of absolutely legendary nights. It was during the height of house clubs. They'd get 1000 people in one night and we'd get 1000 people over 3 nights. It was a marginalised scene compared to house. Gilles Peterson coined the term Acid Jazz as a reaction to Acid House. We'd play Art Blakey next to hardcore latin jazz and nu beats. It was wonderful. We had Brother Jack McDuff and Jimmy Smith playing live. All our heroes!

Were you sad when it ended?

It was very sad. The Town and Country club sold the basement so we moved to the Atrium, where they've got 3 floors. Groove Armada had a monthly residency. Bob Jones and the Fat City Boys and Rae and Christian from Grand Central in Manchester, Peter Parker and Mr Scruff all played there regularly. It was very popular. We also had monthly residencies in Stockton, York, Bradford and Sheffield. At one point Leeds bands were playing around the country through us. We were running a lot of things. Then we moved the Yardbird Suite to the Wardrobe when it opened. Joyce from Brazil kicked it off. We showcased the Cinematic Orchestra, Fase Action live, the Blackbirds, Sharon Jones and the Soul Providers. We had a few years there too. It was fantastic.

Didn't you put a Miles Davis vs. John Lennon art exhibition on there?

Yeah in the rooms above the Wardrobe. We made some eye-catching posters with Miles, John and the Yardbird Suite on them. It was a great excuse to put those names together! It had a reasonable turnout. I was given a lovely Miles print for my troubles.

What do you think of the relationship between art and music?

I love the early artwork on a lot of jazz album covers, particularly the early Blue Note covers. I love looking at them. They had awesome, forward thinking cropped photography and colour matches. The early days of jazz are considered an art form. Musicians were artists back in those days like Charlie Mingus, who I love. On holiday in Orlando with the kids this year the music and culture was so middle ground. I was going a bit nutty and had to rush out and buy a Mingus album and sit in the car and listen to it. Too much mainstream is like eating too many sweets. You're going to throw your guts up!

What's it like looking back?

It was great fun, a fantastic experience. I've DJ'd around Europe, played Mexico City with the New Mastersounds and met wonderful people. Some of the artists have knocked me out! I got to make a living out of listening to music, putting records on and smoking fags. You couldn't ask for more than that at the end of the day.

Are you doing anything music related at present?

Eddie Roberts has just done an album which I'm releasing on the restaurant's record label. It's Salvo's first release. Eddie's made some arrangements of old Italian favourites from Salvo's jukebox in his trademark Roughneck style. It's a lovely production and it's out in October. We've also been digging out some old recordings of when he was in the Three Deuces with the view of possibly releasing them.

How did you meet Eddie?

It was the end of the 1st season at the Gallery as Dig! We'd been closed for summer and when we re-opened 5 guys walked in wearing pork pie hats and d-mob suits. They looked like a bunch of old New York musicians coming out of the 5 Spot or something. Eddie said "I hear there's a jazz club here. We're a band". I said "Dressed like that you've got a gig!". That year had the hippest crop of students ever coming out of Leeds College of Music. The second season of Dig! was really swinging. There were jam sessions with lots of people sitting in. It was quite exciting. Eddie became part of the team in the early 90's. He's been playing in various bands since the Gallery days. He cut his teeth on all those club nights. Snowboy describes him as "The unsung hero of the Acid Jazz scene". He's played with everyone from James Taylor to Reuben Wilson. He's one of the best guitarists in the world as far as I'm concerned and I don't say that often.

Corinne Bailey Rae

Venue: Corinne's flat.

What's been your biggest influence?

Listening to my parents records. My dad collected funk and soul 45's. I also liked 80's Michael Jackson. I remember when I was 5 years old singing at school in a nativity play. I would sing the solo 'Jesus where are you?' and everyone else would respond and be totally flat! I then thought 'I could do this'. After that I sang in a Brethren Church from being 7 years old. No instruments, just singing.

When did you form Helen, your old band?

We started playing together when I was 15 years old. We were influenced by Hole and L7. I was grabbed by the immediacy of the music. You could write a song and get a gig in Leeds. We got thrown in at the deep end with our first gig. My boyfriend at the time was in a band and the support act couldn't play, so we played instead. It was at the Duchess of York! We were more grungy back then and covered Verruca Salt and the Cranberries and did an encore of our favourite song that we'd already played.



Music can heal you if you feel burdened. It can open out emotions in people.

Were you inspired by the fact that these bands were led by females?

Yeah. We were into the whole Riot Grrrl thing. I guess they were early feminist principles I was drawn to. We were 3 girls and a male drummer all being brought up by our mums. The alternative was rubbish dance music. We were all outsiders at school. It was a certain version of femininity, you know, the way they dressed and everything. It had an edge to it.

Why do you do it?

I love it. It's the best way that I know to express my feelings and thoughts. When I'm singing and playing I feel like I'm flying off and free. I like how inclusive it is, writing songs that people can relate to. It's an instant reaction. And I like performing music. Music is the most direct of all the art forms.

What have you been doing recently?

I've been doing a residency at the Cherry Jam in London. I've done many gigs in Leeds, but the music business is so London-centric. I've also been busy promoting my first single on TV and radio. I'm currently finishing off my album, which is out in March.

Is music a spiritual thing?

Yes, I think so. All the creative things are. They go against logic. Music's innate and ancient. People have been banging drums as a form of communication with each other and God since the beginning of time. Music is a natural response to the Creator – using your ideas to offer to the source of all creative things. Music can heal you if you feel burdened. It can open out emotions in people.

What are your hopes for the future?

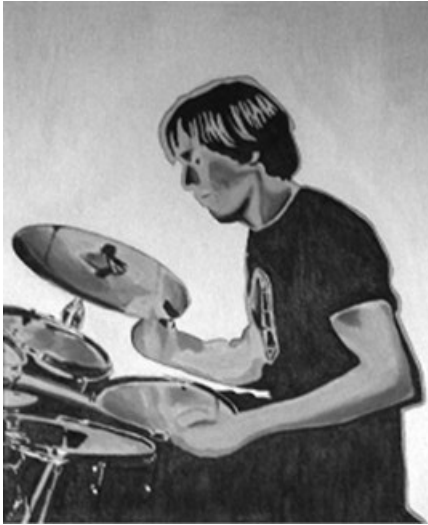
To write a bunch of good songs that stay around beyond fashion. To broaden what I write about. I'd like to start writing more political songs, but in a way that suits me. I'd like to say it in my own way. I'd like to get better at singing, make more albums and travel the world with my music. I'd also like to make some money and put it back into Leeds, into the local community.

What would you like to look back on as an old lady?

That's in 44 years time! To have had a really loving home and had people round. To have been a positive thing in peoples' lives. To have been a good friend, wife, mum and member of the community. To have made good records and good gigs.

Favourite song 'A Song For You' by Ray Charles.

Dan Woodward



Venue: The Wardrobe.

Who are your influences?

Earth Wind & Fire, from when I was 5 years old. My dad's a musician. He used to play at the Mecca Ballroom in the 1970's, playing Earth Wind & Fire stuff. He used to play every night, like we do down the Wardrobe. He's a drummer. I learned off him and records. Also, my mum's into ceramics and mosaics, so I grew up in a creative household. When I was younger I was also a member of Interplay which was a hippy-ish theatre group in Armley doing community stuff. I went to Christchurch Primary School next to Interplay. When I was 12 years old I got into the Average White Band after my mum bought one of their records and played me it. I also got into copying comics like Spiderman at the same time. I started playing drums at 5 years old. I used to play in the Christchurch choir. I started singing, but when they found out I could play drums I started playing along with the piano when I was 6 years old. The first band I was in was a school rock band called The Sweeney when I was 16 years old. We were playing stuff like Carter the Unstoppable Sex Machine.

In Leeds there's more freedom to establish your views. In London you get swallowed up.

I started playing at the Underground when I was 17 years old. I saw a band called What is Hip? who were amazing. At that point I was thinking I'd start playing grungy funk like the Red Hot Chilli Peppers, then I saw this band playing funk with horns and thought I'd do that instead. It came full circle, back to Earth Wind & Fire. I really like mid-70's Earth Wind & Fire. My background where I grew up was a very mixed area. There were lots of Asian kids and one or two black kids in the neighbourhood. This was an influence on me. It took me away from white indie music. At 17 years old I also started listening to blaxploitation soundtracks and realised you could have a band like What is Hip? but play soundtrack funk. I also played in the Leeds Youth Jazz Rock Orchestra when I was 16-19 years old, in West Park. The guy who ran it went to the Leeds College of Music at the same time as my dad. My dad went to the college so I didn't have to! Leeds College of Music ties it all in. I met Matthew, a guitarist, and Chris, a bassist, at Leeds Youth Jazz Rock Orchestra and we became the first incarnation of Capri. Capri started in 1996/1997 as a band. I'm 28 years old now.

Why do you do it?

It's what I do. You do what you're good at. It's impossible to know what I'd be doing without my upbringing. It's impossible to separate everything. I inherited a good concept of music from my parents.

What makes the Leeds scene so special?

It's got a lot of soul. People talk about 'northern soul' in the 60's and similarly the grooves are different to what musicians are into in London today. It's more like worker's music. It's northern and industrial. The emphasis is on a good time and not prestige.

Is music a spiritual thing?

Yeah. All art is. Expressing yourself, that's the spirit.

What have you been doing recently?

I've been painting something for the Wardrobe as a piece of advertising. I've also been working with Lara Rose doing an EP. We've also been doing this downloading thing with Capri, so I've been promoting that. We've been signed by a company in San Francisco, a distribution company and they're really into what we do. It's the other side of the world, but there's a connection, a kind of 70's ideology.

What are your plans for the future?

To concentrate on my art and music and keep the scene going. The only other scene is London but it's not the same. London's a big city. There's not much freedom so you have to go with it. You can't establish your views and sound there. In Leeds there's more freedom to establish your views. In London you get swallowed up.

What would you like to look back on as an old man?

The music and the painting. The people are in it. I'd like to look back on what we've left behind. Nowadays with improvements in technology, you can get it all down. The scene here is so special because it's real. What can you say when you're at the top of the ladder?

Favourite song "In The Stone" by Earth Wind & Fire.

Eddie Roberts

Venue: Sela, after playing with his Roughneck band.

How was it?

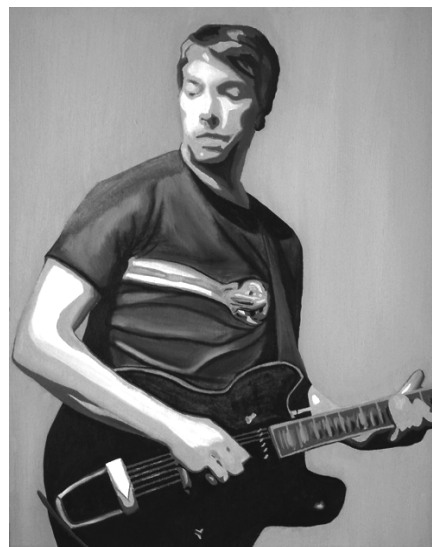
Well, Gordon Kilroy, our drummer, was like an unleashed caged animal!

Why do you do what you do?

I don't have a choice in the matter. It's something I have to do. It's so much a part of me. The goalposts constantly change because you constantly achieve your goals. So I keep doing it.

What are your hopes for the future?

I want to record a new album within a year and tour the States. As an artist, you never feel like you've got there otherwise there'd be nowhere else to go. It's the hunger that pushes you forward. You need it. You might be striving for contentment but it's not what you really want. If you got it you'd probably blow your brains out. Like if you won the lottery for example.



On a different occasion I went to see the New Mastersounds play at Sela. Whilst waiting for the band to come on I caught Eddie again...

What's so special about the Leeds scene?

I'm still working it out. It seems that like-minded people gravitate to the same place. It's different to the Manchester and London scenes. People settle here. There's a good groove.

What influenced you to get into music?

I had an older brother who started collecting records, so we began joining the dots, you know, going back and buying old records. It started with stuff like Deep Purple, then blues and then jazz – growing outwards, getting deeper and deeper. Also, my parents used to take me to the theatre to see stuff like African dance troupes, so that was an influence as well.

When did you start playing the guitar?

When I was 10 years old. I took piano lessons from the age of 7 and got to grade 3. Then one day I was in the park and I saw this guy with a guitar and he had loads of people around him and I thought "Wow – a portable piano!". So I bought a guitar for Christmas. After that I was basically in my bedroom until I was 18 years old.

Where are you from and why did you come to Leeds?

I'm from Swansea. I came to Leeds when I was 18, in 1989, to study jazz at the college of music. Straight away I met Gip Dammone from the club night Destination Out at the Gallery. I remember going really early one night, around 6pm and banging on the door and this guy dressed the same as me in 1940's gear, a zoot suit with a pork pie hat, opened the door. I said "Can I have a gig?" and he said "Too right, dressed like that!" Three weeks later my first band in Leeds, the Jazz Mailmen, did their first gig, doing Jazz Messengers stuff. By 1990 Destination Out had become Dig!.

Was that you who used to drive old cars around Leeds?

Yeah. That was me, Gip and Leon who runs the North Bar. We all used to drive old cars. I had a 1973 Ford Cortina 2 litre GT.

Favourite album 'Love Supreme' by John Coltrane

Jason Rae



Venue: Jason's flat.

When did you start playing music?

I started playing the recorder when I was 8 years old. My dad was an oboe player who taught woodwind. He'd been in the army band. I wanted a go at that too, but he said "you're too young and it's the hardest instrument that you can play". I then realised I liked the sound of the sax from watching TV shows like Cagney and Lacey. My dad had a friend at church who used to play in big bands, so I got a lend of his sax. He showed me how to blow it and I transferred what I knew from the recorder. Later, at Academy School, when I was 12, there was 1 sax and 72 people passed the test to get a musical instrument. When they read out that I got it, I couldn't believe it. It was the happiest moment of my life.

Who was your biggest influence?

Dale, who lived next door. When I was 6 years old, he started taking me and my mates football training. It turned out it was a community service thing. He was doing community service for head-butting a girl but he was a hero of mine!

My dad was an oboe teacher and Dale, who was twice my age, said "play sax as you can play more different styles of music". He also got me into table tennis, bodybuilding, Bruce Lee and survival. I baked him a cake. We watched Enter the Dragon when I was 6 years old. He became a science teacher and then a chemical engineer. I think he lives in Leeds now. He took us football training for the church 9-14 years 5-a side team. He was a brilliant footballer and on the books for Glasgow, but he was also a Glasgow gang member on his way to prison. 10 years later he wrote to me and told me how much me and my mates had changed his life.

Why do you play music?

Music is the one thing, no matter how much you do, you never reach your peak. I play music because I love it, but also because, like any artistic endeavour, you can wake up and get better everyday. It's a constant scale of excelling yourself. There's no such thing as a perfect musician. Every day you can wake up and get better at it. There's no such thing as the final product. As far as your mind can take you, you can go.

It's mostly sexual. It's a sex thing.

Are you in it for the money?

I'm not in it for the money. If the money came with it, it would be good, but no serious musician does it for cash. I do it for the gig, especially a good gig. I like connecting with the creative force in the world.

Do you live a different lifestyle to other people?

The lifestyle is part and parcel of being a musician. It makes you feel separate from the rest of the world. There's a bit more angst, torture and edge to my life. It's a different mindset to someone who works 9 to 5 and that is reflected in my playing. The audience respond to it because we are hitting parts of their minds that they've had to suppress, the ups and downs of life, in order to live a 'normal' life. We articulate that for them.

What's the difference between jazz and rock?

Rock is more easily understandable, whereas jazz is more intellectual. At it's best, however, they're all tapping into the same thing: an innate human feeling, the connection of souls. At its best they both transcend the intellect and reach the soul.

What do you want out of the future?

To be appreciated for what I do, but I don't want to be too popular. Why is the worst beer the most popular? Because it's cheap and easy to make. The same thing goes for music, TV and clothes. It's all about education. If everyone heard good music, they wouldn't accept bad music. I'd also like to get more gigs across Europe.

What's Leeds been like?

I could die tomorrow and think I've lived my life. I'll always remember playing in 'Taxi' from 1998 to 2000. We *destroyed* the Underground. We should have made it. We had Dan Goldman on bass, Russell Holdsworth on flute, and me and Malcolm on horns, Andy Marshall on drums, Byson on Keyboards, Rob Durbin on guitar and Amrit on vocals.

What's your relationship with Malcolm like?

It's mostly sexual. It's a sex thing.

Favourite song 'Stardust' by Nat King Cole.

Jim Corry

Venue: The Angel pub.

Who were your influences?

I grew up in Lewisham, listening to rock n' roll records such as Jerry Lee Lewis from the age of 12. They were my dad's. Also my brother picked up records and brought them home. He's a sax player. I had a 2 years older 'trendy older brother'. Then I got into Hendrix and Zeppelin. I started playing the saxophone first. Simple stuff like 'Three Blind Mice'. I also started playing guitar as well. Then my sax teacher played me some Charlie Parker when I was about 14 years old, so I changed direction, put down my guitar and got into sax players. I realised there was a lot more to the sax.

Why do you do it?

It beats working for a living! I get paid for travelling and hanging around. That's the work part. When I play I give it for free. I still get freaked out and nervous when I go on stage. As you develop a name for yourself there's higher expectations from people.

**What brought you to Leeds?**

My brother went to Leeds College of Music. I came here to visit and thought "Great!", so I went as well in 1995. When I was in Lewisham I played funk in a band called Hiptrick. We played venues in London, played this famous pub the Half Moon in Putney. Hiptrick were my schooling. Around the same time I also went to a jazz workshop in Croydon. I used to duck out of games lessons to go there! When I came to college I worked in bands and started gigging professionally when I finished college in 1998. The first bands I played with, when I was finding my feet, were Capri, Rhythm Method and Kelly Dickson. I've also played with the Haggis Horns, the New Mastersounds, Eddie Roberts and Corinne Bailey Rae.

Is music a spiritual thing?

Yeah. I try and get out my experiences when I play, stuff that's happened in the past. It's a way of calming myself and releasing frustration. When I can see movement and dancing in the crowd I respond to it. Music's a danceable thing. I've always watched early jazz videos and seen people moving, so I keep that connection in my playing. I try and wind people up so they want more and more. It's psychological. It's nice to see fit birds boogying as well! I have a responsibility to create a vibe.

What's special about the Leeds scene?

There's a very distinctive sound. It's quite a heavy funk scene with heavy grooves. On top of that there's good jazz players with good jazz vocabulary. When you combine the two there's a different sound to say the Manchester scene. Leeds College of Music is a good meeting ground. Also there's a mixture of self-taught players who work there. So there's a mixture of 'feel' players and 'school' players, which is a good mix.

What are your plans for the future?

Make my album, continue practicing and working on my own voice as a sax player. I'd like to get more into writing and arranging. I generally have limited input into the overall sound of the bands I play with, so I'd like to write more grooves for the rhythm section, to create a band that I can specifically play on top of and have more say over the whole thing.

Favourite song 'Parker's Mood' by Charlie Parker

Joe Tatton



Venue: Upstairs at the Wardrobe.

Where are you from and how did you get into music?

I'm from Stoke originally. My sister used to play Led Zeppelin and ACDC, when I was about 6 years old, around the house. My primary school teacher used to let me play the organ once a week. I really got into playing guitar in school rock bands. I found piano lessons a bit boring, but later realised I wanted to go to Leeds College of Music and chose jazz piano. I always took it seriously, but especially from 16 years of age. Actually, I've never taken it seriously!

How was your college experience?

It was challenging. I got accepted into the college on talent but didn't know much jazz. The best thing was meeting other people who were into it. I didn't really need to go to college as the emphasis was more on gigging and having to learn songs. Look at Malcolm Strachan – some of the best people don't need it and don't get that much out of it.

What's special about the Leeds scene?

It's small enough to be friendly and there's a hell of a lot of musicians. You've got places like the Wardrobe & the HiFi, which are a continuation from the Underground and are basically institutions now. So you can always go out and see music. Also, it's a concentrated city centre, so musicians bump into each other all the time. It's a close scene. You could go to 3 or 4 gigs a night if you wanted to.

Do you enjoy the experience of gigging?

That's a good question. I enjoy getting £40! A good gig is when the audience know you're enjoying yourself, they know it's working and there's no pretensions. I enjoy seeing their faces, the honesty and the truth. When there's a good gig going down, there's a connection – you know that they know.

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Do you enjoy making a living out of music?

I'm totally grateful for making a living doing something that 99% of the time I totally enjoy. I'm not grumbling. However, all the best gigs are when you're on it and you might get no money at all for it. When you're not pre-meditating.

What sort of music are you into?

I'm into film scores and deep jazz. I'm also into soul music. The Haggis Horns can be a spiritual thing. I like gospel music too, people like Sharon Jones, but I don't get "into the zone" as much as other people.

What are your hopes for the future?

I'd like to do my own project and for it to do quite well. I'd like to write more and have enough time to not have to worry about not making a living. I'd also like to use my studio to write with other people, to succeed.

What would you like to look back on as an old man?

The scene, especially the early days living in Stoke; the whirlwind of about 3 years with Rhianna playing Top of the Pops, supporting Jamiroquai and playing in Japan. It was an amazing time, but also a taste of the fickle world of pop. It's so much better playing in this scene.

Favourite song 'When Will You Be Mine' by The Average White Band.

Karlene Wray

Venue: Upstairs at the Wardrobe

Who do you sing with?

Well, my main band is called Karlene Wray. I'm a solo artist. I've been doing it for 1 ½ years, touring the same material which we change sometimes. At the minute we're featuring a rapper and a poet as well.

What have you been doing recently?

In the past year I've played the Leeds circuit and I play in Israel each year I go there. I played the Israel Jazz Festival last year, the jazz festival jam – you chill and meet new musicians. They let me sing with some New York top dogs and it was great. I got invited to New York. It was a wicked point in my life, playing at that level of musicianship with people stood in awe of me with utmost respect asking for me to sing each evening. They'd say "We gotta' get K Wray!" which is my name for doing covers stuff. I also played Hammersmith Palais last year, singing on a house tune at the Diesel New Music Awards and with DJ Genetics this year. I was on telly last year and this year!



I've just returned from London where I've been doing 'The Harder They Come' musical. I sang with Jimmy Cliff! I haven't gigged with Homecut Directive since the CND gig last year. Testament is amazing! He's great, a good vibe person. I'd work with him on any occasion.

What are your influences?

The church. Gospel singing. I was a child prodigy in the church, like Whitney Houston (laughs). I was brought up in the church on Victoria Road in Hyde Park, which has a clapping and singing gospel vibe. It was an immense experience growing up. I couldn't have wished for more. Also, my mum used to sing with Jimmy Cliff when she was younger! So I guess I'm following my mum like Lil' Kim!

Why do you do it?

My faith. I don't owe it to talent or experience. I believe in God. It's my calling. I'd sing for free! My upbringing in church is such a positive thing. No-one knocks gospel music, even if they don't believe in God. It's worldly, singing in clubs, but my lyrics are inspired by the church. If people are touched but don't know it's about God then I can touch a soul stemming from my faith. In a sense they've been touched by God.

So do you think music is a spiritual thing then?

All the way! We all make mistakes but it helps me continue my journey by being a singer. Music focuses me and grounds me in knowing the force behind me is my spirituality. I'm a better Christian everyday.

Is the Leeds scene special?

I have issues. The good side is that everyone's trying to push so much music out, the bad side is that it's very settled in a jazz thing. If it's not jazz then it's jazz covers and if it's soul then it's soul covers. A positive thing is I'm not doing jazz, which is wicked, but I want to break off and do reggae fusion mixed with rock and funk. I want to find a gap and do a different interpretation. I mean I love r & b but I won't perform it. No-one's doing modern reggae. There's a rock scene, a jazz scene but everyone comes up to me and says that what I do is different. That's what's missing in Leeds. We can get paid at the Wardrobe, the HiFi and Sela, but let's change their minds with a different take on it.

What are your plans for the future?

In the immediate future, to write my second album and push it more. I've made more 'musical' contacts recently in London. In the long-term, to keep singing and go abroad. I'm going to go to New York for two months next year hopefully to work and jam with people I met at the Israeli Jazz Festival and make contacts. I want to find out what it's like to be broke in New York! Let's have it! Yeah, I'll come home and the bubble might burst, but that's a life experience. Who will I meet to inspire me?

Favourite songs 'Lord I'm Available To You' a gospel song, and 'All Is Love That I'm Giving' by Gwen McRae

Kenny Higgins



Venue: The Wardrobe.

How long have you been playing music?

I've played at Pentecostal church since being a kid. I was 9 years old and started with the guitar. I was 15 years old when I started playing bass. The bass player left the local band at church so I switched instruments.

Why do you do it?

I love playing and meeting people. I like the next gig to be better than the last gig.

Is music a spiritual thing?

Yes. Especially when I listen to John Coltrane (laughs). He's my favourite jazz artist.

What are your hopes for the future?

To get my own band together and record my own stuff.

As an old man, what do you want to look back on?

I want to reflect on the music and the people associated with it.

Favourite song 'Killing Me Softly' by Roberta Flack.

The Wardrobe

Simon Beddowe:

How long has the Wardrobe been going and what's the concept behind it?

The Wardrobe opened in September 1999 and I've been working here since 2000 as Events Manager. The idea came from the owner, Pete Connolly, who has done a lot of development in the city and always dreamt of opening a live music venue playing jazz and funk, his preferred music of choice. Also, initially, Chico from The Dig! Family and the Underground had a lot of influence, as well as the close location to Leeds College of Music. James Hudson, the manager, had a huge say in the style and look of the place. It used to be a textiles mill. The West Yorkshire Playhouse own the building now and we lease it from them. We've kept the features – the bare minimal interior – which emphasises the musical quality of new artists and old greats. There's two stages; the Café bar, which is a good platform for up and coming artists, and the club downstairs. Here we have a rock night, Expansions, Drum Major and Saturday Night Live to name a few nights. It's all top-drawer stuff.

What's unique about the Wardrobe?

We offer local musicians like the Haggis Horns and Leeds College of Music students so much work. It's somewhere for musicians to play live and learn skills. We pay decent wages as well so people can actually make a living out of it.

Any great memories of people playing here?

Bernard Purdey from the JB's and the most sampled drummer in hip hop. Reuben Wilson, Sharon Jones, Roy Ayers, Bobby Blackbird and the Blue Jays, Hamish Stewart from the Average White Band, the Real People, the Pharcyde and loads more.

What's special about the Leeds scene?

It's an amazing scene. There's jazz, funk, world and rock. The musicians here are lucky because we give out so much work that it keeps people playing. Without the Wardrobe a lot of artists wouldn't have come to the city. It's a cultural thing. We offer music that isn't necessarily the mainstream but deserves to be listened to. If the music's in peoples' faces, like with us and the HiFi, then hopefully they'll enjoy it! Also we couldn't exist without all the musicians, so it's a two-way street.

Lara Rose

Venue: Upstairs at the Wardrobe.

Who or what is your biggest influence?

The church. People have always said I've got a great voice. My family never influenced me. I should have been a pharmacist! Music is in me and it comes out. It's a *joyful melancholy* which sums up my whole life. I've been singing since my teenage years. It was a form of teenage rebellion, but it was in church which was a safe environment!

Where do you come from?

I was born in Leicester. I came to Leeds as a baby with my foster family. I went to high school in Nigeria. I came back to Leeds 7 years ago. I felt like a stranger in Africa. Leeds is my home. I spent my first 4 to 5 years here.

Is music a spiritual thing?

Yes. I think I'm from another planet, like Sun Ra, a shared planet. Music is life.



Music is a powerful medium that influences people. It's my responsibility as an educated person to get my message across. I'm using my education. It's important to have a focus. Believe in yourself and you can achieve it.

Why do you do it?

It's my life. It's oxygen. If I don't sing I'm dead. I saw Sun Ra on telly the other night and was so inspired. I'm trying to make it full-time. When I sing I come alive. I'm looking for an open house where I can sing all the time. I feel constricted in Leeds. There's nowhere in Leeds where I can express myself.

What have you been doing recently?

I've been doing a lot more writing. I've been in the studio and just released an album. My new band is called Rose but it's only a fragment of who I am. I haven't captured my full essence yet. My real name is Omolara. It's an African name and means 'brings the whole family together'. This name and meaning makes sense to me.

What are your hopes for the future?

More recording, on a label. My message is to see an Africa that is as developed as the West. This is the greatest fear of the West.

What is your ideology?

I'm a hybrid of Leeds and Africa. I learn things from each other. If I ever go to war I'd send a nuke missile! Everyone would then ask "Why's everyone smiling?" and people would say "Because of Lara!"

What do you want to look back on as an old lady?

World Peace. I'd specifically like to see an Africa that has become more important and developed. I'd like to see everyone migrate to Africa. The issues I am interested in are covered by my album. Music is a powerful medium that influences people. It's my responsibility as an educated person to get my message across. I'm using my education. It's important to have a focus. Believe in yourself and you can achieve it. I'm inspired by Martin Luther King and the church I was brought up by a white foster family. I never saw colour. I don't like stereotypes. I represent human beings.

Favourite song "Saving All My Love For You" by George Benson & Whitney Houston

Malcolm Strachan



Venue: A kebab house after playing a gig with Eddie Roberts.

How did you get into music?

My dad wanted me to play from the age of 7. He woke me up one morning and presented me with a trumpet. I decided straight away that I liked it and learned tunes by ear from dad, with him on the piano, in regular jam sessions in the dining room. Very quickly I was the one initiating the jams. By the age of 12/13, whilst at secondary school, I was definitely thinking of it as a profession. I'm not really good at a lot of things, but I can play the trumpet.

...there's so much talent in a small area that Leeds is exploding with energy and lots of bands are getting record deals.

Why did you come to Leeds?

There was 2 colleges for jazz: Leeds and London, and dad said "Go to Leeds". I left school at 16 years old and dad pushed me to go to college. It was a rubbish course but I met loads of interesting musicians. I left because I realised that a music degree doesn't get you gigs, but I would have failed anyway.

What bands have you played in?

Loads . Listen for the Noise, Odyssey, Northern Uproar, the Million Dollar Men, Taxi, Lou Donaldson, Snowblind, the Haggis Horns, the New Mastersounds, Corinne Bailey Rae & various jazz bands.

Why do you do it?

You never know what's around the corner. I feel like I've been doing it for a long time, so I must be doing something right. I can't be that bad a player. I get a buzz out of a gig. There's nothing better than watching an audience go wild. I like watching peoples' reaction, people dancing. What could be more fun than that? There was this amazing bassist, in a band called Weather Report, who ended up living on the streets. He got beaten to death by some bouncers for trying to get into a club that he was supposed to be playing at! You never know when your time's up.

Do you live a rough life?

Yeah, I'm easily led. Booze lifts you up after a gig and you find yourself in a park 2 days later. My life consists of what I think about, watching the telly and waiting for the next gig. I definitely live for it. That and relationships with people. I'm dying to have some money.

What do you remember about the Underground?

That was *the* place to be. It was one of the best clubs in the country for live funk, jazz and soul. It was a very hip place. I used to go there all the time and saw a lot of my heroes play there, such as Jimmy Smith and Brother Jack McDuff. It was a massive blow for Leeds when it shut down. The staff and the music moved to the HiFi.

What's so special about the Leeds scene?

I've seen the scene grow. I've been here for 12 years. I've seen certain influences passed on through generations and seen younger people turn into amazing musicians. It's been quite amazing to see. One reason is the College of Music. There's only 2 cities in the UK that do a full-time jazz course, so there's so much talent in a small area that Leeds is exploding with energy and lots of bands are getting record deals.

As an old man what do you want to look back on?

I want to have been on lots of good albums and have material benefits. I want to look back on an interesting, different life.

Favourite song 'We Have All The Time In The World' by Louis Armstrong.

Neil Innes

Venue: The Wardrobe

Who or what influenced you into getting into music?

I don't even remember it not being there, not wanting to do it. I gravitated towards it as a kid. My mum plays piano, which I wasn't really into and she made me play. There's a bit of it in the family. There was always a piano in the house. I dabbled around with guitars from the age of 12. Then, at 15, I was given a bass and it just clicked. Before that I knew I loved music, but getting a bass guitar was my way in. I'm from Perthshire. I came to Leeds at 17 to study an access course and then a degree at Leeds College of Music in jazz studies, but it wasn't conducive to learning. There's not enough enthusiasm for the joys of music. I've just had a bass lesson with a Canadian musician who I met at a gig at the Wardrobe last night. We started chatting, he showed me a few things and arranged a lesson. I've learned more from gigging and playing with guys who are phenomenal. It's only now after 6 years of learning that I really want to study.



When I next get a girlfriend I'll have to sit her down and say this is my mistress and she's 160 years old!

What do you think of the Leeds music scene?

There's a great music community here, but we suffer from a lack of history. There's some amazing players but what's going on? Can you think of anyone older than the Haggis Horns who are phenomenal sax players? I was speaking to this Canadian guy, who gave me a lesson, about the amount of musicians over here and in New York. They're further down the line. This is my first experience of learning from someone who wasn't an academic. Academics come across as people who don't play all the time. Their desire to play is more academic, rather than from the inside.

Why do you do it?

I've been asking myself that loads at the moment. In the last 6 weeks I've been so busy playing music that when I don't have a gig I wonder what defines me. Is it music? When I next get a girlfriend I'll have to sit her down and say this is my mistress and she's 160 years old (laughs)! I just have to do it. It makes me happy.

What have you been doing recently?

Lots of great stuff! I play in a small trio doing Brazilian and Latin stuff. It's the music of life – really positive and celebratory. They were actually the first band I saw in Leeds 10 years ago at the Underground. They're called Saudade, which means Happy Sad. It means a lot to me to be playing with them. I remember coming here as a kid and thinking I'd love to play with these guys and I am. I've also been doing Roughneck with Eddie Roberts, which is a different role and I enjoy doing it. I've been playing with the Lightning Rods as well, which is great. It's a real pleasure playing with Wayne Clarke. He's an absolute superstar! I've been doing loads of other stuff too, but ultimately I want to concentrate on my own stuff – writing, recording and getting better at playing bass.

What are your memories of The Underground?

Just amazing music on your doorstep for nothing. I remember that feeling of walking down the stairs and thinking "I'm here until 2am, I'm going to dance and enjoy it". It was brilliant, the same with the lunchtime sessions.

What would you like to look back on as an old man?

I'd like to have no regrets and think that I did the best I could. At the end of the day you s**t or get off the pot! I also want to start travelling. Hopefully I'm going to Cuba next year to study under someone. Being a musician is almost like a ticket to any job in the world. I'd like to go and experience places like that. There's so much to learn. In what job do you sustain this kind of enthusiasm to learn and better yourself? It's all about the passion, following it and being true to it. A lot of musicians still have the fascination of a kid. It keeps you young at heart.

Favourite song 'Reet Petite' by Jackie Wilson.

The HiFi Club

Ed Mason:

How did you get into music promotion?

I came to Leeds in 1989 to study Politics at Leeds University. I'm from Exeter originally and I've always been into bands. I used to be the guitarist in an indie band called Headtime. We once played at Scrumpy's in Leeds (now the HiFi), got reviewed in the Melody Maker and ended up buying it! At the time Gip and Eddie were running Dig! at the Gallery. This was followed by the Cooker at the Underground and the Yardbird Suite, Move on Up, Funk Soul Nation and Casa Latino.

I understand you used to be a DJ at 'Move on Up' when it was at The Underground. When was that?

The Underground opened in 1994 and me and John Morelli set up Move on Up as a one off in November 1995, playing northern soul, mod revival and ska. We saw a gap in the market for a 60's club. There was no pure soul night in Leeds at that time. It was packed out, so it became weekly night in January 1996. We've just had our 10th Anniversary. It's the longest weekly club night in Leeds after Back to Basics. I'd been DJing for years before that at the Royal Park pub and Beat Surrender at the Music Factory. Then the Cooker moved on, so we started Funk Soul Nation at the Underground on a Friday night in 1999.

When did you start the HiFi?

In June 2000 the Underground shut. The Town & Country club owned it and one day they rang up and gave us 2 weeks notice. We were full-time promoters by this point so we thought it was all over. Then my current business partner Steve Ellison rang up and told me Liquid was on the market and did I fancy getting involved? It was the next logical step. So we took it and it became the HiFi in October 2000.

What was the concept behind the club?

We always knew we wanted a relaxed comfortable unpretentious environment. This was *crucial* to putting on good quality live music. It's always been about the music.

What's the history of the venue?

In the 1960's it was a club for the Central School of Dancing, you know ballroom dancing. Then in the early 1970's it became the Central Soul Club, which was *the* northern soul club in Leeds. The DJs were Pat Brady and Ian Dewhirst – the Mastercuts founders. In the late 70's it became a rock club, then in the 80's Adam and Eves, then Scrumpys, a dodgy rock club. In 1996 it became Liquid. When we opened the HiFi we took over Sweet Revival from Liquid, carried on our nights from the Underground and started brand new nights like the Sunday Joint. It was nice to get all the old Leeds Soul heads down from the Central Soul Club. The history of the Central Soul Club was always very important.

What famous people have you had play down here?

Connie Listen Smith, Carleen Anderson, Omar, James Taylor Quartet, Amp Fiddler, Lou Donaldson, Kim Weston, Terri Walker, Martina Topley-Bird, K T Tunstall, Corinne Bailey Rae and local funk bands like the New Mastersounds, Capri, Chunky Butt Funky and the Haggis Horns.

How important do you think image is in music?

It's not very important. Good music will always sell itself. At the HiFi we put musical substance over image. Black music has always had a strong alliance between imagery and music. Blue Note had amazing artwork. Motown and covers like Stevie Wonder's 'Innervisions' have become iconic images. The creative strength of image in our music is down to our designer John Morelli, who does the logo, flyers and poster. He's influenced by Blue Note. We've always praised ourselves on having cool, well-designed promotional material, but the music is more important.

What's special about the Leeds scene?

It has a strong jazz and soul tradition which comes from the Leeds College of Music. Everything is self-reinforcing, like the Dig! Family, Leeds College of Music and so on. Everything breeds off each other. There's a lot of history, like in 1994 when the council funded a Leeds Jazz festival and Snowboy and the James Taylor Quartet played. Also, in the mid to late 90's Eddie Roberts' Three Deuces played at Arts Café a lot. They had a residency there.

Any great memories of anyone I'm painting?

Yeah. The first time the New Mastersounds played with their full 8-piece line up for the first album launch. It was an amazing line up – the Mastersounds, the Haggis Horns and Reverend Chunky! They brought the house down. It was phenomenal!

Pete Shand



Venue: Sela after a New Mastersounds gig and on the phone two days later.

Who or what was your influences?

I was playing in Pentecostal church at the age of 13, playing gospel music. Then I got into Sly and the Family Stone, Herbie Hancock, James Brown and lots of stuff. I played in my first band professionally when I was in my mid-20s called Root President – a hip hop thing. I've also toured with the Utah Saints, Edwin Starr and loads of reggae bands. I've been in this Mastersounds line-up for the last 5 years, but I was in another band with Eddie called Jupiter Mission in 1995/6. We did a space-funk kind of thing.

Why do you do it?

I love it to death. I can't do anything else. To really make a living out of it though, you've got to be able to play lots of genres. I'm quite happy at the moment, playing with the Mastersounds, Organ Donor – which is reggae – and Reverend Chunky.

In all my years playing and being into funk and soul I've never come across a city in the UK with more variety of original sounding black music than Leeds... I've (now) got friends all over the world. I've enjoyed having a good time, getting the music across. This music requires heart and soul. You can't do this and pretend.

Is music a spiritual thing?

Yes. Absolutely. If I'm not centred and playing well it affects the rest of my day.

What's special about the Leeds scene ?

In all my years playing and being into funk and soul I've never come across a city in the UK with more variety of original sounding black music than Leeds. A lot of musicians play in the same bands. There's a scene going on. It has a lot to do with the college of music. There are young students watching and by their 3rd year they're ready to take over. There's positions to be fighting for. It keeps you on your toes. You've got to keep it going and keep raising your game, like we are playing in the States.

What are your plans for the future ?

We've done most of Europe. We're going to Japan in February and March and then we're going back to the States. We want to put loads of records out. Also, Organ Donor's first album is out in 2006. It features LSK and Maxie Jazz from Faithless.

What would you like to look back on as an old man?

I don't have to imagine it much! If I could have predicted what I've achieved in the last 10 years, 10 years ago, I would have thought I'd made it. But you never really get there. Our gigs and records have touched fans who sometimes have miserable lives. I'd look back on the fact that we've touched people for an hour or 2 when we've played. I've got friends all over the world. I've enjoyed having a good time, getting the music across. This music requires heart and soul. You can't do this and pretend.

Favourite album 'Groovin' At Smalls Paradise' by Jimmy Smith.

Reverend Chunky

Venue: Outside the HiFi after performing.

Who were your main influences?

My mum and dad. I grew up in a Pentecostal background. I'd come home from church and learn songs and harmonies from my parents. At 13 years of age I got into my brother's jazz records. Jo Sambo on the jazz side, Roy Ayers and Parliament on the funk side and loads of musicians on the jazz/funk side.



How old were you when you started singing?

It's my heritage from going to church and writing my first song aged 7 years old, I've always been singing. In 1993, at the age of 32, I started professional funk singing with Wayne Clarke.

I understand you used to be a Minister?

Yes. I was ordained at 20 years old and served full time in Hyde Park between 1986 and 1992 initially. I moved to America in 1998 and spent 2 years in Augusta Georgia, near Florida, 1 year in Jacksonville Florida and 1 year in California. I came back because I was going through a divorce and felt depressed. It was a juncture in my life. A chance meeting with Wayne Clarke in a launderette led me to doing what I do now.

What bands have you been in?

I started off in the Bluebirds, a blues band. We released an album, which I think is still available, then I struck out on my own, before joining the New Mastersounds for a while. This was good funk exposure. I did vocals and the Haggis Horns did horns on top of their instruments. Through all this I found a different level of confidence and found my own niche. I'm still a preacher, but with a different pulpit.

Why do you do it?

I feel compelled. That's the honest truth. I was born to do it. If I didn't I'd die. I feel the most complete when I'm doing what I do – spreading a positive message to complete strangers. Asking them to share their love.

What have you been doing recently?

For my last project, we've been recording original stuff, some of which we played tonight. I think of it as soulful hip hop funk. I call myself Reverend Chunky but also Chunky Butt Funky. This band is a marriage of the two, called The Crackling Record All Stars which is also the album title.

Is music a spiritual thing?

Yeah. I've come to understand that I'm here to transfer things through music, whether they're positive or negative. As people who I play with know, I go home after the soundcheck before the gig to purge myself in order to deliver a pure-spirited thing. Hopefully people get it.

What are your plans for the future?

I'd like to get a residency abroad, somewhere in Europe maybe, for the lads to enjoy playing at. I'd like to storm someplace with a chunky vibe! I've never met anyone who doesn't like music. I want to see my kids grow up and do the right thing.

What would you like to look back on as an old man?

I'd like to remember the smiles on peoples' faces as we were playing. It's a good thing to go to the grave with. I once met a guy who was going to commit suicide and said that he saw me and I changed his life. Also, once when I played at the Underground in 1995 with the Bluebirds, a little girl gave me a note saying "You're the best band in the world". I keep that note with me as a reminder that what we do is important.

Favourite song 'What A Wonderful World' by Louis Armstrong

Sam Bell



Venue: Outside the Wardrobe after playing with the Bugalu Foundation.

Who was your main influence?

It was a rock band, a power trio! I played in it for 6 months to a year. I left at 17, then a little later I joined the travelling scene, playing reggae and ska. This was 1987/89, with Still Pack a Pub. We put a 12-inch single out and an album later. Then I went to art college for a year, but decided against an art degree. My interviewer actually showed me that music was the way. He said "You keep talking about music, so do that". So I started playing in percussion groups, got involved with the Dig! Family and played in bands like Casa Latino All Stars, who I played with for 3 years. I brought some Cubans over at one point, including Omar Puente. Cuba has been a massive influence on me. I ended up doing a degree in pop music at Bretton Hall. I spent 5 weeks in Cuba whilst at college in 1994. This was a massive learning curve for me.

It's all about the people.

When did you first play with the New Mastersounds?

Around 1997/98. I played with Eddie Roberts in Guacho, a jazz quartet doing avant-garde music and then a funk thing that became the first incarnation of the Mastersounds. I left for a bit but rejoined recently. I actually wrote the B-side of their first single. I played on their last album. They're releasing a live album soon.

What's the main thing you do?

I do an album/studio thing called Orgatronics with Richard Arthurs. It's ambient latin.

Why do you do music?

I'd go insane if I did a 9 to 5 job. From an early age I've been drawing and being creative. I even gave up football for music. The urge to create is like food and nourishment. It gets better as you perfect the craft.

Is it a spiritual thing for you?

All of it is. Life. It's a journey that I'm choosing to take consciously. I'm setting my stall out if you like. It's meaningful. I'm not compromising. The Bugalu Foundation is just a laugh really.

What are your plans for the future ?

To keep recording and performing. I also play with the Northern School of Contemporary Dance doing reggae, jazz and contemporary dance. I played for 6 hours today before the gig tonight. It keeps me match fit. I've got my toes in many pies!

What would you like to look back on as an old man?

The journey. To hanker after something is pointless. Doing it is the thing. Playing music is an awareness of enjoyment. It's the same in the studio. There's magic sometimes, like a collective energy that's channelled through at different times. It's all about the people. The quality of people involved in the Leeds scene is one of supportiveness and open-mindedness. Yes there's bitchiness and competitiveness, but we all get off on playing with each other. Getting paid is good as well.

And the Bugalu Foundation?

We're working on recording, but we're all involved in different things, like playing with Capri which I enjoy. I remember the first time I played with them thinking it was less rocky than I thought it would be. The Bugalu Foundation is mainly my project. We're making a stand in the face of mock Cuban music!

Favourite song "Because" by The Beatles

Simon Allen

Venue: Sela before a New Mastersounds gig

What were your influences?

Not really my family, although my mum played church piano when I was young. The first person I really got into was Hendrix, followed by the James Taylor Quartet. They turned me onto soul jazz and boogaloo funk. This was all when I was 16 years old. You know the theme from Starsky and Hutch? The first time I heard it I thought it was amazing. I started playing keyboards in a band, but was envious of the drummer. I eventually took over on drums!

Why do you do it?

That's a good question. It's a massive buzz. It's like a family relationship, a subconscious link. I do it automatically when I'm on the road. There's no real musical enjoyment. We're playing for an audience and it depends on the audience. That's my main reason for doing it. When the music works really well and we're communicating, that's when it's ideal and fun. It's the best thing when there's an appreciative crowd.

Is music a spiritual thing?

It's soulful. I'm a materialistic person. I believe in matter. I find my own answers. I'm not religious. The word 'spiritual' has no meaning. I'd rather describe it as 'soulful' or 'wholesome'. When it touches people it's definitely *righteous* though. It's the opposite of starting fights. When we inspire people I feel a certain sense of righteousness. I'm not selfless. It makes me feel good! I don't really feel like a musician, but the other three in the band consider me as one. I feel privileged to play with them.

What have you been doing recently?

I've been running the record label and the band from my home office. I've been planning gigs, tours, releases and rehearsals, which are few and far between. We've got a new live album coming out soon and we're off on a tour of the West Coast of America next week.

I also understand you're a good photographer?

How do you know that?! (I tell him I've seen his photos on Eddie's 'Roughneck'). Yeah, I've recently bought an expensive SLR camera and took loads of stills for a Manchester Girls School theatre piece. They gave me free reign of the stage and I got some great photos. I think they might be useful as official press/text. I get paid as well! I'm more professional now. I'm actually more creative in my photography. It's Eddie's music. I get a buzz from the two. The drums is where I get a chance to show off and perform. Photography is where I get to be creative.

What's special about the Leeds scene?

Compared to America and Europe, I've only ever known the Leeds scene. Leeds has got a vibrant scene for this kind of music. I think it's down to Leeds College of Music, really. There's a jazz school here and there's lots of places to play live music. In the States they mainly play covers, but people go mad for it. Yet at the Wardrobe, people write their own tunes but are anonymous and get hardly any money. It's a very tight scene, but essentially it's ignored. It's just music to get drunk to on a Saturday night. We've got used to not being highly valued here. In the States, it's a largely white audience and the bands are mainly playing covers, yet they're revered as heroes! Why is this? This sort of music over here is regarded as a novelty. In the States there's 100's of 1000's of people taking it seriously and it's happening for us on a gradual level because we've got a rich music fan promoting us. Still, the Leeds scene is better than their scene. It's a Catch-22 situation.

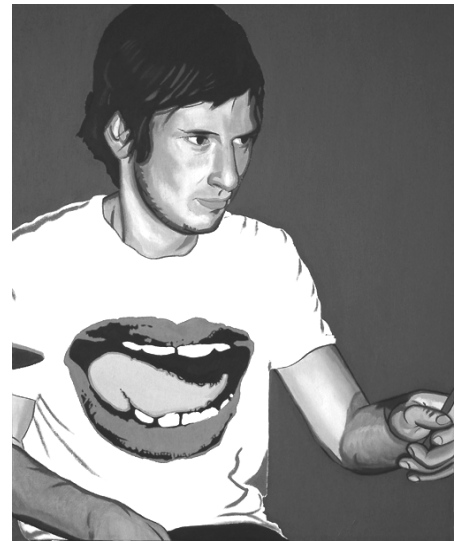
What are your plans for the future?

I've given up on this country ever caring really. We can play to 200 people at the Jazz Café and play at the Wardrobe to a really appreciative audience, but I like the reception we get in the States.

What would you like to look back on as an old man?

For Eddie not to have to worry about money. A lot of it goes out! Eddie should be earning money, but it's still a long way away. Eddie's an eternal optimist. He's very patient.

Favourite song 'Oh You Pretty Things' by David Bowie.



Wayne Clarke



Venue: Sela before playing with his band the Lightning Rods

Where are you from and how did you get into music?

I'm from Barnsley. I got into Howlin' Wolf when I was 14 years old. He was a major influence. Also, my dad was a multi-instrumentalist. He played the piano, organ, clarinet, saxophone and french accordion, which was his first instrument. He used to listen to the Oscar Peterson Trio a lot too. There was a programme in the 70's that he used to watch all the time. I don't remember much about it as I was born in 1973, but subconsciously it must have settled in somewhere. When I was in my teens I also got into Muddy Waters and music from the Chess label. By the time I was 19 years old I got into funky stuff like Stevie Wonder, George Benson and Les Montgomery. I came from a musical family, the guitar was always there so I used to take it or leave it. I first picked it up when I was 7 years old. I had a red and white toy guitar before that.

What brought you to Leeds?

I came here to study on the jazz course at Leeds College of Music when it was at the old place, the Civic Theatre. I studied from 1993-96.

Had you done any gigs before coming to Leeds?

I'd played in the clubs in Barnsley with a band called Positive Touch. It had a rock vibe. We were playing stuff like Roxette! I also formed my first band back then, when I was 17 years old. We were called the Blue Sausage Rolls! When I came to Leeds I went out searching for gigs. There was a place called Shears Yard down by the Calls, which is a fish restaurant called Livebait now. I sat and played one night and ended up having a residency there for 6 years. It went from there really. The scene opened up to me. I made connections and started playing in Manchester as well, with people like John Ellis. I started going further afield. I played with John McAllum, in the Plastic Soul Connection, between 1996 and 97. He got me into singing again. I used to sing all the time as a child, but my voice broke so I left it for a bit. After that I went to London for a year, from 1998-99. I got my bags and went down to further myself, but it all went Pete Tong and I became totally skint. So I realised the error of my ways and came back to Leeds.

When I got back everything had changed so I had to slowly merge back in. You know there were people like Corinne Bailey Rae on the scene. London was a real eye opener. By 2001/2002 I had clawed my way back and formed the Leeds Soul Collective with John McAllum. We used to play down the Wardrobe. Corinne was sounding more and more amazing so we asked her to join as well. The Haggis Horns also played in that band and in return they asked me to join their band. The Haggis Horns introduced me to heavy funk, you know rare stuff like the Meters. Then John left for Scotland, so Corinne became the main singer and we became the Super Soul Collective. Since then Corinne has decided to become famous and rightly so. Everything changes on that level, ambitions and aspirations. It's a more intense world. So with Corinne gone, John gone and the Haggis Horns changing their line-up regularly, I took a step back and did lots of rubbish restaurant gigs. Totally soulless. It did my head in. So I thought I'd start a band of my own and go for it. Encouraged by John I thought "F**k it I'll go for it" and people will like it. We're called the Lightning Rods. That's what you're witnessing tonight.

Why do you do it?

If I could answer that! (Thinks) To me I never knew what to do with my life. Tragically, my dad passed away from a brain haemorrhage when I was 16 years old, so I made the decision to be a musician. I was never that brainy but I had a talent in music so I went with it and I've followed the white lines to where I am today. I've never looked back. I can't see myself doing anything else.

What are your plans for the future?

To carry on with this band. We've just done a promo CD, which is out now and are planning to self-fund a proper album next year. See where it goes and promote it, see what happens and carry on playing.

As an old man, what do you imagine you'll look back on?

I'll remember a lot of genuine friends and the times we shared together. I don't think I'll ever be rich and famous, but I'll have had good times that'll stay with me until I die.

Favourite song "The Lakes Of Ponchatrain" by Paul Brady.

Sela

Mark Young:

When did the Sela open and why did you open it?

January 2004. I fancied opening a bar. There's been a massive influx of bars with similar identities over the last couple of years and I fancied opening something different. The music I like goes back to Dig! and that scene, so I started live music off with the help of Leon from North Bar and it snowballed. It was Leon who put me onto this site. I wanted somewhere for people my age to go to. My initial aim was to have nice background music where people could sit comfortably and talk to each other. North Bar was a good influence. They're always doing something different. There's a nice arty crowd with a real cosmopolitan feel. I wanted Sela to be along those lines, but different. The live music here is a strong point.

What's the history of the bar?

I didn't realise, but it used to be a jazz club in the 1950's. Four days into it and this guy told me this used to be *the* old jazz club in the city. It was called Studio 20 at the time. The guy that owned it used to go round big venues in the north, blag his way backstage, and get musicians to play here for a steak dinner. They'd play, get dinner, then be invoiced a week later. The old guy also told me about Terry Cryer from Pudsey who photographed some jazz greats, like Humphrey Littleton who played here and he came down and I bought some photos off him. In the photos you can see that people used to draw jazz figures on the wall. I know I wanted good music playing here like jazz, blues and funk, but finding out this history vindicated why it sounded so good down here. The building was made for it! Before that, during the war, it had been a milk bar.

What are your plans for the future?

Well there's maybe room for expansion downstairs. I'm into promoting Eddie Roberts at the moment. We put Eddie on every Wednesday for free. When the Three Deuces used to play at the Arts Café it was good for them to work out what was to become the New Mastersounds first album from playing there all the time. Similarly, Eddie's doing the same thing now at Sela. He's writing his second solo album whilst playing here.

Thanks to everyone involved in this project, particularly my wife Verity for her typing skills and ridiculous patience, Jason for opening the door and Ben and Iain for pushing me through it. copyright Neil Hardy 2006 www.theneilhardyroom

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Lunchtime- 12-2pm

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The Guardian



Salvo's Salumeria

Every Thursday & Friday evening from 7pm

6 Course Menu of the Day

A selection of 3 Antipasti plates

A traditional Pasta course

A Main course with accompaniment

Dessert

(Can also be vegetarian)

Salvo's Salumeria,
107 Otley Road,
Leeds, LS6 3PX

Price £15.00 per person Tel: 0113 275 8877



Wardrobe

COFFEE HOUSE • BAR • KITCHEN • CLUB • LIVE MUSIC • RECORDS • AGENCY



Club

Live Music plus Dj's from across the globe.
Jazz / Funk / Soul / Blues / Big Band / folk / world

Cafe Bar & Restaurant

Extensive international bottled beers selection.
Award winning cocktail list. Tapas served all day.
Live music.



Records

Wardrobe records is an independant label representing the diverse musical talent of Leeds Musicians. The label covers jazz / funk / soul / blues / big band / folk / world

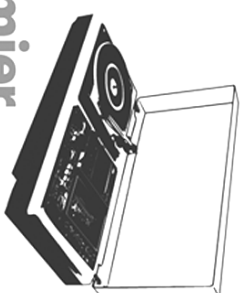
Agency

Representing bands, dj's, engineers for all occasions.
equipment hire, casinos, magicians.



www.thewardrobe.co.uk

FREE MEMBERSHIP • WWW.THEWARDROBE.CO.UK
6 ST PETERS SQUARE, LEEDS, LS9 8AH TEL 0113 3070417



The HiFi Club The North's Premier Live Jazz/Funk/Soul Venue

The HiFi Club is Situated At 2 Central Road In Leeds City Centre & Has Been Voted Best Live Entertainment Venue At The Leeds Bar & Club Awards 2005 & 2006

Sun 1st October 2006
**Saudadel(lunch)
+ Retired (eve)**
Free Entry All Day

Thurs 5th October 2006

The Five Aces
Hammond-Lad R88 From Glasgow
Doors: 10pm (Onstage 11pm)
£400 Members & NUS/£5.00 All Others

Sun 8th October 2006

**Nick Svarc (lunch)
+ Steve Williams (eve)**
Free Entry All Day

Thurs 12th October 2006

First Word Allstars
Amazing Hip Hop Soul Collective
Doors: 10pm (Onstage 11pm)
£400 Members & NUS/£5.00 All Others

Sun 15th October 2006

**We Free Kings (lunch)
+ Malena (eve)**
Free Entry All Day

Thurs 19th October 2006

Bonobo
Deany Electronic Beats
Doors: 10pm (Onstage 11pm)
£6.00 / £7.00 + Booking Fee Advance
Free Entry All Day

Sun 22nd October 2006
**Sarah Mitra (lunch)
+ Fat Sammy (eve)**
Free Entry All Day

Tues 24th October 2006

Mr Liff feat Big Whizz
Socially Conscious Hip Hop
Doors: 8:00pm (Onstage 8pm)
Advance: £7.00 + Booking Fee

Thurs 26th October 2006

Chunky! Butt Funky
Rev. Cleve Is Back For A Funk Workout
Doors: 10pm (Onstage 11pm)
£400 Members & NUS/£5.00 All Others

Sun 29th October 2006

**Stu Moseley Trio (lunch)
+ Yussef Ahmed (eve)**
Free Entry All Day

Thurs 2nd November 2006

Sorenson Soul Project
Blue Note Soul Jazz Influenced Band
Doors: 10pm (Onstage 11pm)
£400 Members & NUS/£5.00 All Others

Sun 5th November 2006

**Bones (lunch)
+ Grand Wazoo (eve)**
Free Entry All Day

Thurs 9th November 2006
Part Time Heroes
Think Groove Armada & Porthhead
Doors: 10pm (Onstage 11pm)
£400 Members & NUS/£5.00 All Others

Sun 12th November 2006

**Lupa (lunch)
+ Tony Smith (eve)**
Free Entry All Day

Thurs 16th November 2006

Haggis Horns
Super Heavy Horny Funk
Doors: 10pm (Onstage 11pm)
£400 Members & NUS/£5.00 All Others

Sun 19th November 2006

**Rosie Brown (lunch)
+ Mambito (eve)**
Free Entry All Day

Thurs 23rd November 2006

Crazy P
Fusing House Disco & Jazz... Superb!
Doors: 10pm (Onstage 11pm)
£6.00 + Booking Fee Advance

Sun 26th November 2006

**Saudade (lunch)
+ Pocket Central (eve)**
Free Entry All Day

For Further Information On The Live Dates Above Please Visit Our Website
At www.thehificlub.co.uk Or Telephone 0113 242 7353
Why Not Sign Up & Receive Regular Info Via Our HTML Monthly
Newsletter - Just Send An Email To into@thehificlub.co.uk With
The Subject Header As 'Sign Me Up'