

The following quotes on '77 were gathered specifically for this book. Each artist was asked, "What did '77 mean to you?". I have chosen to simply list these contributions in alphabetical order without any analysis or other comment. Let them speak for themselves.

"When the two sevens clash: 1977, the most dread year of the century. Everything was red, green and gold. A time of cross cultures and two musics bleeding into one. We played a lot of 'Rock Against Racism' gigs with reggae groups of the day. Mucho fun."

Bob Derwood Andrews (Generation X)

"I was 17 in '76/'77. Definitely a case of being the right age in the right place...It meant fun, speed and slight chaos. But mainly it meant fun, there were no rules, see great gigs most nights, a time to take drugs, get laid, hang around with band members (Pistols, Clash...), take more drugs and lose a few teeth - all this to the best soundtrack available...AND start a band!"

Robin Bad Habits (The Unwanted)

"Lots of fun, lots of booze, a great way of not having to do normal jobs, and being able to express yourself, in fact exactly like 2002."

Arturo Bassick (The Lurkers)

"1977 saw me progress: From the back of a van (where I was Roadie for The Damned), to the front of the van (where I was the drummer for The Damned). From setting up the drums to setting fire to the drums. From avoiding the gob to being a sitting target. From drinking beer to drowning in it.....and back again!"

Dave Berk (Johnny Moped)

"1977 was the year when the Kursaal Flyers were sunk by punk. We were very much a live band that did well on the circuit, but suddenly were old hat, and everyone wanted to see these crazy young punk kids with all their 'energy' and safety pins. I loved punk and felt a great affinity with it and it was the best thing that could have happened to the music scene at that time. My favourite group by a mile was The Clash and I thought The Cortinas were pretty damn good as well."

Will Birch (Kursaal Flyers)

"What did '77 mean to me...A door opening. Freedom to escape from a 'safe' perspective to something a little more dangerous. The problem being that true perspective needs to be balanced to be of any use. I've found I've had to go back through the door a few times to retrieve stuff I thought I didn't want anymore."

Andy Blade (Eater)

"You could tell there was a sizzling energy about in '77. Going in and out of rehearsal rooms, The Clash or 999 would walk in as we walked out. Though, as a band, we refused to adopt the de rigeur street-political stance and grim



Bethnal line-up: George Csapo (vocals, violin, harp, keyboards), Nick Michaels (guitar), Everton Williams (bass) and Pete Dowling (drums).

The sound is remarkably fresh new wave for a band that at the time got stomped for being punk bandwagon jumpers. True, Bethnal had been around as a hard rock 'n' roll band since 1972, so they were an easy target once the punk stance of 1977 rolled in sight. The music on "The Fiddler", meanwhile, had the important edge, not least because of the raw guitar stabbings and the speed with which the band played. Furthermore, the use of electric violin gave Bethnal an easily recognizable sound and helped set them apart from all of the conventional guitar-bass-drums punk bands. Indeed the violin was used in a not dissimilar way to Urban Blitz' fiddling in The Doctors Of Madness.

Everton Williams: "When this punk thing started, we automatically felt part of it, although we knew we weren't a punk band." Additionally, Bethnal was truly a multi-racial group. Both Csapo and Michaels were Greek Cypriots, Williams from Jamaica, and Dowling from England. Another Bethnal song performed live in 1977, "Who That You Talk To", was a vehemently caustic anti-NF anthem.

In September '77, Bethnal supported Hawkwind on tour.

1977 Discography:

7" The Fiddler (Live)/This Ain't Just Another Love Song (Live), Bethnal - VIOL 1 11/77 Gig freebie

Post-1977:

Bethnal released several records on Vertigo before calling it a day in 1980. Albums include 1978's "Dangerous Times" and "Crash Landing".

Everton Williams later played with Bernie Torme. Nick Michaels and Pete Dowling both re-surfaced with Robert Calvert.



BIG IN JAPAN

No, Big In Japan were not big in Japan. They were, as a simple matter of fact, not very big anywhere except for perhaps their native Liverpool circa 1977.

Formed in May of '77 after witnessing a local Clash gig, this fashion-conscious combo played, according to guitarist Bill Drummond, their first gig 2 days later. Using the stage as a platform for exploration with the riffs simply evolving as they naively went along, Big In Japan were resultantly often compared to the more experimental New York scene.



Initially Big In Japan was just a trio consisting of Bill Drummond (born in South Africa as William E. Drummond - vocals, guitar), Kevin Ward (vocals, bass) and Phil Allen (drums). It didn't take long, however, before Ian Broudie (guitar) and Jayne Casey (vocals) joined, the latter of whom soon adopted a unique way of screaming her lungs out over the "messy unrhymic chaos", as one critic put it. Live, Casey would often perform with

droning, blitzing James plectrum work, all topped with stunning Vanian over-the-top vocals. This long since established classic piece of music ashamedly failed to make the NME's list of the 20 best singles of 1976. Quite inexcusable by a mag who pride themselves in being ahead of the pack. When "New Rose" was released, it immediately sold 4,000 copies via mailorder and specialist shops. This prompted United Artists to snatch up distribution and issue the following press release: "Punk Rock Breakout - The Damned: 'New Rose' c/w 'Help'. Previously available only in specialist shops or by mail-order. The unprecedented demand for the first single by a British Punk Rock Group The Damned's "New Rose/Help" has necessitated a special agreement between Stiff Records and United Artists to rush release the record nationally". At this time, some record companies clearly doubted whether punk music would turn out to be a sellable commodity, but such fears were swept away upon the take-off of The Damned's "New Rose".

The Damned also recorded their first John Peel Session in 1976, laying down "Stab Yor Back", "Neat Neat Neat", "New Rose", "So Messed Up" and "I Fall" on November 30, 1976.

The Damned's brew of highly potent speed-punk-rock was served up by 4 extraordinarily individual characters and the band was without doubt one of the most visual acts to emerge in '77. Ex-gravedigger-turned-vocalist Dave Vanian ("The first thing I want to do is buy a hearse") who bore an uncanny resemblance to Count Dracula, guitarist Brian James ("We just wanted to be allowed to get onto stage and make as much noise as fucking possible") pushing the macho lead guitarist role to new limits, football hooligan Rat Scabies ("I just like hitting things"), by far the best punk drummer around with by far the biggest mouth, and Captain Sensible ("I fuck ants"), only one such character born in the UK every 100 years, on bass.

Due to the general acceleration of the punk avalanche and the success of "New Rose", Stiff signed a distribution agreement with Island Records. As a result, The Damned's "Neat Neat Neat" appeared early 1977 on an Island promo LP sampler entitled "Island 45's". This now very scarce one-sided album came in a plain white sleeve, rubberstamped with its title only (some w/xeroxed insert).

The Damned's trademark was no-nonsense loud and powerful punk rock in the vein of The Stooges and the MC5, but played several notches faster than even the Ramones had ever attempted. It was no surprise that the band closed their debut album, incorrectly blamed at the time for being sped-up takes of the actual recordings, with a no holds barred amphetamine-fueled take on Iggy & The Stooges' "I Feel Alright" (aka "1970").

The Damned's first album, appropriately titled "Damned Damned Damned", is an all-out attack of loud wild-fire rock and roll, but still it's chock-full of great riffs and hook-lines. The VU needle never escapes the red area from start to finish. It should also be noted that this album gave Stiff Records their first chart entry (it peaked at no. 36). The band plays fast and furious, but even so



Come the end of '77, and the trio of Gale Warning, Hi Fi Harris and Dr. D.K. Smythe had left The Rezillos, now a more manageable 5-piece. William Mysterious inherited the bass duties from the Doctor.

Not long after the debut single, "I Can't Stand My Baby" (all 15,000 copies individually numbered on the back) made it out, The Rezillos signed to major Sire Records and this move instantly provided them with the support slot on the Ramones' late '77 UK tour. The Rezillos thus became



the first UK punk band signing on the dotted line with Sire. "I Can't Stand My Baby" was backed with what the label called a "Special Beat Club Version" of Lennon/McCartney's "I Wanna Be Your Man".



The Rezillos' second single, "(My Baby Does) Good Sculptures"/"Flying Saucer Attack", originally pencilled in as FAB 2 on Sensible Records, but never released as such, came out instead on Sire Records in December of '77. NME immediately gave this revved-up slice of vinyl "Single Of The Week" honours.

All three original Rezillos songs released in 1977 were penned by Luke Warm.

The roots to The Rezillos' whimsical tunes was to be found somewhere in the classic British 60s (including late 50s) pop tradition, peppered with an irresistible science fiction fascination, entirely their own. The Rezillos' sound was fast, quirky and captivating, and they were notoriously known for a dynamic and super-magnetic live show. Always a visual treat, The Rezillos dressed in 60s kitschy apparel, not unlike The B-52's.



THE REZILLOS London Tour

July	
Sun 24th	Bridge house, Canning Town
Mon 25th	Yorvik at Cruckers
Tue 26th	Greyhound, Fulham
Wed 27th	Man in the Moon, Chelsea
Thurs 28th	Ruby, Crown
Fri 29th	Garden
Sat 30th	Nashville, Kensington
Sun 31st	Dogwalk, Camden
Aug	Double 50, Brixton
Mon 1st	Rock Garden, Covent Garden
Tue 2nd	Golden Lion, Fulham
Wed 3rd	Music Machine, Camden
Thurs 4th	Nags Head, High Wycombe
Fri 5th	Rockham, Camden
	Stoke Newington

First single on Sensible Records (see picture above)
Double Side "Can't Stand My Baby" / "I Wanna Be Your Man"
Order now from local Hip Record Shop

Cosmos Agency
031-226 4527 (24hrs)

At the end of 1977, the NME referred to The Rezillos as "Definitely one of the bands for '78".

1977 Peel Sessions:

12/12/77: (My Baby Does) Good Sculptures, No, Fight Amongst Yourselves, Top Of The Pops

1977 Discography:

7" I Can't Stand My Baby/I Wanna Be Your Man, Sensible - FAB 1
08/77 Individually numbered
7" (My Baby Does) Good Sculptures/
Flying Saucer Attack, Sire - 6078
612 12/77

