

BRIUM FREE BEAT

THE MUSIC MAG OF THE MIDLANDS

NUMBER 38

JUNE 1983

THAT OLD BLACK COUNTRY MAGIC



*Deep in the heart of
Sedgeley lurks
Heavy Metal Records
... Kevin Wilson
investigates ...*

If the sight of a naked female draped across a tombstone is familiar to you, that is because not so long ago, the Fleet Street gutter press had picked up on it and made it headline news.

Under such banners as "Thanks for the Mammary" and "Sick pop group in porn occult outrage", Stroubridge rockers Witchfinder General became, overnight, personalities.

Their crime wasn't that Joanne Latham's ample frame had upset frilly feminists, (though in many ways it did!), their crime was simply that the names on the tombstones appeared on the cover of the bands "Death Penalty" album. Whatever the rights and wrongs of the issue were, what this veritable storm in a chalice did was to heap a ton of bad publicity at the door of the record company involved and brother if ever a story needed to be told to set the record (sic) straight, this is it. Ladies and Gentlemen . . . put your hands together for . . . Heavy Metal Records.

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Paul Birch of Heavy Metal Records recently picked up the UK rights to a rather good jazz funk album and duly forwarded a copy to Polydor with a view to arranging a licensing deal. Unfortunately the album was returned with a duplicated rejection note informing him that the material was "not suitable for release on Polydor Records at present — and apologizing for sending a form letter but that this was in order to facilitate their intentions in being as efficient as possible, as they'd rather spend our time listening than writing". In fact Polydor's A&R department seem to have taken efficiency one step further since the record was actually returned in its original shrink wrap — unopened! Maybe this marks a new step forward in A&R policy — making decisions. Rather than only briefly listen to the music, Polydor have actually dispensed with the need altogether. What guideline do they use these days — telepathy? Mind you, judging from recent signings perhaps this policy has been in force longer than we thought . . . Nice to see Magnum's "Eleventh Hour" straight in at number 45 on the National Album chart thus joining fellow Brummies the Durans, Kevin, La Armatrading and Fun Boy Three . . . Local pirates Sounds Alternative are now testing on FM on alternate Thursday evenings from around 8 p.m. — it's well worth the twiddle to locate them on 94.2 mhz . . . We hear that an establishment not a million miles from the Birmingham

settlement hosted a National Pirate Radio Convention last week — more news from our mole in the next issue . . . It seems that new Ian Gillan fronted Black Sabbath are soon to be, if not already, shut away in the Manor Studios just outside Oxford, recording new material. They'll be there for a couple of months and we hear that the demos done thus far are "interesting" "not unlike a cross between Gillan (the band) and Sabbath (the institution)". Brum Beat's powers of investigation may well lead to a Sabs exclusive, watch this space . . . Revamped Horizon Studios at Coventry doing good business lately with albums by Witchfinder and Quartz — to be followed by Steel Pulse. Musical Youth also due shortly for overdubs . . . Veteran Brum Beat lensman Mel James finally landed by the wonderful Margaret who did the nuptial bit on May 21st . . . Rumours abound that CBS have offered a mere 5 million quid in an attempt to ink Duran Duran as the EMI deal nears expiry. The Durans and EMI deny any "imminent" split — especially in view of the fact that their 3rd album HAS to be through EMI. Brum Beat currently checking the piggy bank with a view to making a counter offer . . . We hear that the 12 piece 747 are really something special. Their fortunes are being guided by

OVER HEARD

Clive Richie — ex-miner host at the Golden Eagle, The Bournebrook and now out in the wilds of Longbridge . . . too long ago to carry a review — but the Stylistics were merely wonderful at the Night Out . . . Mike Davies seen investing wisely at Bernies Real Ale Off Licence in Harborne. His current tippie is a potent Belgian beer quantly named Mort Subite — it means Sudden Death! — It is reported that Duran Duran's John Taylor is recording an album with Scott Gorham and Daryn Warton of Thin Lizzy. We hold our breath.

and from LORD HAW HAW . . . RADIO AND TV FUN

Interesting rumours regarding the future managerial structure of BRMB, assuming they retain the franchise.

Current MD David Pinnell is scheduled to retire (hence certain scenes of agitation at mention of his name on last issue's column) and the most likely successor to the post would appear to be the current Programme Controller Bob Hopton. In the light of Hopton's unpredictable (and somesay downright bizarre) station policy in his present post this likely promotion can surely not bode well for on-

going stability let alone internal morale. Drawn - faced rumourmongers also suggest that likely tailhanger PC to Hopton's MD may well be current promotions manager David Bagley, although some voices have whispered Robin Valk as a dark horse in the race but more knowing and observant eyes have already dismissed this prospect as pure fancy. Interesting fuel to the gossip is that Tony Gillham (former Head of Music at Mercia and currently PC at some hinterland station) has been seen at BRMB along with other 'strange' visitors. The likelihood of these calls being for personal pleasure or for a guided tour seems highly unlikely.

Irony touch to Central's Girl of the Year fiasco is that when the filming in Jamaica was called off over union squabbles the programme executives already in the tropical climes had to fly back home. All save for Ted Trimmer who was elected as responsible for chaperoning the contestants who were guaranteed the West Indies trip. Seems that poor Ted suffers from a skin ailment that renders him highly allergic to the Jamaican sunshine!

Tongue wags that David Williams — the man who guided the popularity rise of Pebble Mill at One and who Neil Sedaka once remarked was the only man to fully capture his adonis-like looks — has been sacked after previously being booted up to Radio 4. Without Williams' guiding hand how will Treadmill ever be the same?

Which seems a pity but he hopes to emulate the lads success with his own backing band, 10-4. An album and single are due out shortly and at the end of June, they all descend on Jamaica to take part in the Reggae Sunsplash Festival. But, even in his absence, the Railway will carry on doing what it's best at, providing good live music. The current break down is as follows: Mondays: 10-4, Thursdays: Trouble, Fridays: The Flying Doctors, Saturdays: Bandanna.

Meanwhile, on the other side of town, Faces French, the Midland Discotheque Of The Year 1982, is giving over a Monday night to live music.

Under the banner "Kilohertz", the evening will reflect current music and current fashion. Katu played at the first gig, (see review page) and Landscape made a personal appearance. Other bands have included Smart Young Men, Danse De Feu and Club 21. The success of Kilohertz has yet to be gauged, as usual it depends on the quality of the performer(s) and the quantity of punters that turn up but it is a measure of the attraction of live music, that the city's leading night club should feel the need to put bands on. Long may Kilohertz carry on.

The non-success concerns Snobs in Paradise Circus, where live music has been taking place on a Thursday night for around two months. Our own intrepid reporter, Sister Ray, visited Snobs on the occasion of the recent Philip Jap concert and was verbally nailed to the wall.

"Where were you when we needed you?"
 "Why didn't you write about us at the outset of our Thursday night live music scene?"

Probably because we weren't informed of the clubs activities but, suffice to say that the Tin Tin gig (see Reviews), will be the last that directly involves the Snobs management although Swans Way played soon after but did so independently. Snobs manager Wally Truscott put it thus:

"I'd be lying if I said it was successful. We tried to give people something different on Thursdays. Everyone moans about the deadness of nightlife in Birmingham, but when we did do something, there was little support from the public."

In all honesty, Snobs have a point but surely with the kind of acts Snobs were booking (national, aspiring talent, sound major record company backing), it should have been successful and merely to blame the Birmingham public again isn't only adopting an ostrich-like approach, it's also akin to wearing a blindfold whilst doing so!

So, there it is . . . the Railway, spring cleaned and ambitious . . . Faces, new and potential packed . . . Snobs, if only but . . . Two out of three ain't bad.

SHORT CUTS

FESTIVE FROLICS

During the weekend of June 3rd, 4th and 5th, a folk festival will take place at Furnace End, Over Whitacre, Warwickshire. Amongst the array of artists booked so far are Tommy Dempsey, The Campbells, Band of Hope and Glory, Hobnail, Maurice and the Minors and Last Details. Other attractions are stalls, childrens sports, skittles and an afternoon fete. So, for something completely different, why not head off to Furnace End.

Cozy here ain't it?

That exiled Brummie skin basher, Cozy Powell, now resident drum machine in Whitesnake, releases a solo album on Polydor and it rejoices in the title "Octopuss". Some say it marks a new departure in Cozy's career, but we say never mind the . . .

Who would? Winwood . . .

Another exiled Brummie (how many more can you find? — Ed) Stevie Winwood returns to his mother city for an Odeon gig on July 10th. Steve, late of Spencer Davis, Traffic, Blind Faith and Stevie Winwood used to live in Kingstanding, an area of Brum well-known for it's rock heroes (it says here!). His band is all American and the gig is part of a European tour that began on May 27 in Norway. An album is due out on Island after the tour.

Hart to Hart. . .

John Hart and Martin Hart, aka Secret Harts have a hearty new single "Dance like Boy, Dance like Girl" out on Warner Bros, so it's heartily well done to all concerned.

TWIST ON

June looks like being a good month for local band Twist. They play the Duma Express, June 16th, the Triangle Arts Centre on June 18th and the Glastonbury Fayre on June 21st and 22nd. All dates to be confirmed at the time of going to press.

Upstairs on the road

Do you like The Man Upstairs? Do you like their alternative Jazz approach? Here's your opportunity to judge this month: June 18th — Nottingham University, June 21st — Arches, Wolverhampton, June 24th — Nottingham University, June 29th — The Asylum, Nottingham.

Plug that Leake. .

Former Dexy's keyboard man Any Leake is set to re-surface in July with a single and an album out on Beggars Banquet.

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PIC: GERED MANKOWITZ

Doll Delight . . .

After what seems like an eternity, China Doll have finally signed to EMI and a single "Turkish Delight" was released at the end of May. Perhaps, at last, Fay and co. will go on and achieve what they deserve . . . a top ten hit, but that depends more on EMI than luck.

IN TENTS EXCITEMENT FROM BRMB . . .

On Saturday June 4th in Cannon Hill Park, BRMB, in conjunction with Birmingham City Council, are presenting three local bands in concert.

They are The Flying Doctors, Zoo-Q and The Set. Admission is £1.50, all proceeds to charity. Kick off is 7 p.m. and the final whistle blows at 10 p.m. from whence there'll be a magnificent firework display, courtesy of the City Council.

The whole shebang gives under the banner "Event In The Tent" Also, on Sunday, June 12th, Tuxedo Bay, supported by English Air, are appearing at the Birmingham Botanical Gardens, on the Bandstand, beginning at 3

p.m., and running on until 5 p.m. Admission will be at the normal Gardens price. At the same venue on August 21st, BRMB will be presenting Swan's Way. All these shows will be recorded by BRMB for later transmission.

E.L.O. SHOW

Those mega stars of mega-stars ELO release a new album, their tenth, on June 24th.

Entitled "Secret Message", this bi-annual release promises to set the whole ELO show in motion for another year with a single "Rock 'n' Roll is King" due out on Jet on June 3rd, a cassette version of "Secret Messages" with a bonus track due out and maybe even the tour (never-Ed!) who knows.

Jeff Lynne is currently in Britain to film a video with Bev Bevan, Kelly Groucutt and Richard Tandy and also to work on his production techniques, e.g. a couple of tracks on the new Dave Edmunds L.P.

They do say that old rock and rollers never die, they just go to America and dive into the mainstream. In ELO's case, we love 'em cos they're Brummies at heart.

Witchfinder Changes

Stourbridge contraversialists Witchfinder General have had a team change.

In come new bassist Rod Hawkes and drummer Derm the Germ to join Zeeb Parkes and Phil Cope. The band have an album "Friends of Hell" out at the end of June and a single "Music" released in mid-June, both on Heavy Metal Records. Tour dates are in the process of being scheduled. One interesting

footnote to the Witchfinder story is that it transpires that their fierce rivalry with fellow Stourbridgian axe grinders Diamond Head looks like being settled once and for all. How? on stage with amps blazing? Pistols at dawn? A debauched ale contest? No, on the football field. The Witchfinders have challenged the Diamond Headers to a five-a-side soccer game, all proceeds to local charity. Stourbridge will never be the same again . . .

ROKKIN' ON

Evesham based Rokk Promotions motor into summer in top gear with dates at three southerly venues.

The busiest end of their activities falls at the Waterside Club, Worcester: — SCHELLSHOCK (Blitzkrieg Brum rock, June 2); RAVEN/BASHFUL ALLEY / OVERKILL DISCO (June 13); OVERKILL ROCK DISCO (featuring 'Women In Rock', half price admission for girls, June 16); GRIM REAPER (demonic metal monsters, June 23); ARC (heavy with two singles already, June 30).

Meanwhile at the Nags Head, Malvern, OVERKILL ROCK DISCO turns up on June 11 and the following week sees an appearance by the Kidderminster acid-rock band DAY OF JUDGEMENT (June 18).

And to complete Rokk's June roster comes a new night at the Market Tavern in Kidderminster. The regular Friday gig begins with Droitwich rockers GRIM REAPER (June 24) and continues with Malvern's VIRGIN STAR (July 1).

©

Ruby Turner, fresh from a guest spot on the new Landscape single and currently one of the darlings of the London clubs has a new single out on Sunflower through Pinnacle. The title? "Every Soul" b/w "The First Step" — reportably classy.

©

One of our favourite bands of last year, Felt, re-emerge from self-imposed hibernation with original member Maurice Deebank back in the fold and a new single, on Cherry Red, entitled "Penelope Tree" and it comes in 7" and 12" versions. We've been told not to tell you that Felt come from Water Orton.

Following hot on the heels of their huge Birmingham successes with Roy Ayers and Prince Charles, local outfit Wellingtons Promotions have announced the country's biggest all-day dance contest ever.

The prize in this unique Jazz / Funk competition is a two-week holiday for two in New York.

The contest takes place over three months with heats at the popular Powerhouse Sunday all-dayers on June 12 and July 10 with the grand final falling on August 14. Wellington's dates at the refurbished city venue have

DANCE YOUR WAY TO NEW YORK

gained massive support countrywide and with its 2,500 capacity the Powerhouse is fast becoming regarded as the best all-day club in the land.

The outright winner plus guest receive return jet flights, hotel accommodation and the chance to visit some of the top New York clubs.



■ STOP PRESS . . . The Man Upstairs: Jazzset at the Duma Express, June 16.

PIC: DAVID TRAVIS

Nova's New Exhibit

Paul Nova, formerly of Bizarre Unit, is starting his own label Exhibit 1 Records and has already issued two singles. His plans are now to issue a series of compilation albums for young, local bands.

Each band that appears on the albums will contribute £100 to production and in return will be given 100 free albums to sell or use in whatever way they wish (and deft economics

means that you can easily make a profit on the deal). Copyright remains with the writers and Paul will stand the cost of sleeves, covers etc. The first compilation is nearing com-

pletion and will include tracks from East Orange, Face Value, Desert Train and Paul himself among others. He is now looking for a further six bands for the next album and interested contributors should contact him at Flat 4, 7 Leigh Road, Washwood Heath, Birmingham B8 2YE.

HARRY TO HELP SCANNER APPEAL

A benefit dance in aid of the Birmingham Children's Hospital Scanner Appeal will be held at the Grapes, Hill Street, Birmingham on Thursday, June 16th.

The evening is sure to go with a 'swing', as appearing live will be The Ten Commandments of Harry Lang, the specta-

cular 10-piece soul/gospel / disco group fronted by singer / writer Harry Lang.

In addition, Grapes landlord John Dempsey is applying for a late bar for the evening to aid the fund raising activities.

'A.C.H.I.L.D.S. Appeal' is the title given to the campaign to buy a diagnostic scanner for Bir-

mingham's world-famous Children's Hospital — the initials signify 'Children's Hospital Independent Life Diagnostic Scanner'. So far some £180,000 has been raised for the campaign to buy the scanner, which costs around a quarter of a million pounds. In addition £20,000 is needed for installation of the machine at the Ladywood site.

DONNINGTON UPDATE

With Whitesnake already booked as headliners, Meatloaf has been added to the bill as special guest and marks his only festival appearance in '83.

The Donnington show will undoubtedly result in extra sales for his new album "Midnight At The Lost and Found". Another four acts, one a big U.S. band, have still to be added to the bill. Tickets are already on sale by postal application, priced at £10.50 and local outlets for them are:

Birmingham — Cyclops Records; Coventry — Appollo Theatre Box Office; Dudley — Concert Security Services; Leicester — De Montfort Hall Box Office, Midland Red; East Travel Centre; Nottingham — Select-A-Disc, Market Street and Bridlesmithgate; Wolverhampton — Goulds Records.

The Donnington Masters of Rock Festival takes place on August 20th.

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SUPERB SHOWS FROM STEVE AND FRANKIE

Two of the finest concerts this city has ever witnessed occurred within a few days of each other last month at the Odeon New Street. Winning by a very short head was the performance by Little Steven and the Disciples of Soul. The driving force behind Springsteen's E Street Band, Miami Steve Van Zandt has put together a soul / rock act that storms and stomps its way through a show that many claim to have been the best they have EVER heard. Unfortunate for Frankie Beverley to hit town so close to the Miami Steve date — but Maze were every bit as fine a band as their recordings promised. Another factor common to the two concerts was the high proportion of unsold seats. Once again the city's audience clearly demonstrated their level of discernment.

NIGHT OUT TEMPTS POWERHOUSE DJ

As part of their new formula, the Night Out have put in a resident DJ for the first time in their 8 years in business. The man in the hot seat is Ian Richards who had been at the Powerhouse since its inception some half year ago. Apparently Ian was feeling disillusioned over the Powerhouse as he felt it "was losing all sense of direction, and was becoming just another Locarno with lights". Ian sounds excited by the prospects at the Night Out where — he tells us — he puts the emphasis on fun and audience participation. Go say hello to the man — and maybe pounce a drink off him when you see Jimmy Ruffin (June 28) or Tavares (July 19) at the Night Out.

CHILDREN ALLOWED TO STAY UP LATE WEEKENDS

With the long overdue extension of pub licensing hours by 30 minutes at weekends (how puerile to limit it to 2 days only) does

that mean that we can expect night clubs to be granted an extra half-hour to compensate for the time realistically lost at the beginning of the evening. Fat chance in Quaker City.

MEDIUM WAVE WAX

Brum jazz funkies The Medium Wave Band — complete with new vocalist and distinct visual aid Rosemarie Barnaby — are set to record their debut album at Horizon Studios Coventry during the month. TMWB were recently in Pete King's Sinewave Emporium where they cut a single with Ex-Gangster Paul Morrison — the outcome of both sessions is eagerly awaited, but why are there no local venues for local soulsters to strut their stuff?

MEANWHILE ... AT FACES

Upcoming events at Faces French include a Tee Shirt and Shorts party set for June 10th. The club report much activity on the regular Thursday Experience where "Posh Frocks" and suits and ties qualify the wearers for reduced admission price. Live gigs at Faces will in-

clude Club 21 (June 6) and Katu (13th).

NIGHTERIE AIDS UNDER PRIVILEGED

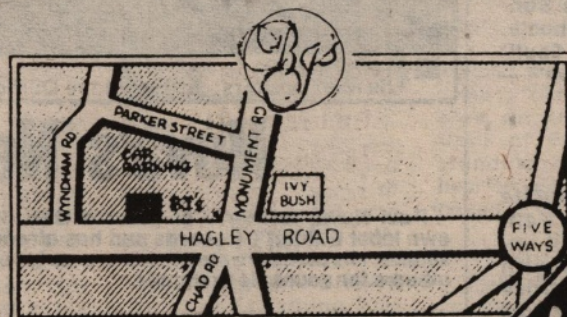
Plaudits to the Peppermint Place and their svelte management person Susie Roden who raised 250 green ones for the Calthorpe Special School for handicapped children.

HOOFER HOSTS

We were delighted and amazed to discover that Jean MacKinnon — landlady at The Windmill in Hurst Street — was the last Betty of the legendary Vaudeville sand-dancing act Wilson Kepple and Betty. Apparently she tired of waiting for Vaudeville's comeback.

JOX DOLL MAKES UP

DJ Paul Anthony's good lady recently qualified by sailing through some horrendous sounding examinations, has invested in a stock of Polyfiller, and is now seeking gigs as a Freelance make-up artist. Bands requiring image construction should contact Jaquelin through Paul ...

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jazz notes

Jim Bryant

Locating NIRVANA

Take advantage of the approaching British Summer before it flashes by, and nip out to the almost impossible - to - find Bull and Bladder for a superior glass of beer and pleasant music.

Many who attempt to locate this Nirvana seem to fall by the wayside, quite pleasantly so as they are able to find solace in several of the many hostels that abound in the region serving the country's finest ales — Holdens, Bathams, Banks's, Hansons, Ma Pardoes, Simkiss et al. For those about to venture forth into the unknown, here are a few instructions. The problem is that — for reasons known only to themselves and rumoured to be the direct result of over-indulgence in black pudding and pork scratchings the locals know the inn only as the Bull & Bladder, although the sign over the door clearly proclaims it The Vine. Furthermore, the address is Brierley Hill though it is obviously situated in Quarry Bank. In actual fact it is in Delph Road which is alongside the legendary Nine Locks — off Mount Pleasant which in turn is off Quarry Bank High Street. The pub is part of the Bathams Brewery building — and is naturally the best place to quaff this tasty brew. The jazz club operates on Mondays and will feature Ray Foxley's Sounds Of Surprise (June 6th), Ken



Ingram's Syncopators (13th), Paul Woodhall Group (20th) before celebrating the club's fourth birthday with gigs by the Zenith Hot Stompers, Ray Foxley and Jan Sutherland (27th) and the Tony Richards Trio plus guests (July 4th).

Diary notes for jazzers prepared to travel to get their fix must include a couple of dates in the Ca-

pital Radio Music Festival. Veteran jazz promoter and near-millionaire George Wein presents the Fats Domino Blues Package at London's Royal Festival Hall on the 18th July and at the same venue on the 19th he duces VSOP II which features Wynton and Branford Marsalis, Herbie Hancock, Ron Carter and Tony Williams.

Birmingham Jazz is set to introduce two excellent but relatively unknown British bands, 7 R.P.M. (5th June) and Churcho Merchan's Macondo (19th) at their Strathallen Hotel venue in Edgbaston. The imposing Tony Dudley - Evans insists that despite the economic problems that beset the music scene, British jazz remains healthy — it is particularly encouraging to note the number of good young British bands producing original music in a variety of styles which draw on other music forms — rock, folk, African etc. as well as the jazz tradition.

Both 7 R.P.M. and Macondo came into this category — In 7 R.P.M. — bassist Paul Rogers leads Simon Picard, tenor and altos, Alan Tomlinson, trombone, John Range-croft, clarinet and tenor, Ted Emmett, trumpet, Peter Nu, piano and Tony Marsh, drums. Composer Rogers was supported by an Arts Council grant, and combines a variety of sources including free — and Latin into a Mingus-like style of the sixties and seventies. Macondo are led by Colombian bassist Churcho Merchan, and sound somewhat like Weather Report but with a stronger Latin element. The drummer is Nic France, who has played with Chucho in a number of groups notably Ian Carr's Nucleus — while Tim Whitehead, tenor sax Steve Franklin, piano and Bozco, percussion, complete the line-up.

SINGLE FILE

Paul Bearer

Karel Fialka: Eat, Drink, Dance, Relax (Carrere): fall asleep. CaVa CaVa: Burning Boy (Regard): lukewarm anonymous dance - floor budge. Martha & The Muffins: Danceparc (RCA): only decent hard-dance track on the album, but still pointless. Joe Jackson: A Slow Song (A&M): classy but not hit and beware B side has former A side "Real Men".

Rita Coolidge: All Time High (A&M): Octopussy theme, usual Bond dramatics — but Rita doing the instrumental B side, c'mon now! Dee Sharp: Magician (RCA): ex-Buzzer tries to be early Edwin Starr. Armando Gama: When Love Has Gone (WEA) Portuguese Eurovision dirge. Geoff Deane: Navy Lark (WEA): former Modern Romance man in slap-happy fun polka - hello sailor.

Modern Romance: Don't Stop That Crazy Rhythm (WEA): contemporary Andrews Sisters disco. Japan: Canton (Virgin): sounds like the Cadbury's Flake ad to me. Landscape III: You Know How To Hurt Me (RCA): one of their finest yet, haunting ballad with acoustic guitar AND Ruby Turner. Margaux Buchanan: Little Girl (Loose

Ends): evocative plaintive ballad with traces of early Faithful. Calling All Boys: The Flirts: (O): hypnotic dance rhythm akin to In Deep, Vanity 6 and The Waitresses produced by Bobby O. The (Hypothetical) Prophets (Epic): contact ad cutluge for the disco. Enigmatic, sly gem.

Nile Rodgers: Yum Yum (Mirage): undistinguished but classy Chic modern Funk. Sirasse: A Stairway To You (RCA): creaky Voxpop. Taco: Singing In The Rain / Putting On The Ritz (RCA): double - pack German cabaret camp. Tacky more like. Pleasure and the Beast: Dr. Sex (Carrere): shallow mesmerising discophunk but no blood in the veins. Dolly Parton: Potential New Boyfriend (RCA): Dolly goes disco - country, sassy stuff too.

JoBoxers: Just Got Lucky (RCA): more sub early Dexys, anaemic flyweight stuff out for the count. Any Trouble: Touch And Go (EMI America): Bee Gees meet Smokey Robinson in stylish sunny soulful ballad. A gem. Sunfire: Step In The Light (Warren): formula soul disco. Twisted Sister: The Kids Are Back (Atlantic): glam kids lose their glitter. Uninspired metal. The Soft Boys: He's A Reptile (Midnight Music): hidden diamond from the late-lamented leaders of true new psychedelia. Jules Shear: Whispering Your Name (EMI America): shades of Mike Nesmith and rather good ones too.

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HEAVY METAL WORLDWIDE

First Impressions

Heavy Metal Records, 165 Wolverhampton Road, Sedgley, Dudley, shortly moving offices into a sixteenth century cottage in Wolverhampton.

Paul Birch and Juanita Anderson run Heavy Metal Records and Heavy Metal Worldwide from a compact, busy, loud, organised upstairs office.

Imagine: Cluttered desks, electric typewriters, pretty secretary, green office decor, ground coffee, lurid posters, a mini computer, wall maps, picture discs galore, albums everywhere and... not a tie in sight! Heavy Metal Records is informal efficiency.

In The Beginning...

In May 1980, Paul Birch decided to call his newly formed label, Heavy Metal Records because after working for a company called Record Sales that didn't sell records it seemed logical to call a label Heavy Metal Records if it specialised in heavy metal music. The first album release was a compilation, 'Heavy Metal Heroes', followed by 'Beastiality' by local heavy heavy metal merchants The Handsome Beats. The 'Heavy Metal Heroes' album was the first compilation metal LP and, much to Paul's chagrin, it was never reviewed in that mighty metal organ, Sounds, but the records sold.

Other up and coming combos were signed and albums followed. Split Beaver 'When Hell Won't Have You', Bitches Sin 'Predator' and Bristol's Shiva 'Firedance' and still the records sold. A second Heavy Metal Heroes compilation appeared featuring Lionheart, Pallas, Jess Cox and localites Witchfinder General amongst others and... it sold. But such is the astuteness of the Heavy Metal clan... it was noted with interest that the various metal charts in Sounds, Kerrang and Music Week were growing more diverse, they were drawing from AOR, from FM, from hard rock, from progressive. Heavy Metal Records had to reflect the subtle changes and one result was Heavy Metal Worldwide, 'The International Rock Label'.



The first record on HMW was 'Planets' by West German band Eloy (nothing to do with Aynuk friends!), who had shifted nearly a million copies of their homeland. 'Planets' first appeared on EMI Electrola but Heavy Metal took it and re-vamped it in a textured sleeve superbly illustrated by Rodney Mathews, an artist in the Roger Dean mould but as individual and gifted as any round today. Not only that, a limited edition picture disc appeared too. Next off came a previously unissued (in the U.K.) Scorpions album 'Lonesome Crow', this too available in a magnificent picture disc and to date this alone has sold in excess of 14,000 copies. Eloy's 'Time To Run' followed and Candidan combo Santer were next up with 'Racing Time'.

Currently on offer is 'Warning from Stardust' from Japan's top rock band Bow Wow, 'Restless and Wild' the latest album from Eloy, simultaneously released here and in Germany. Another first for Heavy Metal is the fact



that the cassette version of lyric sheet and if you know little gesture!

In terms of Heavy Metal remember?), albums due include 'Against All Odds' coming rock veterans Quarfinder General called 'Frie this promises to be more versial than their last epic.

Nothing succeeds

Success is a word that you when it comes to Heavy Metal aimed at a specialist market very well packaged. You may rock journals, you may have you must have heard of Heavy haven't, you will. Plans are in this year, Paul wants to make a gravestone shape for the World well advanced. The company girl and a label manager and don't forget the new offices.

The Personal Touch

O.K. the story may or may on whether you like or dislike You may have found the Jiffensive / flippant / evil / funny The facts are such that no Metal Records is very much as such, they deserve recognition keep on keeping on. I will go Street hacks to reproduce a scurrilous quest for news with they won't... not unless.

P.S.

I suppose that, being a not accurately, an ex-metallurgist through the Heavy Metal catalogue hardly relished but, surprised even within the hardly extreme metal' is wide and varied. The LOUD! if you like it raunchy you're into real 'n' raw un Shiva, if you like a bit of riff - Sabbatical - mega - heavy - n further than Witchfinder General if you like a band that are as innovative as Floyd yet as m - Fantasia as Rush then try E really is up to you to listen is

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TRACKING



The latest offering from
Magnum is "Eleventh
Hour" (Jet) and what a
surprise packet this turned
out to be! I'd always viewed
Magnum as a kind of
hybird, born out of an un-
likely marriage of
Sabbath, ELO and Judas
Priest but "Eleventh
Hour" turns out to be 100%
Magnum. Their brand of
hard rock has a softer side
to it which never drifts into
mush or sentimental
candy dross, they have an
ear for melody that I find
very refreshing. "Ele-
venth Hour" points to the
dangers that lie ahead for
mankind and almost
pleads the case for our
children to inherit a letter
world. Admittedly, no-
thing new there but listen
to "Young and Precious
Souls" or "The Word" and
you'll realise that they
mean it. A magnanimous
gesture.

Meanwhile, back on the
streets, Philip Jap has his
first album out, imagina-
tively titled "Philip Jap"
(A&M). Our Phil joins
forces with Trevor Horn
(Dollar etc.), Colin
Thurston (Duran Duran
etc.) and Tony Mansfield
(the rest etc.) and makes
an album full of nearly
new pop songs, topped by
his epic single "Save Us"
and helped by some nice
touches in "Jump Crew"
and a truly unique ap-
proach to foot stopin in
"Brain Dance" O.K. so the
guy thinks that he's Bowie
circa '73 minus the Ziggy
bit but he's really quite
harmless and, as his
recent Brum gig showed,
at least he's got some
talent, which brings us
neatly onto Rick Wa-
keman and his soundtrack
muzak for the official 1982
World Cup Film, "Gole"
(Charisma). To appre-

ciate this, you must first
see the film as Rick has the
knack of capturing the
mood of the action quite
superbly. On it's own,
without the sporting con-
nection, it's all very cold
and not much fun, a bit like
the music that the BBC
manages to assemble for
it's sports programmes.
You know, plug in the
computer and press button
B. By the way, if you like
animal films, you'll love
the sequence where Italy's
Claudio Gentile gently
'marks' Diego Maradona.

Now, the briefly recom-
mended, the Swann albums of
the month.

Enflame — The Passage
(Cherry Red). Definitive
80's technopop. Just the
kind of thing that the kids
of the 90's will remember.
Stop, look, listen to "Drug
Face", "Horseplay" and
the wondrous "Sharp
Tongue". Don let it pass
You by.

**Power, Corruption and
Lies — New Order**
(Factory). Simply bril-
liant. I still rate "Blue
Monday" as the dance
record of the year and this
current New Order of-
fering is packed full of
goodies, "Ultraviolence",
"Ecstasy" & "The Village"
and so on and so on. I
never saw New Order
smile / grin / grimace,
they remain sullen a big
sulk, a well oiled smirk but
as long as they reproduce
music like this, who cares?

**Volume, Contrast, Bril-
liance — The Monochrome
Set (Cherry Red).**
Volume? Yep, play it loud.
Contrast? Just listen to the
punk spunk of "Alpha-
ville" and the new English
sophistication of "The Jet
Set Junta". Brilliance?
Unabounded. Sadly
underated, The Mo-
nochrome Set have a
bucket full of minor
classics, the cloning "He's
Frank", the morbid "Eine
Symphonie des Gravens"
or the fun "Avanti" and
many more. Fourteen
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An appropriate jump-in point seems to be with the departure of Troy Tate. Is that difficult to discuss?

"I'd say it'd be rather diplomatic not to talk about it. I wouldn't say there was any real animosity from any member of the band towards Troy, it's just that when he joined there was a lot of business people jumping on the bandwagon to cash in. That's basically it and that's all I'm going to say about it. I think he's good, I think his songwriting's ok though a bit limited. A lot of people didn't really like him in Fashion. Troy had a lot of good ideas, he had a lot of input but there was a lot of throwback from all the rest of it with his record company and publishing company."

Before we get to the end of the Arista deal, what about the four you did with Darby and Troy, was that something you felt you had to do to maintain impetus and show the band hadn't collapsed?

"That was showing faith to Arista. We rang up in a panic when De left, with the band splitting up and then we got it all back together in the space of two weeks, got three new numbers and went out with De as a three-piece a lot of his vocals were on backing tape, and here Troy was in the vocalist hot spot and we didn't have time to make up vast amounts of backing vocals on tape. By Hammersmith we'd pulled it all together and it was great, but it was odd because people obviously wanted to hear Fabrique and we wanted to keep the name going but something had died. There was certain numbers I'd never really liked playing live, like 'Love Shadows', which I never thought worked live, though it's a good song. Our main intention was not just to go out and replicate Fabrique. If we'd wanted to do that and just copy it we could have but the fact that we put three new numbers into the set exemplified Fashion's attitude and always will do."

Did things change much in terms of approach when you bought in Darby and Troy?

"When the band split Mulligan decided to go into computers and that took a while to work out and now he's brilliant in his field. The next time we go out live will be quite off - the - wall again. We'll have to computerised robots which will dictate the light show and Mulligan will have two Roland MC4's or he might have got into Emulators or Fairlites where you use floppy discs which is more sophisticated and give a better sound. With the computers it's a lot more versatile. You can control the keyboards but it's not totally mechanical. You have the capacity to play keyboards on top of all that. I never thought Fashion really delivered live in the Dee Harris line-up. I never thought



FASHION SENSE

Since the arrival of Alan Darby and Troy Tate into the ranks and the subsequent departure of the latter, things have been fairly quiet on the Fashion front and it's virtually unknown that the band are no longer signed to Arista Records but to the mighty Epic label.

The following is an exclusive interview by MIKE DAVIES with drummer Dik that sheds some light on what's gone down and what the future holds for Fashion.

it had the power or the highs and lows it should have had, which there are now. Darby's open enough to realise that it won't be just one big guitar thing, there'll probably be acoustic guitar, acoustic and electric drums, fretless bass, the whole thing. What we will do live is to line-up stage front, four people in a row and get away from the standard rock and roll light show. There'll be four consolidated images giving really strong power."

What happened with the recording side of things when the new guys came in, because there was talk of a new single and then nothing happened?

"Arista suggested using 'Love Is' as a single but Zeus was tired and I don't think he could really work on it and we didn't really think it sounded like a Fashion number. We wanted to come out blazing with a really strong song, to compensate for 'Love Shadow', we wanted to cover all bases — dance, visuals, the lot — and put across the fact that we had two guitar players and more power."

Turning to Alan Darby, he's got a definite hard rock guitar style to him which again seems away from the Fashion approach, adding a quality of the Jeff Beck soul - searing style.

"We'd always encouraged De to try and play heavier guitar because he used a 335 and a Roland Jazz Chorus and we eventually got him to play a Stratocaster and a Marshall 4x12 and he really got into it. But like the trigger guitar on 'Move On' wasn't played by De, that was a German guy because Dave refused to play it, he didn't think it fitted. As it turned out the combination worked but it was a hard job getting De round on that one. Now we've got Darby in it covers all bases and it's back together as a band."

He seems to be right for the American AOR audiences while the other aspects of Fashion handle the interest in contemporary electronic dance. Appealing to two major markets in one band?

"We talked about this many times, combining the guitar

with the electronics, even in the early days when the guitar was quite up front but although De could play really well he just didn't have the oomph behind it. Ever since then the electronics side of things has gone to the other extreme."

There's definitely a strong gutsy guitar attack on 'Eye Talk' on the new demos, really powerful dynamics in there, and then there's 'White Line Flyer' which is much poppier, almost like 'Sugar Sugar' in some senses commercially.

"I could play you Fashion demos of Fabrique that would make you piss your pants because they simply don't represent what came out. But if you employ a producer then you realise that producing is his job. Hopefully Zeus will be able to combine with Darby's guitar. That's our main problem at the moment, getting that combination. The guitar should really come though, if you're going to do the sort of guitar solos that Darby can do then let's hear them. It may sound an unlikely mixture but the parallel of course is Michael Jackson's 'Beat It'... who in the world would think of using Eddie Van Halen with Michael Jackson, but it works brilliantly and I think that's the tack we're going to get."

While we're talking about Darby's guitar, what about the instrumental on the demo, 'Wet and Warm', that's a new dimension for you with that almost classic sound to it and the cascading keyboards leading into the searing guitar.

"That's a weird one. Duran Duran we're not. That was a guitar piece Alan presented to us and we thought it sounded a bit like Mark Knopfler. It's a fine piece of music but we had to Fashionise it, change it slightly. I think he threw it at us deliberately to see what we could do with it. As far as I'm concerned it's not a guitar piece anymore, it's a keyboard feature. They're stunning. The steel drums on it are one of Mulligan's programmes."

It's very much like film soundtrack atmospherics, Darby's already done 'Local

Hero', is it an area you as a band would like to explore?

We're probably doing the new British Airways jingle!

Going back to when Alan and Troy joined, what was the situation with Arista? What happened with that deal?

"They didn't take to Troy and Darby at all. After we did that tour I felt Arista should have given us a medal after all the shit we went through. We kept their act on the road whereas the Haircuts were having kittens. We kept the name going, flogged the album again for Arista (incidentally it's gone Silver MD). We were doing it to buy time but they didn't get behind us and that really pissed me off as the potential of the new band was awesome. Darby and Troy were automatic choices for us, the chemistry would have worked. Even on tour, which was very difficult for Troy and Alan to do, there was no real panic. We just went out and socked it to them. As it turns out now we have 20 new songs demoed and ready to roll but Arista never saw us as songwriters. They always took De to their hearts — but I'm quite vehement about this because the songs on Fabrique were written as a four piece but Dave Harris was promoted by Arista as the front-man, singer-songwriter. But he was nurtured and cultured by the rest of Fashion, which is something that's always been overlooked. No disrespect to Dave, he taught us a lot, we've never been the world's greatest musicians but Fashion is a group is a group is a group."

Fashion's now a four-piece with both Darby and yourself doing vocals. On 'I Can't Help You' he sounds like a male Grace Jones, and then there's that dark snake-like spoken vocals on 'Hit Girls' (a Cobra like piece of venom).

"That's a stunt we pulled. That's me singing on that. It's a talk-vocal because I've never been able to sing, like pitching a note, but it has a lot of character. When Mulligan and I used to sing it was never an actual sweet vocal but Darby can pitch and underneath that we can do backing vocals which will give it an edge. What we can combine is my talk-vocal, Mulligan's increasing use of vocoder, Darby's pitch and spoken vocals and Martin, being a bass player, has come up with some incredible Bill Fredricks style vocals."

So what happened to part company with Arista?

"I don't think Arista could handle what was going down with us, Haircuts and Huang Chung. It was far too chaotic for us to contemplate staying with them. What happened was a real Corkey scam (Dave Corkey - manager). We hadn't been into Arista as a band since we sacked Troy (which is what it had to boil down to in the end), so Corkey went in and told them the band had split up, Dik's gone to work on a snake farm in Atlanta, Martin's had his ulcer flare up again and isn't expected to last the month, Mulligan's sleeping rough on UB40's studio floor and Darby's gone off to make another film score with Mark Knopfler, that sort of thing. So Arista said, 'oh that's the end of Fashion then'. What we wanted was a total release from Arista and they just dropped us without any overrides because of their indifference and our lies. Meanwhile we were working away in Bob Lamb and UB40's studios demoing our new album and since Arista weren't behind it we thought bollocks if they're going to get a second album from us. So in between Dave giving sob stories to Arista he was going round other companies playing them demos and as soon as we got the release it was round to Muff Winwood at CBS, presented him with a phenomenal amount of songs,

and signed to them. The day we signed we walked out of the door and bumped into everyone from Arista going into a wine bar. It was quite embarrassing. The Epic deal is worldwide and I think they're looking towards America initially. The deal's for 1½ million dollars over five years. We're their second biggest signing since The Clash. We have our own label too, it's called Distill, which is a Dutch Art Movement, rather like Revolution in Art using very simple colour schemes."

When are things likely to appear in recorded form?

"I'd like to see one out as soon as possible but Summer's a bad time to release a single and there's no point playing live until then. There's not been anything yet about our signing to CBS but we do have a full Fashion manifesto ready for release and we've got biogs, photos, T-shirts, artwork and the lot all sorted out to hit CBS with in fact this is quite frankly an exclusive and I might well get my arse kicked from here to Paris if I am not careful. But talking about recording, we're trying to get Alex Sadkin but he's off with Duran Duran because they got the cheque in first, they and UB40 were first in line. We asked him because we thought he could give us some space. I think we'll probably use Zeus again because a lot of people loved Fabrique because of his production but my only fear is that we've actually transcended his capabilities. Production-wise we're on par with him now because we did nick a lot of his ideas and have used them in Bob Lamb's. I think he'll probably learn a lot more from us now, especially from Mulligan. But if we get Zeus ensconced in Paris for six weeks I think we'll come up with at least 1½ album's worth of material that'll kick Fabrique out of the door. I think it'll be so powerful songwise and on a out level. I think the songwriting standard is far superior to Fabrique. A lot of those songs didn't have that hook that old men whistle on the tops of buses. That's a base we didn't cover on the album — I mean you try singing 'Move On'. We've learned to write songs, there is a formula, which might sound calculating, but we're twisting it into the Fashion scheme of things. And now since Troy left, musically we've streamlined into a four piece and since Martin recovered from his illness his bass playing has improved tenfold. We've gone back to calculating our strengths."

What about work outside of Fashion, you've always been fairly involved in other projects?

"We've graduated into being more regarded as session musicians now, we've been working really hard at technique so that people now phone us up. We've never ignored the latest technology either that tends to leave other bands stuck in a rut. Mulligan's working on an electronic version of 'Walk On By', Martin's doing the bass on the next Tin Tin stuff. We're also working with China Burton who's a songwriter with Virgin Publishing, he's a cross between Fleetwood Mac and Prince. The Triad's still going too and now with Bob Lamb out of hospital we'll be a three drummer unit with him, me and Stoker. The reason Triad started in the first place was that I wanted to make a drum record. The thing is, Fashion's always been a vehicle for everybody, if they allow it and don't get above themselves. These days there are no egos to contend with anymore. It's all so harmonious. Now that the business aspects have been sorted out we can lock ourselves away and get on with the job."

I can't wait for the Autumn Fashions.

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BUZZINGS

Mike Davies

BRUM BEAT'S regular low-down on Midland Muso's

Hot stuff. Just heard rush demos of **Hollywood Beyond** and even in their incomplete, unmixed form both "Fire Down Below" and "Love Lost" are spine-curling examples of intense passionate dance-floor funk—done properly as opposed to the glut of half-cocked clones currently festering the charts. Swirling, hammering synths, drums and bass with Mark's vocals punching in a fist of white-hot compulsion. A video is planned and a mid-June live debut. One step further Beyond.

Good (if ironic) to see **The Beat** back in favour with "Can't Get Used To Losing You" on Arista following the parting of the ways with the label and full marks to promo man **Mike Perry** for putting every effort behind band and single to rescue them from media amnesia.

On to singles and debut from **Assyene** is "Call It A Day" (Zone To Zone), a chirrupy slice of reggae pop, although the more heavyweight flip, "Ask Me No Questions" is fairly anonymous. **Berlin Walls** "Stop" (Passport) is better than demos suggested with some good brass work livening up an otherwise average dance-floor jazzy new wave chunk a funk. Sort of Numan meets PigBag. Delightful sunny-day-driving music from **Pink Umbrellas** with "Raspberry Rainbow" (Ready Steady Go) paying tributes to a variety of late 60's psychedelic popsters. Sunshine stuff too for the debut single on John Mostyn's Paradise Records with **English Air's** "July March", an instrumental that conjures up combined images of The Tweets, Manuel & His Music of The Mountains and The Cloggies. It's taken from their album which is packed with a variety of folk based easy on the ear instrumentals.

Surprise from folk crew **Mad Jacks & Englishmen** is a sterling treatment of Morrison's "Gloria" (DPP) capturing that early Them raw touche, although the magic spark isn't quite there.

Looking ahead **Swan's Way** have a new single planned for soon - come release and the wondrous **The Visit** from Stourbridge will be issuing their dazzling "All The Walls" on Future even as I write (great Beacon session too). **Paparazzi** have turned up a stunner in "Stop", produced by Zeus Held and chart status is only a matter of form. **Duran Duran** have a TV special planned of one of their recent Hammersmith gigs, although a new album isn't likely until year end. Likely producer is Alex Sadkin. When does John Taylor quit the band? And lest I forget **The Photo's** new debut "There's Always Work" (Rialto) finds them in dance-floor form with three versions on 12" plus a 7" issue. Not immediately out of the ordinary but it does flourish after a few plays and the rhythm section is most definitely recommended.

Apologies to **EGO** magazine, mention of whom got scythed from last issue. So let me say belatedly that **EGO 2** is a vast improvement on the debut, and features some excellent articles and interviews on Sound Systems (with Mikey Dread), Imagination, Rik Mayall, and an exclusive on Monty Python's Meaning of Life. Plus a fine satirical cut-up spoof on the jingoistic, gutter-press activities of The Sun and its ilk. As they say, a good read.

Demos time and a sniff of the new **Katu** still shows traces of the Japanese fascinations that plague them but is far stronger and more dynamic in its dance stance. Give it the as yet missing sparkle and they could well make the most substantial recovery since Lazarus. New tracks from **Carl Troia** are still in his jazzy-disco funk style but still lack the real sense of body that the music demands. "Crying In The Darkness" proclaims to be a finished master but sounds more like a skeletal demo. More substance to the vocals



SWANS WAY — Albert's Wine Bar, Birmingham

PIC: DAVID TRAVIS

and a stronger rhythm feel is necessary before developments reach sufficient potential to warrant vinyl commitment.

Kabuki strike again (and ask to inform everyone they've not vanished) with two more sterling examples of their bristling, no-punches-pulled steam-hammer attack. "Cold" flurries along with sizzling guitar work and Cub's inevitable razor-cutting bass work, pinned by the usual Kabuki thundering drumming against which Max and Jowan interweave their rumbling, accusatory, sexual-swagger vocals. "Graveshow", with sax, is a lower, more deliberate sculpture with throat warble and looming spectral dark shadows of musical visions. Superb.

Richard Tibbenham's **Slant** seems to be progressing along sturdy lines, taking a

danceable tack with melodic, echoing guitar passages providing the necessary sparkle to compensate for rather plodding damp drumming (thru that may just be the tape quality). "Animals" etches some pleasant musical engravings but doesn't really lift off before it's all over, whereas "Fielday" (sic) has the makings of a really solid piece of abrasive Echoish dance music once the rhythm section is given flesh to the bones. Nice fluttering guitar and synth work add useful textural colours, but the voice needs to be more confident.

New **Talking America** cut "Sunshine" frolics along in bouncy reggae style but doesn't really allow Carol Decker to give much expression to her

vocal dexterity. Sort of Bad Manners meets The Mixtures (remember them?). Updates from **The Man Upstairs** suggest they're refining their occasionally sprawling energy into more channeled lines, especially the slow, deliberate "New Romance". But "Into The Red" sounds a little weighted down by a rather leaden rhythm base these days. The band are also still looking for a good flexible guitarist. Awaiting new demos from **Zoo Q** and currently frothing over their dub version of the live highlight "Larry".

Great live tape too by **From Eden** (JB's) which serves once again to illustrate their monumentally ferocious musical strengths as well as their stunning lyrical prowess ("Turn It On" is a splendid acide-spraying machine-gun of a song). Good new

material too, proving they've not burned up all their ideas in one nova. Despite recent ignorant dismissals in the papers (glam rock MR Shelley! Do leave the tags to someone who understands what they mean, or at least try and apply your definitions to the right examples!). From Eden are one of the finest bands in the area today and would surely earn accolades galore were they ever to grace the boards of Max's Kansas City. Rub your eyes you morons and wake up to what you're missing.

New **Tin Tin** single to be "She Loves Me". New **Weapon Of Peace 12"** is "Standing On The Edge" (Safari) but has none of the danger suggested in the title. Stylish laid-back reggae soul but no alarm clock. **Charged G.B.H.** finally come out of the closet with "Catch 23" (Clay) and stand revealed as Motorhead clones. More news of **Dee Harris** is that as well as Rick Wright he's working with Mick Karn. **The Flamingoes** have recently been working on a video for their new, as yet untitled, song.

Just had the **Ruby Turner** newie, her reggae-soul live favourite "Every Soul" (Sunflower) which needs a few plays before it really grows on record although the stirring ballad flip "The First Step" is an instant furnace. First demo tape from **Taaga** is an interesting (if as yet still unshaped) proposition with some cold metal music for mental awareness and stimulation, especially on "Friend Of Mine" with its warped reggae undercurrents and rasping sax. Largely romantic lyrics given a very un sentimental musical coating that highlight Mykocupa's vocals, although I Beef-moll's guitar is far less abrasively aggressive than usual. Finished treatments of "Gazebo" and "Horror Son Of Terror" should be particularly absorbing.

Some good hard rock from **Smokin' Roadie**, notably "Girl" and "Love And Freedom", bodes well for their forthcoming Zone To Zone single. Former Fashion vocalist **Luke** returns to the scene as 50% of **Early Gray**, along with Steve Brown. Brown, who hails from Hall Green, met Dik from Fashion in Cleveland in 1979 and is currently utilising his skills with percussion, although Brown himself seems to play any instrument offered. Demo debut sounds like a electronic fusion with a white Prince or Smokey R, especially on "Here & Now" and the rich "Imagination Quota" although the dreamy "Bridges Are Burning" is more a black Ferry sound. Other recommended cuts are "This Time Next Year" and "The VIP'S". The duo currently operate under the name of Earl Gray. Warm the pot someone.

New demos from **The Great Outdoors** show a much more dynamic mastery of their music with aggressive 12-string providing a mighty focus to the overall twilight psychedelia of their sound. "The Gun" and "Blood Sports" in particular stand out and indicate that transition to vinyl would be a healthy proposition. Finally, disconcerting rumours whisper that I have broken up. I trust not!

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- 16 Stop And Go David Grant
- 17 Heat You Up Melt You Down Shirley Lites
- 18 Bad Boys Wham
- 19 Does That Ring A Bell Dynasty
- 20 It's Over Funkmasters

The Floor Fillers Chart is based on dance-floor response in local niteries.

This month it is compiled from returns by: Paul Stewart (Elbow Room); Steve Dennis (Faces French, Edgbaston); Paul Anthony (Eve's Wolverhampton); Paul Beech (Scandals, Solihull); Peter Wesson (Mobile).&

REVIEWS

THE DANCING DID J.B.'S, Dudley

The Roaming rustics roll into town. Baggy cords, horse brasses and waistcoats topped off with a fine sense of humour and a powerful rumbling sound as natural and menacing as a giant, demented combine harvester.

Numbers such as "Just What Is Going On At The Wounded Stag Hotel" are fast becoming legendary. (Even if they're not, with titles like that they should be).

The Dancing Did make the power and force with which they play seem almost effortless, down to earth, honest and enthusiastic — none of the pathetic rock posturing here.

Their blues parody had me laughing out loud, without doubt the funniest moment I've seen on stage in a long long time. Have you ever seen such a mischievous smile as the one on vocalist Tim Harrison's face?

They even did a country and western number — yeeahs and all. By the time they came to "The Lost Platoon" the audience was twitching and shaking to the sound of Did.

Why Stiff Records failed to recognise the talent of this band and keep them on their Rosta on a long term basis is a total mystery that can only be described as complete madness.

Well — it's all over and everyone's off for a nightcap at the Wounded Stag Hotel — see you there sometime.

Dave Travis

THE STEVE GIBBONS BAND The Mermaid, Birmingham

The pen is mightier than the sword, no doubt, but against pure rock it has no defence.

Steve Gibbons has rarely strayed from his simple rock and roll roots and now, he returns with a newly slimmed down line-up (Trevor Burton recently departed to pursue a solo course), of bass, drums, guitar and himself on Bigsby rhythm guitar and harmonica. Big deal, same old story you may think. Where's the synthesiser, brass section or percussion unit, violins, backing tapes, blah, blah?

What this band's got is class, pure and simple. Moreover they love what they're doing and this was transmitted from Steve's grin right through to 'Sticky Wickett', the drummer with the gentlemanly beam.

The simplicity of the music is its greatest strength — every member has the freedom to play at his best and this gives a confidence to do as they choose with an edge that is irresistible. Can rock sound like jazz? Well, on 'Natural Thing' the combination of Steve's voice (and for those of you who still don't know, it's one of the most distinctive in music today) and the swish pulse of the clearly defined backing instruments gives just that jazz feel.

It has to be said that Birmingham (for that matter the rest of the country), owes a great debt to Steve for what he has given to music over the years and now the SGB is back on the street, ready to show a lot of people who like to think they know better, the way home.

John Brocklesby

CRAZY ANGEL The Grapes, Birmingham

Crazy Angel are one of those bands that when you've heard the first few bars you've heard the entire set — many times before. The very heavy 'For Whom The Bell Tolls' opened the set, crossing Motorhead with Sabbath.

The music was messy and dogged by bad timing. In fairness, they did have a bad sound mix but they seemed to be working on the principle that they'd catch up with each other in the end. It's not easy for anyone else to work out where one song ends and another begins. Having seen the band twice I still can't differentiate between the songs, nor pick a winner. They bash them out and there are no surprises in store.

This kind of music doesn't allow all but the most exceptional vocalist scope to shine out. The only way this gent can stretch his voice is by sheer volume, generally to outdo the backing cacophony.

Although a reasonable-sized crowd made the gig, the band mistook the indifference for shyness. After the first encore died a death, they attempted another, and then another. The third encore was, predictably, 'Paranoid'. Well, there are close family connections and it would be foolish not to seize every advantage. The greater folly is to deny it when it's obvious to everyone.

Debbie Fussell

BUBBLING BROWN SUGAR, The Hippodrome, Birmingham

Bubbling Brown Sugar is a revue intended to reflect the music and spirit of Harlem in its heyday. Harlem is a vicious, unpleasant and dangerous New York suburb, but this show could get it a bad name.

Jim Simpson

WRATHCHILD The Grapes Birmingham

Many came out of sheer curiosity to see Birmingham's contribution to the current fashion of glam-rock. After all, local Wrathchild gigs are rare, and they are as notorious as the local lay. But still the crowd was not as large as I'd expected in view of their recent exposure in the national music press.

In a nutshell, the crude, vulgar, somewhat shocking image detracts from their average musicianship. Because of this, I was prepared to have them, but I found I wouldn't help liking them, and most of the crowd seemed to like them too. I had to at least give them full marks for nerve and the ability to hold my attention. I was afraid to turn away in case I missed something.

It was difficult to take them seriously though. Watching these sexually ambiguous made-up men with big hairdos and flashy costumes was rather like watching a drag-act. But because of their highly aggressive attitude, they do not threaten or alienate the men in the audience.

The songs attempt to be commercial, touching on the seventies glam-rock pop tradition. For example the start of "Do You Want My Luv?" reminded me of Gary Glitter's style in that era. They go for catchy, chanting choruses but these often end up sounding shallow. I get the impression too, that singer Bob's chatter is not spontaneous. This was the first time I'd seen the band, but judging by what I'd read elsewhere about this verbal communication, he has a repertoire of certain choice comments which he pulls out at each gig. He also mentioned something about people slagging off the band because of what they look like. Well, Twisted Sister have said it all already.

Talking of TS, they are a perfect example of an expensively marketed rock band, sold on image. Wrathchild are jumping on the same bandwagon. The question is, will they receive the same kind of financial backing to succeed, because they won't get there on musical talent.

Debbie Fussell

TIN TIN Snobs, Birmingham

Snobs was packed for Tin Tin: Steve Duffy singing, Stoker on drum-machines, and backing tapes. His voice was very off in the introduction of "Kiss Me" slipping into "She Loves Me", which sounded like a cover-version of a 60s song. It was evident most people came to find out what all the music-industry fuss was about, rather than as adoring fans. About 20 people applauded, before they all warmed up.

Under the layers of synthesizers and effects was discernable the inextinguishable sound of a disco thud, the percussionist's

function seemingly is to add theatrical liveness to the pre-recordings and Steve's more coy performance. Talking at length about the presentation rather than music is unavoidable, as it was otherwise indistinguishable from a record. The thought occurred that with the tapes providing added percussive emphases and even Steve's voice electronically modified, they were both somewhat redundant.

Beginning and ending with "Kiss Me", its dance-floor familiarity made it difficult to decide whether any of their other material is as memorable. Tin Tin distributed a stack of singles at the end, starting a small avaricious riot. They'd played less than half an hour. The DJ did his best to get everyone shouting for an encore.

They verged close to calculated commerciality and tweeze, but likelier candidates for TOTP you never saw.

Sister Ray

ON RECORD

THE FROG: SOONER OR LATER

(TOAD TOA 10942)



treasure) and on the recording scene. This double album set is more or less a fan's treasure-house of Froggatt standards and golden moments (although the absence of "Hasn't The Lord Blessed Us" and "Anything You Want To" is unforgivable, as is the lack of any of his magnificent croaked versions of Dylan gems) and both Frog and his band are in tremendous form.

Plaintive vocal emotion complemented by sensitive playing, especially from Hartley Cain's long-serving guitars all of which bring an extra special touch to the sensitivity of the lyrics. I doubt I shall ever hear a more beautiful sadness than on "Teach Me", or the haunting loveliness of "Louise". Nor is there a match for the poignancy of his fairy-tale story "The Old Accordion" or the joyfulness of either "Roly" or "Red Balloon" — two of The Frog's immortal classics. The musical style covers a wide range from pure classy pop to gutsy rock (such as the title cut) but these days he is probably best known for his country flavours and given the exposure his talent could eclipse such million-buck stars as Kenny Rogers without effort. There's 19 cuts here, all superb illustrations of Froggy's outstanding and warm-hearted talent. One track's called "The Wishgiver".

That's Froggatt. It's not an easy album to obtain (though you should be able to get it at a gig) but no-one ever said paradise would be waiting on every street corner.

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SUMMERTIME IN PRINT

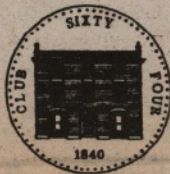
Sun burning hot and pressure pushing up, a faint breeze mingling the smells of roast fish, cornbread and macca weed. Groups of dreads squatting in intense concentration of their drums, bold Caribbean turbans nodding to the infectious, irresistible rhythms. Summer has unofficially arrived in a blaze of red, green, and gold. Everywhere in the parks and later in the long, long evenings stretchin' right through til' dawn, the insistent pounding of drum and bass of that sweet, sweet reggae music. Yes, it is possible to walk through certain sections of Birmingham and imagine that you're in Kingston.

For those who would like a spot more authenticity and background to this vision, but haven't got the dunsai for that dream ticket for two this year, there is of course the alternative escapism of literature. Recent years have seen the emergence of a vast number of titles dealing with the Caribbean in all its aspects focusing notably on reggae and Rastafarianism. One of the first to attract both critical and popular attention was *Reggae Bloodlines* by Stephen Davis and Peter Simon (Heinemann, £4.95), a series of question and answer interviews setting Marley alongside Jamaican contemporaries like Burning Spear, Jimmy Cliff, I Roy, Big Youth and Max Romeo.

Eight years later, the American magazine writer, Davis and photographer Simon continue their Jamaican holiday with an update of *Bloodlines in Reggae International* (Thames & Hudson, £8.95). A large format, glossy coffee table book, it breaks down into four main sections: *Tracin' De Riddim*, looking at the roots of the music, from Africa through to rockers; *The Rastafarians*; *Rebel Music*, with chapters on Bob Marley, vocal groups, dub, deejaying, the studio world and women in reggae; and *Reggae International*, looking at the scene with special emphasis on Europe and Africa. A series of essays and interviews is hosted by a variety of writers including Lenny Kay, Michael Manley and Linton Kwesi Johnson. The layout and pictures are luscious, making *Reggae International* the most ambitious reggae book to date.

Books on this kind of music are just beginning to line the shelves, but the recondite reggae aficionado would do well to check specialist shops like the Pan African Bookshop at 25 Grove Lane in Handsworth or Third World Books, 151 Stratford Road, in Sparkbrook, for a complete catalogue. So don't get too hot this summer and remember what Dr. Bird sez, "Calypso music creates a relaxed atmosphere and visitors leave with fond and cherished memories."

Malu Halasa



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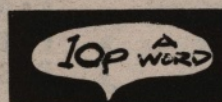
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their DRUMULATORS.*

They are on the way, honest!

If you have not yet seen this little baby, call in
for a demo. Digital drum sounds at the right side
of a grand!

Sole West Midlands agents for Simmons &
Drumulator.



Plus all the usual bits at
thin-wallet prices.

Roland DR55, TR606,
TR808, CR5000,
CR8000, Korg.

JUNE SPECIAL NEWS AND DEALS

**For Personal Callers Only!
June Superdeals**

Anybody who can produce this ad *and* quote a few
lines from any of our ads on BRMB Radio will be entitled
to purchase *one* of the following items during JUNE
ONLY at the price shown.

We are offering:

TWO ONLY TOM SCHOLTZ ROCKMANS at
£185 each (RRP £225)

SIX ONLY TOKAI STRATS at £175 each (RRP £225)

TWO ONLY VOX AC30 TB @ £235 each (RRP £325)

*This offer lasts till June 30 ONLY and applies to only
the 10 items above*



**As one would expect, Argents
have all the latest "Hot"
keyboard products in stock at
the best prices.**

ROLAND, OBERHEIM,
SEQUENTIAL CIRCUITS,
KORG, CASIO, RHODES,
CHROMA, YAMAHA

Call now for prices on:

JUNO 6 & 60, POLY 6 & 61, Prophet
600 (and any others you fancy)

Special June Offers on Casio products
(see June Feature below)

Multi-track equipment by Fostex, Cutec,
Vesta-fire, etc, etc

Fostex X-15 coming soon!

Call in for Demos. Big Package
discounts!

Full range of Sure and AKG mics.

STOP PRESS

*Syrinx Mono synths back in stock.
The best value for money mono at the
moment.*

ALL CASIO KEYBOARDS AT SPECIAL PRICES DURING JUNE

A few examples (phone for prices on models not listed)

MODEL	MRP	SRP	ARGENTS PRICE
PT-30	£79.00	£69.00	£59.00
MT-65	£175.00	£149.00	£129.00
CT-202	£325.00	£275.00	£239.00
CT-1000P	£375.00	£325.00	£289.00

Subject to current stocks being available

ATTENTION: BASS PLAYERS

ONE ONLY: ACOUSTIC 360 BASS RIG. (One of the all time great bass rigs)
MINT CONDITION, A BIT OF A RARITY BUT SENSIBLY PRICED AT JUST £450
(Sounds like a second-hand car ad!)

ALL PRICES IN THIS AD INCLUDE VAT AND FREE DELIVERY (UK Mainland only)

Call for best prices on BOSS, AMDEK and M.X.R. Effects

All items correct at the time of going to press.

ACCESS, BARCLAY CARD, P/EX. TERMS ARRANGED OPEN MONDAY — SATURDAY 10 a.m — 5.30 p.m

ROD ARGENTS MUSIC STORE
15 THE BUTTS, WORCESTER (0905) 611774