



The Derelicts record at The Bowery in Williamsburg. (Spectrum News NY1)

HUMAN INTEREST

Punk rock legends record a theme song for documentary 'The Bowery Boy'

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At a Williamsburg recording studio, a song from the 1890s called “The Bowery” is being reworked by a band called The Derelicts.

This isn’t just any group of musicians, but a who’s who from the influential New York music scene of the 1970s, 1980s and beyond.

The group featured drummer Clem Burke of Blondie, guitarist Richard Lloyd of Television, bassist Glen Matlock of the original lineup of The Sex Pistols, plus guitarist and bassist Ivan Julian of Richard Hell and the Voidoids were producing the track.

“To have the four of us here and you just think back to how many years ago was it I won’t say, to CBGBs, while we were all watching each other play in separate bands is pretty cool,” said Julian, who hosted the session at his Super Giraffe Sound studio in Williamsburg.

Also on board was singer Kris Gruen. His dad is the legendary music photographer Bob Gruen, who was also in attendance snapping photos.

The session was scheduled to record the theme song for a documentary series called “Bowery Boy.” The eight-part autobiographical series is from filmmaker Bobby Sheehan, who grew up on the Lower East Side and in Canarsie but spent his formative years at famous clubs like CBGBs and Max’s Kansas City photographing the legends of the emerging punk scene.

“I would just go and hide and be in the shadows, and just the adrenalin of watching The Ramones, or Television, or Blondie, was just, it was addictive,” said Sheehan, who went on to have a successful career in filmmaking and photography after battling a number of personal demons.

Also sitting in on the session was music journalist Legs McNeil, a production partner on the project. He was co-founder of Punk Magazine and he helped get the groundbreaking musicians back together after a suggestion from Sheehan’s wife, Sara.

“I’m not really interested in the project, I’m just here to drink cups of tea and chat with my old buddies and get out of working,” McNeil said.

That’s all part of the spirit of the session with good friends who still do what they love, attached to a moment in time that influenced many an aspiring musicians.

“They are all friends, and that’s really wonderful that we are all still kicking and playing good music,” Richard Lloyd said.

Clem Burke felt the same, noting that Matlock recently joined Blondie on tour as their bass player.

“When you see somebody that you knew from back then, you kind of immediately connect about what is what like back there, in the back of your mind you are thinking of CBGB and all of that kind of stuff,” Burke said, who has been Blondie’s drummer for nearly 50 years.

Sheehan says production on the series is expected to be complete in a few months, when they will begin shopping it around.