

## **Indie Band Finds Fans Among The Under-10s**



*MJ Hibbett plays for some of his newest fans*

When indie band MJ Hibbett & The Validators released their new album 'Dinosaur Planet' they hoped for the usual things indie bands hope for – the approval of Steve Lamacq, a few more gigs, and maybe a slot at a festival. They didn't expect to suddenly find themselves with a following amongst the under-10s.

"I first noticed something happening a week after the CD came out" says lead singer MJ Hibbett. "Every day I'd check my emails hoping for reviews, and instead find messages from proud parents, telling me how much their children loved the album."

Matt Crisp from Birmingham was one of the first to get in touch, saying that his son Josh "insists that 'Dinosaur Planet' must and shall be played every time he's in the car". Ian Greenall of Merseyside wrote to say "my five year old son Ethan goes around quoting and singing from it all the time."

Some of these young fans are working to convert their friends too. Pete Shuttleworth of Kilmarnock reported that his daughter Millie "has imposed it on any child we give a lift to. Her best friend Euan was more interested in hearing the second half of the album on the return from a recent adventure than he was in the adventure itself."

In Croydon, East London, there's even a Dinosaur Planet playgroup!

'Dinosaur Planet' is MJ Hibbett & The Validators' fifth album. It's a science fiction rock opera which uses space dinosaurs and giant robots to talk about various adult topics. For instance, their current single 'A Little Bit' is supposed to be a hymn to the value of evidence-based academic research, but even that has been taken over by their new fan base.

"We asked our mailing list to help out by each doing 'a little bit' of the video," says MJ, "and when the clips came back nearly half of them featured children!" The results can be seen on their webpage, with various indie mums and dads happily singing along with their kids.

"It's a lovely thing to happen, and we're very glad to have made a record that parents and children can enjoy together", says MJ. "The only downside is that our new fan base can't get into our gigs. We usually play in pubs, and it'll be quite a while before they're old enough to get in!"

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## **Background**

'Dinosaur Planet' started off as an Edinburgh Fringe show. MJ Hibbett was inspired to write it after seeing a slightly disappointing one-man version of Jeff Wayne's 'War Of The Worlds' and deciding that he could do better.

Guest stars include Phil Wilson (The June Brides), Chris T-T, Keith Top Of The Pops, BBC One continuity announcer Claire Gibb and BBC Radio Tees DJ Bob Fischer.

MJ Hibbett & The Validators have performed live on Radio One, had a Record Of The Year in Rolling Stone, an Album Of The Day on 6Music, toured all around the world and very narrowly avoided writing an autobiography.

They're probably best known for 'Hey Hey I6K', the world's first ever internet viral hit.

Bass player Frankie Machine is a singer songwriter in his own right, and is also a former member of number one hit makers White Town. Drummer Tim Pattison toured Europe and the States with his previous band, Prolapse.

All of the album illustrations were drawn by John Allison, creator of the long running online comics Bad Machinery, Bobbins and Scaryground.

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