

**DAN REED NETWORK**  
**Marquee, London**

DAN DOESN'T say much. It's fair to say that Dan doesn't need to. His perpetual sense of swing, melody and rhythm, with or without his guitar, screams, whispers and taunts the capacity foot stompers better than a cartload of wideboy American frontmen ever could. This music *has* to do the talking.

They possess a swagger built on confident bridges, a posse in effect, they crossover with a geniality that exudes as easily as a small tributary flowing into a larger stream. Real cool.

It's debatable whether a year from now *Kerrang!* will give breathing space to this elegant street gang, but for tonight the street-evil dudes rubbed shoulders with denim and leather and peeled off in layers to a lightfooted combination raised on the purest funk and smothered in a distorted guitar that knew all the tunes. We need more nights like this.

We need people to appreciate a guitarist in the shape of Brion James; a man who flips from Chic disco tripping to an elongated set of runs that would not look out of place on one of Mike Varney's guitar hero albums. For them there is no inbetween, no need to state that they're jumping over as it were. No need for explanations, or excuses, they just *are*. Which sounds drippy, though they're nothing like.

Be it the almost AOR taste that coats 'Tamin' The Wild Nights', the funk (that word again) pout attached to the needle sharp guitar of the quite brilliant 'Get To You', the Princely 'Halfway Around The World', the sparkling stance of the absurdly glittered 'Forgot To Make Her Mine', or the chanting path chosen by the size nine 'Ritual', it all came together as easily as spending the morning in bed instead of making your train. All too easy.

And they moved, hell, how do you think they moved? Like water snakes skimming on the clear liquid surface they call home. Like feline hunters making the kill look somehow perversely beautiful. Baby oil in torn jeans.

They plunder with a gleam in their collective eye. They came all this way and I can hardly wait for them to do it all again. They are by no means pure, they are by no means staid; they are an effervescing mass, a boiling pot of good intentions, dynamics and a true goal.

I'd wager a small fortune that a good half of you reading this would hate the Dan Reed Network album just *because* it doesn't fit the mould, it doesn't fall into place like the simplest of jigsaws, but it does open the way for experimentation. It's a new branch on a very old tree.

Open your minds a little.

PHIL WILDING

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