

Sunny Eriksson

BIOG

In the early 1970's a young Adam Tinley, as he was then known, spotted a Teddy Boy in a flamingo pink drape suit strutting down his aunt's London street ... "I wanna be a Teddy Boy when I grow up" he exclaimed to his less than impressed father.... now he has certainly ended up on the Teddy Boy spectrum!

Inspired by Malcolm McLaren and 'The Great Rock'n'Roll Swindle' he formed his first band The Stupid Babies in 1979 when he was 11. He convinced his 5yr old brother Dominic to sing while he strummed a small guitar and appropriated the saxophone solo from Bill Haley's 'Rock Around The Clock' on a kazoo. Adam then sent the demo tape to Fast Product Records – a small indie label run by the Human League's manager, Bob Last. "Everyone thought that was a really precocious and unusual thing for an 11 year old to do, but I just thought that's what everybody did" Sonny recalls.

Fast Product signed the primitive kiddie-punk tracks, and released them on the Fast Product sampler E.P. 'Earcom 3'. Legendary alternative BBC Radio1 DJ John Peel started playing their endearingly twee song 'Babysitters' ("Me HATES babysitters!" went the payoff line of the song). The Stupid Babies caused quite a stir, receiving positive write-ups in music mags like Smash Hits and Melody Maker, and Adam/Sonny was off on his cyberbilly odyssey.

Attending secondary school in the 1980s Adam was bombarded by the frequently changing music and fashions and adored mainstream pop sounds and underground music alike. He bought an old piano with some of the £100 advance from the Stupid Babies record, and began teaching himself to play. As a fanatic (and label mate) of DAF and The Human League he soon got the electro bug and got hold of a Casiotone MT-40 keyboard and a rudimentary synthesizer built by a school friend from Maplin components and progressed to making plinky plonky dance beats. Concurrently it was the psychobilly sound of bands like The Cramps and The Meteors that floated his boat, as well as electronic pioneers Suicide, and in particular their singer, Alan Vega's eponymous debut solo album with its distinct rockabilly flavour. He spent many, many lonesome bedroom hours working out their twangy riffs on cheap Woolworth's guitars... So absorbed by music was Adam that he "left school unqualified to do anything, and was ejected from the family home by my father".

Moving to London aged 17 he started squatting in Hackney and going to early Sique Sique Sputnik gigs. "I loved their look, live sound and manifesto," he says. "Still do!"

By 1986, through his love of New York's Mantronix, Adam had discovered "the Roland TR909 - my drum machine of choice," he recalls. He then started a band, Diskord Datkord with his oldest brother Mark who was the proud owner of one of these machines. With Jonny Slut, formerly of glam-goth band The Specimen, on vocals and styling themselves as a crossbreed of The Beastie Boys and Sique Sique Sputnik they released their only single in 1988, an electroid cover of 'Identity' by punk band X-Ray Spex. It was single of the week in NME, but Adam was already tiring of the band as he became engulfed by the futuristic sounds of acid house and Detroit techno and the exciting social scene they begat. In the summer of 1988 Adam visited Ibiza and was blown away by the extremely diverse Balearic style being spun by DJs Alfredo, Pippi and Cesare - 'The Race' by Yello having a particularly preemptive impact. It was then that the artist Adamski came into being.

Mentored and schooled on an Ensoniq SQ80 digital/analogue hybrid synthesizer by Chicago musician Jimi Polo, he began programming sexy attitudinal basslines and happy-go-druggy melodies into his sequencer, and along with his trusty 909 (since purchased from his brother) geared up for his first solo gig as ADAMSKI in March of 1989. Such was his infectious sound that he went from playing his first solo gig at an afterhours in a restaurant in Kentish Town to within a few weeks playing to 8,000 people at the legendary Sunrise 5000 Rave at Santa Pod racecourse and that season's opening party of Amnesia in Ibiza, cited by many as the 'best club in the world' at the time among many other seminal shindigs.

After a bidding war he signed to MCA records and released squiggly acid piano instrumental 'NRG' which led to him achieving his childhood ambition of performing on Top Of The Pops, and he also put out the influential and vocal-less 'Liveandirect' album.

It was during his set at the aforementioned Sunrise Rave that the then unknown singer Seal, upon witnessing Adamski's exploding popularity, decided to get a demo cassette to him ASAP. On hearing Seal's unique and timely voice, Adam offered some tunes to Seal who chose to sing on the beat that turned out to be 'Killer'. The track shot to No.1 in The UK in May 1990, and was a smash hit all across Europe and in the US club charts.

Decanting to LA the day after a triumphant Glastonbury performance on the Pyramid stage he recorded the follow up to 'Killer' which he titled 'The Space Jungle' but was in fact Adam singing a thinly disguised cover version of Elvis Presley's 'All Shook Up' over a 909 beat and a synthetic sax loop (nods and winks to Yello and Alan Vega).

He left most of his fanbase somewhat bemused with his inconsistent electro rockabilly experimentation but the seed of SONNY ERIKSSON had been sown...

So after spending three decades in the nightspots of the world providing sci-fi beats for hedonists, and even longer as a consumer of all the best sounds from glam rock to grime, Adam is now spurting all his creative juice into his Cyberbilly alter-ego SONNY ERIKSSON - a self-styled Teddy Boy Timelord armed with a laptop and a mean Gretsch guitar, while swaggering down the information superhighway to source the most rockin' elements from 1955-2025. Fusing rockabilly and psychobilly styles with the hypnotic, strange and robotic sounds of today and beyond....

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