From Foco to the Task Force from 4BC to ZZZZ; green hatred idols and the pigs; crazed gate crashers smashing things; happy students sitting around waiting for the Revolution; Heavy Metal postures pretending they are the Rock Stars of Brisbane; the Brisbane Devotee remembers it all as he recalls the Life and Times of the Brisbane Music Scene.

When did you first start in the Brisbane scene?
Well the first dance I went to was at "Teen City" in Red Hill. Must have been 63 or 64. They were the days of Tony Woidtke and The Stamp.

What was the place like?
It was an old picture theatre. Over a thousand people. They called them "Sound lounges". Recor Hop sort of thing with bands playing sometimes. Sorta like Discos. I suppose. Really loud. Crowded. People stomping. It's a roller skate rink now.

Then what happened?
Well that was the "Surfie" period. Bleached blond hair, sacrifice shorts, Billy Thorpe and the Aztecs. Then there were Modds and Rockers, Beatie Haircuts, wide ties, bell bottoms, leather jackets. The venues were pretty packed. Hugge numbers of teenagers then. And they were all pretty united. Common interest. All they'd argue about was which Beatles were better than the Stones.

Were there many venues at that time?
Yeah, well by '68 there were quite a few. A dozen or so plus regular suburban hall dances. See at that there time there were 5 or 6 professional bands in Brisbane. Professional like in that was all they did. Plus there were other bands that worked in regular jobs and maybe played three times a week as well. The Coloured Balls were like that and they were one of the best bands to come out of Brisbane.

What sort of music did they play?
Well maybe by this time the scene had split a bit. The professional bands played up to 60's, but at this time there was Stones, Manfred Mann, Erika, Small Faces etc which was OK. The Coloured Balls were Soul and Blues, Otis Redding, Four Tops, Blues Classics. But it was never a case of never the twain shall meet. Soul and Blues were more an acquired taste.

The Coloured Balls played at Foco didn't they? Did you ever go there?
Yeah quite a few times. It used to be on Sunday nights.

Could you tell us about it?
It was in Trades Hall. The Rads hangout. Foco was Spanish for guitar camp. See in 1968 it looked like it was all over. Black Panthers. Paris riots. Vietnam. The Rads were just hanging around waiting for the Revolution.

What was happening in the rest of the city?
Well there were all these venues. The Red Orb, Mothers, Top Cats, Adam and Fuzzes. Then the YMCA got into the act. Christian discotheques. Snoopy's, Wizards Caudron. They took over Adam and Eve and renamed it The Electric Circus.

Some of it was pretty hopperish. Daddy picking up the daughters at 10.30 sorta thing but there were a couple of 'swinging places' for the 'swingers' at that time.

Was it Crowley's records.
No, no Bands all the time. Three of four in a night, no trouble. Records only in the breaks. That's what a discotheque was.

What was the radio scene like?
4BC was big. (Songs) 'Geoff', Tony and Bob; Tony McCartney had always been about. CNN had half hours. Soul and Blues music. Pretty progressive for the time. Great backcasts. They also ran things like the "Battle of the Bands and Operation Staliffs.

What was the Battle of the Bands?
It was a national contest. Bands from everywhere. Regional contests, state finals, and national finals. Pretty good prizes - tours and equipment, travel, Grand Prize of a trip to London to do a record. Hundreds of bands would compete.

Some southern band would usually win the final. Doug Parkinson in Focus or the Masters Apprentices or someone.

Who were the promoters running things around 68?
Well it was John Hanny mostly. He had the Sound Machine where Pips is now. It had fluorescent centers, red and black decor, telephones on the table so you could ring other tables. It was OK. Best bands. Always written up in Go Set, which was the paper then. Though some of the bands didn't get paid. But Hanny was the man. He booked all the YMCA things and had venues in Tweedco, Maryborough and Ipswich.


He went broke putting on the Bishop Great Pilgrimage. All these bands on this island in Moreton Bay. Jeff St John and Copperwire, Doug Parkinson, Chain, Lobby, Hardy. Anyhard was on. Wanted to get paid. I suppose. Beside it poured rain all weekend. So he had to get going. One of the bands blew it down then. Luckily it was insured or he would have been bankrupt.

What was happening around the University?
The Uni wasn't big at all in 68. Students didn't have much class in the town. Sorta wide eyed innocents. Stimming it. Like most people at Foco weren't students. They were people back from Czech uprisings or Paris riots. Not just uni students. (Spits) They were called "the Revolutionaries". Dances that were OK at the beginning. Union nights had an interesting beginning too.

See in 69 there was this thing called window shopping that the students did during Commem Week. Like the night before the exam. Man they were always pretty gross things where people threw flour and water bombs and handed out smutty postcards from Paris. That was Shopping.

Continued on page...
The go between: 'She's a fraen frind. She's a very beautiful! I come from Brisbane and I'm quite plain! She's from the mountains so close to heaven! Stars on her shoes, clouds on her breasts!' And I'll try to love Lee Remick!

It was the night before when there were all these parties and boat trips and things that get you drunk or whatever. So then all the happy students went into town for the lighting, heavy rubbish bins and kicking in windows till the main attraction of the beating of the pigs started. It was pretty wild but there was nothing political about it, so when the cops banned Window Shopping, Union Nights started to keep the students off the streets.

"Then all these happy students went into town and began lighting fires in rubbish bins and smashing windows, till the main attraction of the beating of the Pigs started.

It wasn't till 1970 that the Unit started to get OK. The Rads started organising happenings with bands like Shepherd and McKee and HARPO. - How About Resting: Powerful Organisations was the group that did dance at the Unit in the early 70's. When they started they were just this group who couldn't stand the student union Brass Unions Night. Really poppy garbage with has riddles and things. So HARPO started doing all these dances and organised lectures by Ginsburg and Phil Ochs. The Revolution had been delayed but was on the way, so we hung around watching the pretty lights and the talented bands which was better than being in the city.

How were things in the city at this time?
Terrible. The early 70's were really a state of decline. See the whole music scene became fucked world wide. It just fragmented. Before the whole age thing came pretty much all into the same type of music.

In the 70's this changed into bubble gum music for the youngsters, heavy metal, led Zeppelin stuff for the 18 year olds, and Glen Campbell shit for the mature audiences. This all came down to a local scene and messed it up.

Wow! Well for example take radio. The early 70's saw the rise of wonder 41P. 4BC was still playing along after their Mc Garth left in 68. They brought in Mike Aheren. They'd have Festival Hall things where they'd have hundreds chomping 'I shall have no leader but my leader Mike Aheren!' Weird.

Still 41P went straight for the hoppers. Bubble Gum Music, squeaky clean DJs in uniform coats. By the 70's the hoppers grew up. They kept their allegiance (though some say they were brainwashed) and you had a topper rating 41P and 4BC in the cold with racing calls.

Was a big deal to be "doing" dope. It wasn't at every Liberal Party BBQ. Like later the bread apart existed then The Abstractions. You were either straight or crooked. In the scene or out of it (or more in it out of it).

Where was this drug scene happening?
The University had the entertainment I guess, but there was a lot of hanging round in the city. Well's Bazzar where the strip club in Petrie St might not be big. Just a late night coffee shop where all these people sat with one cup of coffee between them, stretched out. Playing mind games. Looking to score. Hanging round. Course later there were tourists and plain clothes.

Of course there wasn't anything in the city like this. Town venues didn't encourage to sit around going "far out". The city was just discovering discos in the mid 70's. I remember when the first one opened. Waves it was called at the majestic Hotel.

The explanation they gave us was to widen the audience's "musical appreciation". You know, hear the latest overseas bands, be knowledgeable about them, impress your friends with your record collection.

Course it caught on. The hierarchy, Overseas is better than Australian is better than Brisbane. Course the local bands deserved it. No-one got anywhere in Brisbane let alone down South.

But in the Sixties the local bands all had their fan clubs and shit. And Southern bands were "also" big.

Weren't there any good bands at the time?
The bands at this time were on the professional music trip. You know, A Man and His Music. Getting it together in the 'far out' jam. There's no denying their competence, gee, the audience just sat there admiring them.

They'd get on stage and swirl their hair about and twirl their arms down on the guitar playing riffs.

Carol Lloyd and Railroad Gin you could dance to, but other ones like Siss Farm you just sat and listened to and tried to blow in "Wow! Far out!" or just get bombed and watched the light show. Not much social milieu in that.

You've obviously seen the full development of the Brisbane scene. How do you see that it could become good again and start moving.

Look the Sixties won't come again. Ever. The war was coming home. All those soldiers coming home from the war and having a good time. 1945 - 1956. The Baby Boom kiddies were all teenagers in between '64 and '70. That was the most number of teenagers as a proportion of the population that there will probably ever be. Do you know what it was like to have that number power and to be part of the Youth Revolution.

Swarms of teenagers all dancing to the same beat. Looking for a good time. Listen, in the '60's it was nothing to have a thousand people at something. No trouble at all. Parties. Two or three hundred people could go to one in a night.

Don't believe me? Listen they had this thing called the Treasury Steps Mob. One or two hundred people sitting on the Treasury Steps in Queen Street, waiting to be told about parties. Any parties. You'd go to 5 or 6 parties in a night.

Just cruise. Eat the food, drink pop and move on. Course you bought your

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what do you think of the Punk scene here in Brisbane now?

Punks have been in Brisbane a few years now from 1976 at least. You could hardly say it started here or was developing here at the same time as in England.

The Saints of course came from Brisbane. Their single "I'm Stranded" was one of the first top 40 punk hits in England. So there's a bit of punk history here...

Did you see the Saints when they were in Brisbane?

Once, in a place called "The Dive" in the Valley. They were playing with the Leftovers who are still around the ridges.

What was it like?

There was a fight. Leftover fans

RAZAR (frontman) TASK FORCE. Brisbane's punk anthem


Do you know about the supposed Punk Task Force?

You remember that story about the cops who came out of the window of the dive? Well they were members of a group called "Laughing Magicians" sent up clear up the Valley.

According to lawyers I've spoken to, they were the only real police in the Valley. You know, the dive, the clubs, the drinking problem and so on.

Well they cleaned up the Valley mainly by the method of sticking a policeman in a white shirt and every van, every seat of the Queensland Police.

Well, they did a good job that they were pretty good at it. That's why they made the task force. The job of the Task Force is to go into the "problem areas" and clean up "trouble spots".

They're not specifically for going after the Punks. It's just that punk dance to them is a trouble spot.

According to this lawyer, there's a lot of the harbour area due to the police wanting to score some overtime. They're supposed to be off duty from 10 o'clock until 2 a.m. They pick up a few easy arrests at a problem spot to take back to the Watchhouse where they've had to turn off the sound at half past one or two. Pretty good luck, boys.

This is why you never see the local police on a pub in a punk dance. They're there to catch bargers. And the punks are there to clean up the Valley.

No, it's 10 or 15 detectives swaggering into the dance area about 0.30, maybe everywhere. There's a lot of people for getting stuck up in a trouble spot, to spread the word.

No, it's not quite that easy. There's a lot of the harbour area due to the police wanting to score some overtime. They're supposed to be off duty from 10 o'clock until 2 a.m. They pick up a few easy arrests at a problem spot to take back to the Watchhouse where they've had to turn off the sound at half past one or two. Pretty good luck, boys.

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Got any scandals to fantasize the sensation craving minds of our readers.

Like about how a 414 disc jockey got stuck under in the Electric Circus?

Or about the person the cops first suspected hadZXonobol. The Whisky Au Go Go, where all those people got killed, who the cops described as a "harmonica player, a seller of drugs to children and a homosexual."

Jehovah, Yeah!

Nah, I don't know any stories like that.

13 hot nights in a row! the cops drove past and they move slow! A million people staying long with many not repaying to know. I don't want to let down my hopes for this town! it's so hot it has to yet around 200 cars. But not much success.

I've got to feel I'm being used. (in a sentence that's been hidden from the public view) it's painted by the sea a person said that isn't free.

B R I S B A N E - S E C U R I T Y - C I T Y - T H E S A I N T S

Buy the police always harmless? Rock In Roll in Brisbane.

No, in the old police only turned up in evening at four. The crowd in front of them al and only in response to a complaint. a bath had been broken which had been called.

From about the time the Springbook

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What's the future of the Brisbane Music Scene?
Brisbane has a developed New Wave/Punk scene. For the new wave fans you have The Riptides who have sided the careers of the Shanks, Apartments, Poles and The Supporters. Together with The Go Betweens these groups make up the Abel Label stable, playing variations of a disco beat.

On the other hand you have the 'political' punk bands, The Leftovers, Razor, Fuji and Zero with a motley crew of Flakes, Red Crystals and Hard-Ons.

On the fringes of this is the respectable Hamars, the up and coming Swing Metal, the reforming for a month Fuller Banks and Bruce Anton with a new band called The Bees – Chris Logan's not in it.

The John Steinmetz of such notable as Touch or Phoenix, the third cabinet of Wicker Woc and Seasons of the Witch are East. Disco is wiggling the floor with them.

One strange thing is the commercial radio ignoring the whole scene. Probably because they don't want to give publicity to AZZZ. Commercial radio ignores the interstate and overseas bands appearing at Cloudland; they're ignored the local records and dances.

AZZZ are carrying on an incredible promotion operation. Unique in Australia probably. Large concerts every week, three or four thousand people. There's nothing like it in Sydney or Melbourne. A string of venues, band management, tour organisation and general contact point. They're pretty well swamped Brisbane with Live Music and done it many or less alone.

Commercial radio is pushed into the Support Disco camp. Disco isn't going to abandon live music. No one is out there dreaming of being in a band with Donna Summer. Rock is based on a kid with a guitar playing House of the Rising Sun or something, not consuming clothes, clothes, hairstyles, cocktails at a Disco.

You've got to have people going out 'to see the local Brisbane bands. These bands have to be promoting, putting on a performance. This business of new bands coming out and playing live soap is a waste, especially if three of them are originals. Forty five minute brackets that have people dancing.