

ARTIST FEATURE

# Root'n Toot'n

Root'n Toot'n is the result of three fans of the old days coming together to play good time music that is a combination of rockabilly and traditional Country.

The band is certainly doing things the hard way, two of them are based in Darlington and the third hails from Liverpool. Mandy, their manager and slap bass player works in Leicester three days a week and John, the lead guitarist has a demanding job in a bodyshop garage. Despite all these challenges the band has built a reputation for a fun night wherever they play.

The trio consists of Mandy Stroud, Colin Mee, the lead singer and rhythm guitarist and lead guitarist Johnny Vee. Colin and Mandy met in early 2005 and they came together as a band after the Skipton Country Music Festival.

Mandy has been a bass player for over eight years and for about five of them she was an active member of the Smokey Mountain Boys. Colin began his professional career in 1984 when he was the drummer in a rockabilly band called the SureShots. He left them in 1992 and started his own band called the Skip Rats, another rockabilly outfit.

The band's name also says much about who they are. Colin was the one who came up with the name, which the band thought was very apt. Root'n Toot'n just came up and it seemed a natural phrase for what they wanted to create, like a yeehaa, cowboy good time, foot-stomping sound. Since they had all been in bands playing roots music like rockabilly and early Country it was an easy category to fall into.

Their choice of music has to be carefully thought through. They undergo a systematic process to find the songs and tempos that will suit them and then Colin sorts out if any fit to his voice. If the songs then work, Johnny plays along and fits in with a guitar style reminiscent of the early electric players.



As a live band they also offer something different in terms of performance. At all of their gigs the end of the evening is likely to find many of the audience on stage with the band. Involvement in the truest sense! Mandy is not naive enough to think that they will be to



everyone's taste but as she says, that's why there is so much choice in Country music.

The band would like to become full time musicians but they are still not ready to make that commitment. Root'n Toot'n have achieved much in their relatively short history. In addition to recording and releasing their album, they have received airplay on radio stations across Europe, built a strong following and are now regulars at major Country festivals. They are already booked to appear at the Towerfest Festival in June, the Americana in Nottingham for the third consecutive year, Wolvestock and the Halogaland Country music festival in Norway.

They can be contacted at [info@rootntootn.co.uk](mailto:info@rootntootn.co.uk).

Left: Johnny Vee. Top: Colin Mee. Above: Mandy Stroud.