

THE MANI

FROM MANCHESTER

An Interview With Primal Scream's Gary 'Mani' Mountfield

"It's me now mate, 'ow are ya? Nice to meet ya mate, y'alright yeah?" Mani's hearty Mancunian voice booms down the line from his home town. "I've been waiting for you Antipodeans to get out of bed", he laughs.

Mani laughs a lot, the sign of a good natured, down-to-earth rock 'n' roller who's just happened to be in two of the planet's best bands of the last ten years, namely the Stone Roses and a stunningly re-charged Primal Scream. Have you ever been to the Antipodes?

"I toured Australia with the Stone Roses and I fuckin' love it over there mate. Me family were gonna emigrate there years ago but we stayed in shit'ole England. I'm keen to have a look at New Zealand as well. I know plenty of New Zealand people who live in London and they're all mad bastards. And they smoke too much of the bong."

Pruning Roses

The rise and fall of the Stone Roses has been exhaustively documented by an English press only too aware that the band's 1989 debut album was instrumental in wrapping up the blandness of the 80s and moving the British music scene into a healthier decade. Mani agrees.

"It wasn't good anywhere for music. All we had over here was Spandau Ballet and bloody Duran Duran and all that crap. It was a pretty bland time but in the late 80s it started to pick up. I think between us, the Happy Mondays and a handful of other bands like the Inspiral Carpets and the Charlatans, did do quite a bit to help because the British music scene was a fuckin' sinking ship, mate."

"We did well to give people ideas like listen it's not a closed shop, you don't have to be a poof in a suit and go play fuckin' new romantic music like Duran Duran, anyone can do that. We gave people a lot of good ideas, like Noel from Oasis will tell ya that they use to go and see the Roses and they thought they could do it themselves. We woke a lot of people up coz it was just through the Thatcher years and bad government and everyone was on the dole and it seemed like the fire went out of everybody. It seemed like a good time to get people fighting again and open up a new avenue and get them into music, and a lot of kids have done that."

You've said that the success and influence of the Roses led people to expect too much from the band.

"A lot of people put us on pedestals and think you're gonna come up with a cure for cancer and save the world, but it's only music. I can think of better heroes than people in bands. We didn't think we let anybody down, maybe just ourselves."

The five years between the band's first album and *Second Coming* must have been frustrating. The band lost momentum.

"Yeah, although three of those years were enforced by the courts. We got injunctioned off Silvertone and they wouldn't let us write or record or play gigs. So we couldn't do anything, our hands were tied. We ended up winning our case against them but they don't compensate you for that. They put the brakes on us for three years at the height of our careers. But it was a good learning process and what I learned I can implement with the Scream."

The Roses never recovered from those lost years. Communication breakdown between Squire and Brown and general apathy in the band led to Reni's departure soon to be followed by Squire. How did you get lucky enough to join Bobby Gillespie and Primal Scream?

"You create your own luck in this game. I sort of kidnapped Bobby after one of the Roses'



concerts in Brighton. It was on the last tour before Squire left. And I said to Bobby, 'listen I smell a rat as I don't think things are gonna work out and I want to join your band', and he was totally up for it. So I fulfilled a few commitments with the Roses and the next thing you know I'm in Primal Scream. And it's been the best move I've ever made in me life."

You obviously knew Gillespie pretty well before you asked to join his band?

"I've known Bobby a lot of years, we've always been good friends and we'd bump

into each other in clubs in Manchester and London. Primal Scream always ran on a similar parallel to the Roses with their musical tastes and the way they worked music themselves. They got into the dance thing about the same time as the Roses — they came out with *Screamadelica* and we came out with 'Fool's Gold', and all that kinda shit."

Mani's final commitment with the Stone Roses was to play at last year's Reading Festival with Ian Brown, three session musicians and a dancer. By all accounts it was an embarrassing last act, a final destruction of the myth.

"It was great to do because I knew it was all over and that was me getting out. It's like your last day in prison and I knew I was out on good behaviour as soon as I'd finished that hour's work. So I was buzzin' man, I was beamin' all over me face coz I knew I was away to the Scream."

Other than the sad fact that only half of the original Roses played Reading, what was the matter, was the make-shift line-up awful?

"No, the band was excellent but Ian Brown sang like shit, which he used to do quite a lot."

You've said that some of the songs Brown has written for a possible solo album are pretty good.

"Some of them are, but he can kiss my arse, I'm not arsed about him anymore. Reni was the last person I saw out of the

