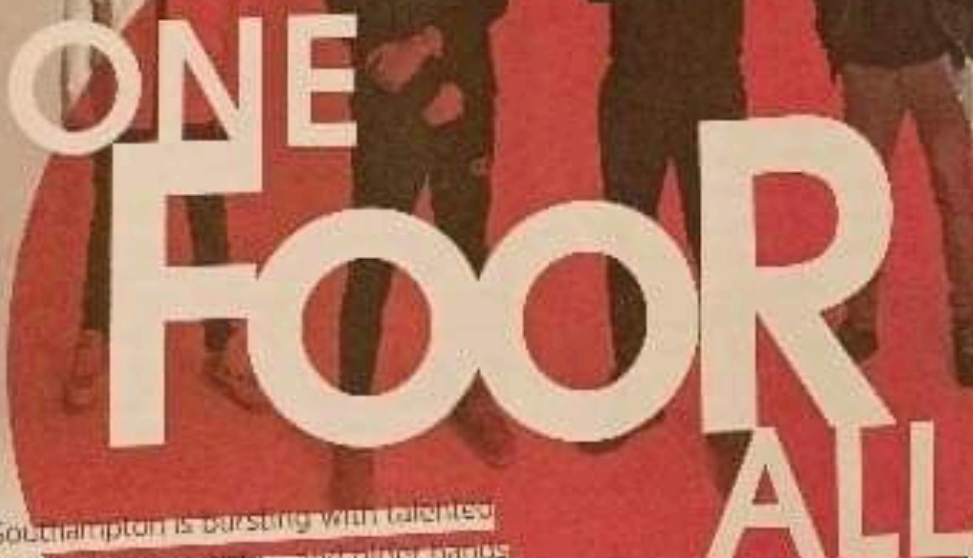


06/07

MUSIC



ONE FOOR ALL

Southampton is bursting with talented dance and rap artists – and older hands are keen to give them a leg up

Words: Adam England

In recent years, Southampton dance collective FooR has been more active than ever. Frontman Gavin Foord is right in the middle of things, helping out younger artists and continuing to make his own music too.

"We started turning our record label about six years ago," Gavin says. "We'd been making music for almost 20 years and we always said that if we ever got to a point where we could help people, we would. No one really helped us on the way up, and we always found it hard to get advice or help."

It's something they've been doing for around two decades. As Gavin says, FooR have done "everything from booking gigs to DJing to running magazines... we've literally probably worked in every facet of Southampton nightlife". Recently they've been working with community organisation SoCo Music Project, which is how the idea for Sounds of Southampton was spawned.

"Just before lockdown we started some shows which were basically to put on performers aged 14 and above to give them their first chance to perform on stage," he explains.

The project during summer 2020 resulted in rap, grime and R&B album *Sounds of Southampton Volume 1*, and work on *Volume 2* has begun. Gavin wants to give up-and-coming artists their first studio session or first single

and now plans to help a brand of Southampton show. "It's all about giving artists opportunities that we never had," he explains.

Gavin's keen to talk about the rich history of dance music in the city. While The Joiners catered all genres as far as bands and the rock scene are concerned, he namechecks the former Rhino nightclub, which hosted residencies from garage duo Artful Dodger and DJ James Zabiela; Junk, which closed in 2010; and the still-alive

Switch, as well as the Docklands and Soundclash Festivals. "If you're a DJ, you can do a small 200-capacity club and build your way up to headlining a festival, like Alan Fitzpatrick did."

As well as helping new talent, such as rapper Tyson, who's also part of FooR, Gavin has seen his music in the national media,

with FooR's track Fresh showcased in a Coors Light TV ad. The boxer Tyson Fury even posted a workout on Instagram that was soundtracked by FooR, which Gavin describes as "surreal". "You get messages like 'Tyson Fury is working out to your song on his Instagram,'" he laughs.

And Gavin adds: "For a dance music artist, Southampton's a really, really strong place to be. And it's only going to get stronger."

5 Things You Need to Know About FooR

1 The Southampton collective have been friends since their teens, and they're fronted by Gavin Foord and rapper Tyson.

2 FooR signed with Warner Music Group last year.

3 FooR's album *Friends of FooR* reached number nine in the Official Dance Album Chart in 2018.

4 Their track Fresh featured on a Coors Light advert across ITV, Channel 4, Channel 5 and Sky Sports, while boxer Tyson Fury has featured their music in his Instagram videos too.

5 They've made remixes for artists including Stormzy, Skepta, Wretch 32 and Tinchy Stryder.

TAKE BACK THE NIGHTLIFE

Across the globe the live performance industry has struggled to survive the pandemic, but with a new festival and the SO25 City of Culture bid, Southampton is fighting back with energy and optimism for the future. Adam England talks to the people with big ideas

There's a diverse heritage of music in Southampton, a city that's been a gateway to the world for centuries... Well think of Bonny and the Bluebelles, the first rock band in the world, or the first punk band in the world, the Sex Pistols. Southampton has a long history of music, and it's not just about the past. It's about the future. It's about the people who are making it happen.

The Southampton City of Culture bid is a project that's been in the making for a long time. It's a project that's been led by a group of people who are passionate about the city and its future. It's a project that's been supported by the city council and the local community. It's a project that's been a source of pride for the city.

As for as bands go, there's a long history of music in Southampton. It's a city that's been a gateway to the world for centuries. It's a city that's been a source of pride for the city.

rebranded its 50th anniversary in 2020 and has seen the likes of Arctic Monkeys, Ed Sheeran, Green Day, Oasis, Muse and Redwood over the years, and the newly founded festival which has seen plenty of exciting acts. It's a festival that's been a source of pride for the city.

Obviously the performance and art culture and arts - not just artists but the supporting industries around performance - have been hammered by the pandemic and UK lockdown. In July last year the field of South Eastern Theatres, which ran the NST Theatre in the city centre, went into

administration, and it's better to now run by the Mayor's team. In at times the name of the Mayor's team. In at times the name of the Mayor's team. In at times the name of the Mayor's team.

But with so much going on, it's better to now run by the Mayor's team. In at times the name of the Mayor's team. In at times the name of the Mayor's team. In at times the name of the Mayor's team.

There's a lot of things going on in the city. It's a city that's been a source of pride for the city. It's a city that's been a source of pride for the city.

Probably the biggest challenge is keeping the team's mental wellbeing in check. It's a challenge that's been a source of pride for the city. It's a challenge that's been a source of pride for the city.

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TURN TO PAGE 06 to discover more about the city's future.

George Southwell, it's a monthly event aimed at bringing local growers, now and once-loved artists to the city and not one product, but artists to the audience.

These artists from Hampshire are making waves, from the local growing the other side of the pond to the local growing the other side of the pond to the local growing the other side of the pond.

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PHOTOGRAPH BY [Name]