

SERIOUS

Sebastian Rochford Biography

Sebastian Rochford is the extraordinary, imaginative and adventurous composer, songwriter, producer and instrumentalist who, with his multi-genre output and the help of some key collaborators, has turned British jazz on its head.

A characteristic of Rochford's music is the mixing of a jazz background with modern electronic and pop/rock influences, so it is no surprise that his influences include Beethoven, Daughters, Bjork, Skepta, Burial, Prince and contemporary electronica as well as a large dose of jazz. The CD releases with his own bands, as well as his contribution to many others as either a composer, player or producer, attest to his particular brand of fertile inventiveness and his ability to get the best out of a wide spectrum of versatile musicians.

Through his bands, Rochford has earned the reputation of one of the most creative musicians on the UK scene. Polar Bear's raw-boned, dramatic music mixes jazz with an electronic soundscape and a punk sensibility, underpinned by break-beat and rock rhythms, while Fulborn Teversham witnesses the collision of punky, funky melodic music with deadpan, in-yer-face vocals, cosmic electronica and eclectic mix of acoustic jazz, alt rock, prog punk and other musical brilliance. The music of both bands is distinguished by Rochford's compelling contrapuntal melodies and driving energy, which has won many critical plaudits as well as a devoted audience.

Since 2004, when he won the BBC Radio 2 and Radio 3 Jazz Award for Rising Star, Rochford has amassed a plethora of nominations and accolades. Further Jazz Award nominations under the Best Band category (2004 and 2005), Best Instrumentalist (2006) and Album of the Year (2006) were complemented by Rochford's participation in the inaugural Jerwood/PRS Foundation Take Five Initiative for creative jazz musicians in 2004/05, an award for Fulborn Teversham for artistic excellence at Brighton Festival and Polar Bear's nomination for the prestigious Nationwide Mercury Music Prize with *Held on the Tips of Fingers* in 2005. This album was also honoured in *The Observer Music Monthly* 'CDs of 2005' and appeared in the 'Top 100 Jazz Albums That Shook The World' in *Jazzwise* in 2006.

Rochford enjoys a significant UK career and a growing international profile as a composer, bandleader and drummer. He has played and recorded with an astonishing array of local and international luminaries, including: Yoko Ono, Herbie Hancock, Brian Eno, Squarepusher, David Byrne, Bojan Z, Marc Ribot, Patti Smith, Sean Lennon, Corinne Bailey Rae, Adele, Soft Machine legend Hugh Hopper, Babyshambles, Grime producer Statik, Stan Tracey, Fran Healey, Adrian Utley, Andy Sheppard and Britten Sinfonia under the direction of maverick pianist Joanna MacGregor.

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Formerly a member of the F-IRE Collective, Rochford's current bands include the Mercury-nominated Polar Bear; new band Jyager Bear, with MC Jyager, Pete Wareham and Shabaka Hutchings; Trio Libero, with Andy Sheppard and Michel Benita; the avant-garde rock trio Big Dave, with ex-Babyshambles guitarist Patrick Walden; electro-acoustic quartet Fulborn Teversham; and Silver Birch, the new line-up formerly known as Acoustic Ladyland.

Rochford recently released a critically acclaimed album with Theremin innovator Pamela Kurstin: *Ouch Evil Slow Hop* on Slowfoot Records. Trio Libero's debut album, *When We Live On The Stars*, is due for release on ECM in early 2012 and a tour will follow shortly after.

As a producer, Rochford has been responsible for overseeing the sonic worlds of all of his own band recordings and those of Acoustic Ladyland. He has also worked as a producer only, on tracks for Joanna MacGregor and Andy Sheppard's album *Deep River*, as well as the complete album for folk/jazz chanteuse Gwyneth Herbert.

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