



Gigging at the Gardens

Transcription of excerpts from interviews with
Alan Hoida and Malcolm Orgee,
talking about playing at Malvern Winter Gardens

Alan: As a band in the Winter Gardens it's a different experience than as an audience. It's actually a nightmare. It was a nightmare for the acoustics. You're playing on a stage and you're playing this vault of a ceiling to a virtually blank wall with just the doors, the entrance into the foyer at the other end. So everything you play comes back at you with a delay. So it's so hard because the drum goes bang, it's ba-bam, ba-bam, ba-bam, you know. Your bass is boom, boom, boom, boom. And then it all mingles round in this great arch to just a wall of sound. And of course, the problem then was compounded by the fact that it was the fashion for bands to have massive speaker stacks. We made our own 'cause Paul White being Paul White, and being an electronics engineer, was able to do so. So I was playing bass through two stacks of four by four speakers. That's eight 12 inch speakers. The same with Paul, the same with Mart. That's a lot of volume. I played through an amp, which Paul made, which was a stereo bass amp [laughs], with a possibility of fuzz. And it was a very professional looking thing, he used make amplifiers, it looked really good. And it was called the Pewke 2000. And I often wonder what happened to that Pewke 2000 amp, is it still around in some kid's bedroom? Is he still playing through the Pewke 2000 amp. A stereo amp with built in fuzz. Anyway, so you're playing, you've got this huge amount of sound coming from behind you, which then comes back at you from in front, so it actually was not

a pleasant experience playing. Well it was very, very hard to do. It was enjoyable, of course, it was great fun, but it was hard work to not get out of synch with someone because you can't hear what you're doing 'cause of this wall of sound. I remember, certainly after one gig that we played there, I can't remember which of the gigs it was that we played. I got back, we had an old Ford Transit van, I got back into that and we all piled into the back of it, all the kit in the back of it was all stacked up, and I kept trying to start it, and the others are saying, "What are you doing Alan? You're going to wreck the starter motor." I said, "It's not starting, it's not starting." They said, "The engine's running." And driving, I couldn't hear my gear changes when I went to change gear, I could hear nothing, it was just people were talking down a long, long corridor. And so you can imagine what those years did to my hearing. My own fault for playing in bands in the Winter Gardens. So I wonder how many people who went to see bands in the Winter Gardens have suffered?

Malcolm: Incredibly excited and incredibly nervous. You know I was absolutely terrified that I would go completely blank and forget everything [laughs], and just stand there like a complete pillock in front of all my mates who were assembled, you know. They'd go, "Oh, come on Malc, come on", you know, and, erm, it never quite happened, I remember, I think I've forgot lyrics quite a few times, but with that sort of music it doesn't really matter, you can just sort of, you know repeat, you know [laughs], you know a line or a chorus, or whatever. Yeah. But it happened to all of us, you know everyone used to fluff up from time to time. But, no it was good fun. I think once I got on stage all the nerves went, you know. I've heard other people say that before, and I think it does happen, you know once you get there. It's almost beforehand you're kind of rehearsing the whole thing in your head. It's like going for a job interview or anything isn't it, you know you're thinking, but when you're there you're right in the minute, right at the moment and you,

you know, everything else just sort of falls away, you're not thinking about anything at all, apart from having a great time with your mates on stage, and entertaining your friends. Yeah, it was great, it was really good. I really enjoyed it. Otherwise I wouldn't have done it, 'cause it's, you know it's a nerve-wracking experience [laughs]. There was inevitably the sort of post mortem after the gig in whatever bar or whatever, you know, friend's place. I can't remember where we used to go now after the--, we probably used to come back here, in the Great Malvern Hotel I would imagine. And yeah, yeah it was good, there was a big buzz. And you know, and we'd already be planning our next gig, you know. Yeah it was good fun.

*Transcripts of the full interviews are available from Rock Around the Hills
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