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Barry Masters from Eddie & The Hot Rods at the Fermain Tavern last Saturday. (Picture by Mark Windsor, 0671953)

Review by Thee Groovy Ghouler

The power and the glory

I COULD feel the atmosphere the moment I walked in the door of the Fermain Tavern. There was a real tingling in the place. I had heard mixed reports about the first band, Alderney's Rawcuz Crowz. I was, however, looking forward to seeing them. They play what I would describe as a twisted kind of garage blues. A female drummer holds the band together and although I shouldn't go into the Meg White comparison, I can't help it because, quite simply, she plays like her. I would say her busier rhythms are actually better, as she is aided by Mr Cool himself on bass, a busy young guitar player and Mr Rawcuz Crow himself blasting away on harmonica.

The first part of the set was OK but in the second part they were a completely different band and really hit their stride, even having to put up with 'can't dance at all man but think I can' and 'pointing and shouting man'. They just kept on powering through their set, a high point of which was a song called Betty Brown. Mr Rawcuz Crow took a wander through the audience, blowing his harp for all he was worth. It was a good set and I was impressed, as I think they will get better and better. I like the fact that the female drummer takes her handbag on stage with her. Nice.

Now, ladies and gentlemen, the main event. This is a style of music with which I am very familiar and The Hot Rods did not disappoint from the start to the finish. They hit the stage like an Airbus 380 on take-off. A rakish, sharp as a razor Barry Masters had the audience in the palm of his hand from the start. The Hot Rods are tight, tight, tight with a twin guitar assault and huge, goggle-eyed manic

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grinning and gurning from the new wave attired bass man, all held together by one of the best punk rock drummers I have seen for a long time. They even managed to 'up a gear' as from the song Living a Lie (I think it was called). Things really started rockin'. The Hot Rods play a mix of powerpop rhythm and blues and what used to be called new wave, (it's punk really, new wave was just a nicer name, in my humble opinion) but hang on a minute, they were one of the originators. It bothers me that they are sometimes referred to as pub

rock. I hate that term and this does not describe the band. Pub rock was never this energetic.

People were really up and dancing and Barry used this to get a call and response thing going from the crowd. He really is a masterful front man – if you'll excuse the pun. He preened and pranced like someone half his age. The behemoth bass man snapped his bottom e-string during Power and Glory, but they didn't miss a beat and he carried on with the three remaining strings.

At this point The Hot Rods could have taken the crowd anywhere they wanted and had everybody clapping and dancing. Next came a song everybody knows, announced Barry as the band pounded into the Them classic Gloria – cue more sweaty bodies and dripping walls and a dancing and singing crowd.

The last song was announced and everybody knew it was going to be The Hot Rods' classic, as they pummelled into Do Anything You Wanna Do. It was by this time obvious they were going to get an encore and came on to drive the expectant crowd into even more of a frenzy with Stepping Stone and The Kids Are All Right. A great band, a great gig and a nice bunch of fellas. I must mention that Chris Staples at the Tavern is doing a fine job bringing these bands over and seems to have found a niche for this type of music. Long may it continue.