

FIRST LONDON GIG IN NINETEEN YEARS...

# EYELESS IN GAZA

+ TYNAN (USA) + FILMS BY BLACKFILMS + MUSIC BY DJ NOIR

FRIDAY 29TH JULY, 7.30PM - BUSH HALL, LONDON

*"One of the great bands that emerged post punk... They were truly unique... one of the great white soul singer voices, by soul I mean Ian Curtis not Jamiroquai. I still love them."*

**ALAN MCGEE / MARCH 2005**

(from the sleeve notes to the forthcoming 'No Noise' compilation)

*"Rich, sensual songs with poetic words... there's some unusual and fiery talent on display."*

**NEIL TENNANT / SMASH HITS**

(reviewing the 'Rust Red September' album, 1983)

*"Martyn Bates' voice... remarkably intense, a compelling instrument. Simply, it oozes emotion."*

**BOB STANLEY**



If the post punk years of the late seventies and early eighties continued the rally for individualism, Eyeless In Gaza - the duo of Martyn Bates and Pete Becker - were out there leaning against the banal more than most. **With their first London appearance in nineteen years scheduled for July 29 at London's Bush Hall and a new album to follow later in the year, the dual release of the CD, 'No Noise' and DVD, 'Saw You In Reminding Pictures', on July 18 celebrates twenty five years of one of the UK's most idiosyncratic bands.**

Back in 1980 their self-released debut 7", 'Kodak Ghosts Run Amok', saw EIG claiming their particular space in the new wave scheme of things. Boasting a Wasp synth never sounding so triumphant, the single was as much a primal scream of expression as any punk onslaught.

Signing to the Cherry Red label the band then released six albums plus an array of singles. From the jagged, spikey soundbites of the first two albums, 'Photographs As Memories' and 'Caught In Flux', ('adrenaline rushes', as Bates himself would describe their mix of sparse instrumentation and his own often fiery rants) through to the fully formed 'Back From The Rains', where the duo's overall sound blossomed, EIG's breed of sonic delivery singled them out. Their on-stage 'face-off' set-up - Becker juggling live keyboards, bass, drums and backing vocals, positioned directly opposite Bates' guitars, keyboards and vocals - only compounded to set them even further apart from, well... everybody.

Although grabbing a 'Single of The Week' here and there and glowing album reviews, EIG were, still, perhaps seen as a cause célèbre for the more receptive journalists in the music press. However, with Bates' emotive, signature, folk-tinged vocals - "a cross between unbridled passion and stylish effect" noted Melody Maker's Steve Sutherland - the duo warranted closer inspection. With another review placing them somewhere between Smokey Robinson and Soft Cell it was clear something unusual was occurring and Alan McGee's 'No Noise' sleeve notes (extract above) just hit home EIG's compelling make-up.

Back at the time of their second album, 'Caught In Flux', Sounds' Johnny Waller championed another side of EIG's style and by default, also possibly hinted at a key element likely to steer them well clear of mainstream chart action. He honed in on "... the sheer sensual and frighteningly beautiful despair" but even though the duo operated within the indie fold and could shiver the emotions like few others their inherent love of class(ic) pop - Beatles to Scritti Politti and beyond - would begin to shine through. By the fourth album, 'Drumming The Beating Heart', EIG's assuredness was palpable. Still challenging listening, there was now a melodic vibrancy peeping through Bates' vocals (practically growing as the album progressed) - something we'd soon see Morrissey display - while Becker's unique backdrop mix of synths and percussion also now felt more fully at home than ever.

Both 'Rust Red September' and 'Back From The Rains', EIG's last albums for Cherry Red, showed the quantum leap in their confidence and song writing, making the most of their trump cards, their melancholic leanings and Bates' growing stature as a mesmeric vocalist. If, since, they've had an on/off relationship with their more 'pop' side, the strain from pushing, unsuccessfully, to secure a hit single and more crucially, the major label support they were after, pretty much fuelled EIG's break up in 1987. There's no question they would have sat uncomfortably within the workings and glare of a mainstream pop machine and even more so, straddled with the pressures and moves it would have taken to stay there.



After their split, Bates, in almost defiant fashion, became even more prolific. He released five classy solo albums in as many years before the duo reconvened in 1992. Since then, with Bates' solo outings interspersed, EIG have increasingly stretched their boundaries. Whilst the out-takes and previously unreleased material of 1992's 'Orange Ice & Wax Crayons' showed glimpses of the quality of (once again) catchy and classy song writing that could be even left *off* albums, the five releases that moved them through the nineties - 'Fabulous Library' ('93), 'Saw You In Reminding Pictures' ('94), 'Bitter Apples' ('95), 'All Under The Leaves, The Leaves Of Life' ('96) and 'Song Of The Beautiful Wanton' (2000) - reaffirmed their, at times seemingly effortless, ability to write truly sublime melodies as well as travel music's hard shoulder.

From collaborations on/contributions to projects involving Genesis P. Orridge, Lol Coxhill, poets Ann Clark and Rainer Maria Rilke, James Joyce's Chamber Music poems, Scorn/Painkiller mainstay M.J. Harris, and Bill Laswell, EIG and Martyn Bates' more 'experimental' side has, pretty much, also spanned their whole musical career(s). Their descriptive feel has leant itself to involvement in film as well, from Derek Jarman's 'The Garden and The Last of England' through to 2002's art house hit, 'Intimacy', the soundtrack to which also featured The Clash, The Stooges, David Bowie and Nick Cave. Most recently, Bates has also completed the music for 'The Resurrection Apprentice', a short, directed by filmmaker (Larry Fassenden/Jim Jarmusch collaborator) Glenn McQuaid.

Don't be too sidelined by any avant/punk/wyrd/art folk/folktronic tags that EIG have attracted along their journey. Bates visits all the human emotions travelled by the best songwriters even if, stylistically, his lyrics at times map out quite unlike anybody else's. Truly poetic and often sepia-toned and camouflaged for comfort in different forms of imagery, the EIG mix of intensity, warm melancholia and fluttering beauty still, though, has the ability to engage and startle the soul as much now as 'Kodak Ghosts' did at their inception.

'No Noise' covers the singles, some well loved early album faves, a few of EIG's edgier and more ambient tracks plus all-too-brief snatches of their very rich post Cherry Red history and serves as a valuable snapshot of corners of their catalogue. In fairness, one CD can't help but miss huge swathes of a twenty five year and on-going legacy. The DVD, 'Saw You In Reminding Pictures', captures a Le Havre appearance from 1982 and footage from their live re-emergence, an impromptu get together at a private party last November.

The pressure to 'succeed', in the way the world was for EIG in the mid eighties, is now well and truly OFF and if they've fallen under the radar since the days of their NME/Melody Maker etc youth a preview of new material demonstrates that Pete Becker and Martyn Bates have grown to inhabit Eyeless In Gaza more stridently than ever. It's nearly twenty years since they last played London and with the elegance of Bush Hall as a backdrop this very rare appearance will cover all periods of the career of one of this country's great hidden treasures.



**Bush Hall, 310 Uxbridge Rd, London W12 7LJ**  
(nearest tube Shepherds Bush)

**Tickets:**

Bush Hall Box Office, (Next door to venue. Cash or cheque, no booking fees)  
'The Music House', 306 Uxbridge Rd, London W12 7LJ  
and also via [www.ticketweb.co.uk](http://www.ticketweb.co.uk) Tel: 08700 600 100  
£10 adv / £12 on the door