

BRISTOL THE PUNK EXPLOSION- ALBUM REVIEWS

'VARIOUS ARTISTS'

'BRISTOL - THE PUNK EXPLOSION'

- Label: 'BRISTOL ARCHIVES (www.bristolarchiverecords.com)'
- Genre: 'Punk/New Wave' - Release Date: '14th June 2010'- Catalogue No: 'ARC154CD'

Our Rating: ★★★★★★★★☆☆

While London may have lit Punk's blue touch paper, it's unlikely the movement would have left behind such an interesting corpse or indeed diversified into areas as brilliant and disparate as Ska and Post-Punk if it wasn't for the regional scenes that flourished away from the epicentre of the storm.

Along with Manchester and Liverpool, Bristol was very quickly haring off the provincial Punk Rock blocks. The city cultivated a vibrant local scene centred around the Clifton area of town and the Barton Hill Youth Club and many of its' earliest rebels keen to learn three chords and spew out the truth as they saw it are featured on 'Bristol - The Punk Explosion': another notable release from Mike Darby's Bristol Archive label which has already brought us the crucial 'Best of Fried Egg Records' collection and a slew of great digital-only releases from the late '70s and early 80s.

You may already be familiar with a few of these early noiseniks. As Shane Baldwin's informative sleeve notes suggest, THE CORTINAS were the first and surely one of the best. Their 'Defiant Pose' (1977) came out on Miles Copeland's burgeoning Step Forward label (The Fall, Sham 69, Chelsea) and it still seethes with excitement, not to mention bequeathing a riff the Ruts would later purloin for 'Criminal Mind'. Copeland also briefly took THE PIGS under his media-savvy wing, releasing 'Youthanasia' (sic) and 'National Front' (1977) on his New Bristol Records imprint. The latter is especially fine scratchy fare with a kiss-off line ("National front are fascists, there ain't nothing wrong with the black kids, no way!") which remains every bit as relevant in a world where scary characters like the BNP'S Nick Griffin can still get a foothold on the political ladder.

By 1978, the city's own independent labels were agitating and getting organised. SOCIAL SECURITY'S 'I Don't Want My Heart to Rule My Head' came out on the nascent Heartbeat label and it's another belter, fizzing with exhilaration and a riot of trebly, Buzzcocks-style guitars. In other cases, though, the bands didn't even have the backing of labels at all. THE X-CERTS could easily cram 500 fans into the local Trinity Church without 'The

I know less about both THE POSERS and THE VERDICT, but with 'Good Advice' and 'IRA Man', both weigh in with previously unreleased gems from the Bristol vault. The Posers pit insistent riffing and edgy guitars with a vocalist who sounds like a West Country equivalent of Malcolm Owen, while THE VERDICT'S 'IRA Man' parades not only proficient playing, but even an eloquent guitar solo. The flashy gits. Like I say, I have scant knowledge of 'em, but their abilities suggest they may well have fallen into Punk from a Hard Rock/ Metal background.

The idea of 'Punk' as an ethic had become rather diluted by the early '80s. The initial colourful diversity had been replaced by a horribly generic 'Punk image' of leather jackets, with studs and mohicans becoming the hackneyed order of the day. Bristol arguably weathered the storm better than some and certainly VICE SQUAD (who featured regularly in my old rag 'Sounds') were a cut above. They had presence, tunes and of course Beki Bondage's Pauline Murray-ish vocals and show all these virtues off impressively on their second single 'Resurrection' (1981). Some of their Riot City label mates (THE UNDEAD, COURT MARTIAL) haven't aged so well, but while DISORDER and ONSLAUGHT (who contribute a catchy little ditty called, er, 'Thermo Nuclear Destruction of Planet Earth') make a good fist of melding Punk with the nascent Hardcore sound, you can't help feeling that both The Exploited and Discharge have a lot to answer for.

Anyway, minor gripes and all that. In the main, 'Bristol - The Punk Explosion' is a mighty, lion's roar of tuneful defiance from the provinces and a bold reminder that even before the seismic likes of The Pop Group kicked in, Bristol was well on the way to forging a musical identity all its' own. It's rarely looked back since.

[Bristol Archive Records online](#)

Man' getting a sniff of 'em and their (previously unreleased) accomplished slice of militant, Ruts-style reggae-pop 'Stop The Fussing & Fighting' (1979) was perfect for a world quickly falling in love with Two-Tone.

Review taken from: <http://www.whisperinandhollerin.com/reviews/review.asp?id=6937>

V/A - Bristol - The Punk Explosion:

When I heard the first compilation of Bristol Archive Records I was a little reluctant to give this a listen as I didn't think too much off it! However this twenty track compilation is well worth a listen as it covers many of the early punk bands that came out of Bristol. Opening this release up is The Cortinas with their wicked 'Defiant Pose' track which is one of the best early punk releases doing the rounds. From then on it's just as good with tracks from The Pigs and the X-Certs with their wicked 'Fight Back' track. If that wasn't enough there's more to come with 'Ressurrection' from Vice Squad, 'Four Minute Warning' from Chaos UK, 'Who Killed E.T.? (I Killed The Fucker!)' from Chaotic Dischord. Also making an appearance is Onslaught the legendary metal band who were a hardcore punk band in their early days. Just have a listen to 'Thermo Nuclear Devastation Of Planet Earth' and you'll see they were a kick ass band back in the early 80's. One of my favourite Bristol bands making an appearance are Lunatic Fringe with 'Who's In Control?'. There's varied bands on here from the early days right through to bands in the early 80's. Most punk rock fans will appreciate this release but sadly that's all it will appeal to as many of the tracks do sound a little dated now. Comes with a cool booklet put together by Shame Baldwin the original Vice Squad drummer.

7.5/10

Review on the Street Voice Site:

<http://blogs.myspace.com/index.cfm?fuseaction=blog.view&friendId=22963792&blogId=531850698>

NAME: Various Artists

ALBUM: Bristol Punk Explosion

YEAR: 2010 (June 14th)

LABEL: Bristol Archive Records

RATING: 4/5

FIVE WORD REVIEW:A little slice of patriotism.

LOCATION: Bristol, UK

LINE UP: The Cortinas / The Pigs / Social Security / The Posers / The Media The Primates / The X-Certs/ 48 Hours / The Verdict / Vice Squad / Disorder / Chaos UK / Court Martial / The Undead / Lunatic Fringe / Chaotic Dischord / Onslaught

WHAT'S THE STORY?: Bristol Archive Records, brings you just that, an archive of Bristol punk records, encompassing the city's scene from 1977 to 1983. It's a collection full of passion, attitude and rebellion. It's a handy reminder of what was great about British punk music of the period.

SOUNDS LIKE: The soundtrack to being young, opinionated and pissed off.

YOU'LL LIKE THIS IF YOU LIKE: Good solid British punk and a bit of nostalgia.

LINKS: [Official Website](#) // [MySpace](#)

– Ruth Wallbank

Review from Red Hot Velvet

<http://www.redhotvelvet.co.uk/reviews/cd-reviews/various-artists-bristol-punk-explosion/>

VARIOUS ARTISTS

BRISTOL – THE PUNK EXPLOSION

Bristol Archive Records

This is a highly commendable compilation, as you should expect from this label, with some interesting bands, which is harder to achieve with Punk material than you may realise. Punk compilations tend to be fairly orthodox nowadays, and after a while almost pointless, the same material endlessly regurgitated, but having a regional niche to explore gives this a character of its own, with the timeline aspect fairly unnecessary. It's a snapshot stretched out over whatever frame you might wish for. Like the wonderful *hyped2death* releases Bristol Archive continues to intrigue and captivate with their diligent work, so you should enjoy this if you're an adept at discerning Punk varieties, but also for the newcomer it's a pretty diverting mixture. Some you will love swiftly, some will make you feel sick. This is all to be expected, and while you could argue some bands deserve more or less space than others, that's a personal argument. The weirdest part, as with pretty much any Punk compilation, is just how cute it all sounds. There's also one of the greatest punk songs *ever* quivering on the autops table, which you may be unaware of.

With cuteness under scrutiny The Cortinas are coyly puffing their puny chests out throughout the jingly-jangling 'Defiant Pose', which originally felt like a breath of fresh air but now appears to be gerbils covering Dr Feelgood. The voice of rebellion ladies and gentlemen! The Pigs spin into view with 'National Front', complete with some shockingly inane lyrics, but then I thought this was dopey old tripe when I first heard it. In fact this was about the only one of the first indie punk singles I *didn't* buy, at a time when you bought pretty much everything which came within reach. Even that Clark Kent thing, or Pork Dukes. Luckily Social Security's 'I Don't Want My Heart To Rule My Head' is made of sterner stuff, albeit determinedly one-dimensional, as agile and chunky guitar disports itself alongside some spirited, ambitious vocals. The Pigs partially redeem themselves with the ironically callous 'Youthanasia', complete with a guitar break that wouldn't exhaust a flea. Social Security

could be attempting a cheeky Buzzcocks impersonation in 'Choc Ice' but come over as a lopsided version of The Boys, which is okay as their guitar is bright and vivid.

The Posers pound away at the yappingly gumboid 'Good Advice' which is a cross between UK Subs and some early hardcore, with neatly slithering bass. It would appear The Media recorded 'New Blood' inside a thimble decorated with Gen X posters where they sound tiny, stylishly constricted and a bit demented. It's bizarre hearing something so oddly recorded it seems to be trapped inside the speakers, and yet it's fun! The Primates have a live version of 'Generation Warfare' and this is a rough and tumble engagingly delivered with punky verve which isn't squalid or aping others. The X-Certs also blare their way through the jiggling 'Fight Back' with some vivacity, at which point we reach The Great Moment.

One of the finest independent punk releases appeared on the '4 Alternatives EP', a song by 48 Hours entitled 'Back To Ireland.' I lost my copy a while back but here we have a demo version of it, called 'A Soldier' and Ange, whoever he was, is a brilliant lyricist, detailed but direct, with the band, fittingly enough, close in style to Stiff Little Fingers without any hectoring aspect. Passionate but straightforward, this is almost modest in its excitement. I can't work out all of the words but I felt it necessary to type out what I can, as this is so good compared to most of the dross punk bands used to come up with, especially the 'have-you-got-10p?' merchants who were everywhere back then.

*"In 1969 I was just twelve years of age,
I didn't know I was sent to act out on Britain's great stage,
I had six years to go,
To play with my toy tommy gun,
It took one shot in the leg,
To prove that this isn't much fun.*

*"This place ain't far from home,
Though it could be a million miles,
Some people here are friendly,
Some even bother to smile
But when I was watching the advert,
I'm sure it was nothing like this
When my three years is up I can't stay in this place.*

*"Cos they said I'm going to Ireland,
I got to fight for my life
I've got to fight for Britain,
Using rifles and knives."*

(May have that last line slightly wrong.)

*"1975, eighteen years have passed,
Eighteen years I've been here,
I hope this won't be my last.
Standing in long lines with rifles in our hands
I crush them up with my big boots..."*

(Can't make these words out properly.)

*“Cos they said I’m staying in Ireland, for the next 18 months
A British army corporal
Once signed on at once
Cos they said I’m going to Ireland (etc).”*

Guitar spiral off wonderfully in discontent at this point, over thumping drums, as we hit the best bit.

*“How I wish I was back in the office,
Leaving off work at four-thirty
And here I am, in the Lansdowne Road.
I’m cold, I’m wet, I’m dirty.
The army just ain’t for me,
Guns and barbed wire is all I see
I’ve just got to leave this post,
I’ll ditch all my stuff
...and I’ll run for the coast.*

*“And now I’m running from Ireland
For the next 50 years
A conscientious objector,
Oh, will you see my tears?”*

“Cos they said I’m going to Ireland (etc)

*“Oh can’t you see
The army
It just ain’t for me
Ohhhh cant you see
The army
Just ain’t for me*

“And I never wanted to come here anyway!”

That final touch of petulant post-Pistolian wit nails the perfect song, seemingly throwaway but an actual spark of emphatic genius. Bliss.

The Verdict keep the Irish theme going through a bustling ‘IRA Man’ that reminds me strangely of The Pirates as though they have an r’n’b past, and the carefully emphasised vowels are simply too Rottenesque to be taken seriously, while the guitarist just wants to go on soloing forever! The X-Certs do their convincing reggae in ‘Stop The Fussing And The Fighting’ which has spry touches, and comes over as soothing. Then it’s none other than Vice Squad who charge off in ‘Resurrection’ and here’s a band we could have done with more of. They always had a crazed energy about them and like many of the more exciting bands of that time their energy seemed to have been poured into a fragile shape you expected to shatter, but somehow they’d always seem to surf their own slipstream, round and round, up and down.

That’s the good stuff and then we’re into the bowels of Hell, I’m afraid. Disorder’s ‘Complete Disorder’ is some form of rakish shorthand I’m sure, like low level sonic suicide.

Mad and bad they keep the right side of thrash or the plain scrappy, and trail off coldly. Chaos UK offer a fairly identikit sub-anarcho rant in 'Four Minute Warning' and represent the kind of earnest but dog-eared, dog-tired Punk I never found remotely exciting or endearing. I suppose they sound pretty decent when set against Court Martial and their slack 'Gotta Get Out' but it's a close run thing as both bore you senseless. The Undead want to complain about the world in 'It's Corruption', as the police and the army are very naughty and apparently corruption destroys freedom of speech and drives people to do crazy things. Their drummer is truly awful. Lunatic Fringe ask 'Who's In Control?' and I think they're genuinely confused. Chaotic Dischord scamper through the utterly abysmal 'Who Killed E.T? (I Killed The Fucker!)' and you have to ask why this garbage was even allowed on the record. Onslaught think they're Motorhead and gargle through the terminal 'Thermo Nuclear Devastation Of The Planet Earth' as I gaze around the office trying to summon up the enthusiasm to leave this chair. At least it's a short song, but that final phase of the record is a weird thing. Punk started off exciting, developed character and then become a generic heap of shite. The record reflects that, I guess.

While you should find the majority of the album enjoyable, and can simply ignore the final tracks, this is a compilation worth buying for the mighty 48 Hours alone. That's a total classic and it's fantastic to be reunited with it again.

<http://bristolarchiverecords.com/index.html>

Taken from www.mickmercer.com

Various Artists: Bristol - The Punk Explosion (Bristol Archives)

Bristol Archive Records is my new favourite record label. Their sole reason for existence is to preserve the punk/post-punk musical history of Bristol. This compilation is almost perfect. For a start, this was the first time I'd listened to a punk compilation where I didn't already know every song.

I grew up listening to punk compilations and samplers and mix tapes, and this is the first one that I've heard where the actual sequencing of the tracks made any sense. On The Punk Explosion, the tracks are ordered chronologically, starting in 1977 (naturally) and ending in '83, this makes sense because it shows the development of the punk sound. We start off with some Buzzcockian poppy love songs ("she's my choc ice"?) and finishes with the birth of hardcore and thrash (Chaos UK and Onslaught, respectively).

What this album does best is present the Bristol scene as a microcosm of the punk scene in general. On an ordinary compilation, The Clash or Stiff Little Fingers would represent political punk, Dead Kennedys would be your dose of hardcore and X-Ray Spex would be the only female-fronted band. On this record those bands are replaced with 48 Hours, The Undead and Vice Squad.

By limiting the record's scope to a very specific geographic location, Bristol Archive Records have avoided rehashing the same old bands and I've had a chance to listen to music by bands I'd only heard of from staring at the patches on other people's clothes at gigs. Before Bristol Archive Records, the punk compilation wasn't dead, but it was stagnant. Check this out if you like your music short, fast and loud. 9/10

Daniel Shields

Taken from:

<http://www.tastyfanzine.org.uk/albums98may10.htm#VariousArtistsBristolThePunkExplosion>

THE BRISTOL PUNK EXPLOSION

What we have here is some amazing old school punk resurfacing on the delightful BRISTOL - THE PUNK EXPLOSION compilation. A great mix of punk bands and some amazing songs that show that you don't have to write a song longer than a couple of minutes for it to be good. There are some great bands on here, kicking off with The Cortinas, Vice Squad of course should need no introduction and the Chaotic Dischord track Who Killed E.T.? (I Killed The Fucker) has to be a classic on title alone. The final track is from the mighty Onslaught from back when they were an angsty Discharge style punk band before they became thrash legends and adopted a more metal style.

If you like straight down the link punk rock then you can't go far wrong with this fantastic collection.

Standout tracks:

National Front

Stop The Fussing And The Fighting

Who Killed E.T.? (I Killed The Fucker!)

Thermo Nuclear Devastation Of The Planet Earth

RATING: 8/10

by K.T. Glitz

Bristol The Punk Explosion

Punk archives from the south west



Now best known as the home of trip hop, Bristol had earlier hosted a thriving underground punk scene that presumably arose from the city's cultural and political heritage. Spanning the early days of punk through to the genre's early 80s crossover, Bristol: The Punk Explosion collates the bigger names (Chaos UK, Vice Squad) with the influential (The Cortinas) and short-lived (The Pigs).

The compilation's linear running order charts the evolution of the city's sound, from the power-pop-inspired punk of Social Security's excellent Choc Ice, right up to Onslaught, who themselves progressed into thrash but here contribute the snappy, distorted hardcore of Thermo Nuclear Devastation Of The Planet Earth. The scene spilled out into other genres too, most notably with The X-Certs' dub-influenced sound, while themes are pure 80s punk

throughout, the dystopian lyrics interrupted only by Chaotic Dischord's glorious paean to killing ET.

Packaged with extensive sleevenotes that unveil the history behind the music, this is a lovingly crafted monument to a part of punk that could have been cast to the realms of musical obscurity. For most of these bands, it seems that making their own glorious racket was more important than embracing the mainstream.



Bristol Archive / tbc

Reviewed by Ben Hopkins

RECORD COLLECTOR

VARIOUS Bristol The Punk Explosion (Bristol Archive Records)

When you think of the punk explosion, London springs to mind. Bristol? Perhaps not, but they had their own scene and it is well documented across the 20 tracks here.

The Corninas open proceedings with a high tempo guitar riff, noise and touch of pub rock and rock'n'roll. The Pigs' 'National Front' is bit more jangly, and not the most politically correct theme either.

From the pub rock roots and Mod influences, there's many a jumpy, high octane track here. Earthy DIY production, there are bands here who make the Sex Pistols sound commercial.

Other bands on show include Social Security, Vice Squad, Chaos UK, The Undead, Court Martial and The Primates, amongst others. And the set finishes with Onslaught, while they were still a hardcore punk band (trust me, this is very hardcore). 'Thermo Nuclear Devastation Of The Planet Earth' a great song title too.

Seven tracks previously unreleased, 20 tracks in all (mainly dating 1977-83), a great intro to the scene and one for punk collectors too. ***½

Review by Joe Geesin

Taken from:

http://www.getreadytorock.com/reviews2010/quick_play0410.htm

VARIOUS ARTISTS: Bristol "The Punk Explosion"

Possibly my favourite ever band, never mind just a punk band, came from Bristol you know? FIVE KNUCKLE were around in the mid 80's and were obviously too late for a compilation such as this, but it just goes to show the depth and longevity of the punk scene in the South West.

This twenty-track CD highlights many of the bands that were around between 1977 and 1983. The whole point of this collection is to showcase the musical mood of Bristol during that period, but really it's quite illustrative of what was going on in cities the length and breadth of the UK at the time. And where this album also scores is that the tracks are listed chronologically, so the listener can see how the punk scene was changing during that six year period, with the songs becoming harsher, harder and more abrasive as the album (and years) progress.

Opening with one of the two most famous bands of the time to come from the city (although there are several listed here who will be remembered by original punk fans) THE CORTINAS were one of the first pioneers of this new music. They played the city's Roxy Club, released a couple of singles on the Step Forward label, were featured on the cover of the seminal Sniffin Glue fanzine and recorded a Peel Session. Defiant Pose is their contribution to the compilation and is pure old school punk bliss with everything you'd expect from an original punk band. Simple, repeated riffs, shouty vocals and gang-backing.

National Front by THE PIGS follows. Brilliant! A song with a distinct anti-racism message even if it is put across in a rather patronising manner: "The National Front are fascists, there's nothing wrong with the black kids no way" the chorus goes. Genuine sentiment, of course but could that line pass the PC brigade today? Ah the innocence of 1977!

THE PIGS actually have a second contribution shortly thereafter: Youthanasia. The recording sounds like it was done with their dad's old tape recorder in the living room, but this just adds to the overall flavour of the album. The previous two tracks are interspersed by two from 1978 and SOCIAL SECURITY "I Don't Want My Heart To Rule My Head" is the first, the guitar riff seemingly plagiarised from The Banned hit at the turn of 1977, "Little Girl". Their second song is Choc Ice which is slightly Buzzcock-esque in sound.

So off to a blistering start and it continues this way right through to the end. I'd happily write all night long in praise of this collection, but time and space is a bit of an inhibitor. Instead, I shall just mention the following highlights. Well, EVERY track is a gem, but these just shine a little brighter for me:

VICE SQUAD were always favourites of mine, so it's good to see Resurrection included here. And the political age in which we lived then is brought to the fore with two songs that relate to the troubles in Northern Ireland at that time: 48 HOURS have A Soldier (Demo) included and THE VERDICT sing IRA Man. THE X-CERTS have two songs that were previously unreleased Fight Back is a chugging guitar driven punk anthem with a shout-a-long chorus, while Stop The Fussing And The Fighting is a nine and a half dub / reggae epic. Again, the almost primitive sound on this just takes you right back to the time and parties in dingy basements.

Moving onwards through time, the album culminates with some early hardcore / Oi from the early Eighties. You can tell by the change of tone in the bands names that the music has taken on a more aggressive feel. The likes of DISORDER; CHAOS UK; LUNATIC FRINGE; CHAOTIC DISCHORD and ONSLAUGHT are all represented with tracks that just go to show even Punk moves with the times.

For anyone around at the inception of the punk scene, this is an essential!

It'll be straight to the top of my personal playlist, I can tell you!

(Released through Bristol Archive Records and available now July 2010)

(10 / 10)

Taken from <http://www.loudhorizon.com>

VARIOUS "The Bristol Punk Explosion 1977 – 1983" CD *Bristol Archive*

Quite why Bristol came to have such a prolific and revered punk scene through both the first wave and second wave of punk remains a mystery to me this very day (Wish it had happened in Southampton!). Right time right place may be? But whatever the cause thanks to a mixture of youthful enthusiasm and individuals with foresight, Bristol and the surrounding areas gave rise to punk bands that are still influential and famed over thirty years on in some cases. Chaos UK, Disorder and Vice Squad's names still adorn the leather jackets of punks young and old all over the globe. But what about The Cortinas from the first wave of punk? The Pigs or Social Security? Not tripping of the tongue like some of the second wave early 80's bands but they all played their parts. Cortinas records still fetch a good second hand price, as do the later bands on Bristol's famous Riot City label. Having said that people of my age (40+) will remember Heartbeat Records who played their part and have Simon Edwards in common. This is a bit of a must have CD to my mind, its not just the music but the comprehensive 20 page booklet that comes with it written by one of the main movers and shakers back in the day, Shane Baldwin who was the drummer of Vice Squad in their original incarnation believe it or not. I don't much like the saying 'back in the day' but for the purposes of this review and the years covered it seem to fit. Twenty tracks in all, of which, seven are being aired for the first time. 'Cider I up landlord' and check out the excellent Bristol Archive website too!

Bristol Archives: www.bristolarchiverecords.com (Gaz)

http://web.mac.com/tonysuspect/Suspect_Device/Reviews/Entries/2010/1/25_Current_Reviews.html