



Biography

With vocals and guitar from New Order front man **Bernard Sumner**, *Never Cry Another Tear*, the debut album from **Bad Lieutenant**, rings with familiar joys – playing of beautifully observed minimalism and a voice of wonderfully understated north-western England soul. But there's also a new voice to be heard, one again from that country's north west.

Singing alongside Sumner is Jake Evans, a talented musician from Macclesfield in the UK. This Cheshire town has had a significant part in the story to date. It was the point of origin of both Ian Curtis and Stephen Morris, one half of a band whose northern rock transformations seem to resound more powerfully with every passing year. A band called Joy Division. Bad Lieutenant is built on this sainted musical heritage – centring on Sumner's voice and guitar and also with Stephen Morris drumming on some tracks. The album also features Phil Cunningham, a man familiar from the Britpop band Marion and the most recent incarnation of New Order.

Bad Lieutenant's blend of youth and experience, of local roots and musical futurism, is perhaps reflected in their favoured rehearsal location – at Morris's hilltop farm where a full-size BBC Dalek (from the classic British TV series "Doctor Who") sits in the corner of the rehearsal room. Morris is the band's full-time live drummer, with the line-up as follows: Bernard Sumner (vocals/guitar), Stephen Morris (drums), Phil Cunningham (guitar/keyboards/vocals), Jake Evans (vocals/guitar), Tom Chapman (bass).

Evans sings lead vocals on several tracks on the album and he also shares vocals with Sumner on other tracks. Evans is front man for the UK group Rambo And Leroy and an old friend and musical accomplice of Phil Cunningham. Evans came to Bad Lieutenant by subtly appropriate means. Sumner first heard him sing at a birthday party. A guitar was lying around and Evans was goaded into picking it and playing a tune. He chose Neil Young's "Heart Of Gold." It was a telling choice – Young was a significant influence on the teenage Sumner's approach to guitar playing. Later, Rambo And Leroy was the support group at the last New Order concert. Evans found it remarkable enough to be

playing on the same bill as a band he loved. Soon after was making music with members of the same band.

The very first Bad Lieutenant rehearsals took place at the British home of Alex James of Blur. James ended up playing on bass on some tracks on the Bad Lieutenant album, something that later gave rise to excited news stories portraying Bad Lieutenant as a kind of Blur/New Order supergroup. This was wide of the truth. Sumner has long been friendly with James, a man who markets a cheese called Blue Monday, named after the New Order hit. However, James's involvement in Bad Lieutenant doesn't stretch any further than his pitching in on a few recording sessions.

"We worked hard on the album and I'm proud of it," says Sumner. "It's also important because it gives people the chance to hear a gifted singer and guitar player who I think is very talented. This is just how I now want to make music."

The Bad Lieutenant album was very much propagated on a DIY, locally-sourced basis. It was recorded at various home studios. The band had to be particularly pragmatic when recording at Evans' place. His upstairs neighbour is a karate school and recording had to be co-ordinated to avoid the bellowed exhortations of the martial artists down below. The resulting album centers on crisp, streamlined, 21st century guitar music – underscored by keyboards and occasional melodica. The record includes Sumner's seemingly effortless melodic invention, but now these familiar pleasures blend with vocals and guitar of Evans. Perhaps Bad Lieutenant can be seen as a new vehicle from a celebrated manufacturer – previous technology has been incorporated, but the overall appearance is new and it'll take you where you want to go in novel and exhilarating style.

"There is some continuity to music I've made in the past," says Sumner. "But it's also very different – because different people are playing on it."

"With Jake singing on some tracks," says Cunningham, "that's allowed Bernard to step back a bit. Bernard's the man at the helm, getting into the production of the thing, where New Order might have had to get a producer in to keep the peace [laughs]. The album comes from a completely home-grown and DIY approach, which is very different to how a New Order album might be made."

"I was amazed when Bernard suggested I sing some lead vocals," says Evans. "It was a little daunting, but the whole process was also very relaxed. It didn't take long to go from being in awe to feeling like a band mate."

It's maybe not surprising that Jake soon felt at home here. Taking in then and now, youth and wisdom, Daleks and karate clubs, here is a band for all seasons.