



THE REZZILLOS

Photography Richard Battye





Ray Turner likes his music, particularly The Rezillos. The problem is, they never play in Birmingham, so he booked them himself and put on the gig at the Hare and Hounds. It sold out and he had a great night. The added benefit was meeting all of the band and he can now add “promoter” to his CV, The Radar thought this was a nice story so sent Richard Battye along to find out more.

Ray admits, “I’d never done anything like this before” but with the help of some friends, he got hold of the band, booked the venue and basically put the night together himself. Backstage

after the excellent gig, Radar sat in with the band as they tucked into their after show rider (fruit and cold cuts...a rock and roll picnic)

Radar; Can you remember the last time you played in Birmingham?

Fay Fife; It was quite a while ago. I don’t think Birmingham is one of the places we have a following, so we don’t actually play here that much.

Ray Turner ; That’s why we were surprised by tonight. (the gig sold out)

Fay; It just shows when it’s promoted properly, there is enough interest, know what I mean?

Eugene Reynolds; We played Barbarella’s in 1978

Ray interjects to say it would have been 1977.

Eugene ; Roy Wood came backstage vying for the job of producing our album or getting a job in production or something..a nice bloke. When we played Barbarella’s it was so unbelievably hot. We’d been on the telly and everybody wanted to see the band. I remember a sea of heads, and then people standing up the walls and on people’s shoulders. Everybody was pouring

with sweat. It was the hottest gig I think we ever did.

The conversation then turns to “punk” music.

Ray; Punk lasted for about 12 months didn’t it?

Eugene; It did, then it came back.

Fay; In its intense form, but I think it lasted longer than that in a variegated form.

Eugene ; I think it’s still here...it’s not that sad, there’s lots of new types of punk rock groups that have been inspired - not like some of the cheesy rock and roll groups - they have done it (punk) their own way. There’s still new life in it.

Ray; The Rezillos were always different anyway, not like a Damned or a Clash, you were different, set aside. ►►



Radar; Some bands were always slightly outside the genre, for example Devo, The Cramps...very individual.

Ray;The Cramps liked you.

Eugene ; And vice versa. We didn't play with them but we knew them. These bands we're talking about, they didn't say "punk's the new thing" let's be a punk group; they did their own thing, contemporary with the punk movement. They were part of it but stood outside of it. Some of the records you listen to from '77 are completely dated and irrelevant.

Radar; What do you think is one of the favourite venues / gigs you've played?

Eugene; In my opinion, since reforming 10 years ago, Vintage at Goodwood last year.

Fay; I agree actually.

Eugene; We headlined the Let It Rock tent last August. If we never did another gig I'd be happy to leave it at that. The sound was perfect, the delivery was

perfect.

Fay;The vibe of the festival was very very good.

Radar; Do you get to meet /see other bands at these festivals?

Eugene ;The reality is you don't see these (other) groups. You turn up, usually an hour or so before you go on, you're in the changing room, you go on do your bit then you are off.

Fay; Sometimes you do.

Jim (guitar) ; Last night we were with Rat Scabies playing with the Members. It just happens randomly. We don't e mail each other or anything (laughs)

Radar;Your paths just cross.

Jim; "Want to do lunch" (Ha Ha)

Fay; Although we did "do lunch" sat next to Rat...Mr Scabies - if you could call it lunch. ►►

Radar; Back to venues, you played CBGB's. How was that?

Fay ; Great. The whole atmosphere around that time was great. We did it as an unannounced gig which was a bit strange, but it was nice to be part of the scene. We saw The Cramps at CBGB's. Once you saw that you would never be the same again.

Eugene; Went backstage, met Lux (Interior) who said "I know you don't I? The Rezillos, we love your record" It was weird...once you realised how turned on they were to your music.

Radar; The strangest gig you've ever done?

Eugene ; It was in London, there was this wall operated by electric chains. A complete wall with a cornice and pictures on it. People were at this party. The wall came up about as far as our ankles. This guy says "Hey it's the Rezillos" He could tell by our feet! Then the wall came back down again (room laughs) We just kept on playing. After about 2 numbers the wall went. We said "Hello!"

Ray; Like Spinal Tap with Stonehenge.

Eugene; But what a tease was that. eh? So that probably is one of the strangest ones.

Fay; Years and years ago at the beginning of punk there was many strange gigs. Ones where we were nearly lynched.

Talk then goes to the subject of the rider of unripe pears and bottles of Sol with a lime in the top.

Radar; My friend tour managed Blur and on their rider they had new underwear!

Fay; Underpants on the rider! (laughs) That's really funny actually because at least 2 people have been involved in getting emergency underwear for the first gig so actually that's a very good idea.

The band and crew drift away to pack up, Ray tells his story of his dream the night before - too long to be repeated here, and the night winds down. It has been a great success. Nothing went wrong, everything went right. The band and Mr Turner, a big fan, had a great night.

Got a favourite band that doesn't play often in Birmingham? You know what to do.

NB. Whilst writing this I was having an email conversation with Eugene from the band. I offered and it has been set up that I go to Edinburgh on Sept 9th to do a promo photo shoot with the band. ■

Richard Battye

