

Gutter

Electronic Press Kit



In the seventies and early eighties, Gutter progressed from being a schoolboy band playing parties and dances to becoming a proficient and capable recording outfit with seven top ten singles to its name as well as a couple of number one hit singles both in Zimbabwe and South Africa.

“Gutter is the only band to have made it without the hassles of fame and fortune”

Bodnik`

The band even had the dubious distinction of knocking Michael Jackson off the number one spot on the charts.

This phase of the band's development concluded with the release of its first album, *Cabbages and Kings* which was essentially a collection of its greatest hits.



As was the case with many bands of the time, success in the charts did not equal financial success and with the pressure on the band members to finish their education, the band split to enable the

various members to complete their university degrees, get married and carve out careers in their various disciplines.

However, as successful as their individual careers had been, there was always the nagging regret of a job left unfinished. There was a wealth of material that had been left unrecorded and unpublished and if nothing was done about it, it would vanish without a trace. Finally, some 25 years after the release of the first album they decided to do something about it. However, this was not a challenge to be undertaken lightly. The members of Gutter were scattered about the planet so recording traditionally by getting together in a recording studio was not an option. However, with the advent of rapid internet connectivity and affordable digital recording technology, it was theoretically possible to set up satellite studios on three continents and

record the various parts remotely, collate the parts and produce them centrally. All that would be required was a powerful computer, some modern DAW (digital audio workstation) software and the expertise to use the software. Oh, one other thing that would be required was a persuasive argument to convince each other that this would be a worthwhile endeavor given that it would take up most of their available spare time with all of them holding down demanding day jobs. After several test demo projects, the process looked like it could work. It seemed that high-class quality music could be created without the need for the band members to be together in one place. It was not going to be easy and it wasn't going to be quick but at least it was possible. The back catalogue of songs was brought back to life and stand-out songs selected, and pretty much before the first note was recorded the entire album structure had been decided. The working title of the Album, 'Shoes & Ships and Sealing Wax' was chosen, a suitable sequel to the previous album 'Cabbages & Kings'.



Shoes & Ships and Sealing Wax is not merely a collection of songs, it is an album carefully constructed to take the listener through a multitude of emotions, love, hate, denial, despair, hope, anger and even nostalgia. The fact that most of these songs were written during the band's formative years, belies the fact that they had lived long enough to understand and invoke such complex emotions. Perhaps the 35-year gap between composition and final arrangement has added a certain depth and finesse to the final production that would not have been there had the compositions been recorded at the time.

Remote collaboration has certainly had its challenges and constraints, but it also has had some unanticipated benefits. The tried and trusted methods of rehearsing an arrangement prior to studio recording could not practically be done over long distance and so the band had to work out its own method of developing an arrangement and molding the songs into a coherent form. This involved putting down a structure, usually bass, drums and a rhythm instrument and allowing each member to develop their own parts independently. These would then be mixed down in a central location and critically assessed. These parts then would either, be accepted in principle and iteratively refined or re-worked. This kind of step by step refinement has led to arrangements that are well thought through, deliberate and well defined. Every note of every instrument has been included with a specific purpose and contribution to make and this has led to a strong and refined result. The old constraints of restricted studio time and

Mastering Engineer.

Paul Ward's involvement has been a masterstroke (if you'll excuse the pun) and his input at the end of the process has added a special element to each song.

limited instrumentation are no longer an issue but as appealing as this might seem a fair amount of discipline has been required to settle the arrangements in a reasonable amount of time. And, as if remote collaboration was not enough, the band decided to enlist the remote services of UK mastering engineer Paul Ward to do the final mixes and mastering finishes. Paul's involvement has been the masterstroke (if you'll excuse the pun) and his input at the end of the process has added a special element to each song.

The genre is not immediately obvious, some have described it as progressive rock, melodic rock and even pretentiously as intelligent rock. While the music may well be described as Intelligent, it is most certainly rock with strong melodies and arrangements which have finally breathed life into some deserving songs.

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