

When can you smash drumkits, play with plenty o' pedals, be secret fans of The Beach Boys in a "Pop Rock Punk" band AND find loads of fit girls armed with spacehoppers? Why, when there's a Red Storm Rising of course...

**R**ed Storm Rising are John, Spencer, Duncan and Craig. Now, they write their own songs and play gigs at venues like The Peel and The Garage. Three years ago, they did a covers gig. Before that, each were part of various other bands "who rocked". Before that, like every musician in the business and any aspiring rock stars you might know, they had to learn how to play their instruments.

#### **But why'd they start anyway?**

**Duncan:** Because bass looked easier to play than guitar...

**John:** There are only four strings!

**Duncan:** I started after I saw that gig with Three Colours Red and Pete wore a nice suit while playing and he's got nice hair as well. I suppose I was just inspired by that if we needed one sort of inciting incident.

**John:** Well I started doing music because my mum plays the piano and by granddad plays the accordion, started playing piano when I was about four and then other instrument. I started guitar at seventeen. So it all stems back to my mum and my granddad - that's how cool I am. It wasn't a gig that did it; it was my mum and granddad.

**Craig:** Um, I, well, I actually started playing the clarinet and I sucked at that, so I gave that up. I was about ten.

**John:** And those hopes of playing the Albert Hall were dashed forever.

**Craig:** I started having an interest in playing the drums after listening to my dad's record collection and listening to The Who, which was the most incredible sound I've ever heard. I actually started playing air drums in my bedroom for about a year, I used two wooden spoons and tried to play along to Keith Moon. I got my first actual drumkit when I was seventeen and just kind of developed.

**Spencer:** I'm similar to John, I think my dad and my grandparents were all sort of concert pianists, concert violinists, and I learnt violin when I was five and I finished all the grades when I was about fifteen. My sister told me it was cool to play the drums so I went to have lessons - it was good fun. After that, I started playing around on bass and started to take an

interest in acoustic guitars. I got my first electric when I got my first credit card.

#### **Any tips for young scenesters who might just be starting out?**

**John:** Do it for the fun.

**Craig:** Do it for the girls!

**John:** Don't sit there and start playing and think you're good enough to play because you won't be. I'm not being mean there, am I?

**Duncan:** Yeah, you are.

**John:** If you're gonna be a rhythm guitarist listen to GreenDay because it's nice and easy to play along to. If you're gonna be a lead guitarist listen to stuff that's got lots of Slash in it, Van Halen, Hendrix. Practice until you get good, don't practice until you think you're kind of all right and mess up, otherwise people will watch you and think "Oh you're a bit rubbish aren't you?"

**Craig:** I'd say the best thing to do is probably to listen. I never learnt to play the drums properly, I never had a lesson, so I'd just say listen to as many drummers as you can and develop your style - find a guy that you like and try and play like them, if you can get a teacher then all the better, because there's still things that I don't know and will never know because I was never taught properly. Just listen and develop your sound.

#### **So how would you describe your sound then?**

**John:** We're Pop Rock Punk or those three words in some kind of order. That's the easiest and loosest term to put us in.

**Spencer:** Craig's very influenced by 60s/70s bands like The Who so his drumming is like pure rock and Duncan's a bit of a punk bassist at heart and I'm influenced by 80s bands like Van Halen and Guns 'n' Roses, stuff like that, and John's big on pop rock.

**John:** Yeah, I love Wild Hearts and every related band to them - Yo Yos - and also stuff like Butch Walker who's been working a lot with Avril Lavigne recently. And he did a song with Tommy Lee, which was so cheesy it hurt.

**Spencer:** So it's quite a mix...and also - don't quote us on this one - John and I are quite big...Beach Boys fans.

#### **Do you guys do this professionally? Is this your jobs?**

**John:** Yeah, we're unsigned, we've got this album that we've been working on since like June, it's kind of nearing the end, we're hoping that it'll be out by Christmas and that through that we'll get some kind of interest from record companies. I mean, we just sort of do this for fun but to do this for a living and get loads of money out of it would be great as well!

#### **Do you have any crazy stories from gigging? What was with the spacehopper thing?**

**John:** I think it was last Christmas, I gave you my heart, but then...no, wait, that's a song. The Christmas gig was excellent - really good fun - we had about ten or a dozen different spacehoppers and they were bouncing up and down and I don't think I've ever signed so many spacehoppers in all my life! And then it kind of happened again around Easter but it's kind of stalled since then because I don't think people can be bothered to take their spacehoppers anymore.

#### **What bands going around nowadays would you like to support on tour?**

**John:** Blue.

They're over though!

**John:** Lee Ryan, he's got his solo career going...oh I dunno.

So not Simon Webbe?

**John:** ...No. Not Simon Webbe. I mean obviously your best bet is to be supporting people who are a similar sort of style really but that you're also different enough from. So any of those punk bands...Blink-182...just anything.

**Duncan:** I'd love to support The Pixies.

**Spencer:** I'd love to be headlining really. What do you think about the rock 'n' roll stereotype? Are you all wild like Pete Doherty?

**Craig:** F\*cking wasted knob.

**John:** He just acts like an arse. At Live 8, he just came on stage and just made noise in the microphone and didn't actually perform or do anything and there's all these people worshipping him like he's the new saviour of music.