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Liverpool - Ten Gigs That Made Me Love...

by Andrew Twambley and Nick Pinto

published: 8 / 11 / 2022

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intro

Andrew Twambley and Nick Pinto recall ten of the gigs that most inspired them especially at the infamous Eric's during their student years in the late 1970s in Liverpool.

In the summer of 1979, I spent four months in the good old U.S. of A. with a view to chilling out and following The Clash 'round various gigs. I vividly recall a visit to one bar in New York where the following conversation took place,

Chuck the Yank : "Hey, where you guys from?"

Me: "Liverpool, U.K."

Chuck the Yank : "Oh Gee, do you know The Beatles?"

Me: "No, but I have taken a piss next to Elvis Costello."

Chuck the Yank : "Whaaaat?"

Me: "Liverpool is a multifaceted vibrant city which is currently the epicentre of musical culture in The U.K.... It's about more than just The @@@ing Beatles."

Chuck the Yank : "Oh, righteo... Bye."

Winding back in time three years to the late, sweltering, summer of summer of '76, I approached my halls of residence in Liverpool armed with my LP collection, including, Queen, Elton John and Rush.

A few days after landing in this strange and alluring city, I heard a knock on my door. It was 'Nick the Pin', from the neighbouring cell (who is co-writing this piece) and for better or for worse, is still my buddy to this day.

He asked, "Do you want to go to the pub tonight or come down this club in town and see this American all girl rock band ?" The pub would have been the easier option but a higher power directed me to accompany The Pin to Eric's on Matthew St., Liverpool, where we were treated to The Runaways on their first European tour.

Life, as we know it, was over. Eric's was our venue of choice for the next three years and is the reason for my love of music (and Liverpool) to this day. The following 10 gigs are not all Scousers, but we first saw them in Liverpool and are thus eternally connected to the spirit of that great city. The original list included well over 20 gigs, so we had to fight to get the list down to 10 (well, 11 actually, but who is counting?)

1) The Runaways, Eric's Club (8 Oct 1976)

Memorable for being our first ever gig in Liverpool and our first ever visit to Eric's Club (which opened the week before on 1 Oct 1976) and memorable, too, because we had read about The Runaways in The NME and being given the opportunity to actually see them live was really something. They were American and were everything an eighteen-year-old could have desired. I spent most my time observing Cherie in her corset whilst The Pin was drooling over Joan Jett. What can I say? We were young! ...And this was a far cry from Elton John. This was our new scene, it set us on our new life path and did we make the most of it for the next three years?

2) Tom Petty & The Heartbreakers, Liverpool Empire (23 May 1977)

The main act was Nils Lofgren with Tom Petty & The Heartbreakers as the support. We were there to see Tom Petty on their first ever tour of the U.K. I already owned the debut album and knew they were good. An acknowledged fact is that the U.K. got Tom & The Heartbreakers long before their own Americans realised what they were missing! Despite the long hair and slightly hippy clothes, they were cool. I am very proud that we witnessed such greatness.

3) The Stranglers, Eric's Club (19 June 1977)

What a night this was! It was my 19th birthday and it did not disappoint. I think, The Pin bought me the ticket as a birthday present. Truth be told, The Stranglers were never really punk but the mood of the time (1977), the venue (Eric's) and the electricity, energy and enthusiasm of the band and gig were as punk as you could get. We both came out of that slightly dingy basement drenched in sweat and fully paid up members of Eric's, 100% invested in the punk movement!

4) The Clash, Eric's Club (22 Oct 1977)

What more can I say about this incredible band and this incredible gig that I haven't said ad infinitum, to anyone who will listen for the past 45 years? For us, The Clash really were "the only band that matteree" and this gig, the first time either of us had seen them live, was an experience akin to an epiphany, like St Paul (or Saul as he was then) on the road to Damascus. We both knew that life would never be the same again for either of us! We went on to see The Clash numerous times over the next few years. They remain...the best.

5) The Heartbreakers/Siouxsie & The Banshees, Eric's Club (26 Oct 1977)

This is in the list not because they (Johnny Thunders and The Heartbreakers) were any good that night but because in 47 years of gig-going neither of us have never been as short-changed at a gig before. Thunders had clearly found a Liverpool dealer to supply the band and himself with their favourite narcotic and they were completely out of it.

They eventually showed up late on stage... The mists of time have masked and romanticised many events from that era, but I will never forget Thunders collapsing in front of us after sixteen minutes, and being dragged off by his bandmates to boos and bottles. The compensation came in the form of the sultry Siouxsie and her Banshees who were the support act and who were, even though at that point they had not released any records, wonderous. A love that remains undiminished and unrequited

6) The Jam, Liverpool Empire (1 Nov 1978)

This was the second time we had seen The Jam live. The first in 1977 was when they were promoting the not so great 'This is the Modern World' album and didn't make this Top 10. This gig was their '78 tour promoting the brilliant 'All Mod Cons' album. It was a truly intense and masterly show. We would obviously have much preferred it to have been in Eric's but by 1978 The Jam were becoming huge and there was no option but for them to play the bigger venue of The Empire.

7) Buzzcocks, Eric's Club (17 March 1978)

Great band, great gig. The classic 'What Do I Get' single had just been released and there was a sense that this band were going to be huge. That never quite happened but their legacy as one of the greatest bands of the punk era is not in question and their reputation continues to flourish

8) Elvis Costello & The Attractions, Eric's Club (25 March 1978)

This was a fantastic gig. Elvis was on fire at this particular earlyish point of his career and his crackin' second album 'This Year's Model' had just been released. He and The Attractions had so much passion and energy back in those days, and as a 'local lad,' Eric's was the perfect venue for him. Another hot and sweaty one! This was the night I found myself standing next to Elvis in the gents, with Wreckless Eric also present.

9) Kate Bush, Liverpool Empire (3 April 1979)

This was the first date on her first and only nationwide tour. It does not seem to fit in easily with this list and caused one of my rare disagreements with The Pin. The Pin was cool and he proclaimed Kate Bush was not cool and performed silly dances, so refused to go. So I went with JC instead and he begrudgingly, now, accepts that he was wrong. It was a creative, amazing and a dazzlingly unforgettable experience. More unrequited love

10) Buzzcocks and Joy Division, Liverpool University (2 Oct 1979)

A truly legendary double bill. We were there of course to see Buzzcocks but we were also very much aware of one of the bands of 1979, Joy Division. They did not disappoint. An incredible double bill and we were very privileged to see Joy Division live, not once but twice when we saw them again in Eric's, this time headlining, in December of the same year. We assumed greatness for them and that we'd see them play live again but nobody could have foreseen what was going to happen just five months later in May 1980. We are not worthy!

10.b) Orchestral Manoeuvres In The Dark, Eric's Club (15 Feb 1980)

This was the last gig we ever went to at Eric's. Just a few weeks later, the then-very scary Liverpool police (you didn't mess with them) raided the place and closed it down on totally trumped-up drugs charges. For that reason alone it had to be on the list. There's never been anywhere as good as Eric's. OMD were at this time one of the new bands on the local scene and had created quite a stir with their debut single 'Electricity'. The Pin bought two copies and managed to persuade the manager of our student bar to add it to the bar's jukebox. He is very proud of the fact that it then became one of the most played singles on that jukebox, even though OMD were still at that point relatively unknown

That's all for now folks..... There is much more ..... so think we need a Part 2. The Pin always kept a detailed diary of our adventures in Liverpool and it is for that reason that we can recall where, what, and when, which is quite handy. I have told him that those tones need to be published....my fee as agent will only be 50%

Slick Nick 'The Pin' Pinto.....London
Andrew Twambley (Pennyblack Music) Manchester

Also In Ten Songs That Made Me Love...

Andy Sumners (2017)
Beautiful South (2019)
Belle And Sebastian (2015)
Blondie (2014)
Bob Mould (2015)
Boomtown Rats (2022)
Brian Eno (2020)
Brilliant Corners (2014)
Captain Beefheart (2014)
Car Seat Headrest (2017)
Chuck Prophet (2017)
Clash (2003)
Darren Hayman (2014)
David Bowie (2016)
Deacon Blue (2016)
Depeche Mode (2021)
Donovan (2016)
Duran Duran (2003)
Echo And The Bunnymen (2003)
ECM Records (2017)
Erasure (2021)
Fat White Family (2016)
Goats Head Soup (2018)
Graham Parker (2019)
Half Man Half Biscuit (2014)
Jeff Buckley (2016)
Joy Division (2015)
Led Zeppelin (2021)
Mickey Newbury (2018)
Miles Davis (2019)
Miley Cyrus (2016)
Miscellaneous (2009)
Miscellaneous (2019)
Miscellaneous (2019)
Miscellaneous (2019)
Miscellaneous (2019)
Miscellaneous (2019)
Miscellaneous (2019)
Miscellaneous (2019)
Miscellaneous (2017)
Miscellaneous (2015)
Miscellaneous (2015)
Miscellaneous (2014)
Miscellaneous (2014)
Mystery Jets (2019)
New Order (2015)
Orchestral Manoeuvres in the Dark (2017)
Pennyblackmusic (2018)
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Pennyblackmusic (2018)
Pennyblackmusic (2018)
Pennyblackmusic (2018)
Pennyblackmusic (2018)
Pixies (2020)
Prince (2018)
Pulp (2019)
Robert Forster (2019)
Rush (2015)
Sebadoh (2014)
Serge Gainsbourg (2015)
Sheffield (2022)
Soft Hearted Scientists (2015)
Soundgarden (2017)
The The (2017)
Tom Verlaine (2023)
Van Morrison (2017)
Willard Grant Conspiracy (2017)

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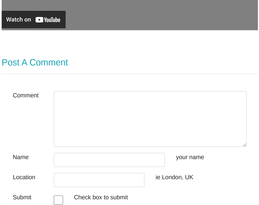

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