

New blood

Orphan Boy

Artrocker gets to the bottom of the passion, the pain and the loyalty of Orphan Boy and finds out how they came to write a football anthem!

Since the release of their latest album, 'Passion, Pain and Loyalty', back in the summer Orphan Boy have done a bit of a New Order by entering the world of football songs! Whilst they haven't gone so far as to write a full-on English World Cup song, complete with a 'Barnes Rap', their last single, 'Some Frontier', has been adopted as a musical



mascot by both the band's local team, Grimsby Town FC (who've taken to blasting out the tune pre-match and at half time during recent games), and Manchester City, who've been soundtracking online match clips with blasts of the single.

Lead Ophan, Rob Cross, says: "Despite what people may think, it's not a jingoistic song about British soldiers. I tried to write from the perspective of the families they've left behind, generation after generation, who must ponder the far flung places that have swallowed up their loved ones. It's a sad song, but rousing too."

It's also a song that sparked a stage invasion in Manchester, where the band have grown a cult

following. Like 'Trekkies', their fans have come up with their own term of endearment to the Orphan Boy cause by christening themselves as the 'Bebop Council Pop Orphanite Anti-Social Brigade', or simply the 'Orphanites.'

This fan loyalty is not a surprise when you consider the philosophy behind their album: "'Passion, Pain & Loyalty' was written for all the people who listen to records alone in their bedrooms and stare out of the windows late into the night. It's still got the energy and imagination of the first record, but the music is bigger this time."

Talking about how the band's developed since they formed in Cleethorpes in 2005 it's clear they're not lacking any confidence: "It's sharper, deeper and more accomplished. We like to think that it could become one of the last great rock'n'roll records. Which, for three scruffs from Grimsby, would be pretty good going. But even if no one buys it, this record will always be a success to us, because our aim was to make a great album, and that's what we did."

With this kind of bullish talk their move to Manchester and signing to local label Concrete Recordings has clearly rubbed off with a renewed Northern swagger; and on the evidence of 'Passion, Pain and Loyalty' they have plenty to be cocky about.

Legends

Gary Numan



This month Tom Artrocker has a chat with electronic legend Gary Numan about concept albums, touching the zeitgeist, making money, making adverts and the recession...

Tom: *I've been enjoying the Pleasure Principle all over again, it is an amazing album, I look at the track names and, I almost feel silly asking but... is it a concept album?*

Gary: It's written from the perspective of a very immature 21 year old, all the angst you get as a 21 year old that I was definitely feeling when I was that age. It's kind of a mix between 'poor little me teenager all alone' and sci-fi, which really go hand in hand.

Tom: *I was talking to somebody on the phone earlier about Jesus And The Mary Chain and I was saying that very much as with Nirvana and maybe Oasis, when they came along, without them realising or knowing it they were fulfilling a need on the part of young people to hear certain sentiments that they can relate to, and I think that's the same with your music. You expressed something that young people shared with you.*

Gary: Yes, I think so, I think it was a beautiful accident because I was being selfish, writing about myself and being self obsessed which I think a lot of young people are, I managed to write some things that struck a chord with many people, and one of the reasons it did what it did was because the feeling of isolation that it portrayed just absolutely resonated with a generation of people.

Tom: *Coming back to the gigs that are coming up (details below), playing live is something that you've continued to do, and these days it's incredibly important in terms of financing isn't it? Now that so little is earned from record sales?*

Gary: Well, yeah, I'm sure the people that do really well will still do well selling CDs, but I think for the vast majority of us making money from albums and things is gone, I know that from my last three albums I've not seen a penny. It's all about live work or getting something used in a film or an advert, all of a sudden that has become a really important source of income, my wife was watching Nip and Tuck the other day and 'Electric' came on and I leapt out of my seat,

not because I was like: "Oh my god I'm on the telly" but more because "that money's going to be helpful"

Tom: *You were introduced to that whole world very early weren't you? Weren't you on an advert - "don't be a dummy"?*

Gary: Yeah, I got £40 for that. Well I actually got £80 at the end of the day because they didn't like the lyrics so the person who wrote it had to re-write it, so I got another £40, I got £40 as a session singer, no royalties just £40 as a session singer. The idea of using established hits on adverts I don't think was very popular in those days, people were commissioned to write music for adverts and ad agencies would have their own in house music office who would do it for them. The man who wrote "don't be a dummy" shared an office with my publisher and he heard my publisher playing my first album one day and said I had the right voice for this advert, which was really lucky for me at the time because I'd had no real success, that felt great, I was getting £18 a week on the J.S.A so to get £40 for an afternoon was great, I thought I'd made it!

Tom: *You went from underground to big nationwide tours very quickly in those early days.*

Gary: Yeah, I did a gig at the Hope and Anchor and there was a big fight and it got stopped, it was horrible and messy, and the next gig I did after that was the Glasgow Apollo in front of 4,000 people.

Tom: *Finally, they don't know what a Recession is these days do they?*

Gary: (Much laughter) Haha, it's not as bad as the 80s.

Tom: *Nothing like is it?*

Gary: Nothing.

Tom: *They talk about recession, didn't you expect to see the endless dole queues again?*

Gary: This is just a blip.

Tom: *Do you think we need hard times to get good music?*

Gary: *No, I think good music comes out regularly, but perhaps when things are a bit grim people focus more on it. Read the whole interview, alongside fellow synth-pop pioneer John Foxx in next month's Artrocker*

Gary Numan: two headline shows @ Back To The Future: 2 December Manchester Academy with Recoil, Motor and DJ set by Richard H Kirk (Cabaret Voltaire); 3 Troxy London with John Foxx, The Whip, Motor and DJ set by Richard H Kirk.