

Matthew Mead interviews Shrewsbury (25/05/89) gig
organiser John Kertland for This Is The Daybreak (23/08/14).



Signed Shrewsbury Park Lane setlist (provided by Tim Vigon).

How did you get involved in booking gigs ?

Through being a musician. It seemed easier to put our own gigs on, and then putting on bands from out of town was the next logical step.

Where did you hear about The Stone Roses ?

My friend Neville - my promoting partner in 'SFG' was offered them by a Manchester based agency. Although I had a friend who had their first single (So Young), I'd never heard of them until January 1989, I admit. We booked them for Shrewsbury through the agent for £125.

Was there a buzz in the town before the gig taking place ?

People had been following the band around on tour, a sure-fire sign that something was happening. There were people in town from Leeds, Manchester, Birmingham...

A massive buzz was building on the day. We had a tout wanting to buy 200 tickets from my store, 'Gizmo', which was the local ticket outlet. The sun was shining and there was a palpable feeling of expectancy and excitement building.

Tell us about the soundcheck.

Soundcheck was late. The Roses' manager Gareth Evans wanted to pull the gig on a technical concern in order to generate more notoriety for the band. We were aware, as promoters, that they'd pulled a gig either the night before or 2 evenings before on a technical issue. I have to hand it to him, all the elements were there to myth-make and he did try his best. However, a bumpy transit van trip to a Hawkwind associated sound-engineer guy near Wrexham provided us with the 24 channel mixing-desk that was lacking. With 500 people crammed into the smaller venue, The Fridge, the soundcheck was very late. Around 9:30pm. The band eventually came on at 11:15pm.

You had to move the gig to a bigger venue – Park Lane ?

We did this as we knew the day before that demand was going to quickly outstrip the venue capacity of the original adjoining venue, The Fridge.

What are your memories of the gig ?

That the band really rocked. The sound was brilliant, and a testimony to all the people involved in the technical production of the show.

My standout memory was dj'ing in the bigger (Park Lane) venue where the show eventually took place. I played some Sike, The Open Mind along with The Left Banke. I also played The Smiths - and a young lady I knew came up and had a chat with me during that. I knew that the Indie balance was shifting as she had been a hardcore Morrissey lookalike until that night. She had bought a 'flag' design Roses T-Shirt and was wearing that with her quiff smoothed down.

Did you see the band after their performance ?

No - I was too wrapped up in packing my records up and talking to excited fans.

You recorded the gig, didn't you ?

Yes - I have a very good recording of both the gig and the soundcheck. I know that there was another audience recording which has done the rounds on the 'net - but it's not as good ! A few photos from the gig have come to light in the last few years - which is nice as I never had a camera at that time.

Have you seen the reformed band ?

No. I saw them at their peak and don't want the impression ruined.

Can you tell us what you are up to now ?

I work in education and music.