

The New Roxette

www.theNewRoxette.com

ISSUE THREE – FEBRUARY 2009



FREE



**Exclusive
Kajagoogoo Interview**

**Claire Batchelor
releases debut EP**

**Slashed Seat Affair
– New Single**

**Mandeville School host
Yamaha Music School**

News, Reviews & Interviews

...and so much more!

www.theNewRoxette.com

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**AND A
VERY SPECIAL
'THANK YOU'
TO AYLESBURY
TOWN COUNCIL**

Welcome to The New Roxette

THANKYOU for reading the latest instalment of The New Roxette, whether that is online on our shiny new website, or the paper copy you may have picked up whilst drinking your mid-morning coffee...

Well, I think it's fair to say 2009 has already got off to a flying start ... with fantastic new singles and albums being released; plans for this year's Hobble on the Cobbles are starting to take shape, and also, it looks very promising that the Aylesbury Festival will be another key music event in the Aylesbury calendar this year.

At the time of writing, dates are still to be confirmed, but it looks like the Aylesbury Festival Music Extravaganza will fall on July 11 & 12 2009, in Kingsbury (Aylesbury Town Centre).

LOTS more gigs, events, festivals and showcases will be confirmed and announced shortly, so keep checking the official websites, and of course The New Roxette, for all the latest local music news and gig listings.

Enjoy Issue 3, and see you again next month ...

*** STOP THE PRESS ***

The New Roxette can exclusively reveal, and announce, local 80's band **KAJAGOOGOO** will headline Hobble on the Cobbles 2009. (Sunday 23 August 2009).

More information will be announced shortly.

Visit www.AylesburyShowcase.com for all the latest News.

Bands wishing to apply to perform at Hobble on the Cobbles 2009 simply need to go to the official website, complete the application form, and send it in for consideration! Good Luck!!! The full line-up will be announced later in the year.

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The New Roxette chats to SSA

Slashed Seat Affair have finished the final touches on their debut album 'Noises'. Their debut single – 'Forget You' – is released this month on Fill The Void Records featuring powerful vocals, showers of almighty drumming and riff driven melodies. Their radio friendly sound is based around the potent songwriting partnership of lead vocalist Ellie Mules and bass player/guitarist Darren Michael. Drummer Rob Meehan – (cousin of legendary Sex Pistols front man Johnny Rotten) – and Guitarist Noel Martin add the aggressive backbone to the band's sound.

We're here with Slashed Seat Affair; Thanks for taking the time to talk to The New Roxette guys.

Of course the readers will recognise you from performing at Hobble on the Cobbles, and the Aylesbury Showcase gigs at The King's Head last summer. How did you find that, and what's been happening with the band since then?

We've been doing plenty of gigs, getting out and putting it about a bit. Busy making the video for our debut single 'Forget You', which was a lot of fun. Generally keeping ourselves busy.

How did you decide to select 'Forget You' as your debut single? Was it a difficult choice as you have so many great and really strong songs?

It was a tricky decision as we all had favourite songs that tended to be different. We had a rough idea of which songs would be best suited and 'Forget You' was one of those, but it was a bit like trying to pin the tail on a donkey so in the end we made up some CD's and gave them to all our friends with the simple question "which one's the single?". 'Forget You' came out on top. If we hadn't done that I think we'd STILL be trying to decide!

The video for 'Forget You' sees you smashing up the film set. It looks like a lot of fun – was it? – And who came up with the concept? (... and did you have to clear up afterwards?)

It was a laugh and Ellie even bought a brand new crowbar for the event, which is now residing by the side of my bed (don't ask!). It was great to just smash the granny out of the set once we knew we'd finished all the main shots. Noel did end up with an industrial injury though, when the last picture frame fell it cut his eye. Thankfully he has another one.

When can we expect your debut album "Noises" to be available?

It will be out in Mid March 2009 on iTunes amongst others.

Is there anything else you would like to add, or tell us about?

Noises is just the beginning. We already have some new tracks that we put into the live set and the response to these songs have been great.

We'd also like to say that Aylesbury has been really good to us and a huge thanks to everyone who have helped us! Hallelujah!



Photograph courtesy of TerryLee.net

THE 'QUICK FIRE FIVE' with ELLIE MULES

I couldn't live without ... deal or no deal

My worst habit is ... watching deal or no deal

Nothing tastes better than ... chips and beans while watching ... just kidding.

I'm not particularly good at ... cooking, saving money, being bored ...

Readers will be surprised to learn that ... I played rugby at Twickenham ... ran out with the ball before an international!

**'Forget You' is available on
16 February 2009**

www.slashedseataffair.com

The New Roxette Round Up

Rumour has it local favourites **The Swamis** have decided to call it a day, and split up! Full details coming soon ...

Claire Batchelor is having a pre-launch album party at The Bullet Bar (www.bulletbar.co.uk) for her debut EP "WISH". Saturday 7 February 2009. 19:00. Tickets are limited, so please contact Claire direct if you would like to come along: www.clairebatchelor.co.uk

Fluid Lines also have a new EP coming out shortly entitled "Confetti". Release date yet to be confirmed, but we'll announce it in **The New Roxette** as soon as we know more.

Have you any NEWS, GIGS, or even GOSSIP you'd like to tell **The New Roxette** ... ? Email the head office at: office@AylesburyShowcase.co.uk

NEW RELEASES

| | | |
|----------------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Bensem | – "Western Lights" | – 02 February 2009 (Album) |
| Chris Cornell | – "Scream" | – 02 February 2009 (Album) |
| The Fray | – "The Fray" | – 02 February 2009 (Album) |
| Lily Allen | – "It's Not Me, It's You" | – 09 February 2009 (Album) |
| Claire Batchelor | – "Wish" | – 16 February 2009 (EP) |
| Morrissey | – "Years Of Refusal" | – 16 February 2009 (Album) |
| Slashed Seat Affair | – "Forget You" | – 16 February 2009 (Single) |
| 50 Cent | – "Before I Self Destruct" | – 23 February 2009 (Album) |

** All information
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time of going
to press.*

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Never "Too Shy" ... as Kajagoogoo talks to The New Roxette



Local 80's electro-pop group talks to **The New Roxette** about the past 25 years, the 'surprise' reunion, brand new material ... and headlining Hobble on the Cobbles 2009.

**For the FULL interview,
visit the Official Website:
www.theNewRoxette.com**

LIM AHL (vocals)
STEVE ASKEW (guitars)
NICK BEGGS (bass)
**STUART CROXFORD
NEALE (keyboards)**
JEZ STRODE (drums)

**TNR: How do you all feel
about being back in
Kajagoogoo once again?**

L: "It's great to be back with the guys and picking up where we left off after 25 years - quite amazing really!! We're all grown-up now and appreciate things a lot more than we did at 23 years old - we were young, naive and very innocent to understand what was really happening to us at that age. We agreed that if the reunion is not **fun** then it ain't worth doing - that's our motto. Have fun

enjoying what we do best which is music. We're all coming back as better musicians with such a wide variety of experience in work/life/love, which we can use to our creative advantage as performers."

NB: "It's a bit like riding a bike. Great fun, with a really big horn!"

SA: "Like waking up in episodes of 'Life On Mars', except we are all older and wiser, it's fun and no record company pressure."

SCN: "It's been a personally rewarding and fulfilling experience. It's like being whole again, and even to the point like we never were apart."

JS: "I think it's a new venture to have a bit of fun, reunited with 4 old friends."

TNR: In 2004, VH1's Bands Reunited managed to bring everyone together for the TV programme. Was this the defining moment that reconnected the band, and 'planted the seed' that a reunion would be a great idea and opportunity, for not just the fans, but for the band members as well?

L: "I suppose it must have had something to do with it but this time it felt like a completely new impetus. A new manager and all 5 years older and suddenly it happened - for me it seemed out of the blue. 3 weeks after meeting the new manager I was with the all the guys at his house one evening in Chalfont St Giles (Bucks). We all went down the pub and had a good laugh reminiscing about the old days. It all felt right."

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SA: "We all felt very natural all playing together again after such a long time, we knew from this moment onwards musically everything was all still intact. I guess it was all the other stuff that needed to be worked on".

TNR: Have you any/fond memories of Aylesbury and/or performing at Friars in the early 80's?

L: "We did perform there once and I enjoyed it 'cos I had seen Toyah there in her heyday and it brought back good memories. I am from Wigan although I did live in Leighton Buzzard with the guys for our first year before we started commuting to London looking for that elusive record deal".

SA: I remember Kajagoogoo, Marillion and Howard Jones all playing on the same bill but in different places in Friars in the early 80s. Then after the gig I had to get the AA out to get my mums car started that was parked in the multi storey.

SCN: "Oh yes, Friars was a regular venue for me and my circle of friends in the mid to late 70's. Saw people like **John Otway, Hawkwind, Budgie** to name a few. Loved the gig – even if the sound was rather unusual (had certain placed in the auditorium where it "phased" and sounded hollow. Probably the building shape I guess! That whole vibe reminds me of the Hunt hotel in Leighton buzzard which was promoted by Chris France, and bands like **Caught In The Act** with their guitarist "Dusty". Heady days but really influenced my musical upbringing".

TNR: What are your current plans for 2009?

L: "To poss go to Las Vegas on holiday with friends again – I love it! Other than that, it'll be work work work, which includes lots of fun things like songwriting, recording, gigging, travel and interviews – I love meeting people and seeing the world a little";-)

SCN: "My ambition is for Kajagoogoo to be working more frequently in 2009 with the hope of going to the States and Japan".

JS: "To get out there and play more gigs for the fans".

TNR: What do you think about 'Hobble on the Cobbles' as an event, and how do you feel about headlining HOTC, and performing to a local (home) crowd?

L: "It would be great ..."

NB: "It always looks great with the light show".

SA: "It's a good idea; didn't John Otway & Wild Willy Barrett do that in a past life?"

SCN: "Yeah it will be cool. The event looks great and should be a relaxed atmosphere. It's always good to gig on home turf, especially after 25 years of being away!"

JS: "It would be great to headline in front of a local crowd, I have been told that it's a great event".

THE 'QUICK FIRE FIVE' with Limahl

I couldn't live without ... Vanilla Yoghurt

I was too shy to ... invite Kenneth Williams out to dinner in Manchester in 1983 when we met at Granada Studios – what a missed opportunity ;-(

I'm currently reading ... anything on internet pages

The last song I downloaded was ... 'The Living Tree' by Shirley Bassey

Favourite restaurant (or meal) is ... 'Manna' Vegetarian Restaurant in Primrose Hill, north London

Kajagoogoo in 1983



**For the FULL interview,
visit the Official Website:
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Well-spent, Miss-spent Youth = TR8R



TR8R, despite diminutive years, have fit in quite a lot over the last few months. They formed as TR8R in May 2008, in the sleepy town of Chesham, but before that the boys in the band had honed their skills at pub gigs, admirably playing great covers from 'Rocks Rich Oeuvre', written by men around twice their age, (Conor, 14; drums,

George, 15; bass, Mikey, 15; guitar – the mainstays and troubadours with musical equipment in their hands). THEN they managed to deal with the eternal problem of "What do we do with a problem like getting a (proper) singer?" After an audition, they found 18 year old Victoria Mackenzie; all clipped tones and a voice as clear as cut crystal. Then they really got to work...

You've been playing pubs for a while – I saw you a few times; you seem to have had different singers. When did it all come together as the final line-up?

Mikey grins as he leans back in the chair. "We were a bit of a shambles back then, to be honest!" George attempts to be a little more generous, saying, "Well, back then we weren't really 'together' – just playing for fun. It was a good foundation to learn, as we were doing a lot of covers. Once Vicky joined, we sort of got on with the job of being more professional and started writing our own material."

Was there a moment when you all thought "Yes – this is it: we're really a 'proper' band"?

George is quick to answer. "There were a few moments, where we all found ourselves looking at each other during songs and thinking 'This is happening'" (Mikey leans back and laughs), "Initially the song writing process was a bit overwhelming for people with minds as tiny as ours, but then we started to think 'Great – we don't mind doing this for another year!'. Victoria is resolute; "There was definitely a moment in rehearsal when we felt we'd come together as a band".

What's in the year ahead for you?

Conor leaps in with "Big bus... big chicks... big spliffs." That's disconcerting from someone almost a third of my age and half my height but: he's the drummer, that's what they do isn't it? George furrows his brow as he hears that, and wants to offer the more serious answer: "Definitely more gigs... and more songwriting. We've got enough for an album, but we need to keep on working." Victoria is comfortable to be a little more bold, "If all goes to plan, the band will be a success in the next year, and I will hold off going to university".

... and after that – they went into the other room and played their songs; a wonderful mix of big choruses, big sound, (small drummer, but) big drums, and loads of flashing lights.

TR8R can be found playing quite often – they're due to hit Aylesbury soon. In the meantime, you can be pretty sure to see them on a Sunday night at the KMD Jam nights at Chesham Utd Football club.

For more information on TR8R, visit: www.tr8r.co.uk

The FULL interview can be read online: www.theNewRoxette.com

Reviews

Claire Batchelor – *Wish*

Singer, writer and multi instrumentalist, Claire has produced a rare jewel here. Her songs are performed with sensitivity, craft and care enhanced by Steph Shepherd's resonant cello which lends real gravitas to the material. The tracks fade in and out of each other giving the impression of a song cycle and lending a kind of organic wholeness to proceedings.

Opening the album with sounds of water and backwards guitar, *Weak* features peerless vocal harmonies, cello and acoustic guitar. *Grow* and *Time* both featuring drums by Mike Hawkins continue with the harmonic beauty.

Instrumental track *Candlewax* uses electric percussion but keeps a folksy chilled out aura and displays Claire's flute and piano skills.

Final track *Free* combines cello and celestial harmonies with some ominous distorted guitar in the background.

There is a really strong, early 'Island Records' feel about the album reminiscent of some of Joe Boyd's best work as a producer. Full of beauty and mystery I can't recommend this highly enough.

www.clairebatchelor.co.uk

Jump

Despite a career spanning twelve album (ten studio – two live) and including support slots with the likes of Marillion, Fish and Midge Ure, High Wycombe based band JUMP are still one of Buckinghamshire's best kept musical secrets. Once again produced by Martin Atkinson at his M.A.R.S recording studio this is the bands first E.P. The three songs included here will be familiar to anyone who has attended JUMP (or John Dexter Jones & The Steven Twins – Acoustic) gigs over the last year or so.

As usual the band delve into the darker side of life (but with a smile on their faces) covering the subjects of relationship break-up, descent into addiction and the struggles of making it in the music biz.

Opener 'Kingston Corner Blues' is not a traditional Blues song and is driven by Andy Barker's marching drum beat. The song tracks a flaming row overheard by the band between a cuckolded boy and his (now) ex-girlfriend prior to the bands set at The Peel in Kingston.

The chorus lifts the rhythm and repeats the betrayed boys words "You Can Go".

Next up is 'When You Fall' the drum intro continues at a similar pace to the opening track and is enhanced by a strong Bass line courtesy of Andy Faulkner. JDJ's sinister vocals tell the tale of a young couple as their lives spiral into the black hole of addiction. Cheerful (not).

Personal favourite and final cut 'Staring At The Rain' picks up the pace and is more traditional JUMP (if there is such a thing). Guitar heavy with a rolling back line it chronicles the many years spent driving rain beaten roads in the search for an appreciative ear and not the "flying glasses" of the Newbridge Memo Hall. The words say it was a struggle but the tune says they had some laughs along the way. Steve 'Ronnie' Rundle plays this song out with a blinding guitar outro as well as capably backing up JDJ's vocal line. This track is already a huge live favourite.

The NEW E.P. is not so much a taster for the new full length album due out early 2009 (as it is unlikely any of these songs will make it onto the album in their current form) but is more a bridge between 2005's 'Faithful Faithless' and the new release.

'Something of the Night' the 2006 live CD is still the ultimate introduction for new listeners. This is however a must have release once your hooked.

Catch the band live at The Limelight Theatre, Aylesbury: 30 May 2009.

www.jumprock.co.uk

Ben Sem – *Western Lights*

Big music with a Celtic vibe from Ben Sem.

This record has a huge, cavernous sound with impassioned vocals and rhythm guitar from Craig Semmens, while big electric guitars rock out courtesy of Pete Rawbone. This is best demonstrated on rockier numbers, such as *Free*, *Sunshine* and *Apathy*. Quieter aspects are explored on string driven ballads like *Why I Cry* and *Constant Dream*. Credit should also go to Adrian Jones on bass and drummer Kevin Cook who make up a gutsy, effective rhythm section.

So if you like your music large, intense and straining heavenwards, dive in and enjoy.

www.bensem.com

Music Fan of the Month

John Staerck



What was the first gig you attended?

The first gig I ever attended was probably One Minute Silence at the Pitz in MK. I must have been about 16 and was totally blown away by their energy on stage.

Have you attended any of the gigs in Aylesbury Town Centre?

Not yet but there is a real buzz about the music scene in Aylesbury.

If no, would you consider attending this year?

Yeah definitely!

What were your musical highlights in 2008?

Finally getting round to see the Powders perform! Awesome.

Have you heard of Hobble on the Cobbles?

Of course, I really need to make an appearance as the feedback from my friends explains that it's a great organised event.

Who would be your dream headliner?

The late, great Jeff Buckley.

Any comments on the live music scene?

Look out for Capdown!!!!

What music are you currently listening to?

Everything really, a lot of chilled out music like Neutral Milk Hotel and Jeff Buckley right through to groups like Wu-tang and Korn!

Which Band/Artist do you wish you had seen?

Nirvana! Sadly I was a bit too young!!

What was the last gig you attended?

The Powders.

Where's Keith?



Keith with Norm Beermonkey

Have you seen this man ... ?

Well, say hello to Keith!

If you see Keith in any pubs or music venues around town, (buy him a drink) and get your photograph taken with him.

Email the photo with the date/location of sighting to us at 'Where's Keith' – and email to: office@AylesburyShowcase.co.uk and if we publish it you will be the lucky recipient of a free CD, AND of course you'll be featured in The New Roxette as well.

What have you got to lose?
Stalkers and Crazy Women Welcome!



Keith with The Powders



Keith with Nicola Parker

'Mandeville makes more music by introducing a Yamaha Music School'

On the 10th February the Mandeville School will be launching a Yamaha Music School. The first stage of the launch will include tuition on the drum kit followed by guitar and keyboard later this year.

Yamaha Music Schools have been established for over 50 years during which time they have helped over nine million people worldwide to learn to play a musical instrument. The Mandeville School recognises the value of having such a school and therefore would like to invite the Aylesbury community to access it.

The Yamaha Music Schools provide 'state of the art' courses which will enable learners to gain both solo and band skills that professional musicians use. In addition students will have

the opportunity to play on top quality instruments; learn a wide range of popular music; practise at home with some great backing tracks and have a great time learning to play!

The lessons will be available for pupils at the Mandeville School and we will be visiting four primary schools in the local area to offer the facility to the younger members of the community. Adults are also very welcome to access these drumming sessions.

If you would like any further information about the drum course we are currently providing, please contact the school directly:

**The Mandeville School,
Ellen Road, Aylesbury, HP21 8ES
Tel: 01296 745437**

Looking back at Friars ...

WARREN HARRY & the YUM YUM BAND are DYNAMITE

"This tells the start of a journey, where without the good people of Aylesbury we would not have had a chance to go anywhere ...

In 1974 I saw an advert is Melody Maker/N.M.E for a drummer needed by singer/songwriter from Aylesbury. At that time I was in the RAF stationed in Leighton Buzzard. I rang and Warren and I met in Aylesbury and listened to some of his music which I fell in love immediately.

Warren arranged a session with myself, Graham Dibble and himself to try out some of his music in the now defunct Hammonds Organ Music Shop where Warren worked. Graham at this stage was a schoolteacher and I was still in the forces.

The three of us rehearsed and jammed together and the feel was good. At the next session Paul Kendal, a friend of Graham's and Warren's joined us as our Bass player where we gelled very well together and

concentrated on a live set. We had our first prestigious and near enough first live gig at the Marquee Club, London ... sadly now closed.

We were supporting a band called the *Kursall Flyers* who had just entered the top 10 and we were given a twenty minute support spot. The gig was good and the band played really well and during the second to last number loads of cheers and noise erupted from the Aylesbury contingent, such as Chris France, John Otway, Pete Frame etc, who had come to give us their support. A banner was unravelled across the back of the Marquee stating 'WARREN HARRY & the YUM YUM BAND are DYNAMITE'!!!!

We later found out this was the work of Mr France and Mr Needs and the name WARREN HARRY and the YUM YUM BAND was born.

The support and help from all the good people in Aylesbury was phenomenal and I am glad to hear it is as active today as it was then."

PADDY BURNS
Warren Harry & The Yum Yum Band

Blackwater Productions chats to The Madame Project

On behalf of The New Roxette

by Leon Gordon



Friday 19th December 2008, saw the Blackwater Productions team attend the Sounds of London/141a Music Managements (www.141amanagement.co.uk) Xmas party at The Ramshackle, Fulham. On show was a wealth of talent from the company's roster including rising songstress Jesse James (www.myspace.com/musicjessiej), reggae sensation Ava Leigh (www.myspace.com/avaleigh) and the host of the showcase production sensation Shae Agha (www.myspace.com/shaebats).

The main draw of the evening came from an emerging group 'The Madame Project' (www.myspace.com/themadameproject)

dubbed by some as the UK's answer to the *Pussycat Dolls* these girls brought sex appeal, club banging tracks and a huge stage presence to the evening. The Madame Project, consisting of Anjee Desai, Shakira Akabusi, Dhanielle Mauger and Aylesbury's own Hayley Wilkinson have a bright future ahead of them after attracting a large amount of interest in the States whilst working with Badboy producer Jack Knight and have also received radio play on 1Extra achieving 'Hottest Single Of The Week' for new single 'Chemistry'.

I got the chance to sit down with Hayley and ask her a few questions about how the group came to be and also where she saw TMP fitting into the music industry.

How did the Madame Project originate were you all friends before becoming a group?

"We were put together originally called a group Soul Deep being government funded for Mothers against guns. After generating interest from that they decided to start the band under the name TMP."

With choreography and lyrics to learn how often do you rehearse before a show?

"A lot of time and effort goes into our stage show, running through every track in the set accapella until its perfect then adding in the music."

What is it like to be working with well known producers/artists?

"After working with quite a few you kind of get used to it, although a certain amount of pressure is added depending on the producers reputation."

Have you ever been star struck?

"No I haven't."

What do you see the future being for TMP?

"Very bright and hopefully world domination."

With alot of 'girl groups' vying for attention what makes TMP stick out?

"We can all sing after coming from solo careers but we mesh really well as a group. We offer more than just sex appeal."

When can we expect to see your debut release?

"Our new single 'Chemistry' has just been released on the underground scene."

Any advice to up and coming talent?

"It definitely helps a lot to be networking across London."

For the latest news & information visit:

www.myspace.com/themadameproject

www.blackwaterproductions.co.uk

www.myspace.com/blackwaterproductionsuk

Claire Batchelor – Local singer-songwriter makes a Wish!



Local singer-songwriter Claire Batchelor talks to The New Roxette about loving beer in the sunshine, Vaseline adverts and of course, her upcoming EP release.

Last year you performed at the Aylesbury Festival, and a few showcase gigs at The King's Head last summer. How did you find that, and what's been happening since then?

I love the King's Head, because it has such a great atmosphere. Playing gigs in their courtyard with a beer and the sun shining is just brilliant – something to dream about in these freezing winter months! With Aylesbury Showcase there's a great variety of bands too, which is not only more interesting for the audience, but great for me as a performer because it means I get to meet new bands all the time.

Since then I've been gigging and writing as much as I can! I've been in a competition judged by Robin Gibb, writing music for a documentary, writing new songs, scoring an art film, and singing / playing all over the place!

You have a new five-track EP coming out this month, entitled 'WISH'. Was it difficult finalising and selecting the tracks to be included on this debut record, and do they hold any special memories or personal stories you'd like to share with us?

It was difficult deciding which songs to include – I'm trying to save some for a full album. Also I wanted to make sure the tracks run nicely together and take you somewhere musically.

Two songs on there are new incarnations of really old songs that I wrote as a teenager ('Weak' with James Markham, and 'Free'). The reason for this is that they're the two that people seem to like the most! So along with those are three completely new tracks which I wrote last year. When I was writing them I'd just graduated and moved back home, so my state of mind was hopeful for the future but also quite frustrated. You've done all this hard work, and now you're in the real world on the bottom rung of the ladder, scrabbling to do what you can to forge a successful career for yourself.

What made you decide to write and record the EP at this time?

It just felt like the right time, and now is as good a time as any. I've been meaning to do an EP for ages, and because I'm not at college any more I finally had the time and energy to do it! My god it has taken so much energy, but I have loved doing it!

How did you record your EP and who plays on it?

Well, I play everything except the cello, (which is played by Steph Shepherd who also performs live with me,) the violins and drums. The vocals, guitars, piano, percussion etc are all me! I recorded everything except the drums at home in my studio, which I've built up over time. It's been a real challenge but I'm proud of the result and the fact I have managed to do most of it entirely on my own. However, I do prefer working with other people because it's nice to bounce ideas around (and make each other coffee!).

Can you describe your EP to us?

I was aware that I was releasing it in February all along, so the sound of it is very warm, something to curl up with. As it progresses the tracks become more intense with 'Candlewax' and 'Free'.

All the songs started out as just being acoustic and are acoustic guitar-based (apart from the 'Candlewax' because that's more piano, strings and electronic based). Then I added more to them like the cello and violins, little electronic bits, percussion and drums. I have been playing more piano on this EP too because most of my other recordings are guitar-based, so I thought it would be nice to use more piano and Rhodes.

I tried to make it sound as interesting and individual as I could, instead of just the same old rock or pop that you hear. I think my background in writing orchestral music for film and electronic music as well lead me into new territory when it came to adding to the songs.

As you say, you've written a lot of music for film, including songs, orchestral scores, jazz & rock. What's been your most successful piece of music so far?

I suppose I'd have to say getting 'Free' and 'Dance to This' into Black Ink, an independent thriller film which was screened in Leicester Square. 'Dance to This' was commissioned specifically for the film and I did a special version of 'Free' for them.

What else do you hope 2009 brings for Claire Batchelor? What are your plans for the rest of the year?

I'm going to be doing loads of gigs to promote my EP, so catch me on clairebatchelor.co.uk for the dates and come along! I'm hoping to get some more music to picture work too because I absolutely love film scoring, and it's so different to writing music in its sole existence. There's not always a beat, but the music's carried by emotion or something that's happening on screen which is really liberating as a composer.

THE 'QUICK FIRE FIVE'

I couldn't live without ... Music

My favourite song is ... String Quartet No 2:3 by Michael Nyman. (from the Vaseline advert!). Ok that's not a song! That's too hard a question!

ONE of my favourite songs is Karma Police

I'm currently reading ... Stephen Fry's novels

My favourite colour is ... Red! Only kidding, come on we all know what it really is ... – (it's Purple!!!)

... and if I had one WISH, – I wish ... Bill Bailey was Prime Minister

For more information on Claire Batchelor visit: www.clairebatchelor.co.uk and www.jamcentralrecords.com

'WISH' is available on 16 February 2009

The New Roxette

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