

# The Destroyers Hit Town – Get Ready For The Balkan Blitz

☒ Fourteen piece mayhem Mega Agit-Folkers, The Destroyers, are on a mission to agitate your aunties and set Auld Reekie rocking with deranged dervish abandon, UK touring and promoting their debut album 'Hole In The Universe'. (see review below)

Birmingham's celebrated itinerant ensemble of disallowed mob-seeker musicians, The Destroyers, train their mighty fire-power on Edinburgh and Glasgow later this April led by vocalist, front-man, legendary hirsute wily silver fox singer/songwriter Paul Murphy, whose several grandchildren ought to know better than to encourage him. He predicts the unexpected; anticipates enigmas. Be prepared to surrender your musical souls to the Transylmaniac eclectic hyper-hectic fiddle 'n saw lords of Psycho-Gypsy Balkan-Billy alt.punk. The Edinburgh Reporter felt duty to be Birmingham bound to catch up and chat with Paul Murphy during a brief tour break.

ER. The Destroyers: thirteen grown-up musicians in a delusional pact with you, Paul Murphy, lead vocalist, co-song-writer and Birmingham agit-grandpop who really ought to know better – explain yourself.

PM. Well, that's quite right. When you look at the excitement onstage we do get carried away and it's a great feeling. We're like a bunch of kids. It's a collective energy – we're a collective of great individuals and want to have fun. In the past people would tell me it's time to get a real job but they can't say that any more because I'm doing one: writing, rehearsing, recording and right now – touring.

ER. The live gigs seem to have an effervescent dynamic all of their own. That is, both young and old seem to go a tad

mental!

PM. The live gigs have a sort of chaotic, frenetic feeling where people come up to us afterwards all sweaty saying, 'I haven't danced like that for years!'

(It is incumbent up on The Edinburgh Reporter to advise that, at Destroyers' gigs, for Health & Safety reasons, let alone those of aesthetics, no-one dances like they did before – or will do afterwards).

ER. What sort of influences are you drawing on given the eclectic references both fans and reviewers are citing? i.e. the Balkan/Gypsy Roots dynamic.

PM. That sort of music is on the edge of peoples' consciousness. They've heard that music somewhere. It's in the melodies and rhythmic structures. I may be the grandfather among them, in terms of the singer/songwriter tradition, but I'm an apprentice when it comes to working with a team of trained musicians and writers, some of whom are steeped in those kind of influences, it's part of their family heritage. They've gone out and studied it, embraced it and brought their experiences and influences to The Destroyers.

ER. You celebrate collaboration and positivity but the name 'Destroyers' might seem paradoxical?

PM. The name comes from a Balkan tune. One of the earliest tunes in our live set was called 'The Destroyer'. And, after a time, we became known as 'The Destroyers'. It's the kind of notion of destruction, breaking down barriers and inhibitions – getting people excited in a cathartic, energising way. Also, of course, it's an appreciative nod to George Thorogood & The Destroyers.

And with that, in true rock n' roll patri-anarchic style, Paul has to say farewell – he is off pick up the grandchildren.

This ragamuffin wild bunch of eclectic genre-magpies, mugging the archives of pan-european ethnic Roots music cultures, play **Chambre 69, Glasgow, April 20th & Studio 24, Edinburgh, April 21st 2012**

*Hole In The Universe*

*Prod. Gavin Monaghan/Louis Robinson*

*Transition Records*

*2012*

*With this long awaited, exhaustively gestated debut album, Birmingham's apocalyptically named, multi-membered ensemble, The Destroyers, head-butted down the doors of musical reactionism, give genre shibboleths a shafting and thoroughly blow wind to caution. It's anarchy ok – but not as we previously knew it. Like a hyper-active Hydra munching on mandrake roots theirs is a Bulgar Buccaneer/Carpathian cavalier 'Children of the Night' scream de coeur homage to all things trans-Euro Roots. This thirteen track album firmly establishing them as the definitive mega-mayhem miners of the mother-lode of all things Balkan/Transylvmaniac Gypsy-Punk. Matt Burden's paganistic, symbol-soaked cover design's a treat in itself.*

*Opening with the instrumental Tex/Mex dervish swirl 'Honga Bulgan' it hump umpah-tubas into a grappa-fueled Saber Dance that segues into the eponymous title track 'Hole'. An exploration in to our dark anti-'who cares what matters' existential anxieties. 'There's a...hole no-one can repair/In the cosmic underwear...' Red Tape' follows with a frenzied fiddle-lead rage against the bureaucratic machine jobs-worths. Vocalist, co-songwriter and principal lyricist, Paul Murphy, sometimes in raspy Johnny Cash/licorice Vincent Price vocal-noir, is given ample canvas to vent his exploding*

*spleen about all things hypocritical and cant. But humour bubbles amidst the toils and troubles. Party-game spot the influences would last long into the night at which everyone would be a winner. Witty, wry and drenched in both ironic and reverential reference it's a multi-cultural Chimera album that defies dislike. With the heart-on-sleeve romantic reflections of 'Clown Slayer/Underground' there's chill-space enough to catch breath before the death-ballad-noir 'Diamond Jones' recalling some of the magic of The Bonzos at their darker best. A Summer-festival filler and sampler certainty.*