

## Hawkwind Words 1973 NME Annual



The story starts, as all good stories do, at the beginning. There was a band called Group X who were made up of a bunch of very easy-going fellers of varying musical ability and who played de blooze. Amongst this motley crew were to be found one David Brock, busker and traveller on guitar, and eminently scruffy young Terry Ollis, refugee from communes of one sort or another who played drums after a fashion.

Let us turn our attention from other members like Huw Lloyd-Langton and John Harrison to survey handsome bohemian road manager Nik Turner, a striking figure of a man who had a habit of carrying various wind instruments around with him.

So, seeing as the boys were basically lazy, self-confessed tripping science-fiction readers who were firm believers in the power of good vibes, the cool, suave Mr. Turner, who happened to share the aforementioned interests, automatically became another member of the band.

It was around this time that a strange drug-induced vision appeared before Group X, guiding them to lay down their second-hand blues licks and go the way of the cosmic traveller journeying around those mystical areas heavily wrought with mind-expanding chemicals.

And lo and behold, a word flashed before their eyes. And the word was Hawkwind. Meanwhile, a new roadie known as Dik Mik, possessing a secret desire for creating weird electronic sounds, was added to the ever-increasing line-up.

Now enter Doug Smith of Clearwater Productions, who became the band's manager, and we're all getting somewhere. At the 1970 Isle of Wight Festival, the band blew up a storm alongside other London Ladbroke Grove sex-and-revolution freaks the Pink Fairies, injecting the only real flashes of life into the otherwise flaccid event.

The first album, released on United Artists, was well received and Hawkwind became THE Underground band, building up a unique rapport with great communities throughout the British Isles.

Here was a band who would play at almost any benefit you'd care to mention. It all happened to work in with Hawkwind's basic philosophy. "We play because we enjoy it," they state with a typical lack of pretension.

Not that they can afford to be pretentious or give over portentous messages; Hawkwind are in their own words, not over-capable as musicians and usually disorganised when it comes to setting up for gigs, but ultimately all their vices have become virtues.

The band operate on that weird level of being a 'band of the people' in the most unclined sense of the phrase. They came along at a time when it was strictly not the thing to do, to play psychedelic music.

Sure, the Pink Floyd were accepted, even if most of their work was either heavily influenced by a composer like Vaughan Williams or else sustained itself on its own precociousness, but Hawkwind were

rank amateurs in this field. Doug Smith explains it all thus:

"Critics have put the band down for being a three-chord group. That is easy enough to accept because that is exactly what they are. But I feel that when you attend a Hawkwind gig you come away with the feeling that this is a band with integrity, in the same way as artists like Neil Young and the Dead possess this aura of integrity."

Nik Turner explains it more simply, again returning to the basic philosophy behind Hawkwind's reason for playing in the first place: "I think we're honest about what we do. The feeling that goes into the music on our side has to rub off on the audience. If we're having a good time then the audience seem to enjoy themselves."

Throughout the two years, the band have gone through any number of changes. Bass-players have come and gone in rapid succession until now when the well-known Lemmy has seemingly settled himself into the position.

Terry Ollis, one of the original and more important members, had to leave for health reasons and tall, dark and handsome Simon King took over the position behind the traps.

Del Dettmar, goblin and electronics freak, joined the band after Dik Mik temporarily split-intending to go to India. And there is of course the mysterious Mr. Robert Calvert, last seen dressed in thirties flying uniform with cropped hair small moustache and flying glasses. Calvert is at present fit and well, playing 'selected' gigs occasionally, and writing furiously.

As I write this, Alan Freeman on Radio 1 is informing all listeners that "Silver Machine" is No. 6 in the charts. The band themselves are a little apprehensive about their new-found success but intend to carry on in the same old way. By the time you read this, they may even be the new T. Rex. Maybe by then Dave Brock will be able to afford a new pair of boots.