



I'm Not Dead!

The Birth of the New Romantics



Synopsis

In the wake of Steve Strange's and David Bowie's deaths, *I'm Not Dead! The Birth of the New Romantics* meets some of the influential Blitz Kids still alive, whose antics in late '70s and early '80s London defined decades of global fashion, music, art and club culture to follow.

Through combining rarely seen archival footage and candid interviews with core members of the New Romantic movement; including, **Boy George, Princess Julia, Judy Blame, Pam Hogg, Philip Sallon, Mark Moore and Mark Almond** alongside interviews with other influential tastemakers including; **Grayson Perry, Andrew Logan, Zandra Rhodes** and **Vivienne Westwood**, we revisit the era to reflect on the past and show how this has impacted on their future lives.

We discover the values that drive the New Romantics and find out how these radical elders have carried the creative driving force of their youth into their older age. Their lives, past and now, are not only influential but inspirational. They prove age is just a number when it comes to having an exciting youthful life.

I'm Not Dead! The Birth of the New Romantics is the definitive account of an often glazed over microcosm of the iconic scene which is finally gaining the recognition and acknowledgement for its contribution to modern culture it deserves.



Why Now?

2017 marks the 40th anniversary of the punk movement, followed shortly by the earliest incarnation of the New Romantics, the Blitz Kids, who derived their name from the notorious Blitz nightclub.

In the summer of 1977, the definitive electronic anthem, *I Feel Love* by Donna Summer and Giorgio Moroder was released. At the same time the Punk scene detonated and engulfed the planet with its anarchic energy. Simultaneously, this marked the year the teen-aged members of the soon-to-be Blitz Kids descended on London.

Before the Blitz, in 1978, there was Billy's, a nightclub where core members of the New Romantics, such as the late Steve Strange, Philip Salon, Marilyn and Boy George first encountered one another where DJ Rusty Egan would play Bowie, Kraftwerk, Giorgio Moroder and Roxy Music.

Finding themselves bored with the punk movement and as electronic music grew to prominence they went on to form the collective New Romantic subculture, harking back to the 1850's Romantic period embodied most strongly in the visual arts, music, and literature. This New Romantic period would set London ablaze once again. Forty years on, the creativity and values of their youth still burns bright.

In the past twelve months we have seen the deaths of Steve Strange and David Bowie with near seismic reaction from the mainstream in response to the latter's death in particular. Now it's time to properly acknowledge the greats and the lesser known stars of the New Romantic scene to tell the inside story and recognise how their lives have shaped and defined a generation who refuse to grow old.



Overview

I'm Not Dead! The Birth of the New Romantics focuses on six legends from the notorious New Romantic movement.

Guiding us through the documentary we follow **Philip Salon** the club runner and acid-tongued London fixture, who terrorizes the city with his ruthless personality to this day. As a socialite since the pre-punk days, Salon helped introduce the likes of Siouxsie Sioux and the Sex Pistols to the rest of the world.

Also we meet filmmaker and DJ **Jeffrey Hinton** who alongside his best friend, DJ and ID Magazine journalist, **Princess Julia** were at the forefront of the Blitz club scene. Today they continue to be just as prolific, active in the fashion and music scenes, surprising many with their endurance to still go clubbing each week.

We follow iconic stylist, and accessories designer **Judy Blame** who began making jewelry from discarded objects and has worked with some of the most famous musicians and designers of all time.

Meanwhile we are introduced to fashion designer and musician **Pam Hogg**, whose groundbreaking and much loved work fell away from mainstream attention only to return to much acclaim recently designing 2016's high profile Brit Awards.

We speak with **Scarlett Cannon**, who became the iconic "face" of Blitz Magazine and hosted some of the most notorious New Romantic parties. While the others are still active in London's bustling life, Scarlett has fled to suburbia. Her distance from the history provides a strong contrast to the other stories.



Overview

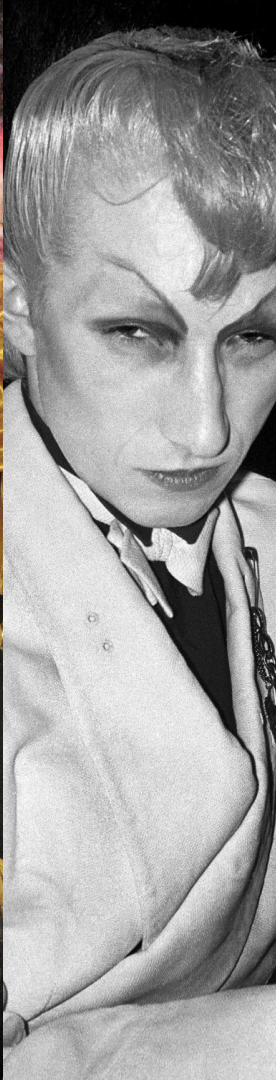
We pay homage to other iconic artists who emerged from the New Romantic movement including bad-boy choreographer **Michael Clark**, filmmaker **John Maybury**, legendary performance artist **Leigh Bowery** and the late **Steve Strange**, whose band **Visage** served as a sort of musical mascot for the generation.

We reflect on the influence of **David Bowie** on this generation and recount the filming of his famous *Ashes to Ashes* music video - at the time one of the most expensive music videos ever made - which featured members of the Blitz Kids.

Most famously, we meet **Boy George** who made the transition from original Blitz Kid to international superstar. A career trajectory shared by other acts including Duran Duran and Spandau Ballet which caused the small scene to flourish into a globally recognized pop-culture phenomenon.

In addition to our six key characters, we interview other new romantics including singers **Mark Almond** and **Mark Moore** alongside influential tastemakers as well as artists and designers **Grayson Perry**, **Andrew Logan**, **Zandra Rhodes** and **Vivienne Westwood**.





The Story

Using archival footage, we begin this story as the white hot flash of the Punk Rock movement burned and fizzled between 1977 to 1980, when a new breed of London youth culture began to emerge out of its ashes.

Amidst civil and political unrest and with the polarizing entry of Margaret Thatcher into office in 1979, the New Romantics - also known as The Blitz Kids - were born.

Following the historical context which this new movement was born, we will reflect on the period up to 1985 – when low rent (or no rent) and life on benefits allowed for their limitless creativity to flourish, manifesting into a large body of artistic output from this period.

Initially consisting of students at Central Saint Martin's Art School, the community swelled with aspiring filmmakers, fashion designers, musicians and artists.

The New Romantics was a subculture youth movement born as a reaction from the exhaustion of punk's ugliness and aggression.

By adopting the do-it-yourself ideology of the punk movement, and combining it with an aesthetic of extreme glamour and Romantic era ideology, the new romantics reinvented the look of London's subculture.

By using clubs and the city streets as their exhibition space for their living art the new romantics drew attention from onlookers and the collective performance made them iconic.



The Story

I'm Not Dead! The Birth of the New Romantics will then recount the tale of how this group of outsiders take London's infamous underground art community to the mainstream and gain notoriety worldwide.

Culturally we follow this narrative from the Glam Rock and Punk Rock periods into the New Romantic movement, which will lead to the arrival of the AIDS crisis.

At that point we will examine how the onslaught of AIDS decimated the young creative community, changing the way they forged forward into the present day.

This narrative will be punctuated by the modern day footage of each character in their personal settings and their day-to-day lives.

The film will simultaneously serve as an historical document and intimate portrait of the individuals who made up this scene. This definitive documentary will show how these early formative years help shape the way our characters live their present day lives.

In telling their stories, we show how the new romantics taught us you are never too old to be young.

Character Arcs





Scarlett Cannon (55)

Formerly a club runner, hair stylist and model, Scarlett Cannon's story demonstrates how one can suffer from a certain lack of depth in social communities. Scarlett abandoned her connections to this period of her life, and took shelter in a new life as a gardener. Her story provides contrast to the others who have chosen to remain resourceful and absorbed in London's hustle. We will look at what elements of the nightlife hustle alienated her and caused her to take a new, more solitary direction in her life.



Philip Salon (65)

Philip Salon predates the punk movement and was one of the key members of the "Bromley Contingent", along with whom he helped The Sex Pistols rise to prominence that changed music and fashion permanently. Philip is older than the rest of our subjects, and after the punk movement fizzled, he attempted to maintain himself as a London socialite. Philip's infamy is based on his reputation as an acid-tongued diva who represents someone who never pursued their own career as an artist and is only known for his relation to a redundant musical fad because of it. Philip reveals a bit of a sad panicked defensive vibe and with him we ask what it means to be remembered.





Princess Julia (56)

London Born DJ, Writer, model and fashionista. Famously accused of being out every night for the last 30 years. We will see how her feelings of alienation from her family and surroundings in her youth led her to the punk community. By choosing not to focus on one career, Julia has had to live resourcefully, while maintaining an outward appearance of glamour. With the reputation of eternal youth - we will look at how living a life without security has taken its toll, and ultimately led her to her acclaimed one woman performance of her life story to sold out audiences in London



Jeffrey Hinton

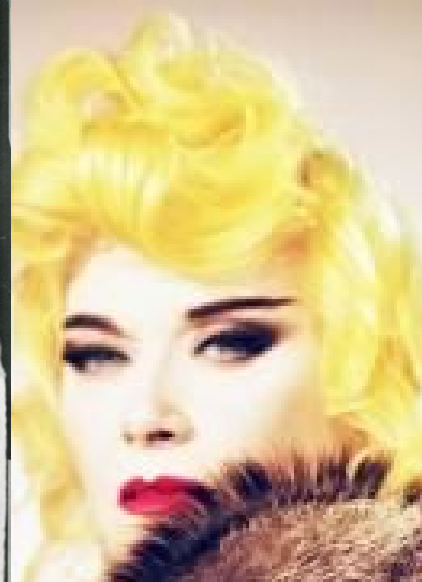
London Born DJ, Writer, archivist and artist Jeffrey Hinton's tale is one of extreme loss and sadness. Working as the resident DJ for some of the most infamous clubs, such as Leigh Bowery's short lived Taboo. His connections to the creative community were profound. An obsessive documenter of his surroundings, he has been unable to revisit most of his archives since losing many of his friends to the AIDS crisis. Jeffrey's story is very much about keeping the spirit of that youth alive and using nightlife to prevent him from having to confront the depth of his loss and sadness full on.





Judy Blame (56)

Judy Blame is an iconic fashion stylist and accessories designer. After leaving home when he was 16, he arrived in London and ended up becoming part of the South London radical gay squatting community. Because of this, Blame's formative years in the city were much more politically charged than many others – and thus had a drastically different perspective on his time there. Blame has created the iconic looks of stars like Neneh Cherry, Bjork and Boy George, now works with designers like Louis Vuitton, John Galliano, and Dior. Judy's active and positive outlook present an element of balance and career-specific success out of the group of key subjects - who otherwise have had more precarious experiences in these terms. His story arc resembles his work in which he started out turning actual found junk into high fashion, which eventually lead to him being one of the most successful stylists and artists of his generation.



Pam Hogg (undisclosed age around 55)

Arriving to London from Scotland, Pam self-identifies as having an outsider perspective on her relationship with the community. Since the eighties, Pam has adapted her love of design to become a designer to the stars of rock and pop. Although her clothes have been worn by the likes of Siouxsie Sioux, Kylie Minogue, and Debbie Harry, Pam's work has largely gone unsupported and recognized by the London fashion industry. By way of Hogg's down-to-earth, and candid personality, we will explore the effect that has had on her personally and professionally. Pam's story arc is the classic "jack of all trades, master of none" tale having spanned the fashion and music worlds, without ever truly reaping the benefits many other work less hard than to attain. Only recently Pam was officially invited to present as part of London Fashion week after years of not being included. We ask Pam - what keeps her motivated? Why chase that sense of acknowledgement for so long without giving up?

The Crew

I'm Not Dead! The Birth of the New Romantics director **Kevin Hegge** is a filmmaker, curator and writer based in Toronto, Canada. His first feature-length documentary, *She Said Boom! The Story of Fifth Column* premiered in 2012 at the Hot Docs festival in Toronto and later won Best Canadian Film at Inside Out LGBT Film festival. The film went on to screen at over 50 film festivals internationally.

Fenton Bailey and **Randy Barbato** will serve as consultants and executive producers. Together they have worked as both producers and directors with success in both documentary, film and TV. In 1991 they founded World of Wonder an international media production company based in Hollywood, the company creates reality and documentary television. Their films include *Hot Property* (1997), *The Eyes of Tammy Faye* (2000), *Party Monster* (2003), *Tori & Dean: Inn Love* (2007) and on television the phenomenally successful *RuPaul Show* and *RuPaul's Drag Race*.

The documentary will be shot by award-winning cinematographer **Franklin Dow**. In 2015, Franklin was awarded the Outstanding Achievement in Cinematography by Cinema Eye and won an Emmy Award for Outstanding Cinematography for Nonfiction Programming for his work on director Orlando von Einsiedel's documentary, *Virunga*.

Iconic London-based dance music producer, founder of sampling pioneers S'Express and original Blitz Kid, **Mark Moore** will be the music supervisor for the film. In addition to using a back catalogue of music from the era, there will be an original soundtrack composition by composer **Verity Susman**.

Executive Producer **Chris Amos**, recently produced the cult documentary *Dressed as a Girl*, about East London's thriving alternative drag scene. In 2011, Chris set up Chrysaor Productions to make innovative documentaries and films promoting counterculture and human rights issues. Chris is currently developing *Hating Peter Tatchell*, a feature documentary to celebrate the 50th anniversary of campaigning for human rights activist Peter Tatchell.



Archival Access

Director **Kevin Hegge** has amassed a long list of contributors of moving and still archival materials. This ranges from personal Polaroid photographs from the likes of renowned artist **Nicola Tyson** to **Jeffrey Hinton**, who will share access to his infamous personal archive of private video documentation. The film will feature professional photography and high fashion editorial imagery from **Derek Ridgers**, whose candid photographs of decades worth of London's evolving youth culture have recently been published by the likes of *IDEA books*. **Graham Smith**, whose photo collection was recently published in his book *We Can Be Heros*, will contribute his images from the very centre of the action at the Blitz and other New Romantic hot spots. Other contributors include photojournalists **Ted Polhemus** and **Homer Sykes**, whose works have appeared in *Newsweek*, *Now*, *Time*, *Weekend Telegraph*, *Observer*, *Sunday Times* and many others. In addition, award winning author of the intricate retelling of the punk movement *England's Dreaming*, **John Savage** will contribute fascinating personal photographs of London's dilapidated squat scene. The archival video content features the same dynamic range, from candid, behind the scenes home videos, to professional journalistic content seen on mainstream television.



Target Audience

Due to its wildly high level of pop cultural mythology, *I'm Not Dead! The Birth of the New Romantics* will appeal to the current generation interested in music and art; not to mention the queer, fashion and art communities who have been so greatly influenced by the work of Blitz Kids.

The New Romantic period has recently seen a resurgence as a trend, most noticeably in publications of photo collections by the likes of Derek Ridgers and Graham Smith, as well as major retrospective shows such as *From Club To Catwalk* at the V&A in 2014. Following the emblematic death of the New Romantic's God-like figure, David Bowie, and as the 40th anniversary of the Blitz club and the birth of The New Romantics approaches, this trend is only picking up steam.



Conclusion

Some of the most fleeting cultural movements leave the largest impact, and that is indeed true with the New Romantics. *I'm Not Dead! The Birth of the New Romantics* will speak to the timeless and universal reality that the community and ideologies we form in our youth have a profound affect on our future – and how in the right hands, can literally change the world...



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