



## Crow Dog at the Sandside Summertime Festival 2014

Gig Review by Gordon Morris

As an avid fan of great music I have wandered a bleak and desolate musical wilderness since the untimely passing of my dear friend, the Irish blues legend Rory Gallagher.

Thankfully I have managed to find solace in a handful of bands along the way which has kept my musical taste buds alive and well and eager for more. Then, on the 26 July 2014, I attended the Sandside Summertime Festival at the Ship Inn, Sandside, hoping that I might get lucky and hear something that would lift me off the floor and bang me against the wall – and that is exactly what happened when **Crow Dog** took the stage.

From the very first chords struck by guitarist Paul Mackay, I stopped talking, turned around, and **listened**. There is lots of soul music without the soul out there, lots of music to shave by. **Crow Dog** is different, an oasis in a musical desert, a band that demands to be heard with its hard-edged rock and mind-bending blues, an aural drug that draws the listener ever closer to their particular brand of music.

Paul is an enviable guitarist and the range of sounds he squeezes from his gorgeous SUHR “Strat” is mind-blowing. He plays each song with total empathy, never losing the feel or emotion of that particular track. His solos are beautifully melodic; solos that stay in your mind; solos that can be whistled days after the gig. Paul can play hard rock with the head-banging best, raunchy blues that could stand up in any Southern States Roadhouse, but also some of the sweetest blues you will ever hear on the gigging circuit.

I have seen many global names and been bored to tears after 30 minutes of hearing repetitive riffs and meaningless ego-trip solos that have little musical content – but Paul’s playing left me wanting more. Some of the big names would do well to seek out a **Crow Dog** gig, listen, and learn!

Kev Farish is a man who obviously loves his bass guitar, and this shows in his entertaining bass lines which are a joy to hear – and almost had me wanting a bass solo! The drums, too, were played with feeling by Ben Child (now being replaced by his good friend Sam Allen). It’s refreshing to hear drums played musically rather than the all too common metronomic almost robotic style. Together, the bass and drums laid down a groove so deep that I could have happily remained trapped in for hours.

Paul handles most of the vocals and his voice binds together the band’s music perfectly, whilst the vocal harmonies with Kev are quite remarkable.

**Crow Dog** wraps itself snakelike around your senses, squeezing out every emotion. This is the first time that I have seen the band, but the magic that was pouring from the stage to mesmerise the crowd had me hooked.

My advice for happiness – you don’t need no doctor, you don’t need no pills, check out **Crow Dog**, they’ll cure your ills.

Gordon Morris  
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