

FREE MAGAZINE

2 TONE

THE SOUND OF COVENTRY



JERRY DAMMERS: Specials founder tells his story

PETE PAPHIDES on 2 Tone's musical legacy

Exclusive interview with **PAULINE BLACK**

NEVILLE and **SUGARY STAPLE** on rude boy style

DJ CHRIS TOFU: 'It's time for a new revolution'

DAVE MARSHALL BARRETT on the spirit of ska

WIN TICKETS to The Specials in Coventry

HELLO



As 2 Tone celebrates its 40th anniversary in 2019, it seems only right that our great city reminds the world that it was at the forefront of social and political change through music back in the 1970s and 80s.

This important music label and movement, spearheaded by a young Jerry Dammers, was launched to speak out about the issues, stresses and violence between communities at that moment in time. This movement brought artists from the white, African and Caribbean communities together to promote unity, to fight racism and encourage artists around the world to stand up against apartheid.

It's 25 years now since apartheid ended in South Africa, but with intolerance on the rise, and communities in our cities divided, we are starting to see the youth of today creating their own movements through music.

Just as the spirit of 2 Tone follows a rich tradition of activism – from Lady Godiva and George Eliot, through to the creation of twin cities and peace and reconciliation movements – so too will our year as the UK City of Culture. 2021 will be a joyous celebration of our Coventry communities, our creativity and all of our culture, and I am determined that in the spirit of 2 Tone our programme will have a strong social conscience and create a call to action.

So turn on your stereo, or stream your 2 Tone playlist, and read on for interviews with some of 2 Tone's key players, with expert reflections on its past, present and future.

Enjoy!

Chenine Bhatena

Creative Director, Coventry City of Culture 2021



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CREATING THE COVENTRY SOUND

Pete Chambers, founder of Coventry Music Museum and a lifelong 2 Tone fan, reflects on the origins of this groundbreaking movement

As the angry glow of punk began to fade in the late 70s, music fans started looking elsewhere for the next big thing. With their eyes firmly fixed on London, they little realised that a new sound was emerging in the city of Coventry. The first 2 Tone release, The Specials' *Gangsters*, made the charts in the summer of 1979 and reached number six. It was a landmark moment for Coventry, for the national music scene, and for the people who had produced this sensational fusion music.

But where did this phenomenon come from? Jerry Dammers, an art student and part-time musician from Coventry, had a dream of forming a superband made up of the city's finest musicians. Each one was carefully cherry-picked: Horace Panter, a fellow Lanchester Polytechnic art student who was playing in the soul band Breaker, rhythm guitarist Lynval Golding and drummer Silverton Hutchinson from Pharaohs Kingdom, Terry Hall from Squad, and Roddy Radiation from The Wild Boys. The band was christened The Coventry Automatics and they performed a mash-up of reggae rhythms with the energy of punk rock.

It was during their residency at Coventry punk club Mr George that the band ditched the slower sounds of reggae for the faster beats of ska. It dovetailed perfectly with the velocity of punk and a new genre was created almost overnight. They secured a support slot on the Clash's *On Parole* tour, allowing them to hone their stagecraft. The Coventry Sound had arrived, and in 1979 that unique amalgam of punk and ska made the UK's record labels prick up their ears.

Part of The Specials' plan was to promote other artists who had a similar mindset and to release their music on their 2 Tone record label. The B-side of *Gangsters* was an eerie

instrumental by The Selecter, a band headed by guitarist and songwriter Neol Davies and singer Pauline Black. With vocalist Arthur 'Gaps' Hendrickson, bassist Charley Anderson, drummer Charley 'H' Bembridge, Desmond Brown on the Hammond organ and Compton Amanor on guitar, they were a unit worthy of the 2 Tone name.

And what of that famous name? Jerry came up with it when he was designing the stylised black and white Walt Jabsco figure for the record label. As Jerry told me earlier this year, the black and white checks on the 2 Tone label referenced the legendary Chess Records, New York taxi cabs, and the checked tape that he used to put on his bike as a teenage mod. The 2 Tone name was suggested by the Tonic material – a blend of wool and mohair – that was used for suits popular with mods and rude boys.

'I wasn't actually thinking about the racial mix at all when I designed that label,' Jerry told me. 'People took it as meaning that, and to me that was a bit too obvious, but I didn't mind it – that's fine if people want to see it that way.'

The ska beat was soon causing waves. Madness joined the 2 Tone label and had their first hit with *The Prince*. The Selecter consolidated their success with number eight hit *On My Radio* and The Specials made the top 10 again with the help of ska trombone legend Rico Rodriguez with *A Message to You Rudy*. They released their first album, *The Specials*, in October 1979.

On 8 November of that year, The Specials, The Selecter and Madness all appeared on the same edition of *Top of the Pops*. The Beat, fellow 2 Tone travellers from just down the road in Brum, then had a number six hit with their first release, a cover of *Tears of a Clown*. 2 Tone was reaching critical mass.



The Specials in New York, 1980

Credit: Ebet Roberts

'We always knew Coventry was a special place and now everyone could see why'

The phenomenon continued into a new year and a new decade. The Specials topped the charts for the first time in February 1980 with their *Live* EP and its lead track *Too Much Too Young*. The EP was evidence – if it were needed – of the energy of the live shows known as The 2 Tone Tours. At these shows, The Specials, The Selecter and Madness would take to the stage one after the other, leaving the audience a sweaty wreck on the floor at the end of the night, wondering why they ever thought skanking in a Crombie overcoat and heavy boots was a good idea. For the most part, the tours went to plan, though there was often a small right-wing faction who rejected the message of songs like *Doesn't Make It Alright*:

'Just because I'm a black boy just because you're a white it doesn't mean you have to hate me, it doesn't mean we have to fight.'

Walk around Coventry at this time and it was hard to ignore the tribes of Harrington-bedecked rude boys and girls, stretching at their braces and posturing to see just how far back on their heads they could balance their pork pie hats. I was one of them – and I was part of something exciting. Maybe businesses were closing down, but we had our bands, we had our music.

From the summer of 1979 to the summer of 1981, we lapped up all the attention. We always knew Coventry was a special place and now everyone could see why. Sadly, as we enjoyed the spotlight, the 2 Tone movement was fragmenting. But there was time for a magnificent swansong. *Ghost Town* was an eerie, flute-driven soundtrack to an era, a song that was as joyous as it was bleak. Most felt it was just about Coventry, but in truth it was about the urban decay of a country, our country. The song hit number one in the summer of 1981.

By the end of that year, The Specials had split and new bands were formed. Terry, Neville Staple and Lynval became Fun Boy Three, Horace went to General Public with former Beat members Dave Wakeling and Ranking Roger. Roddy had his own band The Tearjerkers and Jerry and John Bradbury became The Special A.K.A. The Selecter too had also ceased to exist. The glory days of the genre looked over, but there was one final flourish to come: *Free Nelson Mandela*, probably the greatest protest song ever recorded. It is Jerry Dammers' masterpiece, a song that raised awareness of the plight of the imprisoned South African anti-apartheid revolutionary who would eventually become president of his country.

Forty years on from that seminal moment in 1979, 2 Tone has become just as much part of our civic fabric as watchmaking, the Blitz and Lady Godiva. It's part of the official city timeline, and as we approach City of Culture 2021, it will form the soundtrack to the celebrations. This year The Specials have been riding high at the top of the charts again with their latest album *Encore*, Roddy Radiation is rocking the country with his *Skabilly Rebels*, Neville Staple and his band continue to please the crowds, and Jerry Dammers has some plans of his own. The Selecter, The Beat and Madness still make great albums. We have sadly lost Brad, Rico, Saxa and now Roger, but their spirit and the spirit of all who served 2 Tone lives on. They can feel safe in the knowledge that they made a difference.

The shift from *Ghost Town* to *Host Town* has been exciting and above all unpredictable.

As we look ahead to Coventry's tenure as City of Culture, it's important to honour the legacy of 2 Tone's founders. Forty years ago they changed Coventry, and the course of pop music, forever. Here's to the next 40 years.

For info about the Coventry Music Museum visit www.covmm.co.uk



Pete Chambers



musicadviser.blogspot.co.uk

Credit: John Coles

KEY BANDS

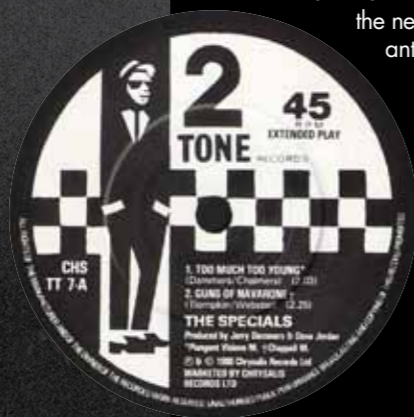


THE SPECIALS

Formed in Coventry in 1977, The Specials featured 2 Tone founder Jerry Dammers (see interview, p8-11) on keyboards, alongside vocalists Terry Hall and Neville Staple, guitarists Lynval Golding and Roddy Radiation, bassist Horace Panter, brass players Dick Cuthell and Rico Rodriguez and drummer John Bradbury.

Between 1979 and 1981 they had seven consecutive top 10 singles in the UK, including two number ones – Too Much Too Young and Ghost Town. The band split shortly after the release of the latter, which would become an era-defining song. Three members left to form Fun Boy Three, while Dammers kept going under the new name The Special A.K.A., recording the anthemic Free Nelson Mandela in 1984.

Six original members of The Specials subsequently reformed. In 2019 a line-up featuring Terry Hall, Lynval Golding and Horace Panter released *Encore*, which reached number one in the album charts.



THE SELECTER

Also formed in Coventry, The Selecter burst onto the scene when their self-titled song was chosen as the B-side of The Specials' debut single *Gangsters*. Founded by Neol Davies and featuring lead singer Pauline Black (see interview, p14-15), they were soon releasing singles in their own name including *On My Radio* and *Three Minute Hero*.

Like The Specials, they split in 1981, but a decade later reformed and have continued recording music and touring ever since. Their 40th anniversary tour kicks off later this year.



MADNESS

The London-based band released their debut single via 2 Tone records in August 1979. The Prince, a tribute to Jamaican ska musician Prince Buster, reached number 16. Madness soon started touring with The Specials and The Selecter and their acclaimed debut album *One Step Beyond* climbed to number 2 in the charts.

Madness, with Suggs on lead vocals, went on to release a string of hit singles, including *Baggy Trousers*, *It Must Be Love*, *House of Fun*, and *Our House*. They split in 1986 but reunited in 1992 for a series of 'Madstock!' concerts and have firmly consolidated their status as one of Britain's biggest bands.



THE BEAT

Hailing from Birmingham, The Beat were the fourth band to join the 2 Tone label. Led by vocalists Dave Wakeling and Roger Charlery (Ranking Roger), their first single was a cover of Smokey Robinson's Motown hit *Tears of a Clown* and they followed it up with a string of hits including *Mirror in the Bathroom*, *Too Nice to Talk To* and the pointedly political *Stand Down Margaret*.

Like most others on the 2 Tone label they disbanded in the early 1980s, but have since reformed for new recordings and tours. The band and their large fanbase were rocked by the death earlier this year of Ranking Roger, who the *New York Times* described as 'a star of the ska revival'.



OTHER 2 TONE BANDS OF NOTE

The Bodysnatchers

Hailing from London, this all-female band was formed by bassist Nicky Summers and featured lead singer Rhoda Dakar, who went on to perform with The Special A.K.A.

The Swinging Cats

This Coventry-based band was shortlived but toured with The Selecter and released one single through the 2 Tone label (*Mantovani/Away*). Several of its members went on to join other 2 Tone outfits.

The Higsons

Founded at the University of East Anglia, the band was named after its lead singer Charlie Higson, who later went on to find fame as a comedian and author. Their 2 Tone singles included *Tear The Whole Thing Down* and *Run Me Down*.

The Apollinaires

This 10-piece, initially formed at Leicester School of Art, joined the label in 1982. Their first 2 Tone single was *The Feeling's Gone*, featuring vocals by Rhoda Dakar. They toured extensively with bands including The Higsons and The Beat.

JERRY DAMMERS

'I ALWAYS WANTED TO FORM A CLASSIC BRITISH BAND'

The founder of The Specials and the 2 Tone record label on how it all began

I always played in bands at school, and when I came back to Coventry in the early 70s after doing an Art foundation course in Nottingham, I started playing in different line-ups. I got into the band Nitetrain, who had Ray King and Neol Davies and two Barbadian brothers, Earl and Raymond.

Everything in those days was covers, but Neol and I wanted to make it more funky. We did a bit of reggae, but it was sort of cabaret reggae and we wanted to make it more serious. I went over to Birmingham and joined the Cissy Stone band. That was covers as well, but it was a bit more funky and serious so I toured around with them for a while.

This was around the time of punk and new wave and suddenly it was acceptable to do original material. That was a big change. The music scene was really in the doldrums before punk.

The road to ska

There was a band in Coventry called Hard Top 22 which was a pure reggae band. It had Charley 'H' Bembridge and Charley Anderson and Gapper [Arthur Hendrickson], who later became The Selecter. I played with them for a while and for me that was really important - H showed me the reggae riff and that's when I learnt to play reggae properly.

When I put my own band together, I got Silverton Hutchinson on drums, Neol on guitar, Horace Panter on bass, myself on keyboards and the singer Tim Strickland.

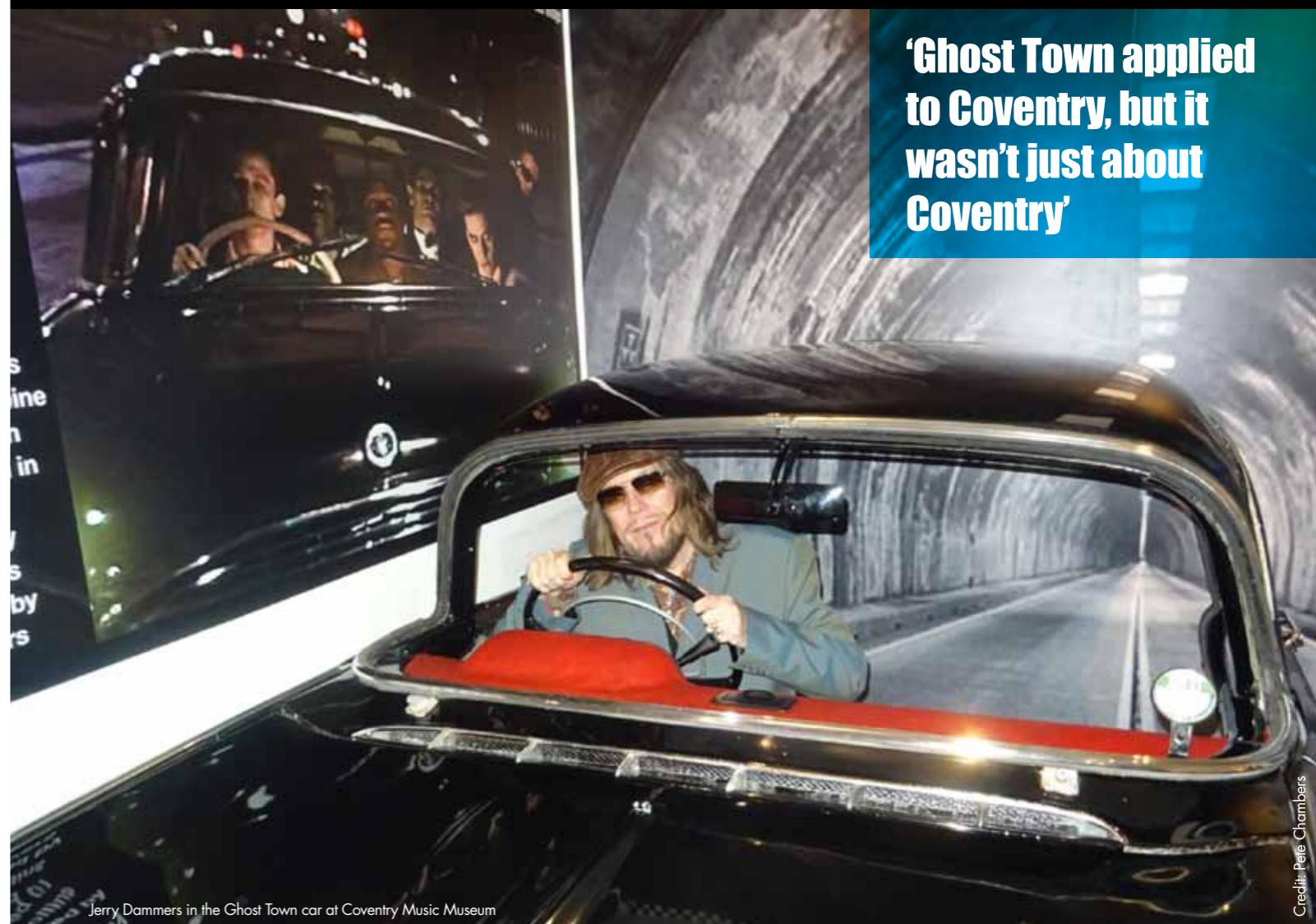
And I had my funky clavinet [keyboard], which I used like a punk guitar. I nearly joined a band called The Flies but they decided that a keyboard player was a capital offence in punk, so that was a lucky escape!

We had the first rehearsals and then, with a lot of difficulty, I decided to replace Neol with Lynval Golding because I wanted it to be a truly multiracial band. Also Lynval had a more authentic reggae sound - he had a Telecaster and Neol had a Stratocaster. A Telecaster is much more reggae-style so it appealed to me more.

That was the first line-up [The Coventry Automatics] and we did gigs regularly at the Heath Hotel. I always insisted on being bottom of the bill and opening the evening. Whatever band was on I always insisted on supporting them in Coventry because I knew they would find it really hard to follow us. It worked - we destroyed about eight bands like that!

Then we did a long residency at Mr George in Coventry, before blagging a tour with The Clash through a roadie I knew called Steve 'Roadent' Connolly, who also introduced me to John Lydon of the Sex Pistols.

I always wanted to form a classic British band like The Who or Small Faces. I wasn't interested in just being a band - it had to be something - so going to John Lydon was the obvious next step to me. Anyway, he didn't join so I got Terry Hall in.



'Ghost Town applied to Coventry, but it wasn't just about Coventry'

Jerry Dammers in the Ghost Town car at Coventry Music Museum



The Specials performing at Butts Student Union Building, Coventry, 25 May 1979

'I wasn't interested in just being in a band - it had to be something'

We came back to Coventry after the tour with The Clash, but it wasn't working because I was trying to combine punk and reggae. A band in Birmingham called Capital Letters had this one song with a ska beat and I just thought, 'Let's go back to ska'. So Lynval dug out some of his dad's old ska records and we chose a few ska covers and that seemed to work much better.

Silverton didn't agree with doing ska because he thought it was old-fashioned, so he left. I had to get a new drummer really quick and Brad [John Bradbury] was the only drummer I knew in Coventry who could play reggae, so I got him in. Everything took off very quickly after that.

Launching the label

There was a fashion for punk bands to put out their own records. In the 60s and 70s, the record industry was this mysterious thing that happened in London. Recording studios were shrouded in mystery and you had to pay a lot of money to go to one.

Pete Waterman was around plugging records and he asked to manage us. He took us down to Berwick Street Studios and we recorded four tracks there, but then he tried to teach Terry to dance and that was a big mistake. So we had to get rid of Pete Waterman. He was only with us for three or four weeks, but he did help out and he got these recordings made, which showed us that it could be done.



Neville Staple performing with The Specials

'A keyboard player was considered a capital offence in a punk band, so I had a lucky escape'

Pete took the tracks to a few record companies and no one was interested, so we decided to follow the fashion and do it ourselves. We recorded Gangsters at Horizon, which was a newly opened studio in Coventry, and put it out on our own 2 Tone label. The record got played by John Peel and it was a real slow build. It took about six months to get up the charts.

At this time I also met up with Madness, who were the only band who independently had come up with a similar idea of doing a few ska songs. When I first met them they were extremely amateurish, like a school band, but when they saw us it gave them a big kick up the backside and they improved really quickly. They were the first band to be on the label after The Specials. And by then Neol Davies had formed The Selecter into a proper band with some of the guys from Hard Top 22.

As for The Beat — we played in Barbarella's and there was a lad on the mic — he was toasting to reggae. It was Ranking Roger and he sang lyrics against the National Front. I thought he was really good, and I

went and said hello to him, and we started talking. He was toasting with a band called the Dum Dum Boys and I said, 'Can I come and see you?' I went along to City Hall and by that time they were doing more ska, so I said, 'Why not do a record on 2 Tone?'

So, we had the big four bands — it was very exciting. It all happened so fast. It was a big shock going from not being known, to being recognised in the street almost overnight, it was a lot to deal with. The gigs were incredible. That ska music had an energy in Jamaica in the 60s which was amazing, and it happened in England with an energy that there has never been before or since. Whole dance floors were going up and down — the buildings were literally shaking — it was extraordinary.

Then we were in America and it was a bit strange because I always thought The Specials was going to be a bit underground, and I didn't really expect it to cross over to pop so quickly to such an extent, so it was quite strange. For people in Coventry it was quite weird as well — suddenly to have the seven biggest prats in Coventry on Top of the Pops!

While we were on tour, I was trying to write songs all the time. I was working on a couple, one of which was Ghost Town. It was just a sequence of four chords and for about a year I was looking for another chord to fit in there. It took about a year to realise I didn't need to change that chord — I could just add a brass line.

The lyrics were based on what I'd seen touring the country. It wasn't about any town in particular — the whole country was going through a depression. So it applied to Coventry, but it wasn't just about Coventry, it was a general comment about the whole country. Thatcher's monetarist politics of basically taking money out of the economy and shredding it, was having a terrible effect on jobs. It was really a protest song about that.

When Fun Boy Three [Terry Hall, Neville Staple and Lynval Golding] left, I was determined to carry on with The Specials with Brad and Horace. Horace left halfway through the album, but out of respect for everybody I went with The Special A.K.A. name 'cause I thought, 'Don't call it The Specials 'cause it isn't completely The Specials'. I recruited a lot of people from Coventry for the new line-up.

Anti-apartheid activism

Near the end of recording the album, I bumped into an old school friend who reminded me that when I was 15 I put stickers around the school in support of the demonstration against the South African rugby team that was playing in Coventry. This guy said, 'Did you know there's a concert at Alexandra Palace to celebrate Nelson Mandela's 65th birthday?' I'd never heard of Nelson Mandela. So anyway, I went to the concert and there were various exiled South African musicians playing including Julian Bahula, who had organised this concert to draw attention to Mandela, who had been locked away 25 years earlier.

Julian had written a song about Mandela and I was already working on a tune which was upbeat — a sort of African, Latinish tune — so I thought, 'Why not put Mandela's name to this song and turn it into a tribute to him?' So, it was like the message was being passed from Julian to me — from musician to



musician. We managed to get it played on the radio when I don't think they knew who Mandela was, otherwise they might never have played it. It took off and Free Nelson Mandela became a hit all around the world.

It helped with the campaign and made Mandela's name more well known, and from that Dali Tambo, the son of the head of the ANC, came to me and asked me to organise Artists Against Apartheid. By this time the band had disintegrated, so I spent the next four years organising Artists Against Apartheid. We did a lot of concerts which gradually got bigger and bigger with The Smiths, Madness, Billy Bragg, Sting, Gil Scott-Heron and many more, until we had a concert on Clapham Common with 250,000 people — at the time the biggest anti-apartheid demonstration ever, anywhere in the world.

In 1988 Artists Against Apartheid did a concert at Wembley Stadium. That broadcast went out to hundreds of millions of people around the world. So the moral of the story is — big things come from little things, and whatever you do to try to help, you don't know who it might influence, or what it might achieve. Nelson Mandela said that any attempt to fight apartheid was appreciated. With problems in the world, with every

little bit that someone does — no one knows what it might achieve. That's very important. Those were the proudest moments. On an international level the record Free Nelson Mandela had more effect than anything The Specials did.

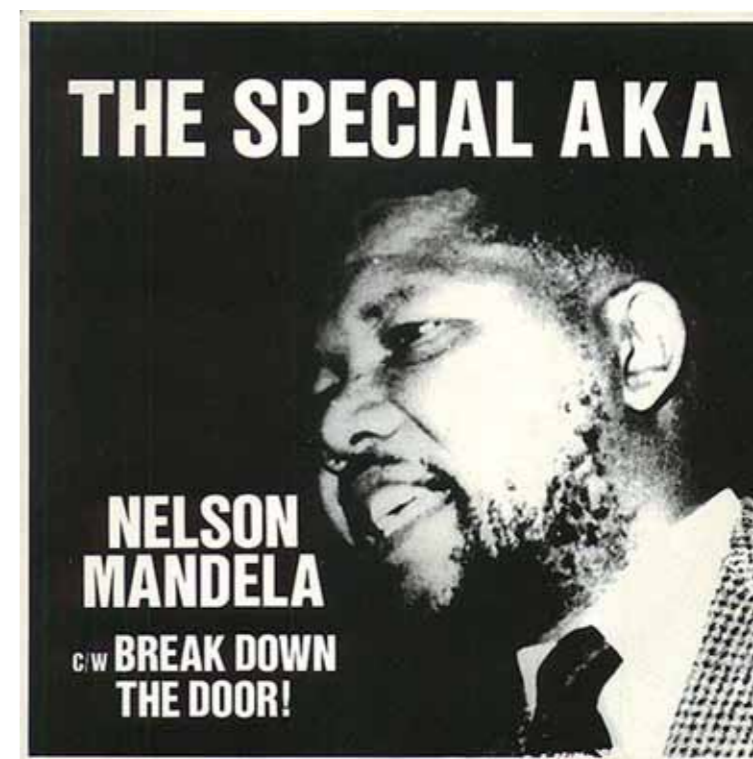
The 2 Tone legacy

2 Tone wasn't perfect — nothing's perfect — but I think it did achieve a lot. I know I was inspired by Rock Against Racism which was going already when we started. Likewise, I worked extremely closely with the Anti-Apartheid Movement — you can't do anything on your own. With the other bands, who knows — if it hadn't been for all of us working together, instead of in competition, we might not have got as far as we did.

So, I think we did achieve something. I think most people got the message. Racism is still there but we helped to drive it underground for a while at least. The sort of racism that I grew up with in Coventry which was commonplace — the racist jokes, the bad words — we were part of a process that changed that.

All this heritage stuff is a relatively new thing. When we were going, bands came and then they went. I didn't expect there would still be interest, so it's great that we caught the end of that period of classic British pop music, and hopefully we gave some of the big names — The Clash, The Jam — a run for their money. That's all we could hope for and that's what I tried to achieve. It's great that the music's on record and that it's lasted 40 years. 🗨

Jerry Dammers was speaking to Pete Chambers



LOOK INSIDE 2 TONE HQ

Coventry Music Museum is currently exhibiting a mock-up of Jerry Dammers' flat at 51 Albany Road, as featured in 1980 BBC Arena documentary **Rudies Comes Back**. Pete Chambers gives us an insight into some of the key items.



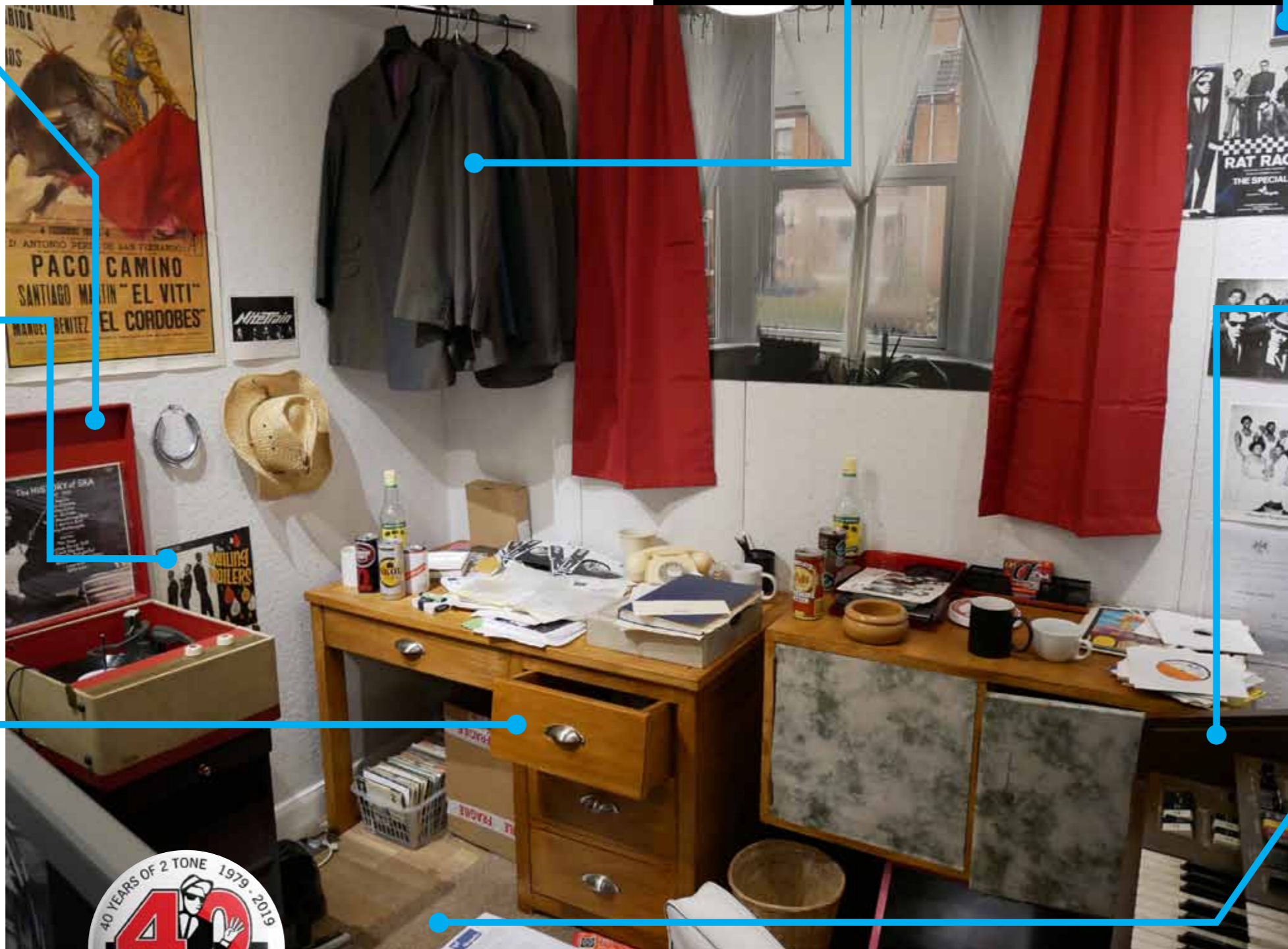
RECORD PLAYER THIS WAS THE CENTRAL POINT FOR EVERYTHING. IN THE ARENA DOCUMENTARY YOU SEE JERRY PLAYING AN ALBUM CALLED 'THE HISTORY OF SKA', WHICH INSPIRED MANY OF HIS IDEAS.



WAILING WAILERS COVER THIS IS WHERE JERRY GOT THE IDEA FOR THE ICONIC WALT JABSCO FIGURE, WHICH IN HIS WORDS WAS 'AN IMPRESSION OF AN IMPRESSION OF THE IMPRESSIONS'. HE TOOK THE NAME FROM AN AMERICAN BOWLING SHIRT HE OWNED.



DESK THE CREAM PHONE WAS NICKNAMED THE '2 TONE HOTLINE' – IT WAS FOR JERRY TO FIELD CALLS FROM RECORD LABELS AND PRESS. YOU CAN ALSO SEE SOME CONTRACTS AND 2 TONE SINGLES SPREAD ACROSS THE DESK, ALONG WITH THE BEER CANS AND CIGARETTES.



RUDE BOY SUITS 'A NICE BIT OF MOHAIR,' AS JERRY DESCRIBES THEM, THESE SUITS ARE THE UNIFORM OF 2 TONE. IN THE FILM HE TUGS AT ONE OF THE SLEEVES AND THE WHOLE RAIL FALLS DOWN, WHICH HE INSISTS WAS NOT SCRIPTED.



DISCS YOU CAN SEE A SILVER DISC FOR THE SPECIALS ALONG WITH SOME OF THE ICONIC EARLY RECORDS.



GHOST TOWN ORGAN THIS IS THE ACTUAL YAMAHA ORGAN THAT GHOST TOWN WAS WRITTEN AND RECORDED ON, IN WOODBINE STUDIOS IN LEAMINGTON SPA. IT'S A VERY SPECIAL ITEM THAT WE CURRENTLY HAVE ON LOAN FROM JERRY.



DEMO TAPES JERRY WAS SENT LOTS OF DEMO TAPES FOR THE 2 TONE LABEL. DURING THE FILM HE POINTS TO A STACK OF TAPES ON THE FLOOR AND SAYS 'THIS IS WHERE THE BEAT STARTED'.



SEE THE EXHIBITION FOR YOURSELF AT COVENTRY MUSIC MUSEUM, 80 WALSGRAVE RD, COVENTRY

THE SELECTER'S PAULINE BLACK 2 TONE'S BRIGHT BURNING STAR

'I put the trilby hat on and suddenly it was like this whole persona came together and I thought, I can go on stage like this and feel at home'



Credit: Dean Chalkley

Watch The Selector's charismatic, skanking performance of *On My Radio* on Top of the Pops in 1979 and it's easy to see why they shot to fame so quickly.

At the time, lead singer Pauline Black, one of 2 Tone's rare female vocalists, was on leave from her job as a radiographer in Coventry. She had even changed her surname from Magnus so that colleagues wouldn't know about her other life. But how did this dual existence come about?

'I grew up as an adopted mixed race child in Romford in Essex,' says Black, who arrived in Coventry in 1971 to study combined science at Lanchester Polytechnic (now Coventry University). After graduating, alongside her work as a radiographer she started frequenting a pub called The Old Dyer's Arms. 'It had a folk club in the back room, and I used to enjoy plonking away on guitar, singing a few songs. I probably fancied myself as a poor woman's Joan Armatrading.'

During one of these gigs she met Lawton Brown, a student at Warwick University, who suggested they collaborate on some material. 'Lawton introduced me to all kinds of things, most notably reggae and The Last Poets. Eventually we ended up forming a band, together with Desmond Brown and Charles 'H' Bembridge. One day we were rehearsing in a pub called The Wheatsheaf on Foleshill Road, and I walked Lynval Golding. He suggested we should meet with Neol Davies, who had recently released a B-side on The Specials' hit *Gangsters*.'

That fateful meeting, at a house on Adderley Road, gave rise to the familiar line-up of The Selector, with Black as lead singer. They scrambled to record three tracks – *Street Feeling*, *On My Radio* and *Too Much Pressure* – which were released by Jerry Dammers' fledgling 2 Tone label, who gave them £1,000 to record the material. 'We all owe a debt of gratitude to Jerry's vision,' says Black.

On My Radio was chosen as the single, and it was released as a double A-side with *Too Much Pressure*. The record reached number eight in the charts. The band also introduced The Beat to 2 Tone after inviting them to support them in Birmingham, and started

touring with The Specials and Madness. All told the autumn of 1979 was a heady period.

Did Black enjoy the newfound fame? 'It would be disingenuous to say I didn't like it – what not to like? – and there was never a problem with the fans,' she says. Those fans included 'a lot of young, disaffected, mixed race kids', she adds, 'who were maybe seeing for the first time someone that vaguely looked like how they might want to look.'

Black's distinctive look was forged when, during an early gig with The Specials, one of the roadies suggested she try on a trilby hat. 'I put it on and suddenly it was like this whole persona came together and I thought, I can go on stage like this and feel at home.'

Beyond the break-up

2 Tone was at its zenith between 1979 and 1981, after which the key bands began to break apart. Does Black wish it could have lasted longer? 'Of course at the time I wished it could have, but in retrospect, to use a much-hackneyed metaphor, sometimes things that burn very brightly don't burn very long. Really that is the story of 2 Tone. But that is also the story I feel of anything that has its roots in a political, black landscape. They seem to burn for a very short period of time. Historically I think that is true in terms of jazz in its heyday and all those kinds of things – soul, Motown, disco.'

Black cites the New Romantics as the movement that stepped into the territory previously occupied by 2 Tone, but points out that politically it was much less impactful. 'Suddenly it was all Duran Duran on a yacht, you know?'

Black and Davies reformed The Selector in the early 90s. They played gigs in the UK and the US and enjoyed renewed success thanks to the popularity of 'third wave' ska. It's a period she looks back on fondly: 'We had a great run of shows, it was all good and ska was cool, and we carried on from there.'

The band has pretty much kept playing since, albeit with changes in line-up – notably the departure of Davies. Black also took time out a few years ago to write her autobiography *Black by Design: A 2 Tone Memoir*, which was published in 2012.

'Sometimes things that burn very brightly don't burn very long'



Credit: John Coles

Did she find the experience of writing the book cathartic? 'I wanted it to be more than just a potted diary of the exploits of The Selector. The search for blackness, and what that means as a mixed race person, is very important. It was an opportunity to explore that, and hopefully be of some use to a young mixed race woman growing up now.'

Black is saddened by the recent rise of racism. 'I always suspected it was there, but recently those people have begun to crawl

out of the pipe again.' She feels they've been given a 'green light', not least due to the election of Donald Trump as US president. 'I'm slightly disappointed we're still talking about the same issues, but change was never going to be an overnight thing.'

On a positive note, she is excited to be gearing up for The Selector's 40th anniversary tour later this year, when she will be sharing a stage with Rhoda Dakar of The Bodysnatchers. Sadly, one person

who won't be there is the late Ranking Roger of The Beat, who Black describes as a 'kindred spirit'. In a sense, however, his absence seems an important reminder of how important it is to celebrate the fifth decade of these groundbreaking 2 Tone creators.

Black's star certainly seems destined to keep burning for many years to come.

For information about The Selector's 40th anniversary tour, see theselector.net

Pauline Black was speaking to Theo Bosanquet

THE 2 TONE MUSIC TRAIL

Delve deeper into the story of 2 Tone in Coventry. Retrace the steps of **The Specials** and **The Selecter** and discover how a new age of race relations developed against the backdrop of a changing Britain. **Walk this trail and feel part of this precious piece of Coventry history.**



1 THE CANAL BASIN, CV1 4LY. It was here in 1979 Carol Starr and Chalkie Davies shot what would become the iconic front and rear cover of The Specials' first album, and the rear cover of their More Specials album.

2 HOLYHEAD YOUTH CLUB, CV1 3AU. Many members of The Specials and The Selecter first met at this venue. The walls still bear graffiti from the time.

3 TIFFANY'S (THE LOCARNO), CV1 1FY. Now a library, this was once a night club where The Selecter, The Swinging Cats, The Bodysnatchers, Madness and The Beat performed.

4 MR GEORGE NIGHTCLUB, CV1 1DX. Coventry's Punk palace in the late 70s, The Coventry Automatics won a residency here, before they became The Specials.

5 51 ALBANY ROAD, CV5 6JR. Jerry Dammers lived here during the heyday of 2 Tone, and it featured in a 1980 BBC documentary. A mock up of the flat is currently on display at Coventry Music Museum (see p12-13).

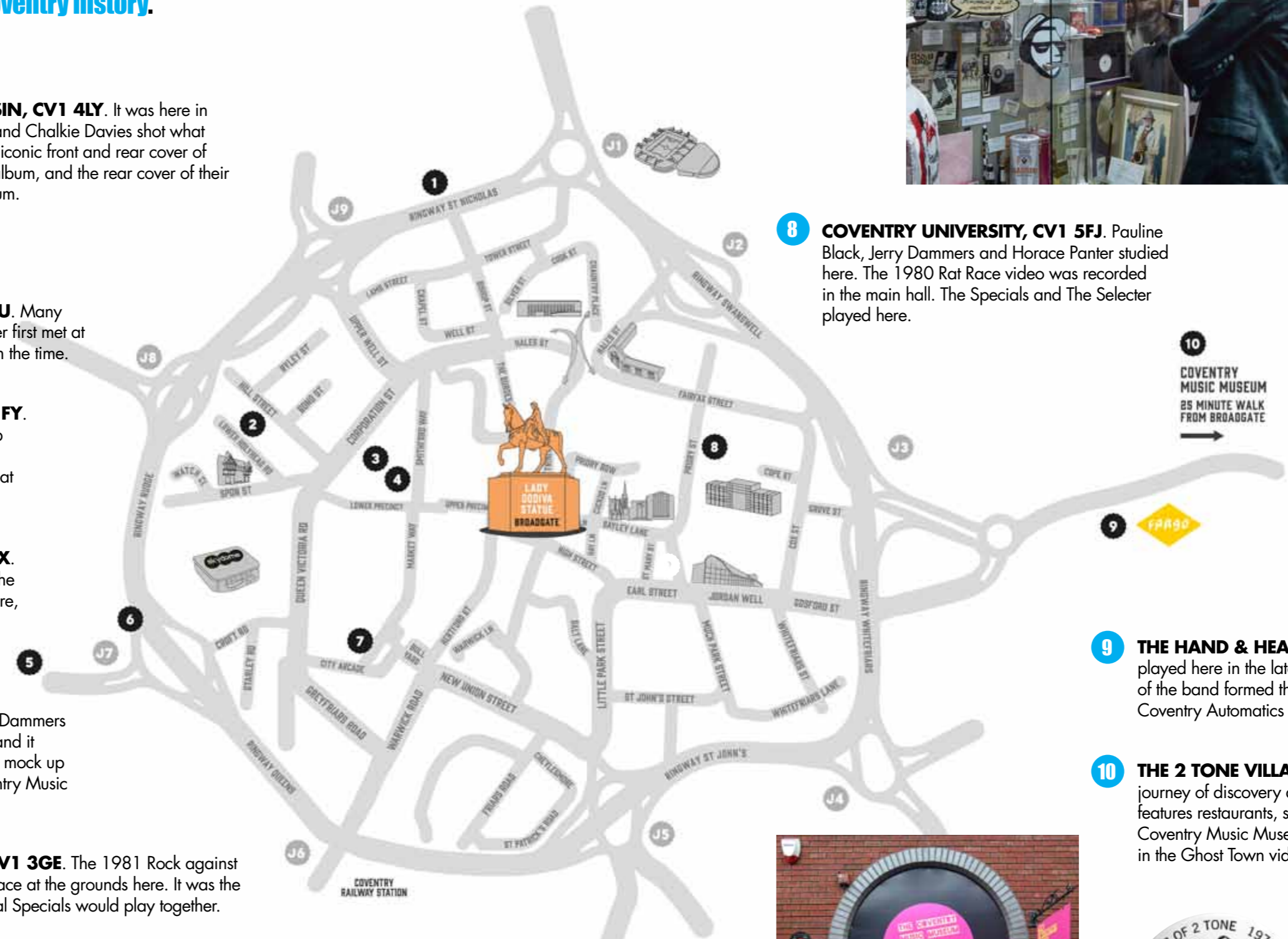
6 BUTTS ROAD, CV1 3GE. The 1981 Rock against Racism gig took place at the grounds here. It was the last time the original Specials would play together.

7 VIRGIN RECORDS CITY ARCADE, CV1 3HX. A small but influential record shop that employed John Bradbury, who later became The Specials' drummer. One-time Specials manager Pete Waterman ran The Soul Hole upstairs.

8 COVENTRY UNIVERSITY, CV1 5FJ. Pauline Black, Jerry Dammers and Horace Panter studied here. The 1980 Rat Race video was recorded in the main hall. The Specials and The Selecter played here.

9 THE HAND & HEART, CV1 5EA. Hard Top 22 played here in the late 1970s before key members of the band formed the core of The Selecter. The Coventry Automatics also played here in 1978.

10 THE 2 TONE VILLAGE, CV2 4ED. Continue your journey of discovery and visit the 2 Tone Village, which features restaurants, shops and the award-winning Coventry Music Museum, home to the car featured in the Ghost Town video.



PETE PAPHIDES

One of the UK's leading music journalists reflects on 2 Tone's history, influences and ongoing musical impact

ON 2 TONE'S LASTING LEGACY

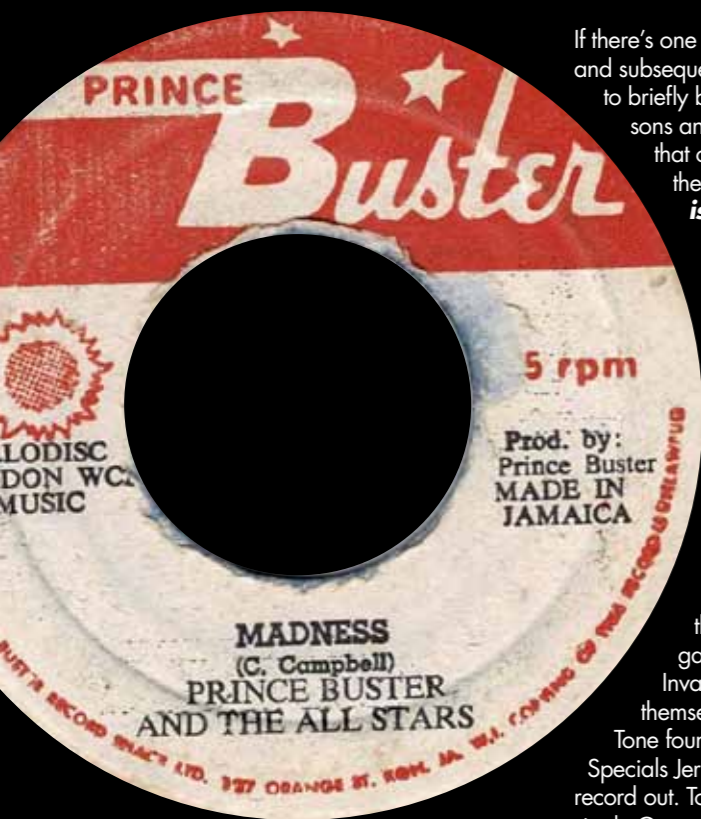


Prince Buster in 1968



Festival Against Racism, Butts Stadium, Coventry, 1981

Mark Osborne



If there's one lyric that sums up the impact and subsequent legacy of 2 Tone, we need to briefly bypass Coventry's most famous sons and look to a song by a group that only released one single on the label. **'An earthquake is erupting,'** sings Suggs on the first line of The Prince by Madness, **'But not in Orange Street'.**

In its way, it's perfect. It tells you where the 2 Tone ethos came from. But it also tells you something about where we were in 1979 when the label opened for business. Orange Street was the Jamaican birthplace of Prince Buster, whose song Madness was covered on the flipside of The Prince and gave the erstwhile North London Invaders a snappier name to call themselves. It isn't hard to see why 2 Tone founder and *de facto* leader of The Specials Jerry Dammers wanted to put the record out. Together with The Specials' debut single Gangsters – a song based on Prince Buster's 1964 single Al Capone – it marks

the middle of a timeline that begins with the arrival of Prince Buster on British shores and stretches into the present day.

Contrary to the version of British pop history that places The Beatles and the Stones as its founding fathers, this is a timeline that reflects the demographic changes that took hold of Britain in the post-Windrush era. Just as the port city of Liverpool was perfectly placed to alchemise American rock'n'roll into the British beat boom, the West Midlands, with its high concentration of West Indian diaspora was always going to produce a musical subculture that reflected what their children and their children's friends were listening to.

Groups like The Specials, The Selecter and The Beat were the culmination of all of that activity. Singing A Message To You Rudy on Top of the Pops, Terry Hall awkwardly shifted his body weight from one foot to the other, reluctantly holding the mic like he was looking after it until its owner found a parking space. Far from acting as a deterrent, his manner was key to the band's appeal. Any kid from round here, if asked to sing in a band, would have carried themselves in the same way – or

they would have chosen to move like Neville Staple, who, standing to Hall's right, carried out some choreography of his own devising, moving with a slightly robotic motion from left to right.

They weren't the first ska and reggae group to form in the West Midlands. That honour goes to The Equators. But, unlike that group, The Specials numbered both black and white musicians in their ranks, a crucial component of their lasting impact. In drawing on a disparate array of influences, they circumvented accusations of revivalism and created something brand new in the process.

It was an approach highlighted by Jerry Dammers as early as 1980 when he explained, **'I listen to anything basically... it doesn't matter how good or bad it is, if you listen to it enough, you learn to like it.'**

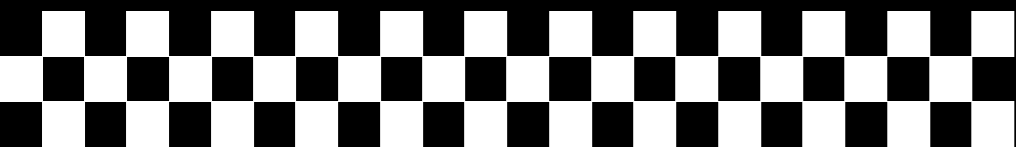
In a post-punk era where music was still defined and demarcated along tribal lines, Dammers' words were truly ahead of their time and borne out by The Specials' speedy sonic evolution from the adrenalised ska of Too Much Too Young to the dystopian hotel lounge arrangement of the 1980 double

A-side Stereotype/International Jet Set and also Dammers' queasy accompaniment for Rhoda & The Special A.K.A.'s 1982 single The Boiler. Originally a song by Rhoda Dakar's recently dissolved group The Bodysnatchers, The Boiler saw its protagonist graphically reliving a date that ended in violent sexual abuse. Dammers said at the time that it was a song most people would probably struggle to hear more than once.

This was 2 Tone at its most fearlessly uncompromising, throwing its weight behind a record that prefigured the #MeToo movement by 35 years, and in doing so, took the subject of date rape into the top 40 (years before the term 'date rape' had even been invented).

For one musician who helped define British music in the 1990s, the impact of 2 Tone was life-changingly dramatic. Damon Albarn has frequently cited 1981's More Specials as his favourite album of all time. Indeed, it's the nauseous exoticism of that record and also The Special A.K.A.'s 1984 (post-Hall) album In The Studio that most readily spring to mind when you hear Albarn standouts like 1997 Blur track Theme From Retro, or Nineteen Seventeen from The Good, The Bad & The Queen's 2018 album Merrie Land.

'An earthquake is erupting ... but not in Orange Street'





'It is difficult to imagine trip-hop or even grime and/or dubstep having gone on their particular aesthetic autobahn without the example of Ghost Town'

On Gorillaz' 2001 song Slow Country, the backing track is built around a sample from Ghost Town. If that song's political significance became apparent from the moment of its release, its musical significance seems to accumulate with every passing year. Writing in 2009, Freaky Trigger editor Tom Ewing remarked that 'it is difficult to imagine trip-hop or even grime and/or dubstep having gone on their particular aesthetic autobahn without the example of Ghost Town.'

On both counts, he's absolutely right. You can't listen to Tricky's 1995 album Maxinquaye and not hear something of Dammers' later Specials work in it (and, indeed, it was no accident that a year later, on his Nearly God project, Tricky enlisted Terry Hall to appear on two songs). Fourteen years later, the founder of one pioneering label, Hyperdub's Steve Goodman, paid tribute to another by recording a desolate dubstep inversion of Ghost Town. The song's relevance seems to intensify with every passing year.

In this country, the emergence of 2 Tone took place at the end of a decade which saw reggae break through into the mainstream. We had all heard reggae and, even without realising it, we were able to place those first releases by The Specials, The Bodysnatchers, The Beat and The Selecter in some sort of pop-cultural context.

In America, where Bob Marley had been the only Jamaican artist to gain any sort of a profile, early releases by those same groups made a huge impact on a generation of musicians that would go on to join successful groups like No Doubt and The Mighty Mighty Bosstones, in the process triggering a upturn of demand for the original practitioners of this music. By the turn of the century, Pauline Black's Selecter and versions of The Beat fronted by Dave Wakeling and Ranking Roger were playing venues whose capacity far exceeded those in their early 80s incarnations.

Back in the UK, the presence of those artists in the record collections of music fans who came of age to 2 Tone percolated into a generation of new British artists. Lily Allen joined the newly reconvened Specials on stage when they played Glastonbury in 2007.

Amy Winehouse was also a regular presence at several Specials dates at this time and in her own shows would regularly cover Poor Little Rich Girl. In 2008, at the finale of Nelson Mandela's 90th Birthday Tribute in Hyde Park, it was Winehouse who was entrusted with the job of leading a massed ranks version of Free Nelson Mandela – the 1984 single that instantly made Mandela a household name and acted as a catalyst for his eventual release.

In 2017, the rising cultural cachet of The Specials and 2 Tone was underscored when a photograph of Birmingham 18-year-old Saffiyah Khan staring down a protester at an EDL march went viral. Part of what gave that image its power was the fact that Khan was wearing a Specials t-shirt.

In the wake of that, a circle of sorts was completed when The Specials contacted Khan and asked her to collaborate with them for a song on their new album Encore.



Horace Panter and Terry Hall of The Specials

Credit: Pete Chambers

That's her voice you can hear, offering a timely update of Prince Buster's 1965 single The Ten Commandments of Man. On the day of the album's release, Khan took to the stage of London's 100 Club, for the very first time and led the musicians on stage – some of them three times her age – through an incendiary version of the song. Seven days later, The Specials

managed to achieve something that not even their first incarnation could pull off. A number one album. It turns out that while The Specials were resting, their legacy was slowly growing, encompassing our children and our children's children. A story which started in Coventry 40 years ago, looks set to continue far beyond Coventry, for another 40 years.



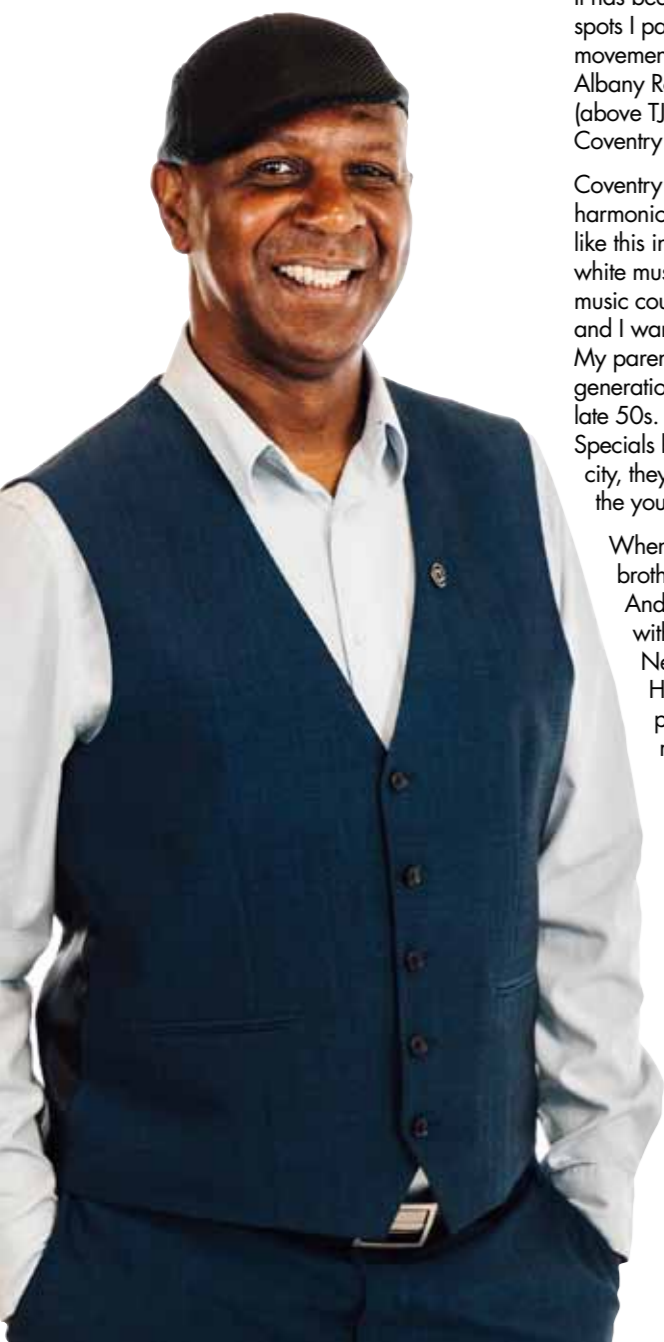
Pauline Black and Arthur 'Gaps' Hendrickson of The Selecter

Credit: Pete Chambers

DAVE MARSHALL BARRETT

'THE 2 TONE SPIRIT COULD

The presenter of a new BBC documentary on 2 Tone reveals how he uncovered its rich history



Those who know me will know I live, sleep and breathe music – so much so I'm a music teacher by day and present BBC Coventry & Warwickshire's Reggae Got Soul show by night. So when BBC Coventry & Warwickshire asked me if I'd like to do a documentary for the 40th anniversary year of 2 Tone I flung myself in with a hard stomp, skanking it with a Harrington jacket and a tasselled loafer!

For this special programme I have been looking at how the likes of The Specials put my hometown of Coventry on the musical map. I got to chat to all the main members of the 2 Tone movement, revisiting the places and people who like me lived through the birth of a musical phenomenon.

It has been thrilling to explore all the little spots I pass in Coventry where this incredible movement started, places like 2 Tone HQ on Albany Road, the old Mr George nightclub (above TJ Hughes) and Tiffany's (now Coventry City Library).

Coventry has for a long time been so harmoniously and richly diverse. It feels like this incredible mix of black and white musicians making black and white music could only have come from here and I wanted to delve deeper into that. My parents were part of the Windrush generation and came to Coventry in the late 50s. When I was growing up and The Specials burst on to the scene in my home city, they were just those lads we knew from the youth club.

When I was 10, I was taken by my big brother Fritz to see my cousin Charley Anderson (The Selecter) performing with his Jah Baddis sound system with Neville Staple (The Specials) at the Holyhead Youth Club. It was a key place where many of the 2 Tone members got to know each other. It was a place that inspired me and I'd later go to and set up my own sound system, which is where I get my 'Marshall' nickname from.

Going back down to the almost untouched basement and still seeing the graffiti on the walls (it wasn't me – honest!) was so exciting. In the late 70s I had Jheri curls and I was into jazz funk. I vividly remember when my white best friend at school came in wearing a pork pie hat and listening to ska. I was like 'Whaaat?' Back then I thought ska music was old fashioned, it was the kind of music I'd grown up with – the music my dad listened to.

Having the opportunity to interview members of both The Specials and The Selecter has been fascinating – hearing first-hand the stories of their formation. Jerry Dammers told me: 'I always had these high hopes for Coventry, that it was going to be the next New Orleans.'

They shared stories about the early gigs, the creation of the front cover of The Selecter's single made up from cuttings carefully placed then knocked out of place by Jerry's dog! They talked about the good times and, heartbreakingly, the bad.

We often think being a pop star is glamorous but listening to the lengths that all the boys went through to make it – shared cigarettes and pints, even sleeping on park benches – was sobering. It makes the stories of the break-ups so much more poignant. During their interviews they showed vulnerability



Interviewing Don Letts



ONLY COME FROM COVENTRY'

'Ska was the music I grew up with'



Dave Marshall Barrett with Horace Panter, Lynval Golding and Terry Hall

and sadness. The Specials' Roddy Radiation was on Top of the Pops one year and the next he was back on the dole, refusing to admit to people who recognised him who he was, instead pretending he was his older brother. They all spoke frankly about whether they 'left the band', 'created a new band' or just stopped turning up to rehearsals.

'It wasn't about us forming a band, it was about us leaving a band,' Terry Hall said to me. It was at the height of The Specials' fame – when arguably their biggest hit Ghost Town was at the top of the charts – that they split. Their original line-ups were never to be again. Despite efforts for reunions over the years, both The Specials and The Selecter now perform without their respective founding members Jerry Dammers and Neol Davies.

Our documentary doesn't just focus on the old days. The Specials (now Terry Hall, Lynval Golding and Horace Panter) have come back this year with a brand new album Encore. It entered the album charts at number one earlier this year, 40 years on from them forming. I was at the album launch at the 100 club in London and met the legendary DJ and filmmaker Don Letts who told me why he thought the band continue to make an impact globally. He said it was because they make music with a message.

And those messages are connecting with younger generations, people like new collaborator Saffiyah Khan. She shot to fame standing steadfast in the face of an EDL member, nose to nose with a smile on her face, wearing a Specials t-shirt. She caught

their eye, and ended up collaborating and joining them on their world tour.

Saffiyah said to me: 'There is a correlation between being a die-hard Specials fan and being a really nice person.'

Her story made me think again about how the 2 Tone spirit could only come from Coventry – a place where fresh faces meet one moment and the next they are jamming all night in basements. Now that's special.

Dave Marshall Barrett presents BBC Coventry & Warwickshire's 2 Tone Story, an hour-long documentary featuring all the members of The Specials and The Selecter. It premieres on 21 June.

'2 TONE'S LYRICS ARE JUST AS RELEVANT TODAY'

Neville Staple of **The Specials** and his wife **Christine 'Sugary' Staple** reflect on the inimitable style and cultural impact of 2 Tone, and why they want to reach out to a new generation

Neville Staple: 2 Tone music is about the street; it's about you, it's about me. But it's also about style. Jamaican fashion mixed with the UK culture of the 1960s, with Jamaican rude boys influencing UK mods and skinheads (and we're talking about the good guys here, not the boneheads that tried to steal the look and turn it racist). This eventually gave rise to 2 Tone's punky rude boys and rude girls.

Ska music runs through all those styles, from the tonic suits and smart shirts to the sharp haircuts and polished shoes and boots. This, along with lyrics that everyone can understand and sing along to like they meant it, made 2 Tone such an eye-catching genre. You could have been flat broke with barely enough to pay for food or a roof over your head, but you still had to look dap-per.

Sugary: 2 Tone really appealed to me and my friends. Neville was roguish; he stood out and instantly became my pin-up. Little did I know I would meet and marry him 30-odd years later! The teenaged me found the whole thing fascinating, especially the fact that 2 Tone did not come from London,

where I grew up, yet fitted so well with my life. I came from black and white heritage, with a white English mother (with some Scottish ancestry), and a black Caribbean father who had been part of the Windrush generation.

I had been through several identity crises, not quite knowing where I fitted. Was I white with a black background or black with a white background? Could I not just be both? Why did people make it so difficult like I had to choose? So, when 2 Tone appeared with the message that black and white must unite against racism and social injustices, I finally felt at home. And then kids of all backgrounds began wearing the 2 Tone fashion and suddenly we all were from the same page of the same book, without the divisions of chapters. It was perfect. I believe the lyrics of those early 2 Tone songs are just as relevant now as back then.

Neville: 2 Tone came at a perfect time. We were experiencing high levels of racial tension and trouble, with fighting going on regularly. People were protesting against politics, against policing, against cuts to

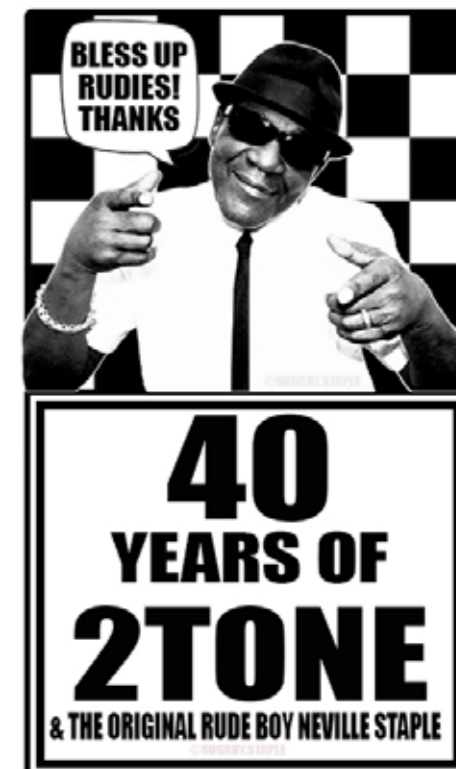
'I decided Neville and I should use our profile to try and help'

public services. It was a tough time. Jerry Dammers was the main brains behind 2 Tone and The Specials. Roddy Byers had the punky edge and I gave them the 'authentic Jamaican' flavour with my singing, my toasting and my original rude boy style. Each of the band had something different to offer and this diversity helped 2 Tone become a voice for young people. Coventry was the right place to do this because we had such a massively diverse population in a small city.

Sugary and I, along with the Neville Staple Band, continue to produce albums right here in Coventry. They sell worldwide, because we still connect the music and lyrics to everyday people, relating our stories and lyrics to them, because they are us and we are them. Recently we have placed an emphasis on knife crime, including putting out a new version of A Message To You Ruddy, called Put Away Your Knives.

Sugary: We have been through a very painful time. My step-daughter Melanie still has no answers [to the loss of her son to knife crime], and it hurts deeply. I decided Neville and I should use our profile to try and help, by highlighting knife crime issues from our perspective. We also speak with young offenders and others to see if we can find the time to believe in them, mentor them and help them celebrate their youth instead of wanting to cause pain or death to each other. Most want ways out, but they get such bad press all the time. If you keep insisting someone has no value and is mostly bad, then eventually that is exactly what they will become. Let's help them. Coventry has made a difference to so many people over the years with its super history and heritage, especially in music and culture, so let's nurture our young and create new history. We both hope that our City of Culture 2021 legacy will mean more of our homegrown talents are helped along their career paths.

For more info and tour dates, visit www.nevillestapleband.com



DJ CHRIS TOFU

'NOW IS THE TIME FOR A 2 TONE REVOLUTION'

DJ Chris Tofu, one of the busiest people in the music business, reflects on his long-standing love of 2 Tone and the future of ska

What does 2 Tone mean to you?

2 Tone is the foundation upon which so many of us walk. It's the reason many people, myself included, found out about ska, and it really put that music into context. We realised our lives weren't built on Elvis Presley, they were built on Jamaica. When I was a kid that was just such an inspiration. Songs like Too Much Too Young, Mirror in the Bathroom and Stand Down Maggie, they were just so resonant.

Do you think the political message of 2 Tone was as important as the music itself?

Absolutely. And even more so now, because no-one is making political statements at the moment. It's all Ed Sheeran-a-likes. There has never been a better time for a new 2 Tone movement than now.

What would you say is the musical legacy of 2 Tone?

I think if you spoke to most established dance producers, from Massive Attack to Basement Jaxx to Groove Armada, and asked them for a list of music that led them to where they are, you would find 2 Tone in there. The ska may not be explicit but it's definitely there. I think 2 Tone and dancehall in particular led directly to the birth of dance music in the UK. And it's so continually influential. As a DJ, I know that when I put on A Message to You Rudy the whole audience will know it and love it.

How would you summarise the energy of the early 2 Tone gigs?

It was popping. Super electric. Totally jumping. It was a really amazing mixture of punks and mods and rockers and all sorts. I remember once The Specials played a gig in Torquay, where I'm from, and some rude boy threw a pork pie hat so high it got stuck in the rafters. It stayed there for about 20 years!

You have a particular association with The Beat; how did that come about?

The Beat contacted me many years ago, when they were going through a very quiet period. They weren't getting the respect they deserved. They asked me to play in Lost Vagueness at Glastonbury [in 2004], and they really found the right guy! I was like 'Yeah, you have to do this'. That gig, which was one of the best I've ever seen, really started a rebirth for them. They even went on to play at my wedding!

The recent death of Ranking Roger must have been very tough.

It was so sad. We all thought he was going to last forever – he could survive for a week on half a baked bean. He seemed so healthy and on stage he was such a force, but it turned out he was beset with tumours. It was so sad and a massive loss to 2 Tone.

You seem like a very busy man. Tell us about some of your current projects.

I run Continental Drifts, which produces gigs for about two million people a year, as well as the Shangri-La stage at Glastonbury. I also DJ all round the world, and I'm running the ska stage at Boomtown.

What's your view of the current ska scene?

It's super healthy. There are loads of young bands doing ska. But there's no real movement they can join. I think this is partly because of the lack of airplay for the music. When 2 Tone launched those bands were able to make an instant impact because of radio. But now it's much harder. And you're not likely to get the next Suggs or Ranking Roger out of X Factor.

Having said that, are you optimistic about its future?

Well I have to be, because I can't imagine my life without it. But it needs a lot of love and care and attention. Enough of the infighting, we need a new 2 Tone revolution.



Tofu's Top 2 Tone Tracks

- 1 **A Message to You Rudy** The Specials
- 2 **Mirror in the Bathroom** The Beat
- 3 **Too Much Too Young** The Specials
- 4 **Prince Buster** Madness
- 5 **Too Much Pressure** The Selecter



'The Beat played at my wedding'

COVENTRY 2 TONE EVENT HIGHLIGHTS

DATES	EVENT	LOCATION	INFO
Throughout 2019	Special 2 Tone Exhibition See a reconstruction of Jerry Dammers' bedroom and sit in the Ghost Town car in this 40th anniversary 2 Tone exhibition	Coventry Music Museum, CV2 4ED	covmm.co.uk
21 June	2 Tone Story Dave Marshall Barrett presents a documentary about Coventry's musical revolution, including stories from the original members from The Specials and The Selecter and the people who lived through the birth of a musical genre (see p22-23)	BBC Coventry & Warwickshire, 6-7pm. On BBC Sounds for a minimum of 30 days.	bbc.co.uk/bbcc Coventry andwarwickshire
22 June	Found in Cov Spencer Graham invites you to listen to his unique collection of records and CDs by Coventry artists and 2 Tone bands in atmospheric surroundings	Cathedral Ruins, CV1 5FB	coventrywelcomes.co.uk
5 – 7 July	Godiva Festival See The Selecter, fronted by Pauline Black (see interview, p14-15) play at this flagship Coventry festival	Memorial Park, CV3 6PT	godivafestival.com
9 – 12 July	The Specials Promoters Coventry Empire with DCB Promotions bring The Specials to play at Coventry Cathedral as part of their 33-date tour to coincide with the release of their new album Encore, which topped the UK Album Charts in February WIN TICKETS IN OUR COMPETITION (see p31)	Cathedral Ruins, CV1 5FB	thespecials.com
9 – 12 July	The 2 Tone Pre-Gig Village Come and enjoy the pre-Specials vibe at the 2 Tone Gig Village. From 5.30pm there will be bars, food and live music by local artists	University Square, CV1 5FB	seetickets.com
20 July	Rudeboy in Coventry Film screenings focussing on the years prior to the advent of 2 Tone including Rudeboy: The Story of Trojan Records together with music from local DJs and a pop up Rudeboy Fashion exhibition by The Curious Boys	West Indian Club, CV1 3BB	eventbrite.com
27 September	Music Against Racism and Rock Against Racism The opening night of Uplift Weekender features Roddy Radiation & The Skabilly Rebels with younger ska bands Ruder Than U, These Fine Strangers and Rude Six	Albany Club, CV5 6EG	upliftweekender.co.uk
26 October	Sounding Off: Roddy Radiation Byers The lead guitarist for The Specials, who wrote several hit songs for the band, is in conversation with Pete Chambers at Coventry Music Museum	Coventry Music Museum, CV2 4ED	facebook.com/tagcmmm
7 December	Sounding Off: Neol Davies Come and hear the legendary founder and songwriter of The Selecter in conversation in this season-closing event	Coventry Music Museum, CV2 4ED	facebook.com/tagcmmm

A MESSAGE TO YOU... FROM SOME OF 2 TONE'S FAMOUS FANS

2 Tone has influenced countless musicians and attracted a large number of influential followers. Here are just a few of them.



DAMON ALBARN

'The implication of The Specials as a reflection of multicultural London – what they were saying on songs like Ghost Town – had a very powerful impact on me... I was obsessed with him [Terry Hall], I could not imagine anyone cooler.'

(The Guardian, 2014)



AMY WINEHOUSE

'Amy Winehouse stunned the crowd at V Festival, Chelmsford in 2009 by joining the end of The Specials' set to join in with You're Wondering Now and then remained on stage to help the band to wrap up their set with Ghost Town before encouraging the crowd to clap them.'

(NME, 2009)



STEVE MCQUEEN

'My first album was The Specials (1979). I was nine years old, and it was life changing – life affirming. My mum brought back the album on cassette, and my sister and I used to jump about the kitchen playing it; sweating, laughing, and singing. I know the album like the back of my hand – as much as my mother would teach me my 'Hail Marys' and 'Our Fathers'.

'My favourite stars were Terry Hall, Neville Staple and Pauline Black.

'I can't underestimate how important 2 Tone and The Specials were to me. It was pride; it was joy; it was the feeling of being seen and heard. Working class, black and white youths having a platform where they could shout and express themselves fully with style and riddem.'



LILY ALLEN

Lily Allen is credited as the catalyst for The Specials reforming when she invited Terry Hall and Lynval Golding to perform with her at Glastonbury 2007. After singing Blank Expression in Tokyo earlier in the same year, she told the crowd, 'This is a cover of a song by one of my favourite ever bands!'

(NME, 2007)



MARTIN FREEMAN

When asked what his most treasured possession was, he said: 'My records, especially the first Specials album, because I've had that since I was nine.'

(The Guardian, 2018)

'Way before I wanted to be an actor, I wanted to be in The Specials.'

(Financial Times, 2016)

THE SPECIALS

ENCORE 40TH ANNIVERSARY TOUR 2019

JULY

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CELEBRATING 40 YEARS OF 2 TONE

The 2 Tone Village, Shops, Cafe,
Restaurant and Museum



The Ghost Town Car – now YOU can ride in it...

The Coventry Music Museum now boasts the ultimate 2 Tone exhibit, the actual Ghost Town car, lifted straight from the Ghost Town music video. Thanks to master mechanic Steve Kearns and his team, who not only found the car, but carried each section up bit by bit, finally creating the famous 1961 Vauxhall Cresta PA car complete with the 4218 RO number plate.

Specials fans have been queuing up to get into the car for the ultimate photo opportunity since January. One Ghost Town Car rider said, "For just a moment we felt like we were starring in our own Ghost Town video". It has already attracted the likes of: Jerry Dammers, Neville Staple and Lynval Golding, Roddy Byers, Neol Davies, John Shipley Trevor Evans and Paul Heskett. So now I guess it's your turn.



The Ghost Town Car

A reconstruction of 2 Tone HQ

Rude Boys Bedroom

Be a Three Minute Hero

Vote in our charts

Plus the real 2 Tone story watch our exclusive interview with Jerry Dammers now showing.

Play in our music studio

KEY EVENTS IN 2019 RING 07971171441 FOR UP TO DATE INFORMATION

LAST WORD

We hope you have enjoyed this odyssey through the wonderful world of 2 Tone.

As we look ahead to Coventry's tenure as city of culture in 2021, we are proud to celebrate this landmark musical movement that truly put Coventry on the music map.

Please continue your journey by visiting Coventry and enjoying some of the incredible events we have planned during the build up to 2021. There is so much on offer, and so much more to come.

Keep up to date with the latest news and events at coventry2021.co.uk, and follow us on Twitter, Facebook and Instagram (@Coventry2021).

Finally, a big thank you to all of our contributors and our funders, Arts Council England.



Supported using public funding by
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SPECIAL PRIZE DRAW

Win a pair of tickets to see The Specials playing in their hometown this summer. Tickets to these gigs sold out in 30 minutes!

When? Thursday 11 July, 7.30pm

Where? The atmospheric ruins of Coventry Cathedral

To enter the prize draw, just email the following information:

1. Your name, telephone number and the first half of your post code
2. In one sentence, tell us what 2 Tone means to you?

Send it to us at: competition@coventry2021.co.uk

#ThisisCoventry

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