

# All back to vinyl – Sam Fender – Seventeen Going Under

Since releasing his debut album, *Hypersonic Missiles* two years ago Sam Fender has gone from having a growing following to becoming a cultural phenomenon.

The title track of the album is nothing short of single of the year, immediately catchy and attention-grabbing Fender takes us right to the heart of a coming-of-age drama suffering at the hands of Tory austerity. It's the story of his youth and times of struggle and poverty in North Shields.

Last week taking the stage at the Barrowlands he gave the Scottish crowd a taste of what to expect from an arena tour planned for next year playing *Seventeen Going Under*, *Spit of You* and *Get You Down*. He delivered a trio of knock out songs that all feature on the new long-player. *Spit of You* about boys and their dads is typical of Fender's poignant songwriting style that has made him one of the most significant acts to come out of Britain since The Verve. *Get You Down* is another floor bouncer with the singer writing about insecurity and that in-between place of adolescence and manhood.

The 27-year-old Geordie front-man and songsmith has become an important political and working-class presence in just over two years. Voices from his social background have been absent in mainstream music for some time and he has become a

refreshing anomaly.

There is a myriad of reasons why but the young Geordie has shown he has the chops to grab the baton from the big rock acts that inspired him from the 90s such as Nirvana, Oasis and The Verve. Addressing often overlooked issues such as male suicide on Dead Boys (from Hypersonic Missiles) was one of the highlights of his Barrowlands performance, the song has without doubt struck a chord with the many who are struggling in these dark times.

As Fender recently pointed out his kinship with life across the border plays a relevant role. From the new album Angel In Lothian reflects on a period of his childhood in Scotland. The artwork is reminiscent of Springsteen's Nebraska, a nod to a significant influence on the work, the Boss is a touchstone in the way that The Beatles were for Oasis. His solo version of Dancing In The Dark is well received in an audience that spans generations. Just when rock music had become staid and safe the genre (and vinyl sales), have received a major shot in the arm with a new and original voice.

He said last week it has been a "mental year" but his music and art have been a boon to many during the pandemic.



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