



[Boomtown Rats](#) at [Manchester Academy](#)

Reviewed by [Catherine Smyth](#) November 2013

Ok, I will admit that there was more grey and Grecian than in the band posters that adorned my wall when I was a teen. I was a 'rebel' who longed to see her favourite band; I even still have the single with the freebie ticket inside the clear vinyl but I never managed to get to the Bradford concert...

Now, nearly 30 years later, I finally got my golden ticket and it was worth the wait.

These 60-somethings had more energy than most bands half their age. Sir Bob owned the stage and he worked the crowd as he strutted his stuff until they literally hung on his every word. Bob's performance was Jaggeresque and since The Rolling Stones headlined Glastonbury this year, who knows where this latest reformation could lead.

The band exploded onto stage with **Eva Braun**, and the eclectic and electric mix of tracks that followed from all their albums allowed the audience to sing along and feel a part of the performance. We were not mere spectators at a showcase of songs known only to the artistes, unlike some gigs I have attended.

Bob's political rhetoric about Obama and Facebook was somewhat ironic as without the social network I might not have known the Rats were gigging again. It provided a clever link to **Someone's Looking At You**

, a real crowd pleaser that had the Academy rocking.

With Johnny Fingers and Gerry Cott absent, the four remaining members,

Bob Geldof

,

Garry Roberts

,

Simon Crowe

and

Pete Briquette

showed that they still had it. It was hard to believe they had not performed together for 27 years.

The anthemic **Rat Trap** and **I Don't Like Mondays** had the audience chanting back and when Bob rasped out the line... 'How to die' the crowd respectfully fell silent for the only time in the night. Songs from the Rats' first couple of albums *Looking After No 1*, *Modern Girl* and *Mary of the 4th Form* went down a storm as a sea of hands raised in the air punching out the lines.

Having voyeuristically spied on some of the 2013 concerts c/o YouTube, I had heard the links Bob was using and, at times, felt they came across with a hint of theatricals rather than sincerity, not that they weren't meant just that they had been recited many times before. His references to his fake snakeskin suit brought light relief and endeared him to the audience whose average age was probably, like me, late 40s.

Banana Republic cleverly moulded into bluesy **Many Rivers to Cross** and the whole concert was non-stop action for 80 minutes.

Loud Boomtown Rats chants brought the 'boys' back for a further three encore songs ending on their new song

Boomtown Rats

One newspaper report quoted Bob saying the group had reformed because the three other original Rats on stage had fallen on hard times, but without multimillionaire Bob's lyrics and vocals the band would not have filled the Academy. **The Academy** is a fabulous venue, offering the intimacy not enjoyed in the Arena or Apollo. It allows the audience to feel a part of the performance instead of having to watch the act on a large screen. Even for a 5ft midget like myself I managed a pretty good view.

Should they continue to gig next year, and I sincerely hope they will, I will be back. Please don't upscale and go for larger venues. I openly admit to being an ardent Rats fan – the first single I bought was a Juke Box second of **Rat Trap** from a shop in Keighley for 50p.

Having the chance to see the Rats live after all these years was, I admit a great big dollop of nostalgia with icing on top, but what is wrong with that? And what has changed in the last 30 years? We are more looking out for number one now than we ever were, someone is always looking at you, but it is no longer just the curtain twitchers. We are as baffled to the senseless of the gun murders in America now as we ever were when ***I Don't Like Mondays*** topped the charts.

I own every album and every single. Live Aid and Live Eight DVDs are now in my collection. On that subject, there is cynicism as to Sir Bob's involvement in Live Aid. Should pop stars really get involved in political situations – is it their place? Are they able to make a difference or is it just an attempt to boost their flagging careers? If the latter were true, then it was a spectacular flop. On the awareness raising, well it certainly did that.

As his nickname 'Bob the Gob' suggests he always has an opinion but in this day and age of Political Correctness I personally find that a breath of fresh air.