

# The New Roxette

www.theNewRoxette.com

**The New Roxette meets...**

**John Otway**

*By Gemma Davidson*

To celebrate his upcoming 60<sup>th</sup> birthday, local hero John Otway is releasing a movie about his life, celebrating his, often turbulent, 40 year-long career. **The New Roxette's** Gemma Davidson caught up with John to find out more about the film and what audiences can expect from it.

**The movie is coming out to celebrate your 60<sup>th</sup> birthday, is that right?**

*Yes, we had a hit project for my 50<sup>th</sup> birthday 10 years ago [a campaign in 2002 saw the track 'Bunsen Burner' reach number 9 in the UK singles chart, scoring John his second hit single], and we were thinking what could we do for the 60<sup>th</sup>, and we came up with the idea of having the movie.*

**What can we expect from it, what is it about?**

*It's basically a documentary, and there is a remarkable amount of archive footage around. I always tried to get someone to follow me with a camera when I was doing something interesting. Back in 1979 when I had my first hit, ITV did a documentary on me which they shot on 50mm film, and the centre of that film was a big concert in Aylesbury Market Square, where 10,000 people turned up, so we were able to use the original negatives from that film which works beautifully on a cinema screen. I only ever had a dodgy second-hand VHS copy of the footage but when we got the high definition footage from the negative suddenly the whole of Aylesbury from 1978 came to life.*

**How long did it take to put together?**

*About two years, so quite a long time. It's quite daunting putting a movie together, but if you think of it as three half-hour programmes you've got quite a lot of time to put in and the time and effort into getting it right.*

**What made you decide to put out a movie?**

*I've been thinking of making a movie since I was about 19 years old. I realised that you can pretty much do it yourself, there's been some big changes in technology recently, you don't need to make a 35mm print anymore, which can cost around £30,000. But we found with a laptop hard-drive, and a good laptop, you can put a movie together.*

**Is it home-made then?**

*It is in the sense that we haven't hired any professional film-makers, but we do have professional film-makers who are friends who have worked on it, they can make it look good with the colour corrections and the technical stuff, and put the polish onto it, especially on the archive footage. So we're well covered in making it look and sound good. So in one sense it is home-made in that it hasn't cost a great deal!*

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**You booked the Leicester Square Odeon cinema for the premiere; did you book it before you started making the film?**

*The original idea was to make the movie and to have the premiere at the largest cinema in the country, that was the original ethos, and we thought if we could sell enough tickets then we could make the movie. The time-limit was my 60<sup>th</sup> birthday so we booked the cinema two years ago. The whole fan-base likes to, every ten years, do something mad!*

**What are you hoping to achieve with the movie?**

*International stardom! That's been the intention my whole life and you get to the point where you think the records aren't going to do it so what will? I think a 'rock and roll's greatest failure' is a better chance as any at the moment!*

**Where did the accolade, 'Rock and Roll's Greatest Failure', come from?**

*It was actually given to me by the publishers of my first autobiography; it was a self-depreciating book about basically how I've managed to mess up my own career without the help of managers and the record companies. In a way it's a bit of a disaster movie, but hopefully it will have a happy ending!*

**What do you hope people take away from the film?**

*It is very difficult to make a living in this industry, and we need to be quite inventive to be able to stay there without having to work for a living, so part of the message is basically about how I got away with it, which isn't necessarily the best way, but certainly an interesting way of doing it, so hopefully people will come out with some food for thought. The background of the movie is that we've taken a group of sixth formers from The Grange school in Aylesbury and taking them through how I had one hit and struggled to get the second hit which was a 25 years slog.*

**How did the sixth formers react to it?**

*Hopefully they learnt a lot, they seemed to be quite amused, and they certainly look good on the film.*

**How much is set in Aylesbury?**

*Well the archive ITV footage is obviously set in the town, and then the sequences at the school are shot there. There is also footage from shows like Top of the Pops and The Old Grey Whistle Test which were obviously shot elsewhere.*

**Are you hoping this film will put Aylesbury on the map?**

*Oh yes, I'm all for putting Aylesbury on the map, it's where the film starts and ends really, although there isn't really an end yet, The premiere is the big climax of the film, so whilst the audience are actually watching the movie the editors are working hard to stick on the end of the movie, so as it comes up to the end there they all are arriving on the red carpet! Hopefully it will work out on the day!*

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**There are other events going on that weekend to celebrate the movie.**

*We usually do a weekend away every year but as we have the premiere in London we thought we'd put on a series of events there. It's basically a whole weekend of Otway!*

**Are there any plans for an event in Aylesbury?**

*After the premiere we are hoping to get some sort of distribution on the film, so as soon as we've done that we are hoping for a special showing at the Odeon in Aylesbury.*

**You've had a number of setbacks in your career, what advice would you give to a musician who is starting out today?**

*Basically if you build up a live audience and a fan-base without the help of the media, you can control your own career. You can do it on your own, regardless of things like The X Factor where you are at the mercy of the media, where you can carve out a career and actually enjoy the money that you are making for yourself!*

Thanks so much for talking to us John – Good Luck with the movie, and we'll see you on the Red Carpet!

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