

KID CONGO POWERS



The gigantic tone of Kid Congo Powers' open-tuned guitar is one of the more readily identifiable sounds in the history of underground rock. Best known for his contribution to the development of the contemporary noise guitar with The Gun Club, The Cramps, and Nick Cave and the Bad Seeds in the 1980s, Kid's spent the last fifteen years as a sideman (Make-Up, Mark Eitzel, Angels of Light, etc.), as a partner in Congo Norvell and Kid and Khan, a member of garage rock supergroup Knoxville Girls, and, most recently, the leader of Kid Congo Powers and the Pink Monkey Birds. What's important about Kid's resume isn't only that he played with some of the best bands of all time, but that he did so during their finest hours, from The Cramps' *Psychedelic Jungle* to Nick Cave's *Tender Prey* to Angels of Light's *How I Loved You*, Kid's always had a knack for being with the right people at the right place at the right time. The last five years however, Kid's gradually quit relying on his luck and taken matters into his own hands, emerged as a world-class songwriter and a distinctive vocalist.

Jump-starting his career when he and **Jeffrey Lee Pierre** formed **The Gun Club** in 1979, Kid Congo Powers left the obscure new band in late 1980 when he was offered the universally coveted gig replacing **Bryan Gregory** in **The Cramps**. Though Kid was already a Cramp when The Gun Club recorded their classic debut *Fire of Love* (1981), a number of songs that he helped write and develop appear on the record. Kid wound up in The Cramps throughout the peak of their popularity, leaving the band in 1984. *Psychedelic Jungle* (1981), *Smell of Female* (1984), and *Bad Music For Bad People* (1984), are among Kid's souvenirs of the era. After rejoining The Gun Club for a 1984 Australian tour, Kid stayed in the picture for their *The Las Vegas Story* (1984). When the band fell apart the next year, Kid moved to London and played with **The Legendary Stardust Cowboy**, **The Beasts of Bourbon's Tex Perkins**, and his own band, **The Fur Bible**. In 1986 he was invited to join **Nick Cave and the Bad Seeds** for the *Your Funeral, My Trial* tour - moving to Berlin and becoming a full-time member until 1990 - appearing in Wim Wenders' *Wings of Desire* (1987) and on the albums *Tender Prey* (1988) and *The Good Son* (1990). During his German years Kid not only played and recorded with **Die Haut**, **The Butcher Shop**, and **Barry Adamson**, but also embarked upon seven-years of constant recording and touring with The Gun Club.

In 1993, Kid Congo Powers made his final appearances with The Gun Club and Die Haut to devote full-time attention to his own project with actress/chanteuse **Sally Norvell - Congo Norvell**. After the duo released a string of singles, EPs, compilation tracks, and the success of the LP *Music To Remember Him By* (1994), Priority signed them to record *The Dope, The Lies and Vaseline* (1996). Falling victim to the dissolution of the "alternative" division of the label, the two moved to New York and recorded *Abnormals Anonymous* (1998) for Jet Set. Kid was immediately asked to play with everyone in town - performing, recording, and touring with **Jonathan Fire*Eater**, **Mark Eitzel**, **The Angels of Light**, **The Vanity Set**, **DC's Make-Up**, and a number of others. During this period Kid teamed up with **Bob Bert** from **Sonic Youth** and **Pussy Galore**, Jerry Teal from the **Honeymoon Killers** and **Chrome Cranks**, guitar ace **Jack Martin**, and keyboardist **Barry London** to form the prolific hard-touring supergroup, **Knoxville Girls**.

After a trio of albums on In the Red, Knoxville Girls imploded in 2001. Not long after the breakup, electro-star **Khan** invited Kid to appear on his Matador LP *No Comprendo* (2001). By 2002 the duo forged an official project, **Kid & Khan**, and began touring the world alone or with *Twin Peaks* vocalist **Julee Cruise**. Around the same time Kid formed his first band of his own, **Kid Congo and the Pink Monkey Birds** with his favorite guitarist **Jack Martin**. With the release of Kid & Khan's *Bad English* and *Washing Machine*, 2005 was a big year for Mr. Powers. 2006 has seen the American release of Pink Monkey Birds *Philosophy and Underwear* and career-spanning compilation *Solo Cholo* on New York Night Train. Still the hardest working man in showbiz, Kid Congo Powers shows no signs of slowing down - touring and recording regularly with both the Pink Monkey Birds and Kid & Khan.

DISCOGRAPHY

Kid has played on too many records to list here (almost 100 plus countless bootlegs - check out the nearly complete one at www.kidcongopowers.com/discography). Here's a few of the highlights - chronologically:

The Cramps, *Psychedelic Jungle* (IRS 1981)
The Cramps, "The Crusher b/w "New Kind of Kick" and "Save It" 12" (IRS 1981)
The Cramps, *Smell of Female* (Enigma 1983)
The Cramps, *Bad Music For Bad People* (IRS 1984)
Chris D & The Divine Horsemen, *Time Stands Still* (Enigma 1984/Atavistic 2005)
The Gun Club, *The Las Vegas Story* (Animal 1984, Sympathy for the Record Industry 2004)
The Gun Club, *Danse Kalinda Boom* (Megadisc 1985/Triple X 1993)
The Gun Club, *Mother Juno* (Red Rhino 1987/Sympathy for the Record Industry 2005)
Nick Cave and the Bad Seeds, *Wings of Desire* (Mute 1988)
Nick Cave and the Bad Seeds, *Tender Prey* (Mute 1988)
Die Haut, *Headless Body at a Topless Bar* (WSFA 1988)
Nick Cave and the Bad Seeds, "Helpless," *The Bridge: A Tribute to Neil Young* (Caroline 1989)
Barry Adamson, *Moss Side Story* (Mute 1989)
Nick Cave and the Bad Seeds, *The Good Son* (Mute 1990)
The Gun Club, *Pastoral Hide and Seek* (New Rose 1990/Thirsty Ear 1997)
Nick Cave and the Bad Seeds, *The Road to God Knows Where* (Mutefilm/Atavistic 1991)
The Gun Club, *In Exile* (Triple X 1992)
Die Haut, *Head On* (Triple X 1992)
The Gun Club, *Ahmed's Wild Dream* (Triple X 1993)
Die Haut, *Sweat* (Triple X 1993)
Congo Norvell, *Music to Remember Him By* (Basura/Priority 1994)
The Gun Club, *Preachin' the Blues* VHS (Video Visonary 1995)
Congo Norvell, *The Dope, The Lies, The Vaseline* (Priority 1996)
Nick Cave and the Bad Seeds, *The Best of* (Mute 1998)
Nick Cave and the Bad Seeds, *The Videos* VHS (Mute 1998)
Congo Norvell, *Abnormals Anonymous* (Jet Set 1998)
Make-Up, *Blue is Beautiful* VHS (Discord 1998)
Mark Eitzel, *I'm Caught In a Trap and I Can't Back Out 'Cause I Love You Too Much Baby* (Matador 1998)
The Angels of Light, *Tonic Benefit* (Young God 1999)
Knoxville Girls, *s/i* (In the Red 1999)
The Vanity Set, *s/i* (Naked Spur 2000)
The Angels of Light, *How I Loved You* (Young God 2001)
Khan, *No Comprendo* (Matador 2001)
Knoxville Girls, *In a Paper Suit* (In the Red 2001)
Mark Eitzel, *Invisible Man* (Matador 2001)
Kid and Khan, *Bad English* (Trans Solar 2005)
Kid and Khan, *Washing Machine 12"* (Trans Solar 2005)
Kid Congo and the Pink Monkey Birds, *Philosophy and Underwear* (New York Night Train 2006, Trans Solar 2005)
Kid Congo Powers, *Solo Cholo* (New York Night Train 2006)

INFO:

Recordings: New York Night Train (<http://www.newyorknighttrain.com/recordings>)

Booking: Todd Cote at Leafy Green (todd@leafygreen.com, <http://www.leafygreen.com>)

Home site: www.kidcongopowers.com