**School of Hard Rocks**

**By Leon Horton**

**Calling all budding singers, guitarists, bass players and drummers... If you’re aged between seven and seventeen and fancy picking up a tune, a plectrum or a pair of sticks - either for the first time or as an intermediate - then Rock Out! School in Chorlton is the place for you...**

It isn’t often I’m offered a music assignment, but as an old punk (as opposed to a new one) I couldn’t resist the chance to go along to the Rock Out! School and see what all the noise was about. Providing, I told the editor, there’s no twenty minute drum solos.

And no, thankfully, you don’t get any 1970s prog rock style indulgences. What you get instead are professional musicians, graduates from the Royal Northern College of Music, who provide one-on-one tutoring every Saturday morning - followed by the chance to perform anything from Nirvana to Gnarls Barkley to Robbie Williams. It’s an eclectic mix.

Mike Anderton, guitarist and singer, has been running the school since April 2013, and has seen it go from strength to strength. To what does he attribute this? “What we offer, instead of just music lessons, is the opportunity of a stand-up gig at the end of every session. The students are playing in a band from day one, which helps build their confidence.”

Such has been the success of the school that Mike is currently planning a showcase for the Chorlton Arts Festival on 20th May, and is hoping to introduce mid-week after-school sessions in the near future.

Becki Bennet’s daughter Izzy has been playing drums at the school for about a year, and her mum is clearly proud and delighted by her progression: “Izzy wanted to learn the drums for some time, and I’ve seen her confidence just grow and grow. I think it’s the relaxed atmosphere and the enthusiasm of the tutors that’s helped her develop so much.”

And she’s right. I stay to watch the gig at the end of the tutoring sessions, amazed by the prodigious talents of these young musicians. I even found my foot tapping along to Robbie Williams’ ‘Let Me Entertain You.” But don’t tell anyone that. I’ve got a punk reputation to maintain.

The Rock Out! School meets every Saturday morning at the St Clements Church Hall on Edge Lane in Chorlton. For further details or to book a free taster session for your little rock stars, visit [www.rockoutschool.com](http://www.rockoutschool.com) or telephone Mike on 0161 862 9634.