

# EDGAR BROUGHTON BAND

The London 'underground' scene welcomed the anarchic, revolutionary and irreverent Broughtons, Britain's answer to America's MC5 and Captain Beefheart, the Edgar Broughton Band into an active fraternity during the early days of 1969. The band comprised Edgar Broughton (b. 24 October 1947, Warwick, Warwickshire, England; guitar/vocals), Steve Broughton (b. 20 May 1950, Warwick, Warwickshire, England; drums/vocals) and Arthur Grant (bass, guitar, vocals). Edgar's growling voice was similar to that of Captain Beefheart and they regularly featured his 'Dropout Boogie' in their act. Following their arrival in London they played at a number of small club gigs arranged by Blackhill Enterprises. They were given a wider audience by playing at the famous Blind Faith free concert in Hyde Park in June 1969, where the Broughtons incited the crowd to a frenzy with an exhaustive rendition of the favourite, 'Out Demons Out'.

In 1968, the Edgar Broughton Band moved to Notting Hill Gate, London, seeking a recording contract and a wider audience, and were picked up by Blackhill Enterprises. Blackhill landed them their first record deal, on EMI's progressive rock label Harvest Records, in December 1968. Their first single was "Evil"/"Death of an Electric Citizen", released in June 1969, which was also the first single released by Harvest.

The first single was followed by the Edgar Broughton Band's first album, *Wasa Wasa*. *Wasa Wasa* retained a heavily blues influenced sound that was hard-driven and propelled by Edgar Broughton's gritty vocal style, which was similar to that of Captain Beefheart and Howlin' Wolf. The Broughtons entered into an attempt to capture their live sound on record by organising a performance at Abbey Road on 9 December 1969. Only one track was released at the time: a rendition of "Out, Demons Out!", an adaptation of The Fugs' song "Exorcising the Demons Out Of the Pentagon", which had become the band's set-closer and anthem. The rest of the recording was lost until its rediscovery and release in a remixed form in 2004 as *Keep Them Freaks a Rollin': Live at Abbey Road 1969*.

The band's touring attracted some controversy from their series of free concerts at locations such as children's playgrounds, and from a number of cases of civil disorder occurring at their shows. The most notorious incidents were a show in Redcar at which a fight broke out between audience members and led to violent police intervention, and a show in Keele where the audience vandalized the venue using paint given to them by the band. Though the band denied doing anything to incite any of these incidents (in the case of Keele, Edgar Broughton admitted to giving paint to the audience but argued that "we didn't tell them to do anything with it"), several towns banned the group's concerts.

The Edgar Broughton Band kept recording, releasing the live performance of "Out Demons, Out!" as a single (b/w "Momma's Reward (Keep Those Freaks a Rollin'")") and following it, in June 1970, with the album *Sing Brother Sing*. This was accompanied by the single "Up Yours!" (b/w "Officer Dan"), a polemic on the 1970 General Election declaring their intention to drop out. The song featured a string arrangement by David Bedford.

Their next single, "Apache Dropout", combined The Shadows' "Apache" with Captain Beefheart's "Drop Out Boogie". It was played (to astonished and puzzled reactions) on the David Jacobs-hosted BBC Television's *Juke Box Jury*.<sup>[citation needed]</sup> Jerry Lordan, the composer of "Apache", insisted

that the title be "Apache Dropout" instead of the original "Dropout Apache". The single reached No. 33[3] on the UK Singles Chart.

In 1971, the band decided that existence as a power trio was limiting, and asked Victor Unitt, who had been playing meanwhile in The Pretty Things, to rejoin the band. In May, with the new lineup, they released their eponymous third album, which contained "Evening Over Rooftops" (again with strings by David Bedford). Edgar Broughton Band contained heavy blues and even country influences.

The album was followed by the release of the double A-side "Hotel Room"/"Call Me A Liar". This was played by Tony Blackburn as his 'record of the week' upon its release.[citation needed] The single failed to chart, but the album sold well throughout Europe, especially in Germany.

With the success of their third album, the Edgar Broughton Band relocated to Devon to begin recording for their next album, *Inside Out*. The band then recorded their fifth album, *Oora*, in 1972; following the release of this album Unitt departed the band.

In 1975 the band signed to NEMS. In the same year, John Thomas joined the band on guitar for the Broughtons' sixth album, *Bandages*. This featured a softer sound than previous releases. Shortly after the release of *Bandages*, John Thomas left and was replaced by Terry Cottam. In 1976, having recorded the live album *Live Hits Harder* (which was not released until 1979), the Edgar Broughton Band dissolved.

However, Edgar and Steve Broughton together with Grant regrouped as The Broughtons to release *Parlez-Vous English?* in 1979, with Tom Nordon and Pete Tolson (ex-Pretty Things) playing guitar and Richard de Bastion on keyboards. This was the Band's first adventure into a fuller, more orchestral style of heavy rock. Pete Tolson was not retained after the release of the album and was replaced by John Thomas for the two years of European touring that followed. Tom Norden appears again, along with keyboardists Duncan Bridgeman and Dennis Haines, on *Superchip*, released in 1982.

After this the band dissolved again; recording no more studio material but touring infrequently throughout the 1980s and 1990s esp. In Germany including even a major gig in then still socialist East Berlin's Seelenbinder Halle, where they were hailed by thousands of fans for their anti-imperialistic, left-wing attitude. Another mini-tour in 1989 also included a gig at The Oval in London.

The band reformed properly once again in 2006, with Edgar's son Luke joining on keyboards and guitar, after the re-issue of their back catalogue had stimulated new interest in their work. They had a mini tour of England and Germany then completed a European tour in 2007, including an appearance at the German Burg Herzberg Festival. The Edgar Broughton Band disbanded once again in 2010.