

Harry Howard - Crime and the City Solution for Fanzine Brasil

Harry, could you tell us a little bit about your musical career?

I first started to play with friends in 1978/79. I had inherited Rowland's acoustic guitar on which I would try to work out the theme to Get Smart. I was pretty hopeless (so what's changed?) I didn't know any real chords, so I played bass and sang. I moved to London and became involved in music with my more famous friends and relations like Rowland S. Howard and Mick Harvey. I never made any money, but we travelled the world and became notorious in our way. That's not a bad thing.

How was your experience with the Australian Punk scene?

Australia's "punk scene" was an opportunity presenting itself. A: you could be hateful toward authority and normality and B: you could achieve this on the cheap with less skill required (attitude and style taking up the slack). There was plenty of inspiration coming from overseas and Australian bands who were scene makers themselves. The Saints were fabulous, snarling, garage punk and there was Radio Birman too who really played proto punk / rock n roll stuff.

What do you think of the current music scene and what is your opinion for the future?

I'm always hopeful about music. I don't follow what is happening so much as allow the things I like to find me. And they do. I think people find new ways to say things musically and to break rules because of changing technology and because they are people and its in us to do that.

Is Punk still alive? What does it mean to be Punk?

Is 1977 punk rock still an active viable thing? No, punk is alive in different ways. Punk broke down the demand for highly skilled players and allowed people to make it up for themselves and feel ok about that. I don't think that will ever go away ~ punk reclaimed that for us all ~ nice punk.

You have not only lived the scene of Punk movement but also lived post-punk scene. How did you see the changes from one musical style to another?

It didn't take long at all before punk morphed into post-punk but really that just meant you could be more arty and draw from broader influences from pre-punk musicians like Bowie, Roxy Music, Iggy Pop's work, Eno, Can and blues and even reggae etc. And then Bands like The Boys Next Door, The Young Charlatans, Whirly World, The Laughing Clowns and Crime and the City Solution all became important in my life.

I have already seen comments that associate you with the Gothic culture. Do you consider yourself part of this culture?

The gothic scene was never something I never felt involved in. I like some aspects of it, but I thought it was a bit embarrassing that I might be identified as part of that. Gothic is a useful word though and the Gothic Scene certainly doesn't own it.

You already played with The Birthday Party. How was the experience of playing with such a chaotic band?

Yes, extremely chaotic certainly, but also quite a civilised intelligent group of people. It was terrifying being on stage with them at first, but it is something I have always been proud of.

What was it like being part of bands with your brother? You played with him in Crime and the City Solution, These Immortal Souls and briefly with Lydia Lunch in the '90s.

I have enormous respect for Rowland's talent. It was fabulous to play in bands with him. I consider myself lucky to have had such a high standard of material to contribute to. And I shared all that time and experience with someone dear to me.

Has any band in which you played that is more special to you? Why?

All the bands I have played in have been special to me. Because Rowland is no longer here those bands, I was in with him are now the most special to me.

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