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Biography: Jeff Slate

Jeff Slate has been at the heart of the New York City music scene for more than 15 years. As a founder of the seminal mod/punk Mindless Thinkers, as a solo artist and via his work with The Who's Pete Townshend, and for the last 10 years as the founder of the loved and lauded mod/classic rock outfit The Badge.

Formed in 1997 by Slate, The Badge was immediately recognized amongst the throng of mod-leaning bands as the one to keep an eye on. Slate recruited three musicians he'd played with over the years and with whom he shared a musical and aesthetic bond and crafted The Badge's spectacular 1998 debut, "...digital retro..."

Slate knew The Badge was onto something; he'd been through it all before. Slate teamed up with Marc Teamaker and the two began crafting some of the best songs out there. Period.

Teamaker was the "roll" to Jeff Slate's "rock." He was raised on the same music as Slate – the Beatles, Who, Kinks, Small Faces, Buffalo Springfield, Byrds, Marvin Gaye, Ray Charles and Sly Stone – but also brought along influences as varied as Humble Pie and The Zombies to the mix, and brought a completely fresh perspective to the approach The Badge was taking with its new material.

The bond between Slate and Teamaker was instant and remarkable. They completed work on what was to become The Badge's next release – 2003's "Calling Generation Mojo" – in an eight-week flash of recording activity that marked a new phase in the life of the band. After years of struggling it had all become so easy. It was kismet. Karma. Destiny!

"If (Slate and Teamaker) can write Lennon and McCartney songs, why can't McCartney?" said the BBC's Spencer Leigh.

Nelson Pla brought his rock steady drumbeat to the picture. Matt Kalin's Hammond mastery completed the soundscape.

In October 2003 "Calling Generation Mojo" was released on Detour Records, the UK's premiere mod label. Slate and Teamaker appeared in London to promote it and the reviewers stumbled over themselves to laud the quantum leap The Badge had made from its much-loved debut album. "The Badge's White Album."; "Sincerity may well be a disappearing sentiment in today's music biz, but The Badge are doing their part to make sure it never becomes extinct."; "Listening to The Badge's excellent second album, you can't help feeling comfortable and familiar. After all, The Badge DO wear their influences, not on their sleeves, but on their chests, like medals" In any musician's lifetime such commendations come rarely. To get them for a single work was unheard of, and the boys of The Badge new it.

They hunkered down at Pla's studio – Sessions @ Pla – and honed their live act. They worked on new material. They recreated the Beatles infamous rooftop concert on the 35th anniversary of the event to wild acclaim. In 2004 and 2005 they released a series of EPs that were collected together in 2005 as "The EP Collection (2004-2005)" on Detour/Dandyland Records. Again, the reviews were stellar. The Badge returned to London and stormed the unsuspecting British music scene yet again. The world began to look like it belonged to The Badge.

Work began on "**** (Four Stars)" and Teamaker left to focus on his solo work. But not before he and Slate had crafted some of their best work and then some: Enough songs for "**** (Four Stars)" and at least one more disc.

Matthew St. George replaced Teamaker in the truest sense of the word. Guitar chops? Check. Top vocals? Check. Tunes? Got 'em!

The Badge released a new single ("King Without A Country" b/w "Where You Are") in late 2008 and will follow that up in the Summer of 2009 with "Row Along" b/w "Pressure of Time." The band will release "The Best of The Badge: 10 Years of the Greatest Rock n' Roll You've Never Heard" this Fall. And in early-2010 The Badge will unleash "**** (Four Stars)" and a series of live shows and an all-star single that will truly blow your mind.

In the meantime Jeff Slate has teamed up with producer Eric Lichter, his old partner from the Mindless Thinkers Scott Sherratt, The Badge's original drummer Alex Alexander and a host of top musician's from New York City, London and Austin, Texas, and has begun work on his first proper solo album, tentatively entitled "Lucky Day Sunsets."

The sound is pure. It's not just rock n' roll or soul or Americana or folk or even mod. It's all of those things. Like Paul Weller did with "22 Dreams", Slate has set the bar incredibly high for himself.

After a career of spectacular music -- founding the seminal mid-80s mod/punk band the Mindless Thinkers, working with Pete Townshend, touring with Sheryl Crow and finding a loyal and rabid fanbase with The Badge -- "Lucky Day Sunsets" may just turn out to be Slate's career-defining moment.

Stay tuned!

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