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Ride On, Fight On

From Westway to the West Coast of Canada, Rich Deakin meets Paul Rudolph from **PINK FAIRIES** as he unveils psych rock/proto-punk covers set 'Covered In Pink'.

WHEN Paul Rudolph stepped off a plane from Canada at Heathrow airport in the spring of '69, carrying little more than a guitar, a bass and a few clothes stuffed into their cases, he had no idea he was about to become part of British rock folklore. For many, his name is etched deepest into the fuzz drenched legacy of the Deviants and Pink Fairies – the anarchic, freewheeling heroes of Ladbroke Grove. But his story stretches far wider. He's also the man who walked straight into the Hawkwind maelstrom in '75, filling the gap left when Lemmy was famously detained at the Canadian border and ejected from the mothership. Few musicians get thrown into a crossroads that dramatic: one foot in psychedelic chaos, the other in spacerock turbulence – Rudolph calmly riding the storm.

Both bands were fixtures of Britain's counterculture, loud, unruly and proudly antiestablishment, often sharing stages, members and all night jams, but tales of Rudolph's time in the early Pink Fairies have been told so many times that lingering on them now feels like spinning an already well-worn record. An equally

interesting story lies in the musical detours Paul Rudolph took afterwards – those overlooked collaborations and left-field projects that coloured the years before he finally headed back to his native Canada in 1980 and quietly stepped away from the music world almost entirely.

What followed was a life lived at a different tempo. Apart from the odd musical detour, Rudolph spent the next three decades immersed in cycling, eventually running his own bike shop and becoming a familiar figure in Vancouver's riding community. Now, more than 40 years after drifting out of the rock world, he's back – as quietly and decisively as he left.

But, to understand the road that led him there, we need to rewind to the summer of '71, when the Pink Fairies were flying high after a gloriously unhinged Glastonbury set. Their flamboyant drummer John 'Twink' Alder unexpectedly left the band soon after, but that didn't stop the Pink Fairies' momentum. Live performances such as the one at the Ruisrock Festival in Turku, Finland barely two months after Glastonbury bear testimony to this. If anything,

Ladbroke Grove's opendoor chaos brought new energy: suddenly they were jamming with the likes of Trevor Burton of The Move and Paul Kossoff from Free – less by design than because everyone lived within shouting distance. Playing alongside musicians of that calibre widened Rudolph's horizons, giving him a taste of musical freedom he hadn't quite found within the Fairies. He even invited Burton to try out properly and ended up playing several shows, a BBC Radio 1 session, and contributing to two tracks on 'What A Bunch of Sweeties'. Still, Rudolph later admitted it "wasn't working," and doubts began to creep in. "I didn't really

want to play with Trevor... he was a great bloke, but I don't think he gelled with the Pink Fairies."



TREVOR BURTON (LEFT) AND PAUL RUDOLPH

PAUL RUDOLPH AT
RUISROCK FESTIVAL,
TURKU, FINLAND,
AUGUST 1971

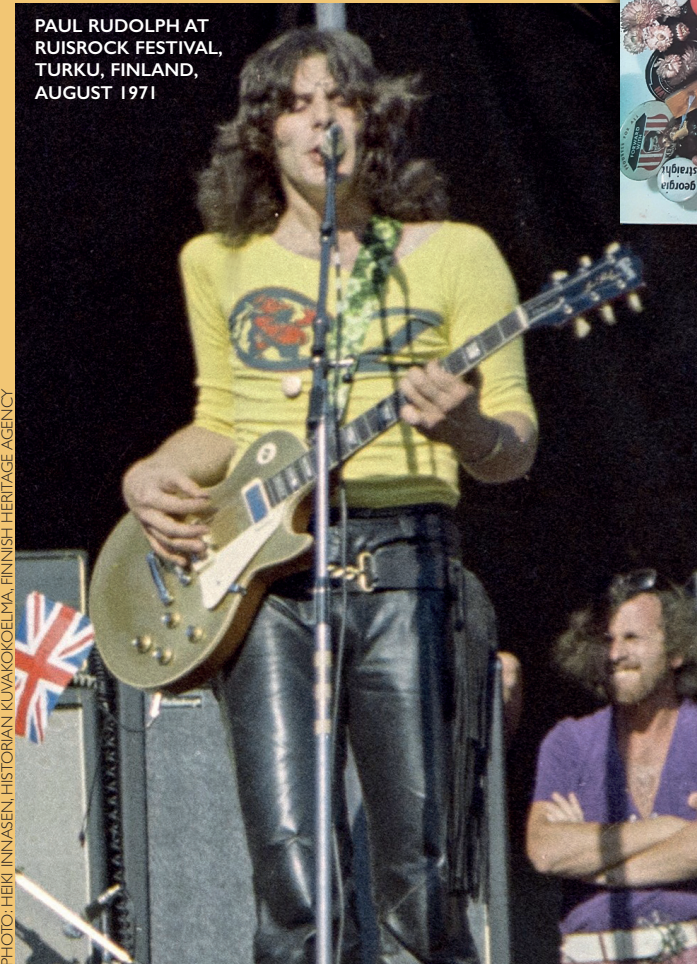


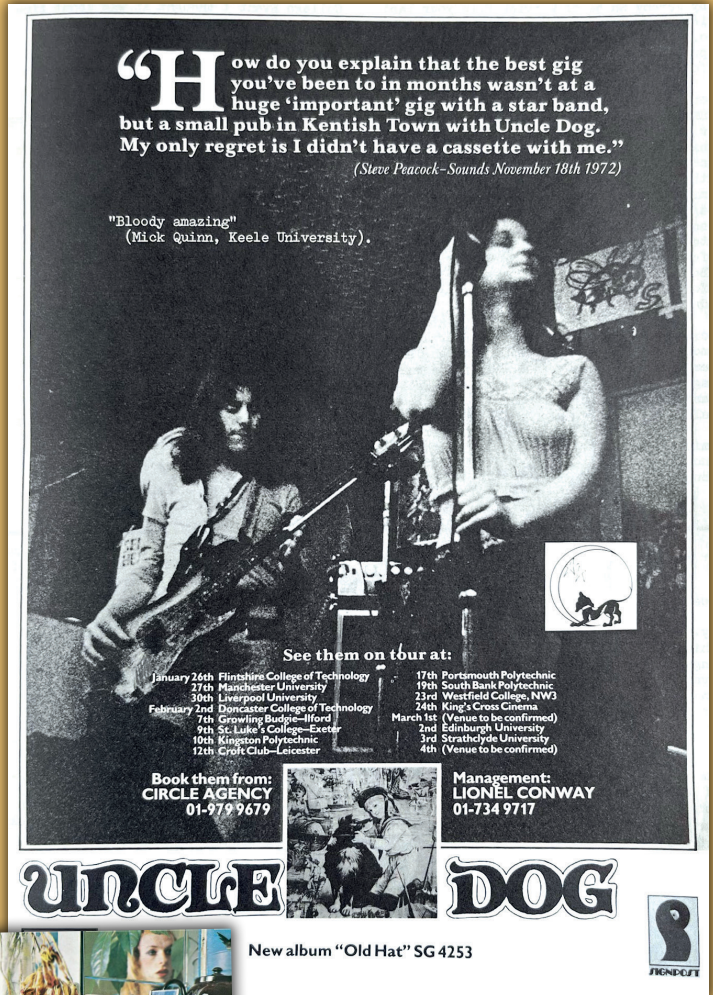
PHOTO: HEIKI INNASEN HISTORIAN KUAKOKELMA, FINNISH HERITAGE AGENCY

Drugs didn't help either. Kossoff's brief onstage appearances were chaotic, his increasing Mandrax use derailing even the simplest jam – and the wider counterculture was shifting the same way. Within the Fairies, Russell Hunter's escalating Mandrax and heroin use became a growing concern for Rudolph, "The gigs were starting to become a bit of a challenge". Something had to give. "I felt really bad about leaving because Russ was a good mate, and I sat down with him at his place and said, 'Is there anything I can do to help you at this time?', and he was very dismissive about getting any help, and at that point I just kind of had it."

Paul now says "Part of the frustration too was Polydor records, because when they first said you guys should make an album, I suggested 'if you want to capture the essence of the Pink Fairies you should do a live recording' because that's where the magic was right?" Obviously Polydor didn't listen. The band's debut album 'Never-Neverland' had disappointed fans and critics alike, and Rudolph felt they'd missed the chance to capture their live power on Neverland and its follow up, 'What A Bunch of Sweeties'. After a gig at Southend Technical College in May '72, he quietly walked away, and there was no fanfare. '...Sweeties' appeared posthumously that July, reaching No. 48 – just as Hawkwind, their old compadres, hit No. 2 with 'Silver Machine'. Momentum gone, Sandy Sanderson and Russell Hunter briefly recruited Mick Wayne before replacing him with Larry Wallis, setting the stage for 'Kings of Oblivion' the following year.

After leaving the Pink Fairies, Rudolph joined Uncle Dog, a blues rock outfit built around Carol Grimes and already woven into Ladbroke Grove's bohemian circuit. They'd released 'Old Hat' in '72, but by summer '73 the band knew the ride was ending. As Rudolph puts it, "everybody in Uncle Dog thought, this is fun, but it's not really going anywhere," so they planned a farewell show under the Westway flyover – the same concrete cathedral where Hawkwind and the Pink Fairies had once jammed as Pinkwind.

That gig proved pivotal. After the set, Rudolph's bandmate John Porter introduced him to Brian Eno, who'd just left Roxy Music. Porter had played bass on 'For Your Pleasure' and was close to Eno, who approached Rudolph directly. It was, as Rudolph says, "a segue into a whole other thing". What followed was a creative partnership that stretched across four Eno albums – 'Here Come



New album "Old Hat" SG 4253



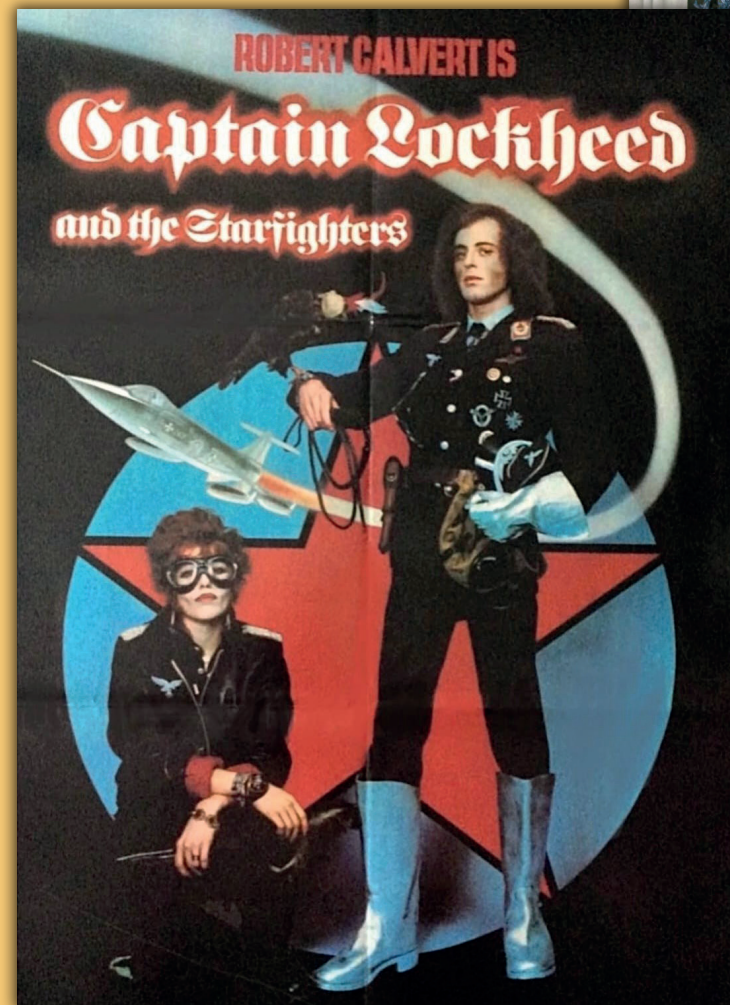
the Warm Jets', 'Another Green World', 'Before and After Science', and 'Music for Films'. "Doing those four Eno albums truly was some of the most exciting stuff I've ever done," he says. "And I still listen to them."

His most famous contribution is arguably 'Baby's on Fire', long debated for its blistering guitar work. The track features both Rudolph and King Crimson's Robert Fripp, and Rudolph now laughs about Eno's cut and splice approach, "when he was mixing it he

would just quickly press channel cut buttons back and forth, so the guitar would suddenly go from the lower register up into the high register, and people would go, 'jeez, how did they move their fingers that fast?' thinking it was one guitar".

In August 1973, John Porter was hired to produce demos for two American brothers, Russell and Ron Mael AKA Sparks. Porter, who had Rolling Stones connections, brought Rudolph into the sessions. "We rehearsed in the Stones' studio," he recalled, "with me on bass, Mick Taylor on guitar and Mike [Kellie] from Spooky Tooth on drums". There was never any plan for Rudolph to join Sparks, and even if asked he says he'd have "politely declined – lovely people, but not my kind of music. I want to play what speaks to my soul".

Much more up his street was his involvement with the mercurial Bob Calvert, Hawkwind's erstwhile frontman. The first of Robert Calvert's solo albums to feature Paul Rudolph was 'Captain Lockheed and the Starfighters', a darkly comic concept piece about West Germany's disastrous purchase of the notoriously unsafe F104 Widowmaker jets in the 1960s. Recorded between March 1973 and January 1974 and released that May, it was produced by Roy Thomas Baker, then fresh from Queen and on his way to produce The Cars, Mötley Crüe and Guns N' Roses. Rudolph once again found himself alongside Brian Eno, on synthesizers, plus the wonderfully unhinged Vivian Stanshall and Arthur Brown. Pink Fairies drummer Twink appears on 'Catch a Falling Starfighter', while most of Hawkwind's lineup of the day, including Lemmy, Dave Brock, Nik Turner, Simon King and Del Dettmar also drop-in, as does Traffic's Dave Mason. ▶



◀ The album's long gestation shows in its stitched together mix of theatre, satire and spacerock chaos – part Monty Python, part Hawkwind fever dream. Highlights like 'Ejection', 'The Right Stuff', 'Widowmaker' and 'Aerospace Age Inferno' hint at what Hawkwind might've sounded like had Rudolph replaced Brock, rather than Lemmy. Calvert may have been the ringmaster, but Rudolph was the secret weapon powering the whole circus.

1975 turned out to be a momentous year for Rudolph. It began with the gloriously shambolic Bugs Bunny Drugs Band – a one-off psychedelic jam prank featuring Van der Graaf Generator's Dave Jackson, drummer George Butler, and a bassist lost to history. "An older beatnik friend and I were joking about doing something," Rudolph recalls. Their only gig, at Dingwalls, was packed. "My mate was in the audience yelling, 'Hey Bugs, where's the drugs?' One song, 'Hashish', we made up on the spot and it went on for 15 or 20 minutes."

More serious were the two Pink Fairies reunions at the Roundhouse, including a February support slot with Hawkwind. For fans, it was a dream: Rudolph and Larry Wallis on the same stage for the first time, trading riffs like duelling engines. Demand was so intense that around a thousand people unable to get in tried forcing the doors – some even attempting to set them alight.

Any hope of a longer term reunion evaporated when Rudolph was suddenly drafted into Hawkwind. During a North American tour, Lemmy was arrested at the US-Canadian border for possession of amphetamine sulphate, mistaken for cocaine, and promptly fired. Rudolph was flown out at short notice to take over on bass. The irony was almost too perfect: Lemmy kicked out of Hawkwind for drugs, replaced by a Pink Fairy – a band hardly known for clean living.

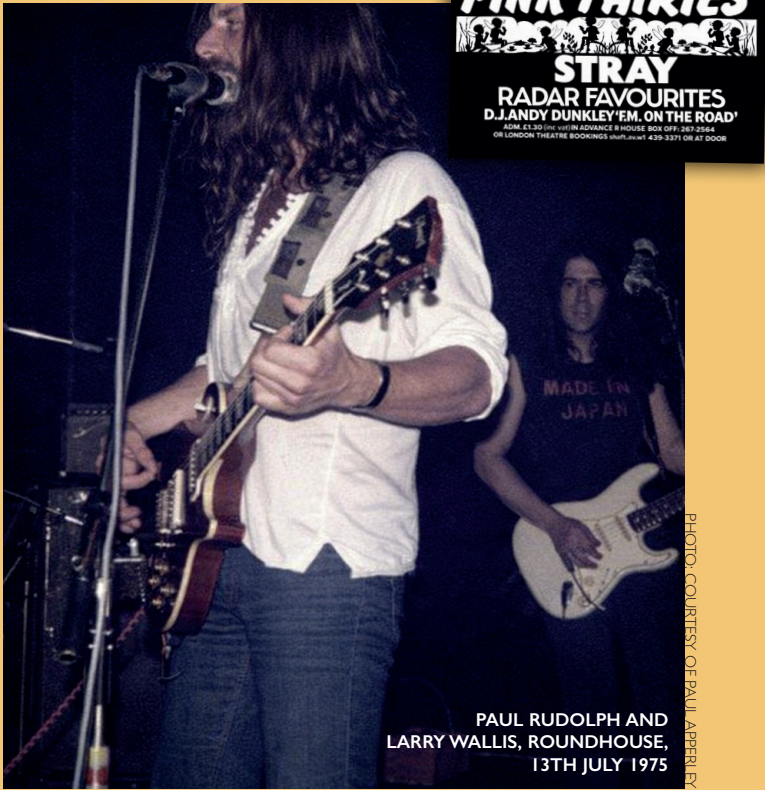
On 13 July 1975, with Rudolph now officially in Hawkwind, the Pink Fairies regrouped at the Roundhouse for another farewell! Larry Wallis later recalled the band arriving armed with an amphetamine-like stimulant, called ephedrine, which he, Sandy and Russell eagerly snorted before going onstage. Rudolph, by contrast, turned up in a tracksuit with his racing bike and a thermos of tea – the picture of calm amid the chaos.

Drummer Russell Hunter later summed up the bittersweet magic of those nights: "In a perfect world, both Larry and Paul would have been in the band together. I really think that would have been something, because I really rate both of them as guitar players, in very different ways – and they both epitomise two different sides of the band."

That perfect world never arrived. As much as Rudolph enjoyed the 1975 Roundhouse reunions, he admits he wouldn't have rejoined the Fairies longterm, even without Hawkwind in the picture. "I don't think I would have continued in a reformed Pink Fairies... my interest in the band was waning, and I really enjoyed working with Eno – it was creative, satisfying, and had a very artistic vibe."

Rudolph spent June touring Europe with Hawkwind, with more UK dates lined up for the summer. Larry Wallis, meanwhile, was already deep into rehearsals with the earliest incarnation of Motörhead, adding a sense of inevitability to the Fairies' farewell. Just a week after their Roundhouse goodbye, Wallis was back on the same stage – this time debuting Motörhead.

July brought more milestones. Rudolph returned to the studio for Eno's 'Another Green World', contributing guitar and bass on several tracks. He also ended up playing snare drums on 'I'll Come Running'. Eno, frustrated with trying to get Phil Collins to strip his kit down to its bare essentials, called a break. Rudolph



PAUL RUDOLPH AND LARRY WALLIS, ROUNDHOUSE, 13TH JULY 1975

PHOTO: COURTESY OF PAUL ARPERLEY

casually mentioned he'd been a drum major in high school; Eno handed him the sticks. One take later, Eno declared, "Great – you just earned yourself another 200 pounds!".

By this point, Rudolph's cycling habit was becoming a full blown passion. What began as a practical way to get around London had grown into a lifestyle. Eno was a keen cyclist too, and between sessions the pair would hang out at the track opposite Eno's Paddington flat, bonding over bikes as much as music.

September brought the release of Robert Calvert's second solo album, 'Lucky Leif and the Longships'. Once again it featured several Hawkwind members, plus sci-fi author and longtime collaborator Michael Moorcock. Produced by Brian Eno, the record imagines an alternate America shaped not by European settlers but by Viking colonists – a 34minute sprint through surf pop, bluegrass, proto-rock and Norse-tinged psychedelia, all filtered through Calvert's theatrical satire. It didn't land as strongly as 'Captain Lockheed' at the time, but it has since earned cult status.

Rudolph's fingerprints are everywhere: guitar, bass, arrangements, and the musical glue that holds the album together as it leaps between genres. He was the stabilising force between Calvert's conceptual flights and Eno's atmospheric production. Though Calvert took the writing credit, Rudolph maintains that more than 75% of the material on both 'Captain Lockheed' and 'Lucky Leif' was cowritten by the pair.

After a short UK tour with Hawkwind in December, Rudolph entered the studio with the band in early 1976. The result, 'Astounding Sounds, Amazing Music', released that August, marked a turning point. It's the moment Hawkwind shift from the Lemmy-era heavy psych roar into the sleeker, more theatrical Calvert-fronted phase. You can hear the recalibration in real time: Rudolph's cleaner, more melodic bass tone; House's intricate keyboards; Calvert stepping fully into the spotlight.

Rudolph's influence is subtle but structural. He doesn't dominate the record, but he quietly shifts its gravitational pull, nudging Hawkwind toward a funkier, more rhythmically defined sound. Critics at the time noted the change, and not all fans were convinced. Even Dave Brock reportedly struggled, unhappy with the growing democratic approach to songwriting and rattled by Rudolph's increasingly prominent leadguitar work onstage throughout 1976. Rudolph didn't define Hawkwind the way Lemmy or Calvert did – but he enabled the next era, and the band was never quite the same again.



A RARE PHOTO OF DAVE BROCK ON BASS GUITAR AND PAUL RUDOLPH PLAYING LEAD GUITAR ON TOUR WITH HAWKWIND, 1976

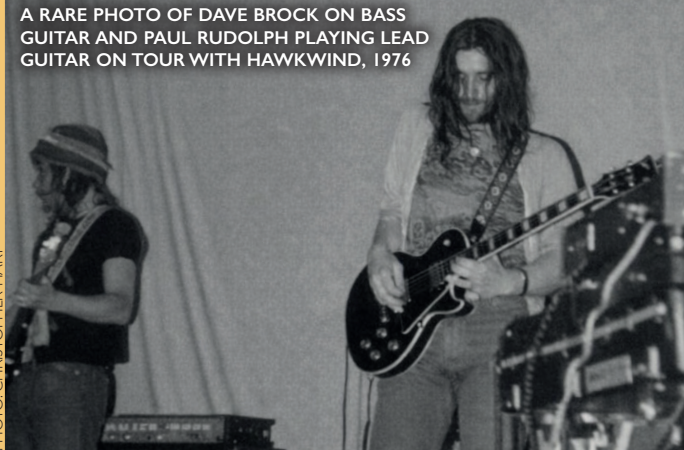


PHOTO: CHRISTOPHER HART

Matters came to a head during the sessions for Hawkwind's next album, 'Quark, Strangeness and Charm'. "It was all ready to go, then the infighting started," Rudolph recalls. "There was always a huge amount of discontent because Dave Brock wanted to write all the songs to get the publishing royalties." Tensions exploded at Rockfield Studios. "Everybody was fucked up on coke... I wasn't feeling the energy, and several others weren't either. They'd had it with Dave. He went to manager Tony Howard and complained about me, Alan Powell and Nik Turner. Tony called us in and said, 'Apologise to Dave or you're fired.' We just said, 'Fuck you.'" By year's end, Brock had removed Turner, Powell and Rudolph.

Brock then wiped all of Rudolph's bass parts from the album, replacing them with new bassist Adrian Shaw's parts. Only one track survived the purge: 'Hassan I Sahba', cowritten with Calvert, "[Brock] couldn't get anyone in to play the guitar like that" Paul says laughing. Although he isn't credited, he still receives royalties, "To date, 'Hassan I Sahba' is still huge compared to anything else I've ever been paid for," he sums up.

Rudolph wasted no time regrouping. Within a month he'd formed Kicks with fellow Hawkwind exile Alan Powell, Cal Bachelor (exQuiver) and Steve York (Vinegar Joe). The press were enthusiastic. NME's Dick Tracy called them "a refreshing combination... a hungry bunch," predicting they could bridge the gap "between the music for old hippies and the music of the punks".

But the timing was brutal. Punk had detonated and labels didn't want anything that wasn't safety pinned and snarling. "The record companies we shopped Kicks around to basically said 'it's not punk enough' so we called it a day" Rudolph now says. Despite strong demos and good crowds, Kicks fizzled out after a dozen gigs in July 1977. The irony, of course, is rich: The Deviants and Pink Fairies would later be hailed as key influences on the very punk bands who helped render Kicks commercially invisible.

With Kicks dissolved, Paul Rudolph made his first significant recordings since Hawkwind. Reuniting with drummer Alan Powell, former Deviants frontman Mick Farren, Larry Wallis, and Ladbroke Grove guitarist Andy Colquhoun of The Warsaw Pakt, they entered Pathway Studios as Mick Farren & The Deviants. The result was the 'Screwed Up' EP, with Rudolph co-writing three of its four tracks. Wallis, now an in-house producer for Stiff Records, handled production, bringing the same sharp edge he'd applied to The Adverts and Wreckless Eric. The title track is a feral two-minute blast of late '70s punk attitude, built on Rudolph's wiry riffing and Farren's half sung, half spat delivery. Another standout, 'Let's Loot the Supermarket Again', reworks Farren's 1968 Deviants anthem into a leaner, nastier, Stiff-era stomp.

Paul Rudolph could clearly play punk when required, though his instincts still leaned toward funkier, blues rock driven explorations, as Kicks had proved, and by early 1979, London's gig scene was drying up for him. So, when an old beatnik friend announced he was moving back to Canada and told him to make use of his full size German tour bus parked on a campground in Málaga, Rudolph took the offer. He grabbed his bike and guitar and spent a year living on the site, enjoying a level of calm he hadn't known in years.

Before leaving London, Boss Goodman had arranged a recording session with Mick Farren, and Rudolph had agreed to fly back for it. He returned later in the year only to be told the session had been cancelled. The news hit hard. Frustrated, he immediately returned to Málaga, collected his bike and then headed back to London one final time. There, he packed up everything he owned, arranged to have it shipped by sea to Vancouver, and closed the door on that chapter of his life. It was the moment he realised he was done with

the London scene and ready to start again somewhere far quieter.

When Paul Rudolph arrived in Canada ahead of his shipped belongings, he found himself without guitars for weeks. With little to do, he threw himself into the Canadian landscape, cycling through the mountains and coastline. One day he wandered into a local bike shop, struck up a conversation with the owner, who, recognising Rudolph's enthusiasm, offered him a job repairing bicycles. By the early '80s he'd settled into a new life. He'd met a Canadian woman, started a family, and soon had three children. With that responsibility came a choice, and music inevitably slipped into the background for the next three decades. He didn't stop entirely: he produced a West Coast band called Brandon Wolf and among other things he contributed an experimental electronic track, 'Peter's Piece', to the compilation 'Stitching Small Tears'. A ten minute swirl of ambient synths and Tangerine Dreamlike textures, it still carried Rudolph's unmistakable guitar work.

But these musical detours were rare. The most substantial recordings of the '80s and '90s came when former Pink Fairies bandmate Twink visited him in Vancouver. Working out of a modest digital setup in Rudolph's home, the pair recorded two albums under the Pink Fairies name in 1996 and 1997 – 'Pleasure Island' and 'No Picture'. They weren't classic Fairies, but they had flashes of charm – 'Cargoe in Jamaica' among them.

During the No Picture sessions, Rudolph and Twink went to see Henry Rollins perform in Vancouver. The venue was overflowing, but Rollins' crew ushered them straight backstage. Rollins, who was a long-time fan, and had already recorded ferocious versions of 'Do It!', was thrilled to meet two original Pink Fairies - until Twink raised the awkward question of unpaid royalties. Given Henry Rollins' weightlifter's physique, Twink was understandably relieved when Rollins immediately apologised for the unpaid royalties, launched into stories of wrestling with record labels, and promised to sort the money out as soon as he could.

Then, in the summer of 1999, Paul Rudolph was hit with two major blows: a prostate cancer diagnosis and the collapse of the bike company he worked for. Through the winter, he and his partner Tricia stripped life back to essentials. They wanted out of the city; Paul wanted to return to the Sunshine Coast where he'd grown up and open his own bike shop in Gibsons Landing. Money was almost non-existent and his treatment ongoing, but they took a leap of faith anyway. In 2000, they bought a house and launched Spin Cycles at the same time. His cancer treatment was successful, and the shop soon became a thriving local business.

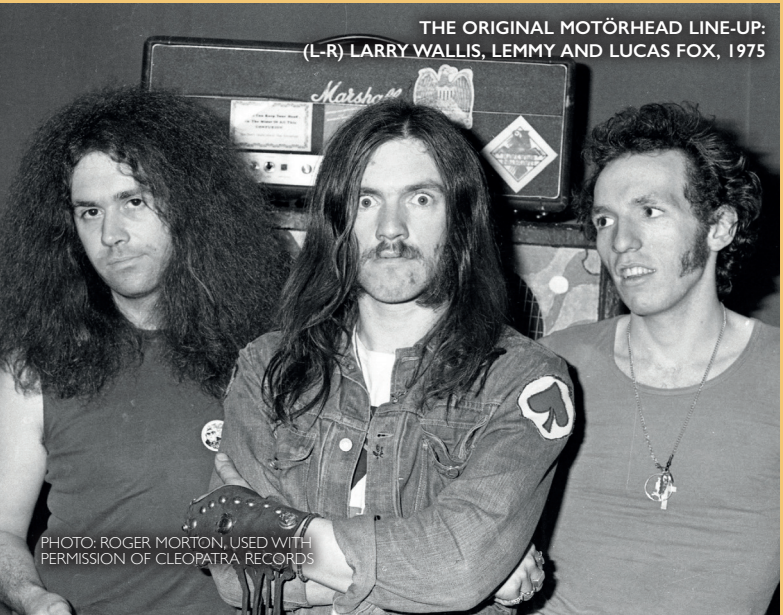
In 2007, news broke that the 'Kings of Oblivion' line-up of the Pink Fairies Russell Hunter, Sandy Sanderson and Larry Wallis were planning a one-off reunion billed by the Roundhouse as "The Original Kings Of Oblivion". Russell Hunter said at the time that to get Paul over from Canada "It would have had to be a much bigger deal to allow that to happen. Logistically it didn't make sense. But it would have been great". As it turned out, the reunion was cancelled anyway, officially due to Wallis suffering from sciatica.

Two years later, in September 2009, Paul did manage to return to the UK. He and Tricia flew over not just for a holiday but to reconnect with his old Fairies bandmates and their longtime road manager Boss Goodman, who had suffered a major stroke three years earlier. A Deviants/Pink Fairies tribute album, 'Portobello Shuffle', was being assembled at the time, and the chance for Rudolph, Hunter and Sanderson to rerecord 'Do It!' was too good to miss. They cut the track at founding Damned guitarist Brian James' studio in Brighton, alongside contributions from James, Rat Scabies and Captain Sensible. ▶



KICKS. NOTE PAUL RUDOLPH IN CYCLING GEAR.

PHOTOGRAPHER UNKNOWN, MICK ODY, MARCH 1977



THE ORIGINAL MOTÖRHEAD LINE-UP: (L-R) LARRY WALLIS, LEMMY AND LUCAS FOX, 1975

PHOTO: ROGER MORTON, USED WITH PERMISSION OF CLEOPATRA RECORDS

WHAT A BUNCH OF QUOTIES - PAUL RUDOLPH ON...

NEVER-NEVERLAND & WHAT A BUNCH OF SWEETIES: "Those first two albums the Pink Fairies recorded for Polydor, I think some of the songs were good, and I think some were very... not so good, because the Pink Fairies were not a studio recording band. It was that simple!"

PAUL KOSSOFF (FREE): "I used to hang out a lot with Trevor [Burton] and Paul Kossoff until Paul's Mandrax abuse became severe... He did attempt to play at one of our Roundhouse gigs when Trevor was in the band. Unfortunately, he appeared to have taken too many Mandies and after five minutes on stage Boss [Goodman] finally got him plugged in as he couldn't seem to get the guitar cord plugged into the guitar. He played sporadic, out-of-tune occasional notes while leaning back into his Marshall stack. He was fortunate that Boss was propping up his stack from behind using full strength otherwise everything would have come crashing down!"

TREVOR BURTON (THE MOVE, BALLS, AND STEVE GIBBONS BAND): "Trevor and I were good friends for sure. He was a great guitar player and played with the band more as a temporary thing to see if it could work out. I thought it could be interesting to have two wild guitarists - kind of like the MC5ish, but we did a few gigs and I found that it was a bit limiting having to arrange songs to suit both of our roles. He did play a few live gigs."

BRIAN ENO: "I really enjoyed all of Eno's stuff. It was so much creative, spontaneous fun with such an open approach and very experimental... It was kinda like being artists, musicians and science experimenters!"

LARRY WALLIS - 1975 ROUNDHOUSE REUNIONS: "It was really good fun playing with Larry. It was two kindred spirits... It was the kind of situation where you got two lead guitarists on stage and they're both playing rhythm and one guy nods at the other guy, 'your turn' and then, 'your turn', and you know I think the fact that it was a one-off took a lot of pressure off everything... I have great respect for Larry as a musician and a songwriter... and he was a good bloke."

REPLACING LEMMY IN HAWKWIND: "There was no animosity between us... I mean, after I joined the band I think that some die-hard fans thought, 'Oh, that Paul Rudolph ousted Lemmy, blah, blah, blah', and that was never the case... I was at the very first gig Motörhead did, and we were always good mates you know? I don't know if I ever lent him a quid or not, but... (laughs)."

ROBERT CALVERT - LUCKY LEIF & THE LONGSHIPS: "Lucky Leif was very much a concept album, but it was something Bob [Calvert] just had to get out of his system. I think a lot of artists just do it because they just have to get it out of their system. I mean... what can I say? He's a very articulate writer, but it was fun."

KICKS: "Kicks was a tight, rock/blues type band and was quite heavy sounding. I enjoyed doing it. We did a few rockier versions of some Al Green songs as well as original stuff. Tight and structured. A bit like a blend of Free with Led Zep."

PUNK: "What I liked about the punk bands was their energy, style and a tribal vibe they seemed to have. I loved that they did their own thing and expressed it like an art form with music and fashion. Perhaps I was a bit of a rebel myself! I really liked the Sex Pistols and The Ramones, amongst many others. I didn't see that many punk gigs. I guess travelling in rockers' circles meant I was either playing or going to see mates in bands at their various gigs."

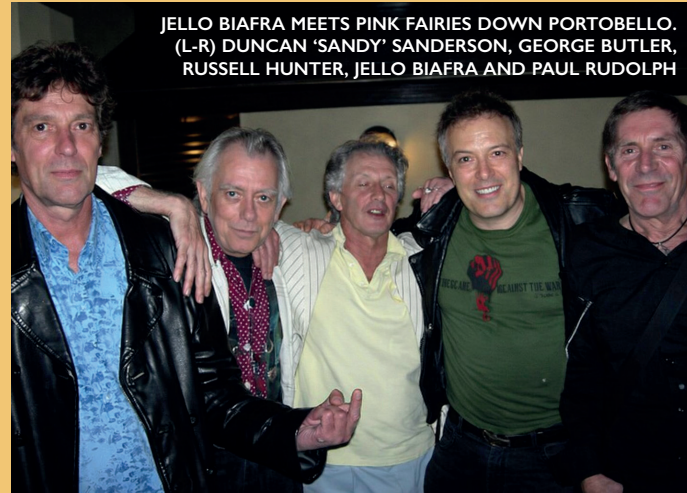
CYCLING: "I used to take a pencil and paper out with me riding, and I'd go riding off on some quiet roads, and something to do

with the meditative part of cycling on a quiet road and the rhythm, and I'd stop and I'd start writing down some ideas, and sometimes I'd even cut my ride short to get home and plug into my tape recorder because it was that powerful... bike riding was not only physically therapeutic it was mentally therapeutic... and I think the health aspects of riding a bike helped to drive out the [negative impacts of] booze and the hashish smoking."

PAUL RUDOLPH IN HIS BIKE SHOP SPIN CYCLES, GIBSON'S LANDING, VANCOUVER, 2006



PHOTO: AMY WALKER



JELLO BIAFRA MEETS PINK FAIRIES DOWN PORTOBELLO. (L-R) DUNCAN 'SANDY' SANDERSON, GEORGE BUTLER, RUSSELL HUNTER, JELLO BIAFRA AND PAUL RUDOLPH

PHOTOGRAPH: STEVE MANN

The following night, at Boss Goodman's 61st birthday gathering on Portobello Road, Jello Biafra made a surprise appearance. On tour in the UK, he'd heard the Fairies were in town and came to meet the band who'd shaped his teenage imagination long before the Dead Kennedys. His contribution to the tribute album - an 18 minute freakout based on a hybrid of Deviants songs was just one more reminder of the deep respect the Fairies command across punk and countercultural circles, echoed by tributes from Wreckless Eric, Wilko Johnson, former Hawkwind Nik Turner, John Perry of the Only Ones and MC5 luminary John Sinclair, and many others.

In 2010, Mick Farren returned from Los Angeles and reunited The Deviants with Russell Hunter, Sandy Sanderson, Andy Colquhoun and Jaki Windmill. After Farren's death in 2013, the remaining members decided to continue as the Pink Fairies, adding drummer George Butler. Russell said at the time, "Larry's not currently fit for such a project". However, he did invite Paul over from Canada to participate. Once again it came down to logistics, and after factoring in the base pay, the time and effort involved, and the number of people needed, Paul decided the return just wouldn't have been worth it.

By 2016, a chance phone call with Nik Turner led Rudolph into a new creative orbit with the Austin-based label Cleopatra Records. Meanwhile, the UK incarnation of the Pink Fairies wound down in 2015 due to health issues, releasing one final album, 'Naked Radio', in 2016 before calling it a day. With the name dormant, Rudolph began considering reviving the Pink Fairies himself. Aware of the long running feud between Dave Brock and Nik Turner over the Hawkwind name, he decided to secure the Fairies banner before Twink did. Hunter and Sanderson gave their blessing, and in 2017 Cleopatra's Matt Green encouraged him to team up with fellow label artist Alan Davey, former Hawkwind bassist, and Lucas Fox, Motörhead's original drummer.

The project, however, immediately hit turbulence. Larry Wallis had been expected to join them in Austin to handle guitar, vocals and songwriting, but days before the sessions he pulled out due to worsening health. Rudolph recalls arriving in Texas, checking into a seedy motel, and telling Davey, "The studio's booked - we'll have to wing it". What became 'Resident Reptiles' was essentially a structured jam, with lyrics improvised by Rudolph and Fox.

A welcome surprise arrived when Jello Biafra wandered into the studio unannounced, having heard the Fairies were recording. Rudolph remembers him as "a really great guy" with infectious energy. Remarkably, the Austin sessions were the first time Rudolph, Davey and Fox had ever met. Aside from an old Larry Wallis tune, 'Old Enuff to Know Better', everything was written on the spot. In Wallis's absence, they even slipped in a tribute 'Lone Wolf', its initials a quiet nod to Larry Wallis.

They tracked the songs with Fox on guide vocals, after which Rudolph rewrote and recorded the final vocals at home, with Davey later adding harmonies. The album became a genuine labour of love - chaotic, improvised, but unmistakably stamped with the Pink Fairies' renegade spirit. Talking about the title track, Rudolph is blunt: it's "aimed at bureaucrats and people in positions of power and influence taking advantage of anyone they could exploit." The same spirit fuels 'Your Cover Is Blown', which he describes as a companion piece - the moment when "the Reptiles are outed for their behaviour and might just back off knowing that everyone is watching."

'Mirage' widens the lens again, tapping into the political tension surrounding the 2016 standoff between the U.S. government and the Standing Rock Sioux over the Dakota Access Pipeline.

The album was released in August 2018, and though Paul may now seem somewhat dismissive of 'Resident Reptiles', it was typified by some furious axe shredding, foundation-shaking basslines and pounding drums. It was also produced by Jürgen Engler, a founder member of the influential German industrial band Die Krupps, which is also indicative of where it was coming from sonically.

Sadly 2018 saw the passing of the UK Pink Fairies' drummer George Butler, and then in September 2019 Larry Wallis also died, followed just two months later by Sandy Sanderson. A few months after this, in March 2020, the COVID-19 global pandemic struck. Having asthma and COPD, the lockdown particularly affected Paul. His marriage broke down and it also spelled the end of his working in the bicycle business. On the other hand it did give him more time to spend in his home studio, and in June 2021 Paul announced on Facebook, "Now working on new Pink Fairies LP with Alan Davey and Lucas Fox. I too would love to play with Russell [Hunter] on drums but sadly his health is not letting him drum. That being said things are rockin' and who knows what the future holds". Sadly, Russell died in December 2023.

Recording the new album was not without its problems, not least because of lockdown restrictions and the respective band members' geographical locations - Paul was in Vancouver, Alan in Death Valley, USA, and Lucas in Paris, France. Paul and Alan both had their own recording facilities at home, but Lucas didn't have the same convenience.

The plan had been simple enough: embrace online collaboration and keep the project loose and spontaneous. In reality, Lucas understandably, wanted to play a bigger part in the writing and production, but that was more than the schedule could handle when the aim was to keep things quick, dirty and raw. He did track a lot of the drums, but that created its own complications. He played great, but the process was a headache: he had to book studio time at the band's expense in France, and then there was the painstaking and time-consuming task of shuttling drum takes back and forth across the internet.

'Screwed Up' was eventually released in the summer of 2023. With all three members carrying the DNA of the Pink Fairies, Motörhead and Hawkwind, 'Screwed Up' naturally tips its hat to the past - with covers of the title track and 'Hassan I Sahba' that arguably outdo the originals. But it wasn't just a nostalgia exercise. Most of the record was brand new material, and Rudolph tears into it with real venom, growling through 'Digital Sin' and 'Wayward Son' while delivering some of the sharpest guitar work of his career.

When the band goes heavy, they hit with the force of all their former outfits combined - just drop the needle on 'WhatChaGonnaDo' or 'We Can't Get Any Closer'. There's space to breathe too: the atmospheric instrumental 'Big Pink Chopper', the dreamier 'Dreamzzz' and 'In The Ether' - the latter two both steeped in Davey's more ambient leanings. 'Screwed Up' bears all the hallmarks of the trio's shared heritage.

Then came the idea of a covers album. Brian Perrera, the owner of Cleopatra, hatched the plan and asked Paul and Alan to do it as the Pink Fairies. But after the production ordeal of 'Screwed Up', Paul and Alan made a decisive call. Regretfully, not least because of the distance and all the costly studio expenses it was deemed more prudent to record it without Lucas. Rudolph emphasises the point, "Lucas is a great drummer. [But] we wanted to get it done and try to stay within our budget." Instead, their secret weapon was One Legged Pete - not a drum machine, not AI, but a fully programmed digital drummer. Alan Davey spent hours shaping Pete's feel, beat by beat, to get the exact sound they wanted. They could have spent countless more hours toing and froing live drum tracks across the internet, but they'd have lost the precision and control they were chasing. Live, of course, nothing beats human energy - but on record, Pete delivered.

Perrera gave Rudolph and Davey a list of 15 songs from which to choose, but when both of them expressed their concern over some of Perrera's original list, Paul remembered a really rough version of 'Do It!' he'd recorded some years earlier, "I'd recorded the vocals through this 50 year old sports announcer microphone, and so I sent Alan the tracks I'd recorded and he said, 'this is awesome, I'll



PAUL RUDOLPH IN HIS HOME STUDIO, VICTORIA, BC, CANADA, 2024

just take your bass track off and put mine on and we're done!', so that's 'Do It!'."

Once again, Paul and Alan took care of the production and engineering on 'Covered in Pink', keeping the whole operation lean and in house. With Lucas Fox now out of the picture, Rudolph and Alan Davey formed the hard hitting core of the modern Pink Fairies, and their approach was simple: hit the material as hard as humanly possible. Guitars are locked into full tilt wah and distortion, bass permanently redlined, and the pair trade vocals in a gravel-throated snarl, Rudolph's vintage Roland vocoder adding an extra layer of sci-fi menace. There's even a cameo guest appearance on 'Motörhead', where Michael Moorcock storms in on lead vocals, riding a blitzkrieg backdrop that feels tailor-made for him.

The covers become a playground for the pair's instincts. 1960s freakbeat and R&B kick things off with The Mickey Finn's 'Garden Of My Mind' followed by the Pretty Things' 'Rosalyn'. Bowie's 'Cracked Actor', Zeppelin's 'Communication Breakdown', and Dr Feelgood's 'Milk and Alcohol' all take on a heavier, dirtier swagger. Little Eva's 'LocoMotion' is reborn as a runaway juggernaut, while 'American Woman' turns into a ferocious antiwar howl. And on their take of Mountain's 'Mississippi Queen' Rudolph's guitar tone somehow manages to outmuscle even Leslie West.

They also dig into their own shared history: Hawkwind's 'Right to Decide', Rudolph's Enoera scorcher 'Baby's On Fire', and the aforementioned reworking of 'Do It!' all get the modern Fairy treatment. It's a reminder that Rudolph isn't just revisiting his past - he's rewriting it with the volume cranked and the edges sharpened.

Although there was some talk of live dates for this version of the Pink Fairies, geographical differences and health issues have proved to be more prohibitive than online collaboration. Paul has recently been working with Don Falcone's progressive space rock collective Spirits Burning, while Davey has his Hawkestrrel project. The pair both have solo irons in the fire too, but you can be sure this is not the last you've heard of the Pink Fairies. Even more recently Paul has said "Brian Perrera asked Alan and

I if we would consider doing another original [Pink Fairies] album for release in 2027, so I said to Alan 'well I'm game!'"

It's the kind of late-career resurgence that feels less like a nostalgia trip and more like a veteran player rediscovering the thrill of the chase. After decades spent far from the stage lights, Rudolph isn't just revisiting old ground; he's carving out a fresh chapter, proving that some musicians don't fade away - they simply wait for the right riff to pull them back into orbit... I'd still pay fifteen hundred thousand intergalactic credits for a Pink Fairies gig on Uranus though! **WR**

'Covered In Pink' is out now on Cleopatra Records
Special thanks to Paul Rudolph, also to Matt Green at Cleopatra Records, and a big shout out to Carol Grimes and Keith Kniveton.

