

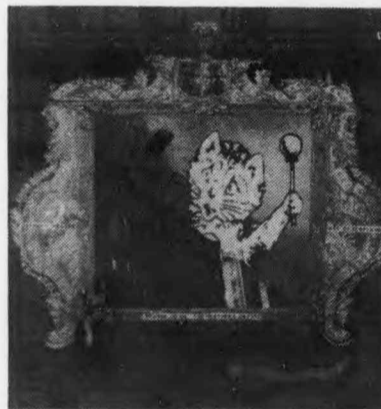
GENREKIDE

MICHAEL EDWARDS

POSTCARD: THE SOUND OF YOUNG SCOTLAND

Postcard Recordings. What can I say? This label was single-handedly responsible for some of the most perfect aural moments of my life. And to think that they were only around for 2 years and released but a dozen slabs of vinyl yet...yet, they changed everything. For Postcard was unlike anything else that was going on at that time, and they rapidly became the darlings of the music press. Three groups made up the roster (the universally unappreciated Antipodeans the Go-Betweens passed through releasing one single) were Josef K, Orange Juice and Aztec Camera who were compared to the 1968, 1969 and 1970 Velvet Underground respectively. The comparison to the Velvets was always a favourite one, although probably most appropriate with Josef K who were the only band to release a Postcard album. The other two bands both supposedly had albums ready for release but moved onto major labels before Postcard disappeared from view at the end of 1981. But not before introducing the world to Orange Juice (more below), Josef K and Aztec Camera whose balladeer Roddy Frame told tales of teenage angst more eloquently than anyone since.

And then during 1992, Alan Horne reappeared and he resurrected Postcard. The sound of young Scotland was back. In addition to reissuing some of the old Orange Juice material (some of which was previously unreleased) but also putting out new material by performers who were new to Postcard. So now I shall guide you through the latest batch of Postcard releases. The Postcard legacy continues.



Orange Juice

"The Ostrich Churchyard" & "The Heather's On Fire"

At long last the full genius of Orange Juice and Edwyn Collins can be experienced the way that it should have been. The debut album that did come out on Polydor ("You Can't Hide Your Love Forever") was wonderful, but now that the original Postcard version has finally reached the light of day ("The Ostrich Churchyard") it appears that the Polydor one is the flawed one. The rawness of the songs before the glossiness of too much production was added makes them infinitely more attractive; the naivety of Edwyn's voice, the chiming guitars...perfect pop. On "The Heather's On Fire", the first four singles are collected along with four tracks from BBC radio sessions. And even 14 years down the line, these songs sound more special than ever - they haven't dated at all and the freshness is still there. Take the second single "Blue Boy"; the percussive introduction, the

guitar solo that approaches perfection; it is still one of my most favourite singles. Ever. In addition, the CD is packaged in a unique sleeve that has a booklet which tells the Orange Juice story through pictures and press clippings. You MUST own these recordings.



Paul Quinn and The Independent Group "The Phantoms & The Archetypes"

This ensemble is something of a fantasy for any Scottish music historian as it features the ex-singer from Bourgie Bourgie (the band that could have been...) and also members from Orange Juice, Aztec Camera, the Bluebells, the Commotions and also the godlike Alan Horne while the whole thing is produced by Edwyn Collins. Sigh. And this is the album that Paul Quinn should have made years ago, the album that Postcard always threatened to release. Sophisticated with an arrogant streak, Paul Quinn has a voice so suited to these moody torch songs that you can't ever imagine him doing anything else. The music is stripped down to a sparse, bare minimum (an electric guitar played quietly - quite a novelty) allowing all the emotions put into the performance to

be captured beautifully. It is mournful - witness their version of the Carpenters' "Superstar" - but it is mournful in an understanding, knowing way that sympathises with the listener. Exquisite. The new single "Stupid Thing" is even more divine and should be purchased by everyone that still has an emotional bone in their body.

The Nectarine No.9 "A Sea With Three Stars"

Another figure from Scottish mythology reappears on Postcard - David Henderson whose previous incarnations include the Fire Engines (the first funk punk group...) and the majestic Win who dabbled with near fame on several occasions. His most recent band is no real departure from his earlier work, just a little bit more focussed. Focussed probably isn't the best word to use with Mr. Henderson as he does rather abuse the concept of pop music to suit his own designs. And what designs they are too - somewhat sarcastic, simple, seedy and accessible but yet underneath he is sneering as he scribbles his cryptic lyrics and leaves rough edges on the music to tear your flesh so those tunes can get under your skin by the most direct route. And in addition to the album, there is a rather splendid EP out there too with a couple of new songs and peculiar versions of three from the album. His most inspired work to date, and hopefully it will finally put this renegade on the musical map. And if it doesn't, he'll just keep coming back. Thank God.

I beg you to contact Postcard Recordings of Scotland at: P.O. Box 546, Glasgow, G12 8NY, Scotland. Remember to include a couple of IRCs, and please let them know who sent you...

Morganfields shine over Headstones

by Stephen Mason

If the audience was lacking enthusiasm on Tuesday night, The Morganfields made up for it with an energetic performance in the SUB cafeteria. They were the first of two bands to play, the other being The Headstones, but were not, by any means, an 'opening band'. In fact, they more or less seemed to be the main attraction of the show, with much of the audience filing out after their set was done.

Hot on the trail of their new album ('Thrash Waltz'), the Morganfields played a tight, strong set. It was evident that they really knew their stuff. The highlight was Alun Piggins, the lead singer who managed to jump up and down (including one brief fall to the floor), sing, and play difficult, smooth progressions on guitar, all at the same time. And it was obvious that he wasn't merely repeating the words by rote repetition - there was definite genuine emotion and excitement in his singing. The other two members of the band carried out their roles with equal talent and energy.

For all their good points,

though, I still found that the Morganfields were lacking. Maybe it's the fact that there's only so much you can do with a guitar, bass and drums (and trust me, feedback is definitely one of those things), or maybe it was just that the songs were transferred directly from album to stage without many changes or improvisations. Or maybe the songs just sounded a little too much alike. Whichever, the Morganfields were missing a key element that is necessary to change satisfying into exceptional.

The Headstones. Okay, I won't dwell on this. They're really not my kind of music, so it is impossible for me to not be biased. I will say that the lead singer was an interesting guy to watch, as he took command of the mike, burped and spat. But the songs were just too repetitious and similar that I couldn't help wishing it would end. Maybe I just need to listen to them a bit more - it's hard to judge when your listening for the first time.

Conclusion: a mediocre concert. Definite enjoyable moments, but too few

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