

Matthew Mead interviews Stone Roses rhythm guitarist Andy Couzens for This Is The Daybreak (27/09/13).

What music were you into, growing up ?

I was into 70s punk (The Pistols, The Ramones, etc) but liked a lot of Tamla and Atlantic soul too (Otis Redding etc). I was also into 50s rock 'n' roll.

How did you first get to know Ian, John, Pete and Reni ?

I met Ian and John at South Trafford College along with Si Wolstencroft when Ian asked me to join The Patrol. Pete was a part of a gang that used to hang round where Ian and John lived in Timperley. Reni came along later in response to an advert we put up in a music shop in town.

Who were you closest to in the Roses ?

Despite all the arguing, we were all pretty tight, no favourites on my part and then ... we weren't.

Listening to the bootlegs, the early gigs sound like riotous affairs ?

Yes, the early gigs were pretty wild and the audiences reacted in pretty much the same way, even when songs like I Wanna Be Adored and This Is The One were dropped in the set. Although that did start to change as the set started to include Sally Cinnamon, (Song For My) Sugar Spun Sister, etc.

What was your favourite gig with the Roses and why ?

I don't have a particular favourite gig. Having said that, I enjoyed all the gigs in Sweden. Good times...

Tell us about the Garage Flower songs.

This album represented our first set, with the first song we ever wrote together as the Roses, namely Just A Little Bit (originally called Nowhere Fast), followed by Mission Impossible and Tradjic Roundabout. These were pre-Reni, although obviously he's on these recordings. Also you can hear the change coming through with I Wanna Be Adored, Here It Comes and All I Want. We wrote This Is The One in the studio whilst recording what was to be the album, and proved to be the beginning of a real change.

After leaving these sessions, we very quickly had songs like Sally Cinnamon, The Hardest Thing In The World, All Across The Sands, etc. Haddock is just some of Martin Hannett's feedback. So Young and Tell Me were recorded at an earlier session and, I still think, sound exciting if not a little naive - representative of the times !!!

Was it true that you played some of the tunes you later released with The High to Ian and John and they turned them down ?

I did play the riff for Up and Down to them and Reni. Reni liked it, but Ian and John did not.

Was your falling out with Gareth Evans the main reason for you leaving the Roses ?

I did have a row with Gareth but to fall "out", I would have to have been "in", which I wasn't. It was the lack of support from Ian and John in relation to Gareth's ridiculous behaviour which caused me to leave.

Did you see the band play live after you left ?

I saw them play at International 2 in about 1988. They needed a rhythm guitar player !

What were your favourite gigs with The High ?

No favourite, although Elland Road (June 1991) was good. I have nearly all the gigs on DAT tape.

I have the Hannett sessions (with The High). Were there any other tunes that were written around that period ?

We (The High) worked with Martin on material right up to his death, and there are some sessions still unreleased. There is one track from the early sessions and probably six from the later. My favourite work with Martin though was P.W.A.

What do you make of the Roses getting back together ?

It was really good to see them together at the press conference, obviously enjoying being together. I saw them play on the Sunday night at Heaton Park. Emotional, but again - they need a rhythm guitar player ?