

## Ian "Knox" Carnochan & Pete - The Vibrators

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Photo Credit: Angela Monger

### How did The Vibrators get started?

**Ian:** Just prior to The Vibrators I'd been doing some three piece bands and stuff and I'd been playing in this bar and the wonder of wonders, Joe Strummer there playing the same. We both went to the same gigs. Joe Strummer was there just before me because he lived around the corner so he got the best night. I'd have the other night but that was all right. I ran an ad in the paper so I was picking up work from bands. We'd be playing with a jazz organist in a gay bar one night and be in an Irish show band another night playing guitar. Eddie wanted to start a band and he was very enthusiastic so we started The Vibrators and I thought it was just going to be another band. I think we were a normal bunch of sort of misfits musically. We all had very different ideas but we started playing and Eddie and Pat Collier the bass player used to go out all the time to places seeing if they could get us work. We started getting work and then we started playing faster and faster. The people were getting really into it and then suddenly there's pop rock you see and there we are doing this stuff. In a way I think we probably slightly contributed to it starting in England. It was probably coming through anyway but we were there. Then it just sort of picked up. We started playing and getting more work and we got to work with the Pistols and stuff but funny enough Eddie joined this band called Bazooka Joe who had various different people in the band. One of them was my cousin and then Adam Ant was in it and John Ellis who was in The Vibrators was in it and various other people. Maybe even Pat Collier who was in our band. They were doing a gig at St. Martin's Art College something like November 1975 and they were supported by this band doing their very first gig. They had to borrow equipment and they were called The Sex Pistols so such a small world. There they were. I wasn't there but I'm sure they were probably terrible. We just carried on and then we got loads of work and we ended up doing stuff with Chris Spedding. He had that song "Motorbiking" and then he was with Roxy Music. He was sort of the guitar hero in the early '70s in England. He got involved with Mickie Most who was England's most successful pop producer probably ever and he used to make all these singles. He did tons of stuff. I think he did Donovan, Jeff Beck, and all this stuff. He normally had a hit whereas lots of other people probably did masses of stuff and don't get so many hits. We worked with him and we signed to his label because we really didn't have any management prior to that whereas The Pistols and The Clash always had hip management people and we just basically have pretty well been going ever since. I left the band in '78 for various reasons. We reformed the original lineup back in '83. We've been playing ever since. Here we are today.

### Playing at Fat Daddy's! You guys got to meet The Sex Pistols.

**Ian:** No, they got to meet us.

### There we go. What was it like meeting up with those guys?

**Ian:** In those days they probably weren't so big. Early on they're not getting a lot of press. They're just other human beings. We worked with them and they were okay to get on with. You see them backstage and they're sort of nervous about going on as anyone else is.

**One thing I've noticed about a lot of bands is they start out and no one knows a whole lot about them. Then all of a sudden someone dies and the band gains notoriety like nobody's business.**

**Ian:** Yeah, Pete, it's up to you then. Oh actually, look I'll tell you what. We had someone die in our band but then they weren't actually dead so they came back alive. That's more unusual. We had Greg Van Cook on guitar for a while. He used to be in Electric Chairs. Jane County wrote in her book that he was dead so I put it in the book I wrote about The Vibrators that he was dead and then he turned up alive in New York. He's died and come back to life.

**You guys have gone through various lineup changes through the years. Can you tell me a bit about the guys who originally started the band?**

**Ian:** Pat Collier the original bass player does studio work. He really didn't like touring. I said well let's do some gigs. He said "well we don't do any gigs." I was going "what?" I couldn't understand it. He just liked to work day jobs and then rehearse once a week in a studio. I had no idea he didn't want to do any gigs. He just liked for the band to do studio stuff. He actually did, there's a tape when he was learning it, he did people like Bing Crosby. John Ellis the guitar player, when he left he worked with various other people like Peter Hamil, Peter Gabriel, and he was in The Stranglers for a while. I don't think he's doing very much at the moment.

**(A bird flies over and Knox covers a bit). We haven't gotten hit by the avian bird flu yet.**

**Ian:** I was trying to get hold of that. I want the updates on that.

**George does promise that if we do he will get the military involved.**

**Ian:** What's he going to do? Shoot down the birds or something?

**Pete:** It seems like the military solves all the problems in this country. That was the first thing they sent into New Orleans as well. Talk about food and water. Guns! That's what we need.

**Ian:** To keep the avian flu away. We've had loads of people in the band. That's what you do if you keep it running. The Addicts is one of the longest running bands with all the original members. I can't think how they've done that. They must be in the Masons or something.

**They must be very patient tolerant people.**

**Ian:** People come along and they play in the band for gigs. The bass player before Pete, Robbie, had to leave us. He said he had to earn some money.

**Was it that bad?**

**Ian:** He said "it's nothing personal. I need to earn some money."

**Who do you have in the band right now?**

**Ian:** Eddie on the drums. He's an original member and Pete here. He's been in the band for two years now.

### **What led you to join up with The Vibrators?**

**Pete:** Mental illness. I was playing with my own band and we supported The Vibrators. I got to know these guys from that. Then I played bass for U.K. Subs here and there. We were on the same bill and I think that was the time when Robbie told the guys he doesn't want to do an American tour. That was two years ago. I guess Charlie Harper from U.K. Subs told Eddie to give me a call because I was out of the band at that time and I didn't have anything to do. He gave me a call and offered me to just do the American tour. We got back to the U.K. and the guys keep calling me that there's a couple more shows that I've got to do. Robbie can't do it. It kept on and on and on. I was wondering when the hell he was coming back. I didn't have a chance to make my next move because this was going on. It ended up where I gave Robbie a call and asked him what he wanted to do. Is he coming back and he said no, he doesn't like touring. I said well I do and that was it.

### **What the fuck is the point of being in a band if you don't like to fucking go anywhere?**

**Ian:** We could be a studio band.

**Pete:** Yeah, but that's boring.

### **It is. You did a live show at CBGB's in 2004. They just recently put that on DVD. How do you feel about having that show on DVD and being re-released?**

**Ian:** Everything is moving up to DVD. You have to go on there. I thought that was quite good. That DVD. Yeah, we played okay and looked all right. It's gotten really good reviews everywhere.

### **They said you were turning 60.**

**Ian:** Yeah, I'm 60 now which I'm sort of surprised. One minute you're a little five year old and the next minute you're 60. I think 60 is a major thing. If you haven't accomplished a lot of stuff by the time you're 60 you're not going to and you have to come to terms with that. You're unlikely to be doing it which is slightly depressing but on the other hand I'm still out playing punk rock at the age of 60 whereas a lot of other people are dead or in hospital beds. Slumped in an armchair watching the telly.

### **GBH came through town and I had the pleasure of talking to those guys. Being 60 now, what's kept your interest in punk rock?**

**Ian:** The money we make. I just like playing really I suppose. You just sort of play and it goes on as just a day to day thing. Actually when I was 50 I didn't play with any of them. I think I said I'm going to stop doing it because I felt it was so ridiculous being on stage at age 50. You get a lot of kids and I just thought I didn't want to stand in front of these little kids looking at me when I'm so old. I sort of got past that now. As long as people keep coming and I can still play okay then I'll carry on playing. You don't know what's going to happen. You might trip over and break your leg.

### **Do you think punk is as relevant now as it was when it started out?**

**Ian:** Totally not but I think it's quite good live music. I'm beginning to think that punk kind of marginalized a lot with other very good music and made it very difficult for the bands who were around

at that time to carry on. They felt completely overlooked. I think people interested in music should check back to these other bands. They weren't top bands. They were third level bands but a lot of them made very nice music. I think even some major bands probably got very worried. They should check that music out.

**You guys are doing a punk covers CD too. From 1977.**

**Ian:** Yeah, we were hoping to have Lemmy sing on the song "Sonic Reducer". He was actually in the studio and his record company phoned up and said that he can't do it. He's got two record companies. He was actually in the studio to sing "Sonic Reducer" and I actually thought that Lemmy singing "Sonic Reducer" might be a bit of a hit because we did a really good backing track thing. We respect Lemmy and we were very excited about it. I kept thinking it was a really good song and Lemmy would sing it brilliantly. I think that punk fans would have really liked to have heard that song. It's such a shame that they said he couldn't do it.

**Was it a legality thing?**

**Ian:** Yeah, they said they think he's becoming increasingly more famous so they're controlling his output more.

**He's only been around 30 years.**

**Ian:** Yeah, it's such a shame. I'm sure if he sung it, I think it might be that it would become a hit. It's not just for us. I think it must have been one of the best punk songs that year. Lemmy would have sung it brilliantly. That's a great song. I think they're trying to get hold of Wayne Kramer to sing it now. I'm sure if they get him to do it, he'll do a brilliant job. Lemmy was the man for that. If you play "Sonic Reducer", imagine Lemmy singing it. It's going to be brilliant.

**You guys have been around for 30 years. How much longer do you think the band will be around?**

**Ian:** Possibly another 15 years.

**[The Vibrators](#)**