



Pointed questions by MARK PIGGOTT

Kirk Brandon's voice cuts through the 1980s like a spear. Through *The Pack*, *the Senate* and *Theatre of Hate*, it remains unparalleled in its pure, blistering power. The energy of Brandon, lead singer with *Spear of Destiny* is unmatched. But although Brandon and his boys are now considered outsiders, a group of unfashionable whipping boys for the music press, they've just signed a deal with Ten Records, a subsidiary of Virgin.

We meet at a dingy rehearsal studio in the Caledonian Road, one of the less salubrious districts of North London. At first Brandon is sullen and tired; awkward silences abound. His habit of throwing an empty Lucozade bottle and snatching it from the air, is less than reassuring. I feel like the bottle.

Brandon has just come back from the USA. "We did a couple of videos out there in the desert of New Mexico. They're for our new video *Never Take Me Alive and The Traveller*. We're going back in June or July to start our own tour. It's the first time we've ever toured the States. I'm really looking forward to it. Then we might do a support tour for some really big band. If it starts going well out there, I suppose it's possible to stick around."

Do *Spear* sell a lot of records in America? "No, up till now, we've never had a record released over there. This'll be the first time."

What exactly is *Never Take Me Alive* about? "It's about some guys I once knew, a scene I was in. Holed up waiting for the law, that sort of thing. Real dramatic stuff! Looking back it's kind of stupid, but at the time you're involved in dumb things and you do dumb things."

Much of Brandon's more recent work, like *One Eyed Jacks* and *World Service*, along with *Spear's* new album *Outland*, draws mainly from his personal experiences. "I used to write about aesthetics or whatever in the past. Now I write about people and events, real things. Although there were some good songs on *World Service*, I didn't think the production was up to much. There was too much going on at the time. It should've been a lot simpler."

As well as his music, Brandon himself has evolved since his years with the legendary Theatre of Hate. “In those days, I was a bit one-dimensional, angry about absolutely everything. But as you go on, you find out you can’t be that way. It’s sort of childish, really. Then you start finding out what life’s all about.”

Brandon is a self-confessed apolitical person, but some of his songs do suggest a certain ideological standpoint. “Yeah, I suppose Playground of the Rich does have Class War sentiments. The Conservatives and the people who vote Conservative run this country. They own this country. This isn’t Russia, it isn’t even America. Politics is a cynical thing. It’s money over people. The system we’ve got now, it’s the one people have chosen. They allow it to go on, so I guess it must be the right one for them. If they really objected to it, they’d change it.”

He is contemptuous of Left-wing trendies. “When you go to places like Poland or Czechoslovakia, then you come back here and realise how free it all is. All of a sudden England looks very rosy. When we got off the plane from Poland, I’d had enough. It’s no bloody tea party over there, when you have to stand in a bread queue for hours. It’s back down to basics. When am I going to eat? What am I going to eat? It’s even more bureaucratic than England.”

Brandon’s lack of real media acclaim does not embitter him. “Sometimes when you see the mindless, gutless pop that goes on, you think, well.” He screws up his face in disgust. “But you have to come round to being realistic. People get what they want, or if not what they want, what they deserve. That’s the way British music goes. The music press is extremely staid.”

The music press are as dismissive of Kirk as he is of them. But he isn’t too worried about this apparent handicap. He still has a huge, and loyal following. “I think people should give those people out there who go to see us more credit. They’re not mindless followers; they just appreciate good music. It’s as simple as that.”

New wave bands, like the Shop Assistants and The Age of Chance have little appeal for him. “I wish them well. I just hope they survive being fashionable. Most of the white music scene is just stupid.”

But where do Spear of Destiny go from here? “America seems like it might open up, and if it does, we’ll stick around for a bit. I got a good reception from the record company and the people I met in the clubs. So you never know. The media aren’t as limited in the States as they are over here. There’s not just one radio station, there are hundreds. And a dozen different charts. To do well in one means you’re doing really well.”

Undeterred, Brandon struggles on. “I’m not fashionable. I’m not trendy, and I don’t want to be anyway. Who does? I don’t want thousands of people in their homes listening to my music. I’m not that vain. I really appreciate the fact that people buy the stuff, and that they enjoy it. That’s enough for me, and I still enjoy playing live.”

Kirk Brandon is as unfashionable as his views. For that reason, many record buyers and the music press aren’t interested in him. He doesn’t care. A genuine voice of the disaffected 1980s, his philosophy is simple: “Get a lot of money and get the fuck out! Born again capitalism. Great religion.”

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