

Sassafras

Sassafras were a rock band from South Wales first formed in 1970. They played a mix of rock 'n' roll, progressive rock and country rock with the emphasis on vocal harmony. The use of twin guitar solos was a distinctive feature of their music. The band holds the UK record for the group performing the greatest number of live gigs in a year.

The band was formed in South Wales in 1970 as a three-piece band with guitarist Ralph Evans, bassist Ricky John Holt and drummer Rob Reynolds. Shortly afterwards guitarist David (Dai) Shell, a Cardiff guitarist of some note, joined and became largely responsible for the tone of the band.

The band signed to George Martin's AIR Productions in 1972 with a line-up completed by Terry Bennett on vocals and Robert 'Congo' Jones on drums. The band utilised the twin lead guitar approach to great effect and released their debut album, *Expecting Company*, on Polydor in 1973.

The band toured America's larger venues with such headlining groups as Ten Years After, Fleetwood Mac and Peter Frampton, but never found real commercial success. Sassafras achieved good press coverage, appearances on BBC's *The Old Grey Whistle Test* and notable rock radio shows of the time, as well as festival appearances and major support slots, but never achieved the widespread appeal of fellow Welsh rock band Man.

The band has been described as "a sort-of Welsh Fleetwood Mac/Eagles hybrid, with soaring west-coast melodies and a real roadtrip rock feel".^[3] In the early 1970s they held the record for highest number of gigs in a single year, with their 332 beating Slade by one.^[3]

Personnel

Dai Shell- lead guitar

Ralph Evans - lead guitar

Rob Reynolds - drums

Ricky John Holt - bass

Terry Bennett - vocals

Robert 'Congo' Jones - drums

Garry Davis - drums

Marco James - keyboards

Chris Sharley - drums