

21. RUBY WOOD

My parents are jazz fans so I used to go to the festival as a child.



My earliest memory is running around the Mechanics Hall with other kids - and my mum being annoyed at me - but I can't remember who was playing that day!

My first gig at Marsden was as a member of the North Stars Steel Orchestra, playing with Dennis Rollins on a national tour. A couple of years later, I had my first public performance as a singer, with Jack Button and Dirty Boy Jazz Massive. I even did a song with Harry Beckett at the Mechanics Hall!

I think I was actually quite terrible on that first gig, but the festival gave me confidence and inspired me to get better. I'm so grateful to have been offered this incredible platform to start my career. I've played about 8 or 9 times since, in different venues and with different projects - Submotion Orchestra, the Sugar Sisters... - including my own solo project, Loopology - just me and a loop pedal.

I also discovered artists who made me think differently, like Soweto Kinch when I was still at Leeds College of Music - he was the first musician I saw mixing jazz and hip hop. Not to mention all the great singers I got the chance to see live, like Clare Teal, and all the great musicians I had the chance to play with.

All the young people living around Marsden are so lucky to be able to see world-class artists in such a small village. You can see them close-up and then bump into them in a pub after their gig! It has been a fantastic source of inspiration for me, and I look forward to the next 25 years of the festival.

