



Three New York natives resident in Britain have somehow struck a cool, catchy formula that kids don't see as a rockabilly revival because they weren't around when that stuff was going down. It's a development. The elaborate, high-piled hair, cartoon pussycat, girlie tats, bike boots, black leather with chains, and assorted emblems, denim, and cut off t-shirts go with it.

People are adopting the style. "Everywhere we've been, it's been," Brian Setzer comments. The first gigs the band did in Britain, Lee Rocker explains, drew a punk crowd, because no one had really done the "Cat thing" before, but eventually they started growing their hair out and got quiffs.

Young Brian (he's just over 20, Slim Jim, and Lee Rocker are just under) has been playing guitar for 14 years. Heard 'Be-Bop-A-Lula' down at Max's, and fell in love with the '50s.

"I'm very limited. I'll take it in from about 1948, actually, — Junior Parker did some good stuff. Elvis was great for the four years before he went into the army. He was the best."

But he denies the man is his number one influence. He claims guitarist Scotty Moore who recorded with Elvis in the early '50s on the Sun label affected him to a greater extent, because "he was the sound." "It's not Elvis' moves, nor his vocals, but the image" he's entranced with.

A second Stray Cat album is just about due for release. "It's a doozy!" Brian reckons. Not slow blues, but fast blues. Jump blues. "A little bit like this," and he presses a tape recorder which obediently burbles a bluesy harmonica number.

Eight of the songs on it are band originals, about "being on the road, bitchy women, alcohol, whisky, Manhattan, a girl who cooks good, a black man eating eggs." It was recorded in the West Indies and produced by the Stray Cats.

They're agile movers. Lee Rocker stands on the curve of his double bass. He plays it every which way — lying down, like a normal guitar, side on. Sometimes it falls apart, but only when he kicks it. Strings break, and the point at the bottom has been known to go through the stage wiring.

A drummer full of tricks, Slim Jim does the splits perfectly natural.

They give the Sunday St James audience an eight rating on a one to ten enthusiasm scale. And that's bearing in mind they are fresh from Japan where they've been overcome with star treatment. Followed everywhere, people outside the hotel rooms in sleeping bags. Mostly women. True fans? "True lunatics," Brian counterpoints.

The St James works well. The sound is good, and people dance in the orchestra pit. At one point, Brian sings 'Rumble in Auckland, instead of 'Rumble in Brighton'. The highlight is 'Storm the Embassy', and of course 'Stray Cat Strut' draws a singalong reaction. For encore, 'Runaway Boy', and Chuck Berry's 'Little Queenie'.

They use a backdrop of West 49th Street, — a rough part of town. Brian likes the idea of having a big white cat for the stage, "with big eyes, a big suit, and swingin' a gold pocket watch."

And if it all ended tomorrow? Lee would go back to working in a liquor store, Slim Jim would go back to sponging off his parents (according to Brian), "and I'll just play in some street corner bar."

AnnLouise Martin

RUMOURS

Auckland

Vinyl in stores includes Herco Pilot's double EP, Fury's *Rare Record* EP, Newmatics' *Broadcast o.r.* and Techtones' *T.T.23* ... Danse Macabre have finished their Reaction 12 inch EP. Sounds rather neat and hits stores November. Tracks are 'Torch' (new version), 'Conditioner', 'Between The Lines', 'ECG' and an instrumental with no name ... also EPing are Clean with five Hood/Knox 4 track goodies out soon on Flying Nun.

Hip Singles are no more, Dick Driver has joined Blam Blam Blam the band who as Whizzkids lost Andrew Snoid when he replaced Dick in Pop Mechanix ... Rem recording artists Alms For Children have split. Paul and Ben may form a new band. Drummer Daron will return south and singer Gary is open to offers.

New are Wild Matadors with Kerry Buchanan, Alastair Rabbit, Peter Mesmer and mystery singer ... big buzz at Mainstreet Newmatics gig were Prime Movers

with Nick Crowther (guitar/vocals), Chris Mathews (drums) and Kevin Howlett (bass) ... also new and 3-piece are Dabs with ex Ainsworth Rowan (guitar), Geoff (bass) and Steve (drums) ... Bongos (Gill, John and Phil) debut at '5 Band Special', Mainstreet Oct 21.

New R&B/blues venue is DB Waitemata, Albert St. Featured in October are Sonny Day Band, Al Hunter's Torpedoes, Shakin' Jimmys and Deros. Bookings phone Ian, 762-075.

Ex Waves man Graeme Gash has recorded an album at Harlequin. It's on Siren in Australia and through Festival in NZ.

There is a meeting for rock'n'roll musicians, 5pm Nov 3, Symphonia Hall (details on page 4 ad) to discuss ways to improve situation for bands. Don't miss it!

New Neighbours drummer is Dave Hinton. They are recording for Stebbings, 'Lovers Never Crawl' and 'All My Dreams' ... Andy's hand is better and New

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4

Rip It Up has five autographed copies of the Swingers' debut album *Practical Jokers*. The five readers who send the best practical funny to Rip It Up SWINGERS COMPETITION, PO Box 5689, Auckland 1, win an autographed album. Post by October 30.

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