

Burning Shed Evening

Friday, 16th June 2006,
The Garage, Norwich



Photo © Carl Glover

The evening started with a short set from live-looping guitarist, Andy Butler, as the audience of around 120 entered the venue from the foyer. The lights then faded as Tim Bowness & Peter Chilvers performed *California, Norfolk & Winter With You*, both songs stripped of the albums strings, marimba and sound-effects, just piano and voice remaining. Bowness / Chilvers were then joined by Michael Bearpark on guitar effectively making it a Tim Bowness & Samuel Smiles performance of *Dreaming Of Babylon & Sorry Looking Soldier*. Again, the performances were stripped to the very core, but the emotional bite remained.

“Going, going gone, dreaming of Babylon
Somewhere that you belong”

Lord Chilvers & Micheal Bearpark left the stage, and Tim was joined by Italian band Nosound, for a one song performance of the new track *Someone Starts To Fade Away*. As the evening progressed, the instrumentation built, with bass being added to the voice / piano / guitar line up for the Nosound performance. This adding of layers (and players) was very effective, and percussion was finally added when Tim was joined by the My Hotel Band (Peter Chilvers, Pete Morgan, Michael Bearpark & Andy Booker).

World Afraid was up first, followed by “ a track you can’t buy from the merchandise stall”, the *Sleepwalker* single ‘b’ side (is there such a thing anymore?), *Unprotected*. I’m not sure if the “casual hard-on” line remained intact in this live outing, I guess I’ll have to wait until I hear the bootleg recording. Hint, hint, dear reader!



Pictured above (left to right) -
Lord Chilvers, Tim Bowness & Pete Morgan
Photo © Lisa Vincent



Pictured left
(left to right) - Lord Chilvers, Pete Morgan,
Tim Bowness (+ borrowed megaphone!),
Andy Booker & Micheal Bearpark
Photo © Carl Glover

A powerful version of *The Me I Knew* featured some very warm, textured percussion from Andy Booker. The first section of the evening ended with the My Hotel Band’s versions of Centrozoon’s *Make Me Forget* and Bowness / Chilvers’ melancholy, haunting *Days Turn Into Years*.

Seasoned no-man watchers would have noted that both Nosound & the My Hotel Band had previously performed no-man songs live with Tim before, but had not done so on this occasion. This was a clear pointer to what may happen later in the evening.

After a brief interval, the second half of the performance started as the first began, with one man on stage with guitar, but this time in the form of Belgian drone guitarist Fear Falls Burning. After about 10 minutes, Steven Wilson took to the stage and played guitar over a Fear Falls Burning guitar drone set.

Pictured right - fear falls burning & Steven Wilson
Photo © Lisa Vincent



SW alone on stage..
Photo © Carl Glover

The improvised piece segued into *Cover Version I* aka *Thank U*. Steven then performed Porcupine Tree's *Even Less*, and a section of *The Sky Moves Sideways Phase One*. Both tracks worked surprisingly well without a full band, even if Steven did describe some of the performances as a bit "Billy Bragg"!

Two more Porcupine Tree songs followed (after SW ignored a shout for *Arriving Somewhere But Not Here!*), with **In Absentia's** *Trains* and the first live outing of the beautiful *Stars Die*, both performed on acoustic guitar.

Stevens 45 minute solo set ended with three Blackfield songs, the first being the track *Blackfield* (SW was joined by Lord Chilvers on piano for this song), before switching back to the electric guitar for a blistering take on the song from the forthcoming **Blackfield II** album, the potential single *Once*, featuring one of SW's best ever riffs. If you have not heard this song, pop over to the Blackfield Myspace site at <http://www.myspace.com/blackfield>. The slow-burning *Cloudy Now* closed the Steven Wilson set.

SW, on his personal SWHQ website, had appeared to pour cold water over any hopes of a no-man performance, and also responded to a shout on the night for him to play "*Days In The Trees - with Tim*" with "maybe later, maybe not", but at the end of the evening, he ushered the My Hotel Year band with Tim Bowness back on, which marked the long overdue return of no-man to the live stage. It brought a tear to Mr Kinski's eye, I have to admit!



So, for the first time since 1994, no-man happened to be: Tim Bowness (vocals), Steven Wilson (lead guitar) joined by Peter Chilvers (piano), Michael Bearpark (guitar), Pete Morgan (bass) and Andrew Booker (electronic drums). The all-too brief set opened with **Flowermouth's** *Watching Over Me*, which sounded very similar to the album version, and to be honest, sent the respectful audience wild.

Pictured left - Tim Bowness & Steven Wilson
Picture © Sonic Chronicler

It was fitting that the 2006 live incarnation would concentrate on the recent **Together We're Stranger** album for this live performance, and the title track was the second song in the set. I'd always hoped that if no-man performed live again, that they would forego the technology of backing tapes and DAT, and bring the organic performances of recent albums to the stage, and this is exactly what happened in Norwich. *Together We're Stranger* contained a moving guitar solo from Steven, and an emotive performance from all the musicians on the stage. If this ever happens again, and we get a full no-man show to promote the next album, The Hotel Year band would clearly be able to lend their talents to all the no-man material, from the recent albums back to the beat-driven early no-man songs. After *Together We're Stranger* the band left the stage and headed back to the dressing room, stage right, but the audience screamed for more. After such a long wait, we demanded more!

Tim, Steven & Peter returned, and seemed to be sorting out what to play next right there, up on stage. Lord Chilvers playfully teased out the opening coda to *Days In The Trees* to much laughter from the stage. This was a possible song to be performed on the night, but apparently it didn't work in rehearsal so in the end the final song performed by no-man was *Things I Want To Tell You* (you could hear SW mutter "oh that one" after Tim sang the first line). Talk about winging it! As Richard Smith points out in his **Live Amongst The White Trash** piece, there was a physical closeness between Tim & Steven, as if they were supporting and guiding each other through the songs. Although there was hardly any rehearsal time, it was extremely moving to watch, and a tantalising glimpse of how powerful no-man's recent music can be in a live environment. The concert ended all too-soon with Tim & Steven taking centre stage, soaking in the applause and obvious warmth from the audience. No "we'll be back soon" or indeed, any hints about the possibility of further live no-man outings.

Like many others in attendance that night, I hope this was a case of no-man tentatively dipping their toes back in the water, rather than a live goodbye.

Mr Kinski 24th June 2006.



No-man 2006
Photo © Simon Clarke



No-man 2006
Photo © Simon Clarke

Mr Kinski would like to thank Simon Clarke, Sonic Chronicler, Carl Glover & Lisa Vincent for the photographs (not in Black & White!) in this review. And I would like to thank all the musicians who took part in the Burning Shed evening. It was one of the most enjoyable concerts I have ever attended.