

BRUM

55p

BEAT

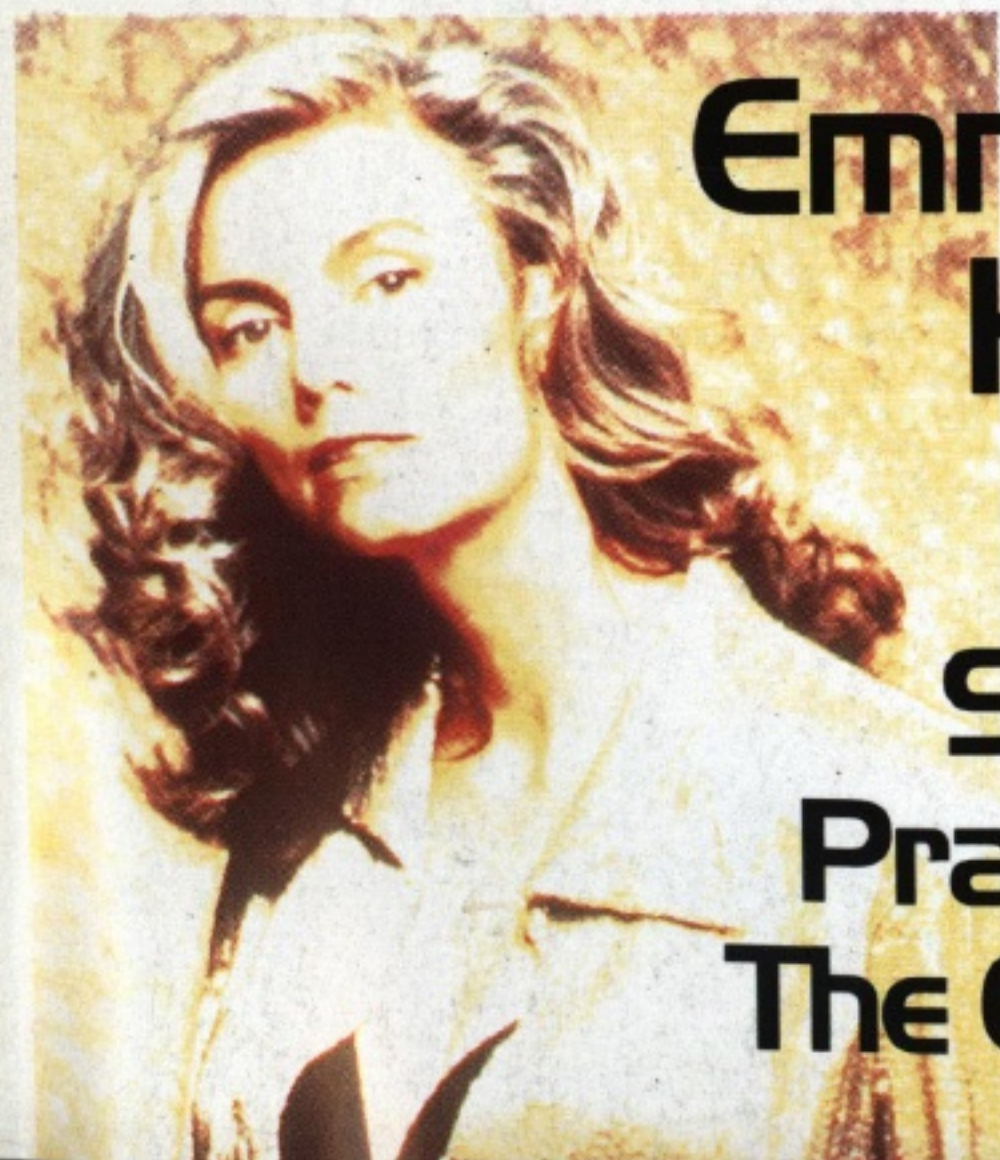
MAY 1994

ISSUE: 160

Counting Crows



*Somewhere In
Middle America*



**Emmylou
Harris**

**Say a
Prayer For
The Cowgirl**

The Midlands Music Monthly and more

SENSER

Automatic, Sporadic
And Random



PLUS:
Stabbing Westward... The Walkabouts...
Ocean Colour Scene... Cud... The Gig Guide
NEWS... REVIEWS... and more, more, more

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L O N D O N

Design by Carol Byrne



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Content

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|----------------------|--|
| 1: BLUR | Parklife |
| 2: PAUL WELLER | Wild Wood |
| 3: VARIOUS ARTISTS | Dance Zone |
| 4: PINK FLOYD | The Division Bell |
| 5: VARIOUS ARTISTS | Now 27 |
| 6: DEACON BLUE | Our Town (Greatest Hits) |
| 7: BRAND NEW HEAVIES | Brother Sister |
| 8: TONI BRAXTON | Toni Braxton |
| 9: VARIOUS ARTISTS | Awesome Dance |
| 10: VARIOUS ARTISTS | 100% Reggae Vol.2 |
| 11: SENSER | Stacked Up |
| 12: CRANBERRIES | Everybody Else Is Doing It So Why Can't We |
| 13: VARIOUS ARTISTS | Blues Brother Soul Sister Vol.3 |
| 14: BARBRA STREISAND | Back On Broadway |
| 15: VARIOUS ARTISTS | 100% Dance Vol.4 |
| 16: URBAN SPECIES | Listen |
| 17: VARIOUS ARTISTS | Wow! Let The Music Lift You Up |
| 18: PRIMAL SCREAM | Give Out But Don't Put Out |
| 19: BARBRA STREISAND | Greatest Hits |
| 20: ROXETTE | Crash Boom Bang |

VIDEOS

- 1: POLICE STOP 2
- 2: MADONNA - The Girlie Show Down Under
- 3: U2 - Zoo TV Live From Sydney
- 4: PJ HARVEY - Reeling
- 5: UROTSUKDOJI 3 - Return Of The Overfiend Part 2
- 6: WALLACE & GROMIT - The Wrong Trousers
- 7: GUNS N'ROSES - Making You Estranged
- 8: INDECENT PROPOSAL
- 9: TIN TIN - Vols 1/2/3
- 10: MANCHESTER UNITED - Video Magazine Vol.3
- 11: BAMBI
- 12: POLICE STOP 1
- 13: MR. SATURDAY NIGHT
- 14: SLAM DUNK - Official History Of Basketball
- 15: A RIVER RUNS THROUGH IT
- 16: WALLACE & GROMIT - A Grand Day Out
- 17: THE AVENGERS - Vols. 10 / 11
- 18: X-MIX VOL.2 - Destination Planet Dream
- 19: THE AIRZONE SOLUTION
- 20: SUGAR RAY - The Hits

REDDINGTON'S TOP 20 LASERDISCS

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1: CARLITO'S WAY (Al Pacino) | |
| 2: THE FUGITIVE (Harrison Ford) | |
| 3: DEMOLITION MAN (Stallone) | |
| 4: A BRONX TALE (Robert De Niro) | |
| 5: FATHERHOOD (Patrick Swayze) | |
| 6: CLIFFHANGER (Stallone) | |
| 7: LAST ACTION HERO (Arnie) | |
| 8: TERMINATOR 2 (Arnie) | |
| 9: THE FIRM (Tom Cruise) | |
| 10: STAR WARS BOX SET | |
| 11: RISING SUN (Sean Connery) | |
| 12: MR. WONDERFUL (Matt Dillon) | |
| 13: HIGHLANDER (Sean Connery) | |
| 14: WHITNEY HOUSTON LIVE IN CONCERT | |
| 15: MAN WITHOUT A FACE (Mel Gibson) | |
| 16: ROBIN HOOD: MEN IN TIGHTS
(A Mel Brooks Spoof) | |
| 17: HOT SHOTS PART DEUX (Charlie Sheen) | |
| 18: CONEHEADS (Dan Aykroyd) | |
| 19: BODYGUARD (Kevin Costner) | |
| 20: FIELD OF DREAMS (Kevin Costner) | |



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CHARTS

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PLAYLIST

PLAYLIST

THE BRUM BEAT PLAYLIST

... rays of aural sunshine molesting a
maudlin May ...

TOM PACHECO
Luck Of Angels
(LP / Sonet - Scandinavian Import)

JOE HENRY
Hello Stranger
(from Fireman's Wedding EP -
Mammoth)

GIGOLO AUNTS
Mrs. Washington
(single - Fire Records)

DEAR JANES
Girl of My Dreams
(from Sometimes I LP - Castle)

STEVE YOUNG
Angel of Lyon
(from Switchblades of Love LP -
Round Tower)

IRIS DE MENT
No Time For Tears
(from My Life LP - WEA)

DEBORAH ALLEN
Blame It On Your Heart
(from The Thing Called Love
soundtrack LP - Giant)

JERRY JEFF WALKER
The Gift
(from Viva Luckenbach! LP - Ryko)

THE BEAUTIFUL SOUTH
Prettiest Eyes
(from Miaow LP - Go! Discs)

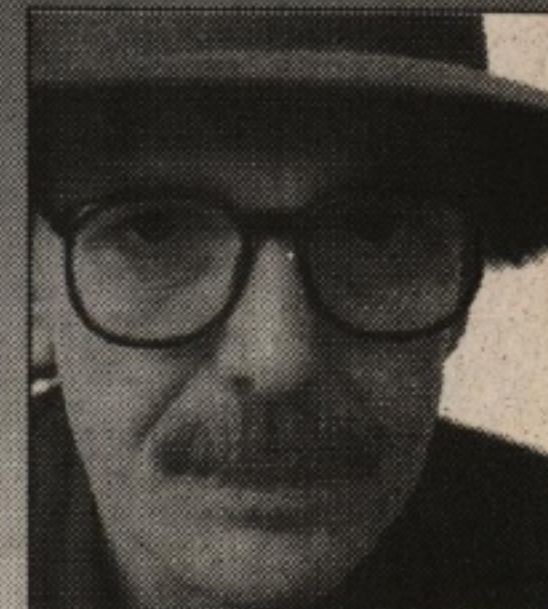
DR. JOHN
Thank You
(Falletin Me Be Mice Elf Again)
(from Television LP - MCA / GRP)

SHIPWRECKED

You're washed up on some mythical desert island,
or worse still, having failed to recoup your advance
the record company has sent in the bailiffs. Gen-
erosity is not an option; there's no eight albums,
books or luxuries...
oh, alright you can choose the complete works of
one artist...

MIKE DUNPHY OF CUD'S DESERT ISLAND CHOICE:

"CAPTAIN BEEFHEART.
He's a genius with a huge
body of work. He's someone
who covers all moods - you
always know you're onto a
winner with him. He used to
be on A & M too - released
those legendary A & M sessions, which included
a cover of Doo Wah Diddy. Then The label
dropped him!"



MAJOR GIG SUPPORT FOR LOCAL BANDS

Following the great success of Wolverhampton Wulfrun Hall's local bands nights, such events are set to become monthly events. Besides allowing local bands to play to decent sized



audiences at one of the Midlands' premier concert venues with decent PA and lighting, the most popular bands will be recorded live and given a free photo session. A promo package will then be forwarded, by the venue, to prospective record companies.

Forthcoming nights have been confirmed for May 7 and June 18.

Any bands interested in performing should send a tape and contact details to Nicky Appleby at The Civic Hall, North Street, Wolverhampton.

Pictured above from the most recent event is Walsall based Cornerstone. Pic by Mark Hadley

CAO TESTS YOU

Ross On Wye's Dental Records have signed singer songwriter BILLY CAO. The man is a prolific writer in George Michael / Prince vein with 37 songs already under his belt. With RCA label interest already aroused, Dental will retain management duties, Billy is studio bound to lay down some first rate demos. To do this he needs a drummer, bass player and guitarist, all of whom need to be A1; if you fit the bill call Dental's John Jones on 0989 564477.

ON A ROOTS MARCH

After fifteen successful months sequestered in Bourneville's Rowheath Pavilion, the organisation known, until now, as Rowheath Roots are on the move. From May 6th, when they relaunch in style with the admirable TERRY CLARKE, they are to be found at The Breedon Bar's Venue Two; and that's upstairs at the Pershore Road music emporium.

The main thrust for the move is the apparent unavailability of a reliable audience on a Sunday night, the organisers feel that such a commodity will be more readily available for the new, regular Friday night slot.

Organiser Kevin Haycox told Brum Beat, "The Breedon's Venue Two is a very attractive, smaller and much more intimate room with separate access and facilities which will enable us to operate independently. The venue is more than adequate for the likes of recent guests PENTANGLE and PAUL JONES without being barn-like for smaller audiences. We hope that the change of night and the easier accessibility of The Breedon will encourage the audience. We will continue to present the finest acoustic / unplugged music at realistic prices."

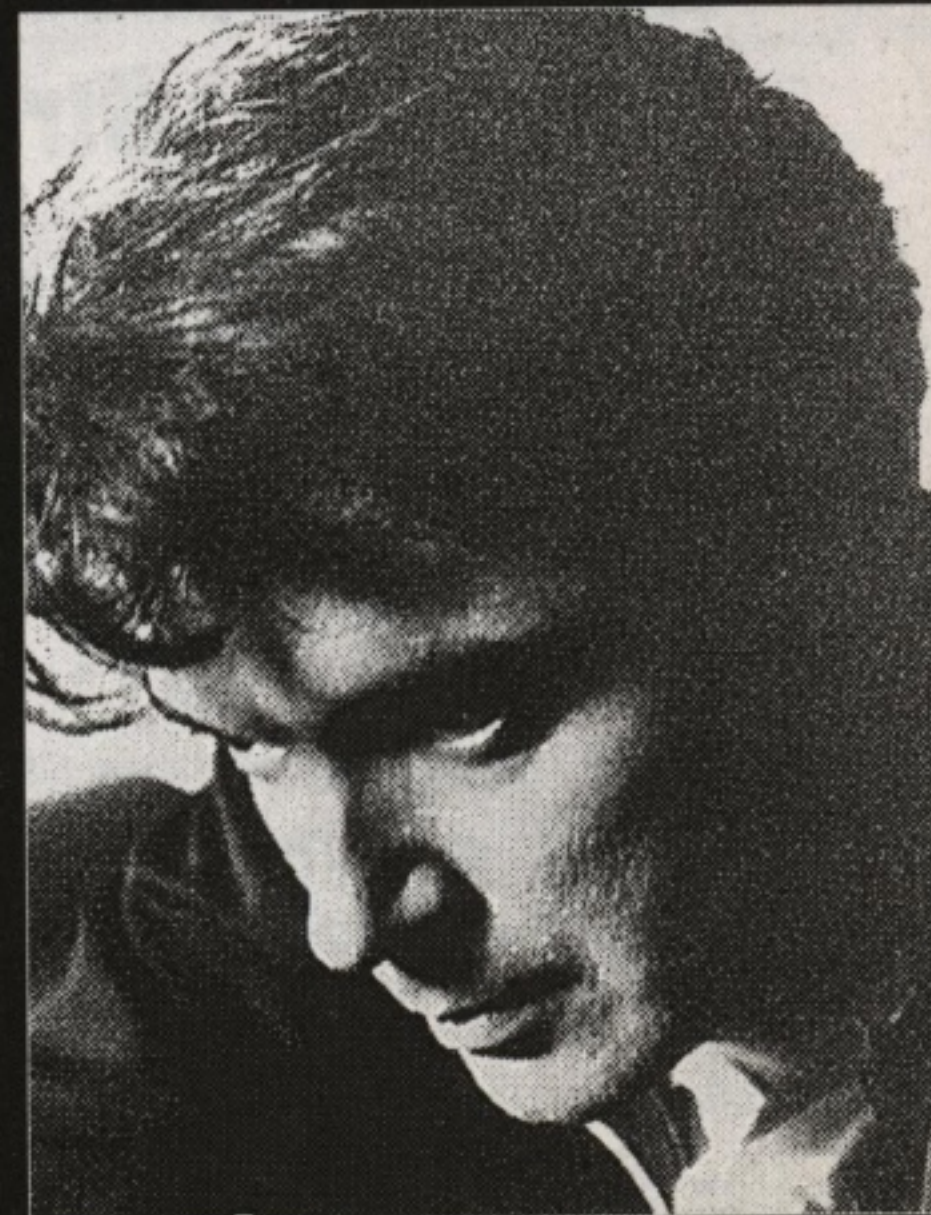
Star attractions confirmed for May are TERRY CLARKE (6) and WORLD SERVICE (20) with ex Incredible String Band legend ROBIN WILLIAMSON worth diarying for July 29th.

Call 021 458 1321 or 021 628 1275 for more info and, er, details of guitar lessons!

THE INTRO.

ON TOUR

New Jersey rockers DOG EAT DOG appear at Dudley JB's on June 3rd ... THREE WALLS DOWN make their only none London appearance at Brum's Jug Of Ale on May 10th. The band, who feature REM bassist Mike Mills' younger brother Mitch have just released a debut album Building Our House produced by the older Mills sibling. Oh, and the usual rumours re guest appearances are mentioned in the press release and so can probably be discounted ... SENSER take their personal blend of rock to Wolverhampton's Wulfrun Hall on May 8th ... and speaking of Wolverhampton's wondrous Civic Halls complex; why have one of the UK's biggest promoters allegedly booked it for four straight nights in June? Rumours suggest 'something bigger than the hall's recent Genesis coup'. But what or who? ... Talking Heads legend DAVID BYRNE brings his new four piece band to Wolverhampton's Civic on May 23 ... gleeful that the real thing is too slothful to bother with the real world demands of touring THE AUSTRALIAN PINK FLOYD tap into the demand with a look and sound a like show at Wolverhampton's Wulfrun on May 20 ... admittedly Queen have a rather more solid reason for not touring, so into the vacuum steps MAGIC: A TRIBUTE TO FREDDIE MERCURY AND QUEEN; that's at Cannock's Prince Of Wales on May 12 ...



David Byrne



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DONINGTON ON THE DOUBLE

There's to be a second stage at this year's Donington Monsters Of Rock fest. The Midlands based, world famous rock day out has added a showcase for up and coming bands. It is, according to Brum Beat contributor Paul Flower, a man closely involved in the event's organisation, "something we have been wanting to do for a long time and thanks to sponsorship something we can do without having to increase the ticket price. It also means that we can put on bands that we want to work with, bands that are the headliners of the future."

And Paul's picks for future headliners are THE WILD HEARTS, TERRORVISION, SKIN, BIOHAZARD, CRY OF LOVE and HEADSWIM.

Meanwhile at the other end of the park AEROSMITH, EXTREME, SEPULTURA, PANTERA, THERAPY? and PRIDE AND GLORY will be rockin' extra hard to stop those newcomers nipping at their star studded ankles!



Aerosmith - Exclusive photo for Brum Beat by Mark Hadley

THE INTRO.

PRATTLE... AND HUM

You may remember the kerfuffle over the dance track Let The Music (Lift You Up), in which Brum's Network label injunctioned the PWL owned Eastern Bloc label over copyright infringements, well love has broken out with the labels issuing a joint version with umpteen versions of the LOVELAND and DARLENE LEWIS versions adorning two different twelve inch singles, a CD and a cassette. Very chummy and cosy but not as much fun as when covers battled it out in the charts, eh? ... Look out for a MR. BLANK / STEVE MILLER remix of Rocker's Revenge classic, Walking On Sunshine to brighten up summer radio. It's due on Brum's Ripe label, any day now ... Meanwhile Ripe's transatlantic star, saxman ALVIN DAVIS took his horn along to NIGEL KENNEDY'S birthday party and spent the night jamming with the celebs ... Finally from Ripe; for some reason RME have adapted Summer Lovin', that irritating song from Grease, into Candy, their soon come 45 ... Good to see THE GREAT DIVIDE returning to live action ... Seems that there is an enclave of terminal rock nostalgics over in Erdington set upon rekindling the magic that inhabited the legendary MOTHERS club that settled in their fair parish in the seventies, playing host to Led Zep, Pink Floyd, Genesis and Bowie among others. If you want to pledge support or perhaps stump up the financial wherewithal, call Patrick or Dave on 021 350 0831 to join the clan of mother, er, lovers ... Birmingham's well respected INDIGO BLUES BAND have been chosen to launch a brand new venue in Wolverhampton; it's The Theatre Wine Bar, opposite The Grand in Lichfield Street. The Indigos appear on May 22nd ... watch out for THE MTV EUROPE MUSIC AWARDS in November; set to be held in Berlin, the cable and satellite station assures us that they'll be "The definitive Europe based celebration of musical excellence." But with tastes being somewhat global these days, will they actually look any different to the US version and will all of the US bands come to Europe to play one song? ... Britain's biggest promoters, the Walsall based MCP are claiming a record breaker for May with sixteen gigs set for the Brum Beat catchment area alone! ... VIVID, 'groove rockers' from Leicester release their debut CD on June 16; look out for local gigs at that time ... ALAN HODGETTS over at BBC Radio CWR in Coventry hosts Unsigned Heroes every Tuesday between 8 and 9pm. It's on 94.8 / 103.7 / 104 FM depending where you live! He needs bands to play, any format will do so let's see a torrent of cassettes, DATs etc. flying to Alan Hodgetts, Unsigned Heroes, Radio CWR, 23 Warwick Road, Coventry CV1 2WR ...

NEW FAIRPORT CROP READY

Fairport Convention's annual CROPREDY FESTIVAL has been set for Friday August 12 and Saturday August 13 this year. Tickets for what has become one of Europe's best loved folk bashes are on sale at £28 for the weekend or £19 for the Saturday only. These prices hold until July 1st when they increase, so send your cheque to Woodworm Records, PO Box 37, Banbury, Oxon OX16 8YN right away or fax your full credit card details - and your address - to 0869 37142.

The bill this year looks rather fine with Friday night, from 7.15 onwards, offering ROY HARPER, LINDISFARNE and TOWER STRUCK DOWN. Saturday launches at noon with TOO COOL FOR SHORTS, SHAVE THE MONKEY, HORCH, THE VIN GARBUTT BAND, BLODWYN PIG, MAN and, naturally, FAIRPORT CONVENTION featuring the added bonus of VIKKI CLAYTON. The day's compere is the legendary DANNY THOMPSON and interval sounds are by DJ PAPA DOC.

PHIL'S BOYS ARE BACK IN TOWN

Plans are afoot to celebrate the legendary Phil Lynott's birthday with an extraordinary gig at The Robin R&B Club in Brierley Hill on Saturday August 20th.

The gig, organised by the Thin Lizzy fans is set to be an all day affair with a Thin Lizzy record and memorabilia fair with free expert valuations, prize draws, special merchandise and a video show of unreleased footage.

But it's the evening gig that'll be the magnet. For one night only, under the watchful eye of Phil's mum, Philomena, there'll be a Lizzy reunion. Brum Beat understands that apart from Gary Moore, ALL of Lizzy's men will be there with instruments. That's right Scott Gorham, Brian Robertson, Eric Bell, Brian Downey and more. There are even plans being made to jet in guys from LA for the night. We also understand that all of the guys have agreed because it's being done for the fans and not for commercial reasons, hence it's a one off with no second night possible.

Admission will be by ticket only. Contact 0602 499007 to find out more and reserve one now.

UP INTO THE BASEMENT RACHEL'S BASEMENT

mastermind, the finely talented Daniel Rachel, is looking for supremely skilled players to complete a line up that'll help realise the dream. Style, originality and humour are the credo of the Basement tapes so potential players should possess the same virtues.

Musically Rachel's Basement are a song based outfit with a gentle lyrical quality that conjures up memories of Lilac Time's prime moments or a pastoral XTC or The Divine Comedy. Though the song he really wishes he'd written is Paul Simon's 59th Street Bridge Song!

Rachel is serious about his ambition too, the press pack presented to Brum Beat outclassed many of those sent by name bands with quality glossy pics, a press release, imaginatively dressed tapes and a video all housed in a Rachel papers pizza style carton!

If you can contribute to such a project call Daniel on 021 449 6284

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THE COLUMN

Senile dementia's setting in. Inexplicably in reviewing the Ten album in last issue's column I write about Dean Jones when of course what I really meant was DEAN COOK.

DISCONTENTED

Shades of Stryper, demonstrating that metal can deal with God as well as the Devil, A.N.D, headed by born again Paul May release *Get Real* (Nu Life), a blistering slice of throaty, riff riding hard rock (and a delicate acoustic ballad in *This Child*) that just happens to have its lyrical sights (King, Babylon, Touch the Sky) firmly set on the Holy Trinity. No quibbles with putting your faith to music, but (while it does take a swipe at TV evangelists), when it's to the total exclusion of other concerns and relationships the danger is that it makes the creative process a little narrow. Meanwhile, for those of like spiritual and musical mind, this delivers the goods and makes a change from the Sabbaths and Priests. Since there was no letter accompanying the single, I'm assuming from the quote out of the Tipton Times that THE PROCTORS are Black Country based even though their *Baby Blue* EP is on Illinois' Sunday Records, although musically it sounds as though it should be on Sarah, Bristol's home of shimmering wistful indie. Whatever, to get a copy you have to send £3 to Sundays Records, PO Box 8335, Rolling Meadows, Illinois, 6008, USA.

The 20 page brochure that goes with Rugby indie Spilt Milk's local band compilation *Ahisma* wouldn't have gone amiss in providing info on the bands but generally it shows the town to be as eclectic as most in its musical tapestry, ranging from R&B, through indie dance, 60s retro and industrial techno to 2 Tone revivalism, sonic minimalism and, in *WAKY WAKY*, even Madness wannabes. None of the 12 acts suggest you'll be finding them on the NME front page anytime soon, but *PHOBIA* and *THE GUARANTEED UGLY* sound good live bets for late 60s / mid 90s

Dansette Damage



garage guitar and THE HERBS' Wisemen and Trees has definite twinges of the ISB about it.

A mere sixteen years after their not totally serious new wave debut single *NME / The Only Sounds* (produced by Robert Plant trivia fans), Smethwick's finest (only?) *DANSETTE DAMAGE* finally come up with an album. Linked with interview clips (including an over generous proportion of my own) and with a sleeve designed by the boys from *Viz*, *Sold As Seen* (Shoestring) is a vinyl only compilation of the debut single and more Diamond Dogs influenced follow up 2001^{3/4}. Approximately, plus a clutch of unreleased tracks from their subsequent mild New Romantic flirtation with *Roxy / Japan* influences and 1981 reincarnation as *Swing Music*, among them the stylish lounge glam of *After Dark*, *People In My Room*, the very European sounding *Europe*, the swirlingly infectious *I'm Not Waving* and the burn-

MIKE DAVIES

ingly claustrophobic, reggae inflected *Assassination*, complete with JFK sound bites. Mail order only at £12.99 + £1.50 p&p from Shoestring Records, 50 Margaret St, London W1. Following on from the *Leap* album, *TOYAH* returns to the fray with *Dreamchild* (Cryptic) an album initially intended for a concept hippie-esque rave musical but which clearly has developed a life of its own. Sounding more comfortable here than on *Leap*, it's both a departure and distinctly Toyah (especially in some of the themes that run through and the underlay of multi-ethnic - mostly Eastern - musical influences), throwing up some of her most melodic work in ages, particularly so on the likes of *World of Tension*, the gentle lappingly acoustic *Out Of The Blue*, *Lost And Found* and *Now and Then* (the single which comes with a Utah Saints 12 inch remix) as well as sustaining an insistent, enveloping user-friendly dance groove (to which Toyah's darkly purring tones make a striking complement). In many ways this is actually a logical progression from her earlier work rather than any re-invention, what it needs is a re-invention on the part of the ingrained cynicism of the music press to listen beyond their customary snide dismissiveness when it comes to anything released by Ms Willcox.

After saying she wanted to get back to her blues / soul roots as evidenced by *Stay With Me Baby*, what should turn up from *RUBY TURNER* but a package of three 12"s featuring New York club and dub remixes of *Living For The City* by House of Scope, *Deep Freeze*, and *Wag Ya Tail*, the latter being the only one that actually regards the vocals as an important part of the mix. Maybe the single sounds better, but while inevitably she gives it a good working over, this is the sort of stuff I, and I suspect most of her fans, had hoped she'd finally decided to abandon. Not good. And just a small point of logic memo regarding the PR company's press blurb - if the single's released on May 3 how can she be back in the Top 40 by May Day, which was May 2?

At last *CHURCH OF ELVIS* have got round to releasing *Diana Rigg Song* (frequently mentioned in this column) on the new Sun God label, a gloriously poisonous cocktail of hypnotic swirling



Church of Elvis

rhythms and dark vocals that sounds like *New Order* with *PMT*. The single comes with the equally knotted personality, frayed nerve melodic brooding and basslines of *I'm All Yours* and the dank earth aroma of *To Be A Part Of You's* anguished desperation. A second single's planned for the summer, hopefully the ferociously excellent - think of *Killing Joke* playing *Acid Jazz - Earth And The Moon*, though what that and the demos of *Head Run Riot*, *Worried Thang* (cyberfunk funk) and *Chameleon* really need is for a rich major label uncle to come along, do the world a favour, and finance the album.

Tough Birmingham rap'n'mellow groove crew *URBAN SOUTH* make their debut on *Nation Records* offshoot 5CD with the *Whatever's Clever* EP, a four tracker of social conscious mellow claustrophobia hip hop led out of the starting gate on a bass groove with *Hard Times* and followed by the equally smouldering *Brain Damage*, *Those Who Can't Hear* and *It's The U Know What*. Good enough to have come from inner city rap LA, smart enough to avoid its clichés.

WE'LL ALWAYS HAVE PARIS head out to New York to spend June writing and performing. Before they go however they play *The Hibernian* on May 20 to promote their cassette EP, *Lost In The Fields Of England*, the first to feature Steve Shaw's violin and bassist Micky Harris. Due out May 16, the EP's an eight tracker comprising four live cuts (not chosen at the time of writing) and four new studio offerings, *If This Is Love*, *Ring Of Russian Gold* and the folk-acid title track in the acoustic, 70s prog rock vein and *What Are We Waiting For?* showing a harder, moodier electric sound.

TAPE DECKED

Fresh from plaudits respectively playing with and supporting Paul Weller, Messrs Craddock and Fowler return to the day job of lifting *OCEAN COLOUR SCENE* to even loftier heights with two new numbers, *It's My Shadow* and *Day We Caught The Train*, that underscore the echoes of vocal and emotion quivering early folk psychedelia *Bee Gees* (their greatest period) and *Magical Mystery / Pepper Beatles* (the latter hinting at elements of *A Day In The Life*). Superlative defeating excellence.

After a year of direction loss and other band nightmares *THE GREAT DIVIDE* are back with a new line up and on devastating form with a double clutch of volcanic songs that arc weld together such disparate influences as *INXS* (*Sleepyhead*, *Go Beat The Drums*), *The Alarm* (*Ill Wind Blowing*), *Geldof* (*Me and My Big Mouth*) and even *Depeche Mode* (*Upstanding Member*) with a vocal tone that evokes *Goodbye Mr McKenzie* but still emerges on the other side with their own distinctive sound. Confident, tight, dynamic and defiant.

NUGGETS

OCEAN COLOUR SCENE

Hmm, I thought, where's my way in? What's my angle? See, only ever having heard their name before and possibly some snippet of their music somewhere sometime (but unable to remember what it sounded like), I needed something to get a grip on. No problem - just get their

manager to lay some back catalogue on me, familiarise myself with their material before we chat. Actually, no. Manager reckons I ought to just hear their new stuff at their studio. Fair enough. How 'bout some biographical notes? Get some to you soon says the manager. Meanwhile, I scour my comprehensive files for info on the band. Nothing. An hour before I'm due to set out for Bob Lamb's studio, manager calls and gives me 5 minutes worth of details over the 'phone. Professional, eh?

I arrive at the studio not knowing a damn thing about OCS other than they had problems with Phonogram and guitarist Steve has done some work with Paul Weller. What the hell, we'll get into a bit of a rap about music and life and take things from there...

So - Phonogram, Weller, state of the music biz...but Simon (vocals) and Steve were more concerned with playing examples of their new songs, having a smoke and giggling. Talking didn't seem high on their list of priorities. OK, but given that they've no new product coming out (no label, y'see), and not many gigs, I began to wonder why I was there. Once or twice, I acted devil's advocate to see if I could get 'em worked up (like asking did they feel they were anything more than simply 'entertainers'), but no luck.



To be fair, the three songs I heard sounded not too bad - very 60s-influenced, competent soul music, including a spirited version of Piece Of My Heart from a live Radio 5 session.

As I left, I asked Simon and Steve if they could get a cassette to me of these demos. No problem, they said - they'd prefer it if I played the stuff a few times before putting pen to paper. You guessed it - no tape arrived, so I had no choice but to go ahead and put this together. A transcript of our conversation would've been plain boring, as there was no real starting point for it. Simon admitted he was into Free at the moment (chapl!) and Steve said he'd always been into The Jam, oh and there was the hilarious anecdote Steve told me about Keith Moon, but that was it.

I don't know, maybe I'm not doing OCS justice, but similarly, it was a bit much to expect me to conduct an interview out of thin air. I wouldn't mind attending one of their gigs to see what they're actually about, hear some old stuff to compare the newer material with - the usual, boring route. Maybe then we could meet on common ground and have something to discuss.

Max

SOUL FRATERNITY

came into being back in '92 when two brothers drew on a long history of involvement in Britain's soul club scene to form a dedicated promotions company eager to revive the poorly catered for soul scene in Birmingham. Since then, Emrys and Lucas have taken over two floors (the Hype Zone and Groove Level) at Branston's Nightclub in Hockley every last Sunday of every month to put on

their Deep Soul Megajam, featuring the country's premier DJs, pumping out a vibrant mix of P-Funk, Hip-Hop, 80s Electro, Swing and Rare Grooves - all being variations on that hard-to-define term, 'soul'.

"Our nights have been going so well," enthused Emrys, "That people have been coming from all over the place to check it out - even London and Manchester, which already have thriving scenes of their own. We're giving people what they want. I can't deny that it hasn't been hard, but the soul industry in Birmingham is definitely picking up. It's our job to let the public know that there is something happening."

And once Deep Soul Megajam has gained the nation-wide recognition it deserves, the next step will be to take it out on the road, proudly yelling, 'Made in Brum!'

"In conjunction with a magazine called Ticket, we're arranging to take the night on tour around the country, which I'm sure will be good for Birmingham and hopefully attract different audiences, who may not have experienced the soul scene before. Which is one of the reasons we wanted to talk to Brum Beat - we're hoping that through you, we can reach yet another audience who's yet to hear of the Soul Fraternity."

Yeah, let's bridge another musical division! This is what we want!

So what d'you reckon? Fancy getting down to some funky jams? Me too! So how 'bout we make it a date at the next Deep Soul Megajam, Sunday 29 May, Branstons? Tickets are £4.50. For further info, call the Event Hotline - 0831 477131. Soul Fraternity - connoisseurs of quality music. M.F.

10

WE CAN BE HEROES

Starting Tuesday, 17 May, there'll be a weekly alternative to the rather lacklustre atmosphere that pervades many acoustic-based soirées. In the warm, wooden surroundings of Heroes Bar, Thorpe Street, purveyors of fine music will be able to enjoy the cream of local talent and visiting artists delivering spirited entertainment

without the aid of a bank of Marshall stacks. And they won't simply be cuddly evenings sporting overfed folkly trainspotters either. Everyone's going unplugged these days, so as well as a sprinkling of lively Celtic-influenced acts, Unplugged At Heroes will also feature name rockers giving stripped-down renditions of their material. Not only that, but cutting-edge comics from the Gagg Club will be guiding you through the night, pub theatre troupes will be providing weird and wonderful skits just across the table from you and your pint and a buffet will be available in case you get the munchies.

Organiser and promoter and singer/guitarist with his own rootsy-rocking outfit, Raising Kane, Brendan McAnoy is eager to simply get a "young, kicking scene going. We don't want it to be folk-oriented. We want to invite known bands in to break down their stuff and fit it into an acoustic setting. There aren't any other alternative acoustic nights in the city - London is peppered with them. This'll be a first for Birmingham."

Things are looking up again for music in our own Motor City - people are sticking their necks out. All Unplugged At Heroes needs now is your support. So get along on the 17th when Burning Rome and Raising Kane will be kick-starting something fresh and entertaining into action.

M.F.

AMERICAN TV COPS

and I talked, over a few pints, of a fave subject amongst us (apart from Andy, who being the drummer, wanted to talk about drums and bassist Sam who was absent) - punk rock. Which is apt, because if I had to label the Cops as anything, it would be a punk band. Pressed further, I'd say they remind me of early Buzzcocks. Pure punk-pop.

Which is handy, 'cause if you want a bunk-up in this biz at the moment, you could do worse than align yourself with the current NWO'N'W madness. I'm not suggesting that the Cops have jumped on any kind of bandwagon - it's just good timing. Grab it where you can, guys.

"A lot of people have accused us of jumping aboard," moaned guitarist Dale, "Y'know, you're quite punky - New Wave Of New Wave."



"But a lot of people are hovering round us," vocalist Anthony pointed out, "asking each other, 'what do you think?', waiting to jump on."

"Anyway, we're trying to set up our own scene," revealed Dale, "the New Wave Of Old Hat!"

"The thing I like about a lot of these bands is their energy," continued Andy.

"But where they fall down is the songs," Anthony added. "We've got better songs."

He's not wrong. The Cops marry high-octane rock with a sense of what makes a good tune. The perfect match.

"Andy and I play our stuff regularly," admitted Anthony, "It's not an ego thing, I just prefer to listen to our stuff more than anyone else's. But Dale and Sam don't listen to it at all."

Why?

"To be honest, I don't listen to a lot of music full stop." Dale replied. "Everything's come round again. We played with These Animal Men and S*M*A*S*H* and I thought, so what? They sound like the first Clash and Jam albums."

Nowt wrong wi' that!

"At least S*M*A*S*H* got the words 'fuck your wife' on Top Of The Pops!" Anthony reminded us. "I dunno, I used to think that if a band sounded like anyone else, it didn't matter," Dale went on. "But it's reached the point where I'll listen to a band and think, I've heard all this before. I know we're not exactly original..."

"But we've got an original slant on things!" interjected Anthony, rather unconvincingly. "There's good music and pop-pap."

Which I'd go along with. And don't let me leave you in any doubt which kind ATV Cops play - GOOD!

LORD HAW HAW

It may be a little after the event (His Lordship has never understood why deadlines can't be flexible to suit his own programme of information gathering) but can His Lordship just indulge in a little smug I told you so with regard to the decidedly low key departure of Ian Rufus from BRMB. Dedicated readers may recall His Lordship predicting that Rufus would not be long for the world in the wake of the Capital take-over and the arrival of pig-headed bulldozer Jurassic Park. And thus it has proven to be, Rufus leaving the station (or was he pushed?) "to pursue other interests". Finding a job for example?

Also imminently shuffling off the broadcasting coil are, surprisingly, Radio WM's Jabba the Hut, Tony Inchley, who having seen the station's ratings overtake BRMB presumably wants to quit before the bubble bursts and he wakes up, and, not surprising at all, Buzz FM. Their good chap efforts at saving the Radio Authority from embarrassment in the wake of the last farrago have been duly rewarded by having their licence application renewal denied in favour of Choice FM, a soul and reggae consortium whose connections to Birmingham seem so far to be limited to the InterCity from Euston.

On a printed note, His Lordship was much amused to read a recent editorial by the Birmingham Post's Grey Man, Editor Nigel Hastilow in which he admitted he'd been unable to sit through *The Silence Of The Lambs* and that it was incomprehensible to him how anyone (several millions of viewers world-wide for example) could regard such 'disgusting' fare as entertainment. His Lordship is surprised that the self-professedly intolerant Nastilow should be such a lily livered wimp on the one hand and such a devoted admirer of the political nasty that was the Blessed Margaret on the other. More surprising though is his rather presumptuous comment that 'everyone knows that cruelty on film can inspire the same thing in real life' and 'leads to cases like the murder of James Bulger'. Aside from the fact that Nastilow is at odds with the authorities on this matter who have cited no evidence that any video was directly or indirectly responsible for the Bulger murder, his understanding of human imitative behaviour seems woefully lacking. If we imitate what we seen on films, His Lordship wonders why the millions who were exposed to the *Sound of Music* didn't all rush out to become nuns, or why it's *A Wonderful Life* hasn't bred peace and community love the world over. And what one wonders did Ghenghis Khan and Hitler watch to inspire their atrocities? Why do little children who have never seen a 'video nasty' exhibit violent characteristics. Why do editors who've never watched such films and have no understanding of the genre, pontificate out of their backsides? Why do papers like *The Sun* try and link the murder of a schoolgirl with the killer's liking for Iron Maiden? His Lordship fears the truth is that humankind generally is a rather cruel creature and that the likes of Mr Hastilow would rather find a scapegoat than admit that at heart people are actually pretty much complete bastards just waiting to get out. How else does one explain the Conservative Party, Bosnia or Jim Davidson? What one wonders what did Mr Hastilow watch to make him the man he is, the test card perhaps?

"THE MOST IMPORTANT FIGURE IN ROCK FOR THE LAST TWO DECADES" Paul Flower On Kurt Cobain

I was shocked and saddened by the death of Kurt Cobain. I did not know him, we had never met, I had not spoken to, or with, him and I'd only seen his band twice. It was not who he was or what he'd become, more of what he'd done.

In a short space of time, Kurt Cobain had helped to re-define the barriers of rock music. He had breathed life into a large dying beast and led a new genre over hurdles, across barriers and into the hearts and minds of youth. He may not have appreciated the classification and the limitations it imposed but it's very existence, conceived by the melodic punk angst of Nirvana, spawned a legion of imitators, opened the eyes of record companies and caused thousands to pick up a guitar.

The continuous cycle of rock, the merry-go-round we have all observed and ridden through our youth and into age, had been interrupted. It's movements had corroded through unimaginative disuse and uninspiring technology looked likely to replace it, to make it redundant. Grunge gave rock music a re-charge, proved that there is nothing more exciting and inspiring in music as guitar, bass, drums and vocal. Essentially it proved that music needs nothing more and that nothing else is anywhere near as damn sexy.

"... he sought the obscurity the band had enjoyed on Sub Pop ..."

Grunge brought it's own figureheads, the literate and the angry. This responsibility ultimately and inevitably proved too much for Cobain who hated the role he had inherited, spokesman for the 'grunge generation'. Many clamoured to give him this crown, the new King of Rock - a gown worn by the Presleys, Lennons and Rottens, a monarchy which had emerged leader-less from the eighties.

He tried to escape from the monster he had created with a seemingly simple but melodic rock record called *Nevermind* and it's anthemic lead track. He sought the obscurity the band had enjoyed on Sub Pop and followed up the multi-million monster with a collection of old material liberally peppered with the unlistenable.

Sadly he was to be trapped by the expectancy of the masses, given hunger by his creation and kept wanting by a limited number of astounding live performances and heavy rotation on MTV. I would not want to imagine the complexities of Cobain's mind in the latter stages, having had limited experience of such deep depression amplified by substances or circumstance.

The cliché of legacy is obliterated by the knowledge of what could have been. Without a doubt Kurt Cobain was the most important figure in rock for the last two decades, we can only hope that it won't be as long before we see his like again.

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Complaints about the sexist euphemisms displayed in the outrageously Homophobic & Misogynist manner of this advertisement to: The Editor [sorry Steve].

With the release of Senser's stunning debut album, *Stacked Up (Ultimate)*, it's time for one of the most exciting bands around - and certainly the heroes of '93 - to face up to the fact that they're no longer the private property of those of us that caught them very early on, and that although we love the idea of the band becoming more and more successful, there's a certain amount of jealousy attached to the thought of TOO many other people getting into them.

DJ Andy was on hand to smooth my worried brow.

"There's no chance of you losing us." Andy reassured me. "Nothing's changed at all really, other than doing bigger gigs. We've still got total control over the music we make and that's what's important."

Did Senser ever yearn for the days when they could still play the smaller gigs and festivals where they always seemed to come into their own, lighting up venues with their incendiary cocktail of metal, funk, rap and dance.

"We still can. I suppose we now have to think about breaking even - taking our own sound system around with us means that playing live is expensive. But, we can still play somewhere like The Venue in New Cross, which is a shit venue, but we've got a lot of friends round there."

I presume that there's also now an element of having to take other people's advice on such matters. Despite doing what you want to do, were Senser actually 'free'?



SENSER'S WORKING OVERTIME

Max Stays Late With DJ Andy

"It's difficult being totally free with seven members in the band. Total freedom was when I was making records on my own."

Senser have been one of the few bands who managed to successfully marry pop and politics. But did Andy think they'd actually made any kind of difference?

"It's difficult to say - I think people have always had those Anti-Nazi views haven't they?"

I don't know - have they? Probably as much as people have held racist views. But at least we know which side of the fence Senser are on. And of course, the press have always had high hopes for Senser - pushing them forward as politically correct spokespeople for an alternative generation. Which is fine, but it tends to ignore the fact that Senser are also bloody good fun, urging audiences to JUMP! (albeit after an in-between song bout of finger pointing).

"I think the press is just stupid. We've always

pointed out that our views are just that - our views. The NME and Melody Maker are just so far up their own arses, they're as sensationalist as the tabloids. They're just continually looking for the next big thing. Although they've been fair to us up to now, we've been waiting for the backlash. I think it's started already with a piece in the NME."

Senser's famed eclectic tastes and their ability to fuse them all into one blistering band suggests that there simply aren't any areas of music that can't be bridged. Andy agreed, although I have my reservations about the band experimenting with twiddly indie guitar rubbish or country and western (that said, Jello Biafra recently got away with it).

"We're about to start experimenting with some faster, Gabba-techno inspired stuff."

Which isn't exactly a radical departure, but at least Senser are staying on their toes and are open to change. One of Andy's jobs is to keep

abreast of current trends, which is how he teamed up with the band in the first place - DJ-ing at The Rocket where Senser were playing. A mutual respect was born. What tempted Andy from being his own boss to being part of a collective?

"At the time, everyone was a DJ, doing warehouses, putting out white labels and I was getting a bit pissed of with it. I thought it'd be good to join a live band."

And what a good live band they are. You MUST have experienced their spirit-lifting racket by now. But if not, another chance is looming: May 8, they'll be setting fire to the Wulfrun and if you miss 'em this time, you've no-one else to blame but yourself. But if you really can't make it, then treat yourself to *Stacked Up*, which in the great Senser tradition, has people from all musical persuasions raving about it. What's going on? It's a Senser thing - EVERYONE will understand.

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ALL OF THE NEW NOTIONS ARE OLD NOTIONS ALREADY

Counting Crows' Charlie Gillingham Talks To Steve Morris

Back in February, Brum Beat ran a five star review of Counting Crows' August And Everything After album. It had, if I remember correctly, been held over for some time waiting for the label to decide upon a release date. In the end we published because, despite the record being officially unreleased, Birmingham's second hand racks were groaning under the weight of copies that the unwise had unloaded and we thought the world as we know it should be made aware of such a gem.

In his review, aside from correctly pointing out that Counting Crows' first album "is one of the most auspicious debuts out of America in ages", Mike Davies also hoped that lyricist and apparent key to the band, Adam Duritz "never finds true happiness".

Well he may not have found that muse mashing happiness that worried Mike, but he sure has found an attitude. For here we are months later with MCA, the label that all but bungled the release, attempting to set up interviews with the now hot band. Are we interested? Sure, name the time when we can talk to Adam. Er, well he's not going to be available, he's limiting himself to doing only four media things, so he can only talk to the NME and there's Top Of The Pops to do ...

So, the man who's ironic take on the star maker machinery in current hit single Mr. Jones seems to have bought his own "We all want to be big stars ..." line.

Considering that it's his words that dictate the flavour of Counting Crows and that the press releases and past interviews suggest that the other musicians (aside from long time compadre, guitarist David Bryson) were picked to build the perfect band, the apparently ego driven absence comes as a total bummer. However, given that the album has insinuated its way into my everyday life, I decided to clutch at straws and see if keyboard man Charlie Gillingham could cast any light.

On the growth of the band he says,

"We've been touring since August, we've played all around the United States three or four times. We won people over city by city, we'd play in a city and the next day there'd be forty or fifty records sold, we'd come back maybe after a month and there'd be a hundred records sold. It was like just one person at a time."

And on that tricky subject of the band being built around Duritz?

"David Bryson, our guitar player, he started the band and he worked with Adam on some songs and yeah, it was all about the songs, we put the



band together around the songs, but we put it together. I'd known Adam for years from his band opening for mine, he called me up and said come on down and play on this demo. Steve Bowman, our drummer is an old friend of David's and Matt (bass) and David used to play in a band together a long time ago. Dan, our newest member is a pal of mine from bands way back. So it's just a bunch of San Francisco local bands coming together." Charlie is, however, unequivocal on Duritz' talents.

"Adam's an extraordinary lyricist and an extraordinary singer and it's only natural that the focus should be on him."

The music Counting Crows make could only be American. Some folks have gone for the country hues and cast Gram Parsons comparisons into the blender and certainly there's a trace of that, though to my mind you'd be wiser looking at the legendary Band. Not that they sound alike, it's just something in the way both outfits capture the atmosphere of the American heartland, somehow wresting a nobility from the everyday melancholia of faded life. But is it a deliberate attempt by Counting Crows to make traditional music?

"We don't think we're doing that. We think that all of the new notions are old notions already. If you're thinking of why we avoid synthesisers and that, it's not a self conscious thing it's just that we had these songs and we wanted to tell these stories and the main thing was to get the story across without taking a lot of attention away from the characters, Maria, Mr. Jones and all the others. They're the main people."

But would he accept that the instrumental textures the band favour do hold a nostalgic reference for people?

"Maybe in the keyboard tones, but I think that if you listen to the grooves and the harmony, the

chords of the songs, y'know we all grew up in the eighties and there's not very much on the record that anyone would have played before the eighties. You don't hear any blues licks and you don't hear any country licks; you don't hear anything that goes back to the kind of country rock we're compared to. I think that what we have in common with Dylan and The Band is that we're a band that's about songs. The songwriting is more important than how we look or how we fit into whatever the current fashion is."

We talk for a while about whether the Crows are part of a grass

roots movement in the US; perhaps the presence on the album of Maria McKee and various Jayhawks sparks the idea. Charlie dismisses it, suggesting that both Jayhawks and McKee are far more tied to a specific musical heritage than his band. It occurs to me that perhaps the difference is that The Jayhawks sound like a band that like to have a drink and play for a good time whilst the Crows sound like a more serious concern. Charlie is emphatic that his band is 'sometimes too serious about the music' which seems like a good time to talk about the missing Duritz' affect on the band. Do the band have any forebodings when the writer brings in a new song; given that his vision is obviously a personal one, the responsibility of creating the perfect musical setting would must weigh heavy?

"Not really, we hammer it out after a while. Sometimes it takes a while, some songs start out big and vice versa. Some of the songs change so much you wouldn't recognise them after we get through beating them up. But you know, we like writing. Writing's the best part."

Finally, I wondered what it was like actually hearing the songs on stage; having Duritz' images sparking different responses every gig. Did that kind of thing change the musical direction of the gig?

"We're the worst for changing things at the last minute. We often throw a monkey wrench in whilst we're playing. We often change things radically whilst we're playing live. We might play a song which was a fast driving song, slow and in 3, or vice versa! Also, Adam is a great stream of consciousness singer and a lot of what we do live is where the band is playing on an idea and Adam's just singing off the top of his head, going somewhere else. The lyrics change every night. We just keep making it up as we go along!"



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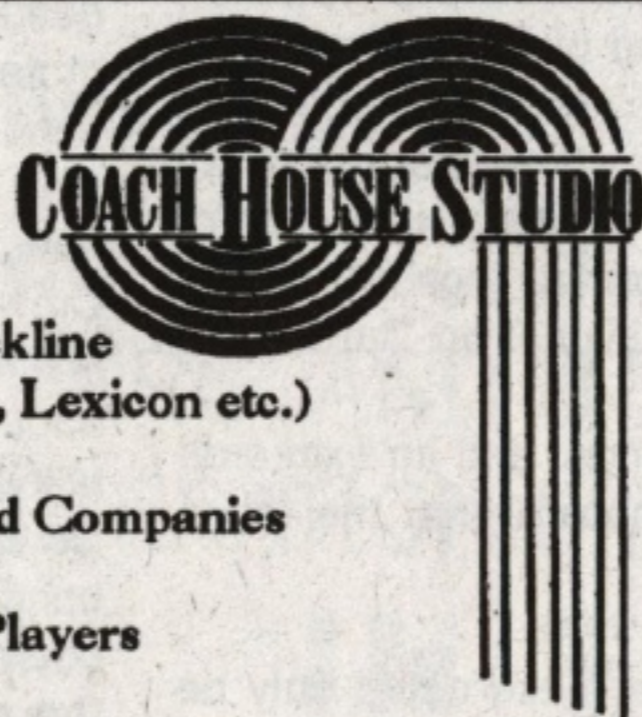
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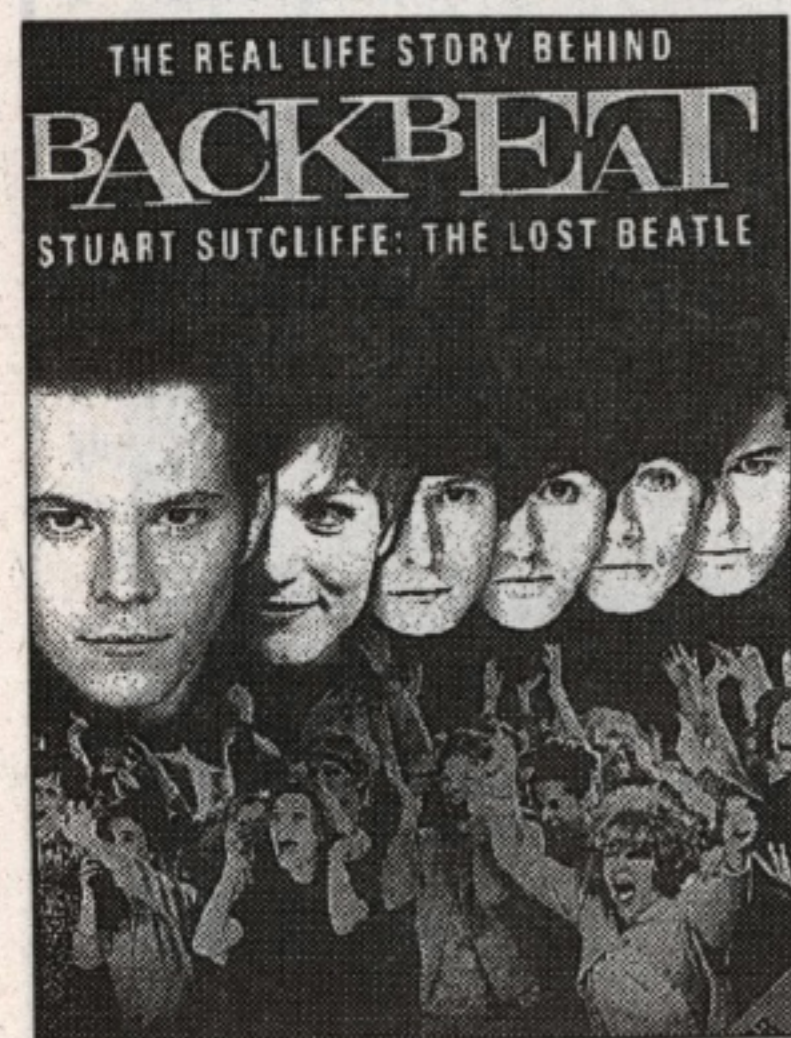


PRINT OUT

What's New in Print?

BACKBEAT - STUART SUTCLIFFE:

THE LOST BEATLE Alan Clayson and Pauline Sutcliffe (Pan)



In essence, the throwaway movie tie in. But wait. Rather than having someone concoct a pot boiler novel from the script, they've put together leading rock biographer Alan Clayson, who's research for his George Harrison and Ringo Starr biogs makes him a Beatles intimate and Sutcliffe's sister who has access to both memories and memorabilia. The result is a richly embroidered look at Sutcliffe's life, woven from detailed research and family memory. Clayson is, perhaps, unequalled when it comes to discussing the beat group Britain of the early sixties, adding period flavour in just the right, sense stimulating amount.

Naturally the nascent fabs populate Sutcliffe's story but Backbeat goes beyond his leaving the group and illustrating all too poignantly his joy

at being in Hamburg and access to the arts circle - he sees an early Nureyev performance - a growing homesickness - he needed a weekly fix of Billy Cotton, something only those over 35 will fully understand - and the delicate decline in his health all of which comes from Stuart's own letters.

The film succeeds admirably in capturing the spirit of the tale but Clayson introduces the person. *Steve Morris*

THE ARC MUSICIANS DIRECTORY

Edited by Stephen Grant (Arc Publishing)

Ambitious musicians are, when you think about it, an ideal target for just about any directory that promises to provide a genuine A-Z of the biz. Sadly many fail; the info can be, at best scant or out of date and at worst totally misleading.

In fairness to all directory compilers, it must be said that none can provide a panacea that'll take you straight to the A&R man's contract file and cheque book; a lot of effort and initiative is needed to actually apply the leads you get. That said The Arc volume is mighty impressive. Not only do you get names, addresses and phone numbers of labels, instrument retailers, PA suppliers, music biz courses, tutors, venues (a quick glance reveals that The Robin is included, which impresses), publications (we're in, good on ya!), radio stations and pluggers but also essays on music theory, career possibilities, setting up a home studio and lots, lots more.

At £15.99 you really can't do much better. *Steve Morris*

THE BIG BOOK OF THE BLUES Robert Santelli (Pavilion)

This book may not tell you everything about the blues, but it will tell you more than you're ever likely to want to know about over 600 of its top protagonists, from the Mississippi Delta to swinging sixties London. Eric Clapton gets recognition alongside Snooks Eaglin and Peetie Wheatstraw, proving that what the bluesmen of the American south lacked in terms of wealth and fame, they made up for with talent and silly names.

While it's merely unfortunate that the catalogue numbers quoted in the selected discographies are American, it's criminal that many of the recordings will prove hard to find this side of the pond. *Andy Mabbett*

SCOTT WALKER - A DEEPER SHADE OF BLUE

Mike Watkinson & Pete Anderson (Virgin)

If nothing else, this book proves there's more to Walker than Make It Easy On Yourself and The Sun Ain't Gonna Shine Any More. Happily, it does much, much more than that, unravelling Walker's career, and reclusivity, in much the same way as the authors' previous work on Syd Barrett. Although Walker proved as elusive as a sunny bank holiday, interviews with friends, colleagues and fellow musicians abound. No hacks, the authors devote themselves to the investigation of their subject in the style one would expect of their day jobs as journalists on 'serious' newspapers.

It's tempting to think that only Walker knows more about his story. And he's not telling. *Andy Mabbett*

STABBING WESTWARD

Max points you in a new direction



There aren't many bands I feel too confident about predicting big things for - Tool were one, and if I'd been into Jane's Addiction at their outset, I like to think I'd've tipped them. I have no doubts whatsoever about Chicago's Stabbing Westward, whose debut album, Ungod (Columbia) has just been released and which butted me between the eyes on first hearing - that whipped Lost, the savage Lies and the brooding Can't Happen Here. Coincidentally, the first thing it reminded me of was Jane's Addiction - yeah, it's THAT big: soaring vocals, polyrhythmic percussion (the percussive element also put me in mind of Tribe After Tribe) and an intelligence sorely missing in a lot of hard-hitting music at the moment.

You lucky people. Not only can you go out - NOW - and buy this monumental release, but you can also witness what I'm sure will be a very different kind of show when Westward play the Jug Of Ale on May 8 - something akin to when JA played Burberries, I reckon. But before that, the band have been warming up on their own continent, and prior to a soundcheck for a gig in Providence, Rhode Island, I linked up with rolling, rumbling bassist, Jim Sellers.

Jim was flattered that I should compare SW with JA (he's also a Tool fan), and that I recognised a rich, intellectual vein in their work ("One of the things about this band is that we're all very intelligent"), but the origins of the band come from a very different source.

"Before I joined, they were a very heavy industrial band," revealed Jim, "A real mixed media thing, using lots of backing tapes. But after a few line-up changes, we started fleshing out the Stabbing Westward you can hear now." Which makes sense. There's a vicious quality to Westward's sound, something you hear in Ministry and Nine Inch Nails. Ministry of course spent some time, along with Urge Overkill and Jesus Lizard, in the Windy City too. Was there something in Chicago's water?

"I think you come from your mind, not a geographical location. But it just so happens that a lot of like-minded people come from that same place."

We moved on to talk more about the Westward sound and although I've given one reference point that might excite you enough to check them out, they're still difficult to categorise, as it should be. But it might help to hear what bands influenced Jim personally.

"A lot of great British bands, like The Cure. They were so beautifully dark and melancholy, with a great sense of melody and irony. And the Smiths. -" - I have to tell you that I nearly put the 'phone down here, but Jim redeemed himself with -

"- But added to that, I was also into the heaviness of Led Zeppelin and Deep Purple."

Thankfully, all I can hear are ten shattering epics with a deeply disturbing undercurrent that with any luck will leave everyone who hears them utterly gob smacked. Go on, admit it - I've whetted your appetite, haven't I?

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O HENRY

Mike Davies Talks To Joe Henry

Recently featured on BBC2's Late Show singer / songwriter special, Words & Music, and garlanded with praise in the likes of Q and Mojo, North Carolina born but well travelled Joe Henry's just released his Fireman's Wedding EP, the title track taken from his recent, fifth, album Kindness Of The World (which incidentally features Victoria Williams on the title cut) along with four non-album cuts, two live, two studio, including covers of country standards Hello Stranger and, duetting with Billy Bragg, Dark As A Dungeon.

Beginning his career in earnest when he was around 17, his first album was Talk Of Heaven for Profile (an album few people heard "and fewer needed to"). Then, dumped mid-way into the second album, he wound up at A&M for whom he recorded Murder Of Crows ("more highly produced than I wanted") and in reaction to that the sparser, more acoustic Shuffletown, an album whose musicians included Don Cherry, which prompted A&M to drop him "virtually on the day of release. They thought it was gibberish! They wanted Elton John, I wanted to make The Basement Tapes."

Subsequently signed to Mammoth, he released Short Man's Room (an album inspired by becoming a dad), essentially a collection of demos he'd recorded with The Jayhawks, which wound up selling more than both A&M releases together. Following on the critical acclaim for that, last year saw the release of Kindness, recorded in Daniel Lanois' studio "for next to nothing" (his wife manages Lanois), which brings us up to date.

Very much in the current vogue for roots storytellers (reference points would be Robert Earl Keen Jr, Steve Earle and Guy Clarke), with novelist Raymond Carver (Short Cuts) an acknowledged influence, Henry's songs tend towards the melancholic with rural tales of losers and outsiders, about looking back and moving on, a result of his somewhat vagabond early years.

"From an early age I had to learn to land on my feet. I was always the new kid on the block, I always felt the outsider and that makes you observe things more. And it's never been natural for me to write songs in urban settings, it's not what interests me. I'm not Lou Reed."

What he is, though it surprisingly rarely crops up in interviews, is Madonna's brother in law. Has he ever capitalised on that?

"It's never been appropriate. My sister in law and I are not in the same business. But if it ever was appropriate, I have no problem with someone giving me a leg up!"

With the tide of interest flowing increasingly in favour of Henry's type of music, he shouldn't need the help of Madonna's leg or indeed any other limb, but what he would like is for someone to come up with a film for which he could do the soundtrack.

"I once said there's not a screenplay bad enough to turn down. I was wrong. There are many scripts awful enough to walk away from. I'd like nothing better than to write for a film, I just need for the film - or the money - to be good enough."

Mike Dunphy Tells Max To

CUD IT OUT

Cud, eh. Aren't they those slightly wacky indie types who released Asquarius 2 years ago? If they are, they've gone through a bit of a transformation. For their new A&M album, Showbiz, is a full-throated funky / rocky workout (my particular fave track being Not Necessarily Evil), but retaining Cud's noted grip on pop sensibility. I asked guitarist / keyboardman, Mike Dunphy, if there'd been any deliberate change in direction.

"There wasn't any conscious change, we just spent a lot more time recording this album and we had a great producer (Al Clay - currently working with Frank Black). I've always been frustrated about this indie label we attracted. I see us more as a pop / rock band."

Was this frustration behind the title of the album, which I presume is meant to be slightly ironic?

"The press has always had us down as wacky and I've never known what that meant. We weren't trying to be cynical - the title just laid itself open to this idea of tackiness. We don't want to be too ludicrous or too serious."

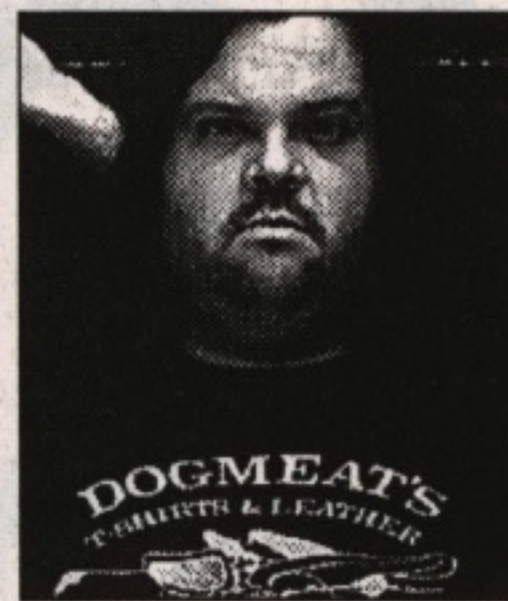
And although Cud have licked the success lolly, they've yet to bite into it and swallow it whole. This could be changing now with the supremely catchy recent top 40 single, Neurotica and newie, Sticks & Stones, both from the album. Did Mike think it was time they broke through big time?

"Yeah. It's been so frustrating being relatively unsuccessful. It's difficult getting 100% right - everybody wants the best and the thought of the charts is there all the time. There's probably too much pressure on bands to release instant smashes, but you've got to be in the race if you want to win. I do like it though when real outsiders are successful, like who'd've thought Nirvana's Smells Like Teen Spirit would be a hit?"

I admire bands who can sort of re-invent themselves and come out the other end smelling of roses. And whilst Cud haven't exactly changed from a cutesy indie band into a raging metal outfit, they've produced a pop album that it's OK for rockers to like too. That's Showbiz, folks!



YOU GOTTA HAVE IT ALL!



The TAD
Philosophy
Of Life
As Heard By
Max

As guests on the recent Soundgarden tour, prime movers in originating that whole Seattle 'grunge' sound, Tad were ensuring all dates were sold out on the back of their rep for rocking, heads down live shows and their latest crunching album, Inhaler (Giant/Mechanic).

I joined vocalist/guitarist, Tad Doyle on the band's tour bus prior to their eagerly-awaited Wolverhampton show and mistakenly kicked off with a question about Tad's late mate, Kurt Cobain.

"No comment."

And when a non-smiling, man-mountain says "No comment" from behind a pair of shades, you drop the matter there and then. But I still dared venture that this business throws up some pretty extreme highs and lows.

"The good thing about this lifestyle is that it keeps you busy," admitted Tad. "The bad thing is that it can have an adverse affect on any love life you might have. And when you have a press schedule for instance, it can sometimes feel like having a regular job."

D'you still get the same kind of buzz out of it you always have?

"The only person I'm out to please is myself and sure, I get fed up like anyone else, but at the end of the day I wouldn't want to be doing anything else. I'd play music whether there was shitty business involved or not. But if there was ever a band to question it all, it'd be us - we've been almost bombed to death, struck by lightning, etc. We've dwelled on that kind of stuff for a long time..."

But Tad's luck seems to be changing. Through BMG, their records are now available to a lot more people and they've been supporting some pretty high-profile acts. Plus, they're amongst a growing army of back-to-basics rockers.

"I've always liked that stripped-down-to-its-bare-essentials type of rock 'n' roll. The perfect example for me, is AC/DC who play nothing more than they have to - and it sounds fucking great! I like that mixed with punk rock, which was a big part of my life - music for people who didn't have anywhere else to go. Music for uncool people."

Whereas Tad's music is surely for cool people. Whether it be the Motorhead drive of Lycanthrope or the sweet, gentle injections that can lift a pumping song like Luminol onto another plane.

"It's fun! It makes things more interesting. I'm into lots of different types of music - Hendrix, Sly, Zappa - we don't want to limit ourselves to playing one type of music. Who knows - we might come up with a fucking country record next and a speed-death one after that! It's like sex - one position gets boring. You gotta have it ALL!"

And Tad certainly give it THEIR all. Monster riffing and melodies to make your head swim. Some medical advice: Inhale and DON'T come up for air.

STROLL ON

Mike Davies Steps Out With The Walkabouts

They might not get the instant saturation adulation of Counting Crows or The Gin Blossoms, but, over the past few years The Walkabouts have been quietly building an ever more solid reputation and audience base with their roots influenced brand of Northwest American rock.

Built round the nucleus of Chris Eckman and Carla Torgerson, the band's been knocking around for a decade, ever since the duo met up at a salmon cannery in Alaska, he coming off the end of a punk band, she fresh from travelling abroad, busking her way round on a set of folk songs. A mini album, *22 Disasters* appeared the same year, but their full fledged debut didn't surface until 1988 (1987's *Weights and Rivers* album never seeing the light of day) in the shape of *See Beautiful Rattlesnake Gardens*. That notched up end of year plaudits in *Village Voice* and *Cashbox* while their second *Cataract* (in 1989 after two mini-albums, *Great Schoolhouse Fire* and *Rag & Bone*, the former unreleased), figured in *Spin* magazine's top 80 indie releases of the decade. Completing the album discography, *Scavenger* followed in 1991, the *New West Motel* masterpiece in '92 while last year saw both a live

acoustic Chris & Carla solo offering plus *Satisfied Mind*, a country flavoured album of covers. Bringing things up to date comes the new album, *Setting The Woods On Fire*.

Throughout, The Walkabouts have attracted a variety of interesting comparisons, the oddest being Fairport Convention crossed with Love. More obviously, particularly in the combination of fiery guitar and melancholic tones, is a cocktail of Neil Young, The Triffids and Richard Thompson with a lyrical sensibility heavily inspired by noir novelist Jim Thompson. If quali-

ty of music and strength of songs alone were passport to rock stardom, The Walkabouts would have a closet full of magazine articles and front covers to their name. The problem was however, that a) they came from Seattle and b) they

were on Sub Pop, a label heavily identified with the grunge sound. And The Walkabouts simply didn't fit the pigeonhole. Hence, no mass media interest.

"It's had its advantages and disadvantages," says Eckman. "We've never been grotesquely famous so we've never been known for something we've had to rehash. In 90/91 being on Sub Pop was a definite liability, but the label's diversified since then just as grunge has gone beyond Seattle to become a much broader thing. In a way we're both pre-grunge and post-grunge."

In many ways, the band's drifter perspectives and an emphasis on story songs, denotes them as documentarists, the songs observed rather than internalised despite usually being first person narratives. Equally, (as with the Jim Thompson allusion) they reflect a mournfulness that has its roots in American Gothic. Dark images are, as Eckman notes, "easier to chew on, though I don't want to be known as someone who wallows in that." He doesn't, of course. He simply builds some powerful moods and images from the source materials. Noticeably *New West Motel* and the current album both have a strong sense of the blues in their lyrical grammar.

"It's something we've felt easier with in the last few years. We've both become avid blues collectors but I've not always felt comfortable about trying to integrate it into the music. I despise bad white blues artists and coming from where

we did I heard a lot of the blues revival stuff and it just wasn't interesting. But getting into the original material was much more inspiring and it certainly rubbed off. It's a very poetic vernacular but also very direct."

More than the blues, the dominant element in The Walkabouts' musical phrase book is that traditional, folk-country American



If there's any grunge at all, it's in the same way that Neil Young's guitar on *Like A Hurricane* or *My My Into The Black* is grunge. But the quality the band draw most from the Young swamp, is that empty desert sense of space. The band's name itself is taken from the Nic Roeg movie, but also reflects C&C's own lifestyle.

"We both always enjoyed the road life, even when not touring. We spend a lot of time travelling. When we first met we hitchhiked 3000 miles from Alaska to Seattle, so it's not surprising that comes out in the music."

music that's currently enjoying a revival among a whole bunch of young guitar bands, in much the same way as *Green On Red* and the Long Ryders fired interest up back in the late 80s.

If justice be served, and the number of admirers are growing with each release (including The Tindersticks with whom Carla will be recording for their next album), then The Walkabouts, who remained in a darkened corner throughout the whole Seattle explosion, could, ironically find themselves finally becoming fashionable. And believe me, they wear it well.

HOME ON THE RANGE

Mike Davies Joins Emmylou Harris In Prayer For Country Music

With country music enjoying its highest profile in decades in America, with the unstoppable success of Garth Brooks, Vince Gill and other similar minded loud and proud performers, not to mention the sudden rush of popularity in the UK, it seems somewhat ironic that after 20 years with the label, Emmylou Harris parted company with Warners for the newly revived Asylum label, Stateside, whilst in the UK she's releasing her new album on the small independent Grapevine label. For someone who exercised such an incredible influence in crossing country into rock, how, to quote CS&N, did it come to this?

"I think there were philosophical differences between us," she says diplomatically. "I'd always been left of centre and Warners had become far more successful being mainstream country. They wanted to do well for me, but it

just wasn't working. It was an amicable split (even though it was in the middle of recording Cowboy's Prayer) and I've been very involved in the forthcoming box set (featuring some juicy unreleased material), but relationships just sometimes come to an end."

Including, it seems, the relationship with country music radio. Amazingly, Harris says she finds it almost impossible to get her new material played.

"To me it seems there's so much room for so many variations in country music, it can accommodate both the Garth Brooks and the Tom Russells. But country radio doesn't want the Russells or anyone not like the image it's cast in concrete. I have an audience that will come to the gigs and buy the records regardless of whether I'm played on country radio, but there's a lot of artists who just don't have the chance to show what they can do."

It's ironic that while the likes of Iris DeMent, Lucinda Williams and Katy Moffatt are receiving increasingly good response in the hitherto countryphobic mainstream British music media, in America, where you'd think their heartland roots approach and values would score highest, they simply can't get arrested. America, it seems, wants the brash showmanship of the Garth Brooks of the world.

"So many artists whose music springs from the heart tried to go through the country door but were shut out. Nanci Griffith, Lyle Lovett, Steve Earle. It's odd to see that happen, when you've got people with something that could enrich country music being ignored. The problem is that country became very popular and radio became afraid to play anything different. I had a friend whose record scored 100% positive audience response on a country radio station but they wouldn't playlist it because it didn't fit the formula. How do you fight that?"

"It would be great to have more variety, but they're afraid to play anything different. Not to say the records they play aren't good, but everyone's being squeezed for the top spot and artistically, the results are not good. And it's not just the

new artists who can't get played. People like Bill Monroe (the bluegrass legend) and Mark O'Connor (a fortysomething hot guitar picker also rated Nashville's top fiddle player), who's one of country's treasures, can't get airtime because they don't fit the formula. You can't argue with the 'wildly successful' mentality, but in the long run there could be such a richer crop. Country's always reinvented itself over the years, but this time I don't think it's brought into it as much as it could."

Hardly surprising then that Cowboy's Prayer should both continue Harris's rediscover of traditional roots (begun in earnest when the Hot Band were replaced by the Nash Ramblers and the At The Ryman tribute album to the old Opry sound was recorded. Nor that with songs like Prayer in Open D, The Light, the spoken narrative Jerusalem Tomorrow or Cohen's Ballad of A Runaway Horse (originally recorded back in 1988 but with no album to go on until now) the last track to be added and from which the album title comes, it should be such a reflective set concerned largely with redemption and getting back to what counts.

"It was never intended to be that way, originally it was just an introspective album about personal issues, about re-evaluating what was important to me. But I'm a firm believer that albums become what they're going to be and I'm always as surprised as the listener. You just have to get into it before a theme's suggested and the songs let you know whether they belong there or not. As we worked on it over a year and a half it became clear it wasn't a boy meets girl, boy loses girl album, that it was about more personal things we all address at some time as we look back and ahead at our lives. There's no answers but I think it does ask a different set of questions."

It's surely no coincidence then, that when asked to contribute to the upcoming Edith Piaf Tribute album, Harris should choose to sing Je Ne Regrette Rien (a stunning version in English save for the title line which she insisted on doing in French). A statement of where she's coming from and going to, and a fine example of the eclecticism that's always marked her career. "I've always believed in music, that eventually stuff that touches people will get heard. And as long I keep hearing things that excite me, I'll keep on making music. I just wish I had the voice to be able to do something like the Trio Bulgarka!"



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*"Never bloody heard of them..."
Peter Gabriel
"Bring to the boil and let simmer for 5 mins..."
Rusty Lee*

AKG'S RADIO TRI-POWERS:

Mega microphone people AKG have announced that the very same vocal radio mics used by Messrs Rod Stewart, Bryan Adams, Jon Bon Jovi, Extreme, etc., etc. ... are now available in punterville to like likes of you and me. How much? £849.00 inc. VAT. What you get is a rugged, high quality vocal mic and a true diversity (which means the signal remains constant) receiver unit. Entitled AKG WMS 100 MK 11, the system comes with a choice of mics: either Tri-Power condenser C5900 or dynamic Tri-Power D3800. (Rod Stewart prefers the C5900). If your budget's a bit tight and wont stretch to £849.00, go for the WMS50 which is of the same pedigree but slightly less flash and only costs £449.00 inc. VAT. Both WMS100 and WMS 50 radio mics are available for guitar and sax miking.

The cable Tri-Powers are equally impressive, sharing a list of features with their wireless counterparts that make them very competitive in the vocal mic market. No surprise when you note that the final specs for the Tri-Power range were arrived at after intensive discussion with leading PA companies on both sides of the Atlantic. Obvious 'On The Road' features include a shock absorbent grille system which allows the mics to bounce rather than dent when dropped. And the triangular shape? AKG believe it's the natural way to hold a microphone; it fits the palm of your hand.

MINI CLIP-ONS:

Small clip-on condenser mics for sax players, drummers, singing keyboard players, etc, are becoming increasingly popular. The benefits are obvious: no need for mic stands; far greater freedom of movement. Most are available with radio systems and are very reasonably priced. Try AKG C409 for sax, C408 drums, C410 headset. (All work with WMS 50 and WMS 100 radio systems).

RECORDING AT HOME:

If you've got a midi set-up you'll probably find that that a good quality vocal mic is all you really need. So how much should you spend? A good condenser vocal mic ideal for 4 to 8 track recording will set you back about £250.00. The AKG C1000S has been the most popular choice for the last couple of years or more. The C1000 can work on an internal battery or phantom power and offers two polar patterns: cardioid and hypercardioid, via a removable cap that fits over the capsule. If you re a bit of a pro and want to make records rather than demos, ask for the AKG C3000: this mic costs £528.00 inc. VAT and offers finished CD quality sound, different polar patterns, and bass roll off.

SOME MIC TERMINOLOGY EXPLAINED:

Polar patterns: these tell you how a mic hears sound. The most most common polar patterns for live and studio vocals are cardioid and hypercardioid. A cardioid mic pick up sound from the front only; a hypercardioid mic also from the front but

TRIED AND TESTED

TURN THE MICS ON - ONE TWO, ONE TWO ...

A familiar sound at all gigs from pub back room to the NEC and beyond; it's the time of night when, as anticipation crackles through the venue, the roadie mounts the stage one last time to check the mics. The eagle eyed concert goers out there, and the musos, will have noticed that any self respecting PA rig uses an array of different mics; our friends at AKG, one of the world's leading mic manufacturers, offer *Brum Beat* readers a brief guide.

within a tighter area. In a gigging situation a hypercardioid mic will allow your floor monitors to pump out more volume before feedback occurs.

Proximity Effect - is when the bassness of your voice goes up when you sing close up to a mic and rolls off when you move a couple of inches back. All leading vocal mics have a degree of proximity effect.

Phantom power - is the electrical voltage needed to power condenser mics (unless they run on

internal battery). Most mixing desks have phantom power available. Dynamic mics don't need phantom power.

Tri-Power mics are in stock with all leading music retailers throughout the Midlands. For further information contact: Harman Audio, Unit Two, Borehamwood Industrial Park, Rowley Lane, Borehamwood, Herts. WD6 SPZ. Tel 081-207-5050. Fax 081-207-4572



AKG WMS 50

A GUIDE TO THE BRUM BEAT STAR RATINGS

★★★★ The meaning of life captured on magnetic tape ★★★★★ You owe it to yourself to own this
★★★ Tempting, but a tape of a mate's will do ★★ Have a listen then decide ★ Obsessives only

ROCK & POP

CHRIS BAILEY

54 Days at Sea (Mushroom)

Never quite the punks the English music press tried to make them out to be, Australian new wavers The Saints were far closer to traditional R&B guitar, a musical grounding that became more evident in the subsequent solo outings by their guitarist, Ed Kueper, and vocalist/guitarist Bailey. This is a largely acoustic driven, catchy guitar pop set into which Bailey's filtered a rainbow of folk colours, including a salty Hebrides tang, adding an extra edge to the distinct echo of early Costello evident on the likes of Nothing's As It Seems.

★★★★

Mike Davies

CARAVAN

Cool Water (HTD)

Recorded in 1977 and wisely shelved until being disinterred recently, this is a far cry from the classic Deram albums Land Of Grey & Pink and Girls Who Grow Plump In The Night. In fact, it's a sad travesty of their earlier incarnation, with weak tunes, confidence-lacking vocals and mediocre playing.

If this was to be prog rock's answer to Punk, perhaps Johnny Rotten was right after all.

★

Andy Mabbett

DOG EAT DOG

All Boro Kings (Roadrunner)

34 minutes of Suicidal Tendencies style punk with a funky fluidity and a horn section you'd kill for. Thus, there's elements of The Bosstones and Fishbone in there, along with barking raps and metal riffing. And this is FUN! Because although DED will sometimes let you know which side they're on, they're mostly out for a good time, as John eloquently chants on No Fronts: "No fronts, no tricks, no soap-box politics/No guns, just blunts, we kick this just for fun!"

Amen to that.

★★★★

Max.

THE DYLAN'S

Spirit Finger (Beggars Banquet)

Mmm, I really rather like this. It's head in the clouds pop music, full of slippery harmonies, day brightening choruses and a spirit that suggests the band would rather have been discovered at the Avalon Ballroom rather than The Roxy.

That's not to suggest that The Dylans are retro nostalgists, rather that they have that loose limbed approach that gives the band a charming organic swing as opposed to the quantised hardness that dominates the thinking of most others. It's a sense that the music hasn't been pasteurised but remains alive. It's a feeling of misty dislocation that makes a simple song like Hell No reverberate with a web of floating voices over hard strummed guitars.

If Spanky And Our Gang, The Monkees, The Electric Banana, Strawberry Alarm Clock mean anything to you, you should find comfort here.

★★★★

Steve Morris

FISH

Sushi (The Dick Brothers Record Company)

Sushi is, as we all know, raw fish! What a wag choosing to title this direct to DAT double live set, after uncooked bloater, eh?

It simply tempts a good critical battering!

Maybe, but when the chips are down (sorry), I have a deal of time for Fish. He is, I'm sure, a stoutly principled chap who seems to have all but sacrificed his mainstream career in pursuit of principle. So maybe this passably good, and well received by the Dutch audience, live set is a tread water piece. For sure, there's little to be gained in the faded carbon covers of Floyd, Alex Harvey, Bowie and T. Rex that punctuate his hits set.

★★

Steve Morris

LISA GERMANO

Happiness (4AD)

Ex Mellencamp fiddler, Lisa Germano's second solo album, Happiness, first saw the light of day on Capitol in the US last year, briefly. It was soon deleted and this restructured reissue suggests that artist dissatisfaction may have been responsible for the short shelf life. The running order has been changed and the inappropriate cover of Nancy Sinatra's These Boots, expunged. But it goes beyond superficial or cosmetic change. The album, recorded by Daniel Lanois acolyte Malcolm Burn in Lanois' studio, has been refocused with the textures that the Capitol issue sanitised, restored. There's

now a textural sheen adding to the individual quirkiness that was previously only hinted; a slight grubbying that, almost perversely, adds intimacy.

It's not an easy ride, but it is a rewarding one and damn near compulsory for The Darkest Night Of All, a heart wrenching, fragile loneliness that chills.

★★★★

Steve Morris

DAVE GREENSLADE

Terry Pratchett's From The Discworld (Virgin)

Having managed to avoid Pratchett's books, something not managed by approximately four million other purchasers, or, perhaps, one purchaser of four million books, I approached this musical impression as a shortcut to enlightenment. And lo, it was ... if this is Discworld, I don't wanna go there.

Seems that Pratchett, far from being the amusing author of repute, must be the writer of Rick Wakeman's seventies tour programmes. Forsooth, Greenslade is a disciple of such proginstruwaffle, right down to Baldrick's intonation at prologue and end-piece.

Had that he had compacted the suffering and proceeded directly to Discworld On Ice, my hi-fi would have been spared the suffering.

The star is for the booklet's illustrations, incidentally.

★

Steve Morris

THE HIGH LLAMAS

Gideon Gaye (Target)

Actually, this album has been around for a little while, but somehow it always got played for enjoyment rather than review. Not a bad sign, I guess. Only now all of the press info has become rather elusive so all of the factual stuff, which I think includes ex Microdisney man Sean O'Hagen (apologies for errors!), you'll have to live without.

Suffice to say, that if, at any time, you carried a torch for Brian Wilson, The Beach Boys (Pet Sounds onwards) or Van Dyke Parks, you should buy this immediately.

★★★★

Steve Morris



Hole

HOLE

Live Through This (City Slang)

I really didn't want to bring Cobain into this, but if he and Courtney hadn't been married, I'd've had no qualms. Live Through This really does sound like Nirvana - the alternating soft/hard approach on tracks like Violet, and often Courtney's vocal intonations remind me of Kurt's. I suppose if they were in and out of each other's pockets, this was inevitable. However, this is a terrific album and despite what I consider a poor choice for a single (Miss World - although it is growing on me. The flip, Rock Star is much better), there's plenty of harder stuff like the driving Plump, which reminds me why I reckoned Hole to be one of the highlights of last year's Phoenix fest. I love the rage of Jennifer's Body and the haunting intro to Credit In The Straight World. Courtney Love? She ain't afraid of nothin'. But be very afraid of her. You must be able to imagine what it'd be like to be on the receiving end of her barbed tongue. If not, listen to her spitting out the punked-up She Walks On Me or her screaming "Fuck you!" during I Think That I Would Die. Sincere, quality, 90s punk rock.

★★★★

Max

HUNTERS AND COLLECTORS

Demon Flower (Mushroom)

Formed in Melbourne 1981 and huge in Australia,

and Terry (rings a feint ball) Taylor steeping in. Wyman basses on both sets. The live record is no better, though no worse, than a good night at the Breedon or similar. Competent pub rock rousers from the musos happy days.

★★★ / ★★
Steve Morris

RE-ISSUES

THE BEAU BRUMMELS

Autumn Of Their Years (Big Beat)

The Beau Brummels were a San Francisco pop quartet that operated in the latter half of the sixties, on the cusp of the dawning psychedelic era. Not that it overtly influenced their classic harmony drenched, melodic pop as the twenty six cuts collected here demonstrate. This set collects album tracks, demos and left-overs, though had the liner not detailed that, you'd happily accept it as a best of, so brightly does the music shine.

★★★
Steve Morris

PAUL CARRACK

Twenty One Good Reasons (Chrysalis)

Britain's finest white soul voice on his impressive own and with Ace (How Long, natch), Squeeze (the awesome Tempted), Carlene Carter and Mike & The Mechanics. And, no, even the superlative Carrack can't rescue the latter's mawkish Living Years. So, make that Twenty Good Reasons and we'll not argue at all.

★★★★
Steve Morris

Elvis Costello



ELVIS COSTELLO AND THE ATTRACTIONS

Get Happy / Trust (Demon Records)

Episodes five and six in the rehabilitation of Elvis' awesome back catalogue. And yes I know that Get Happy and Trust are his fourth and fifth albums, but Demon snuck in the live Mocambo set as number four!

All that needs saying is that both albums have been remastered with the latest 20 bit technology and thus sound far, far better than the original CD issues. Get Happy has ten bonus tracks in the 'Extended Play' section whilst Trust boasts nine. Both albums have informative notes by Elvis and both are essential.

So, that leaves space to ponder on the notion that the excellent Brutal Youth newie is a return to some past heyday and that by implication his recent adventures have been artistic cul de sacs. I beg to differ and suggest that Mighty Like A Rose, Spike and The Juliet Letters, the targets for such spite, were actually signposted, albeit with hindsight, on these albums and that Costello has always been musically inquisi-

tive. One can only hope that Warners, having tasted commercial blood more copiously with Brutal Youth, will continue to allow the man such artistic freedom as he, and not critics, decides is appropriate - and that they'll issue the promised Costello / Brodsky covers EP soon.

★★★★★ (each)
Steve Morris

LONNIE DONEGAN

Putting On The Styles (Sequel)

This punningly titled three disc set finds itself promoted by virtue of the inclusion of Donegan's cover of The Coasters' Volkswagen advertising Sorry But I'm Gonna Have To Pass. Whilst Donegan can't match The Coasters style, it's interesting to note that Mike Stoller (of the songs legendary Lieber - Stoller composing team) himself produced.

Not that that should diminish Donegan's importance in the annals of UK music. This set faces you with titles and facts that build up a formidable case for the man being the UK roots pioneer whose career was derailed by a perhaps unquestioning adherence to the showbiz route of the late fifties / early sixties. Indeed, sourcing hit material from Woody Guthrie, Leadbelly and the Lomax archive was certainly brave for the time and even when panto, summer season and novelty hits (My Old Man's A Dustman and Does Your Chewing Gum Lose Its Flavour? can still chill the marrow of pop fans of a certain age) had smoothed his edge, he still looked to unpublished Dylan songs or bowdlerised the blues; Leadbelly's cocaine / amphetamine anthem Have A Whiff On Me becoming Have A Drink On Me.

And we could mention skiffle; a prototype punk played on tea chests and washing boards but you'd dismiss it as old men's stuff, quite rightly too. But for services to the birth of UK rock'n'roll, this set is Donegan's due.

★★★★★
Sam Mitchell

SANTANA

Evolution (Thunderbolt)

Pulled together in one generously filled (two hours plus) double CD is all of Santana's pre Columbia material. You get the demos and rehearsals including early versions of Jingo and Soul Sacrifice that would become band staples.

It's not a rough cash in either; the recording quality is fine and the performances as complete as the later band's work. What is absent though is the final drive and polish that acceptance by public and peers tends to bring. The band here is tentative and whilst Carlos' guitar is already possessed of his hallmark liquid fluency, the final edge has not yet been honed.

★★
Steve Morris

UFO

Too Hot To Handle (Music Club)

Too volatile by half, the line up changes would need diagrams, believe me, UFO seemingly consigned themselves to also rans. Sure they had their moment, both here and in hard rock heartland, the US of A, but it was only one when their grasp of the dynamics of the genre suggested a greater triumph.

This great value six quid, eighteen tracker that samples classic studio and live sets stands as fine evidence for that assumption too. Certainly Doctor Doctor, We belong To The Night, Let It Roll and Only You Can Rock Me, sound as fresh as ever.

Surely the hard rock bargain of the year

★★★★★
Steve Morris

STEVE VAI

Passion & Warfare (Epic)

Imagine your top ten heavy metal guitar solos, cleverly edited together without any intrusive verses and choruses and souped-up with imagination and wit.

You've just met Mr. Vai, demonic guest star of Crossroads (the movie, stupid, not the extinct Brummie soap), Zappa protegé and guitarist extraordinaire. I'm sure you'll get on well together.

★★★★
Andy Mabbett

VARIOUS ARTISTS

Irish Showbands - Get Down With It (Sequel) /

Ireland's Beat Groups 1964 - 1969 - Irish Rock (Sequel)

Crikey. I didn't know Pye Records were that meticulous in their sweep of Irish talent. This is fascinating stuff, covering the growth of beat groups in Ireland and their reaction against the domination of showbands. Just as in the UK, live rock and pop was jumping in the late 60s: bands and groups played in every village hall and pub there was to play. Unlike the UK, the bands were denied access to the ballrooms, who preferred showbands. The showbands had the money; the groups had the energy. The showbands mixed excruciating covers of existing pop standards with their more traditional material; the beat groups generally did their own stuff, sounding like ... well, like beat groups trying to make it. On the whole inexpertly and unsympathetically recorded, there is nonetheless a lot of charming material here. Chalk up another long-term success for Sequel in their repackaging programme; I wonder if they've got the rights to the original 60s Brum Beat collection? If so, how would it sound to someone reviewing records for Hot Press?

★★★ / ★★
Robin Valk

DANCE & SOUL

MCKOY

Full Circle (Right Track Records)

Noel McKoy, the band's driving force, has been refining his craft since the mid 70s whilst brother Cornell, a featured vocalist worked with The Pasadenas and the James Taylor Quartet, an outfit Noel himself has fronted.

The result of this amassed experience simply glows throughout this impressive own label set. There's a real soul feel that's unafraid to fuse elements from just about every facet of the music, with one proviso; whether McKoy are taking on the funky strut of The Average White Band or a slicker nineties computer based variant, they swing. The band never loses sight of the simple soul dictum; it's music for head, heart, hips and bedroom!

So, if you've grown up with AWB, Heatwave or Jamiroquai (who they're far less 'knowing' than), lend an ear to McKoy, it's my guess that you'll love 'em.

★★★
Steve Morris

SOUNDS OF BLACKNESS

Africa To America; The Journey Of The Drum

(A&M)

The journey in question is, of course, the journey of blacks and whilst the drum may suggest a musical journey, there is a huge spiritual dimension to this ambitious album.

Produced by dance meisters Jam and Lewis, it's a twenty tracker that juxtaposes huge gospel chorus



interludes with the slick sounding productions they are renowned for. Though in fairness, it's their Alexander O'Neal ballad style rather than hard dance that we're talking about. There's also a stark reading of Billie Holiday's Strange Fruit and a spoken poem, You've Taken My Blues And Gone that add to the picture painted rather eloquently.

To edit the whole black experience into a seventy minute gospel flavoured musical experience, and then to wrap it in pop finery is a brave thing to attempt; without the Sounds' obvious soulful sincerity, the producers' taste and an abundant intelligence, it would have been a disaster; that it isn't, is praise indeed.

★★★

Steve Morris

WORLDS APART

Together (Bell / Arista)

Normally this would have been binned on sight; what use do we have for a sub Take That stylist's fantasy that exists only to slaughter the likes of classic old Spinners / Tavares / Robert Knight soul hits with a sixth form girlie dance routine? Right, none. But this set features perhaps the comedy performance of the year; a soppy lovelorn ballad called, wait for it, Arnold Schwarzenegger - "Cause Arnold Schwarzenegger is in all your dreams each night / Where Arnold Schwarzenegger gets to kiss and hold you tight / But he couldn't begin to kiss you like I could ..." Quite, lads, quite.

★

Steve Morris

RE-ISSUES

MARVIN GAYE

The Very Best Of (Motown)

For The Very Last Time (Music De Luxe)

The generously packed, 22 track best of set concentrates, not unnaturally, on Gaye's commercial high points. Thus there are eight duets included (with Diana Ross, Kim Weston and Tammi Terrell) alongside his solo successes. The high points are too numerous to list but amply illustrate the life long dichotomy that pulled him from spiritual to carnal delight, both of which he elucidated in vocal tones capable of simultaneous baptism and seduction.

For The Very Last Time is a budget set taped on his very last tour and whilst the sound quality is bootlegish (albeit via the desk) and Gaye's voice sounds narcotically ravished, the soul shines. The long workouts on Distant Lover and Sexual Healing are particularly revealing of Gaye's sublime vocal genius.

★★★★★ / ★★

Steve Morris

CURTIS MAYFIELD

Get Down To The Funky Groove (Charly)

Whilst accepting that this may not be a definitive Mayfield collection to cast an informative light onto the all star tribute that's just landed, it is a pretty impressive thirteen track lucky bag of the man's seventies sides. The elegant, supple funkiness of Freddie's Dead, Superfly and Move On Up, here in a nine minute groove version, still inform the work of the intelligent funkster, whilst the spirit of If There's A Hell Below We're All Gonna Go and Pusherman reverberates in the sound and styles of many.

Maybe Mayfield was too diffident a performer to reap the accolades landed on James Brown and Sly Stone but his intelligence is surely a far more worthy influence on the course of black music.

★★★

Sam Mitchell

VARIOUS / DEEP BEATS (Deep Beats / Castle Communications)

Castle's new Deep Beats label promises to be the serious dance fan's sound bible in the coming months if the five album launch pack is any indication. We're not simply talking hastily thrown together repackaging of here today, gone tomorrow bedroom cuts, but the beginnings of an intelligent long term overview of what is possibly music's dominant genre. The label is subdivided; ESSENTIAL DANCEFLOOR ARTISTS concentrates on one act hit compilations and kicks off with Volume 1: CROWN HEIGHTS AFFAIR and Volume 2: D TRAIN. C.H.A. came from the seventies funk school that also provided such as Brass Construction; bands taking a lead from Isaac Hayes re-draft of the blueprint. The album delivers a batch of original 12 inch mixes and a couple of remixes that point both to the timelessness of dance tracks and to the faceless manipulators that weaken the credibility of its creative claims. D Train are a different thing altogether with the synth beat of Music and You're The One For Me standing tall more than a decade after release as progenitors of today's sound. ESSENTIAL DANCEFLOOR CLASSICS VOLUME 1 follows the various artists route with a commercial batch from Shalamar, The Whispers, Bohannon, Sharon Redd and the still irritating Last Night A DJ Saved My Life. ESSENTIAL UNDERGROUND DANCEFLOOR CLASSICS VOLUME 1 digs deep with names that are possibly hip passwords only though an ear to many of them reveals sounds that have been sample staples. ESSENTIAL HI-NRG CLASSICS VOLUME 1 is perhaps the most intriguing, culling, as it does, eleven cuts from the early eighties hey day of US west coast 'gay' disco. The electro sound on display being the obvious father of techno with Patrick Cowley the guiding light.

All discs are well annotated and well mastered suggesting that this is the beginning of a reference quality series.

★★★★

Sam Mitchell

VARIOUS

New Jack Swing 3

(Mastercuts / Beechwood)

A kinda Now That's What I Call Dance for the cognoscenti; a hour long twelve cut mix of TLC, Heavy D, Wreckx-N-Effect, SMV, Mary J. Blige and more. Stir in intelligent sleeve info for a full value package.

★★★

Sam Mitchell

VARIOUS

3000 Volts Of Stax

(Stax / Ace)

Twenty one rare or previously unreleased cuts from the vaults of what I personally reckon to be the soul label - Memphis' Stax. And the man who simply has to be the best ever soul man, Otis Redding heads the list with two previously unheard gems whilst Booker T., Albert King, Eddie Floyd, Carla Thomas and The Mar-keys head the support list.

If you can't understand why Primal Scream are so keen on making pilgrimages to Memphis, listen to the guide book.

★★★★

Steve Morris

FOLK & COUNTRY

THE DEAR JANES

Sometimes I

(Swim / Castle Communications)

An Anglo-American duo of Ginny Cleve and Barbara

Marsh, the immediate comparison is with the Roches and Indigo Girls (and perhaps even Dory Previn), not just because it's girls with folksy roots, close harmonies and acoustic guitars, but because they share a similar quirkily gentle humour and poignancy approach to their songwriting and subject matter. Prime example is the first track, Girl Of Your Dreams ("sweeter than the girl next door your mother's house"), a touching ugly duckling "I just want to be liked...a lot" number that slowly reveals its psycho colours when it gets to comparisons such as "sharper than the cleaver waving behind your head" and "softer than the snake I hung on the chandelier". Other gems address convent education (Brides Of The Cross), death (Outside My Window), brush-off letters (Dear Jane) and masturbation (My Guilty Hand), adding up to an album that manages to be both naive and world weary, and well worth letting your ears share some time with.

★★★★

Mike Davies

IRIS DE MENT

My Life (WEA)

Her debut, Infamous Angel, was one of last year's diamonds, not just in country but in contemporary music per se. Now comes what's essentially more sequel than follow-up, again addressing deeply autobiographical matters in a style that manages to be back porch and homespun without once sounding sickly sentimental or maudlin. Her blue collar Okie country roots are as evident in her achingly plaintive keening voice as the simple, classic acoustic Nashville (Carter/Louvins) approach to the music, but what really elevates DeMent is the naked emotional honesty of her songs as she sings about childhood, hard times, broken hearts and, on the album's stand-out, most affective lament, No Time To Cry, the death of her father and its clash with her own mid-life crisis. If this album doesn't make you cry, then you deserve to spend a lifetime locked in a room with Vince Gill and Garth Brooks.

★★★★★

Mike Davies

JOHN DENVER

The Flower That Shattered The Stone (Music Club)

It says much that Denver's latest album debuts on a budget label at £5.99; and it's not that he has become altruistic of late!

In fact, despite the heavyweight presence of ex Presley and Hot Band men Glen D. Hardin and James Burton and session genius Larry Knechtal (he was the piano on Bridge Over Troubled Water), the album is water weak and insipidly pale compared to Denver's commercial peak when, whatever you thought of the man, he had a certain melodic gift.

Curiously, however, Denver can still play the NEC on his rare visits, so the market for this is probably assured.

★★

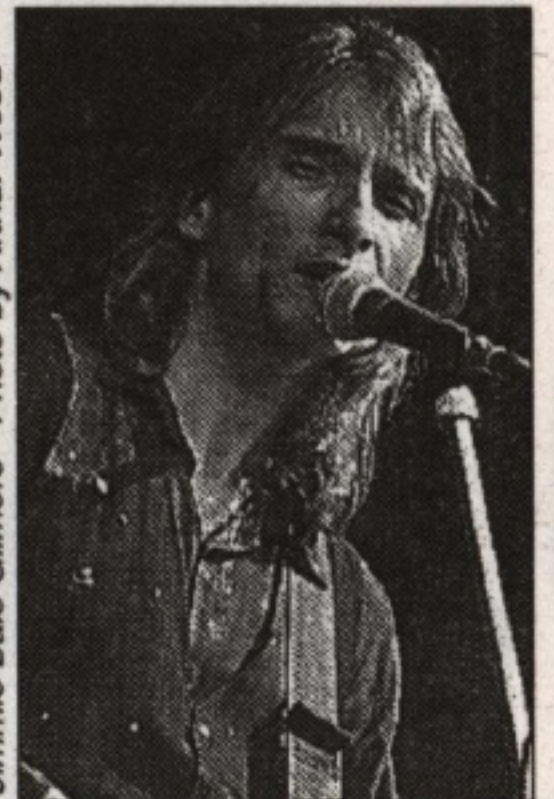
Sam Mitchell

JIMMIE DALE GILMORE & MUDHONEY

EP (Sub Pop)

The five cuts here, (hardly an album - more a quintessential fusing of Lubbock and Lollapalooza licks), include three new recordings and two previous releases. The latter being Tonight I'm Going To Go Downtown from Jimmie's 1991 Elektra album After Awhile and Mudhoney's Blinding Sun from their 1992 Reprise release Piece Of Cake. Tonight ... also opens proceedings with Mudhoney

Jimmie Dale Gilmore - Photo by Arthur Wood



giving Jimmie's classic country anthem some serious Seattle sonic surgery. Returning the favour, Jimmie reprises Blinding Sun and then, the inheritor of Hank's vocal chords joins forces with Mark Arm and the boys, for a rendition of Townes Van Zandt's Buckskin Stallion Blues.

So there you have it. Issued by Seattle's own Sub Pop indie label, I can't see this one gaining a UK release. Guess it's a case of shelling out the shekels for an import copy. Well worth the effort though.

★★★★

Arthur Wood

(Note: It may be that our very own record industry balance of trade deficit, Arthur Wood, obtained a mortgage for an import of this gem, but for the rest of us Sub Pop have released it in the UK at standard prices! Ed.)

JIMMY LAFAVE Highway Trance

(Bohemia Beat / Import)

Now and again, you stumble across a recording where every single piece fits. LaFave's latest poetic gemstones are stunning, being a mix of raucous red dirt (blues tinged) rockers and gentle, perceptive ballads. The players definitely lost all their socks by the time these recording sessions were over.

Raised in neighbouring Oklahoma, LaFave returned to the state of his birth and settled in Austin, Texas circa 1985. In those days, he merged his nights performing on the stages of Sixth Street clubs, with days spent dragging sixteen wheels down the long and winding road (OK, Interstate). With the onset of the nineties and the passing of an assortment of pickers and drummers, LaFave's Night Tribe evolved into one of the tightest quintets in a town over endowed with classy musicians. On Highway Trance the cast of supporting players is drawn from Austin's best, including Gene Elders (fiddle) and Brian Wood (acoustic guitar).

The fifteen tunes on this self produced collection were all composed by Jimmy, except for the Kevin Welch ballad Early Summer Rain, and the rowdy Austin After Midnight co-written with previous LaFave collaborator, Bob Childers.

Just a few reasons to be ecstatic - the politically incorrect sexual references on Shakin' In Your Hips, the angst in Elders' fiddle on the outro to Give Your Sweet Love To Me, the sacred tears raining down, Webb's cheesy 60's Farfisa on the bluesy Leslie, Talk To Me, my perception of heaven - aka Austin After Midnight, those gypsy patterns in Every Line Of Your Face, Larry Wilson's chunky blues guitar throughout, and so own ... Most of all, it's the words and melodies of Jimmy LaFave.

Jon Landau, Jon Landau the catchphrase to recall ...

★★★★★

Arthur Wood

Tom Russell & Barrence Whitfield



TOM RUSSELL & BARRENCE WHITFIELD

Cowboy Mambo (Round Tower)

In which the great roots rocker Russell regroups with

R&B shouter Whitfield to prove that musical lightning does, indeed, refuse to strike twice.

The duo's last outing Hillbilly Voodoo was a fresh brew with Whitfield's exuberant blueswailing and Russell's refined country hues adding complementing spices to the listening liquor.

Here, though their personal party is still in swing, the product fails to effervesce. The covers of The Band's Daniel And The Sacred Harp and Steve Earle's Devil's Right Hand are at best perfunctory whilst the take on Richard Thompson's I Want To See The Bright Lights Tonight is woefully misguided. And then there's the Tribute To Ukulele Ike - Insufficient Sweetie. Complete with ersatz 78 surface noise, it's so coy as to be laughable.

Time for both guys to do what they do best - alone.

★★

Steve Morris

RAFA RUSSO Despite Myself (Mauve)

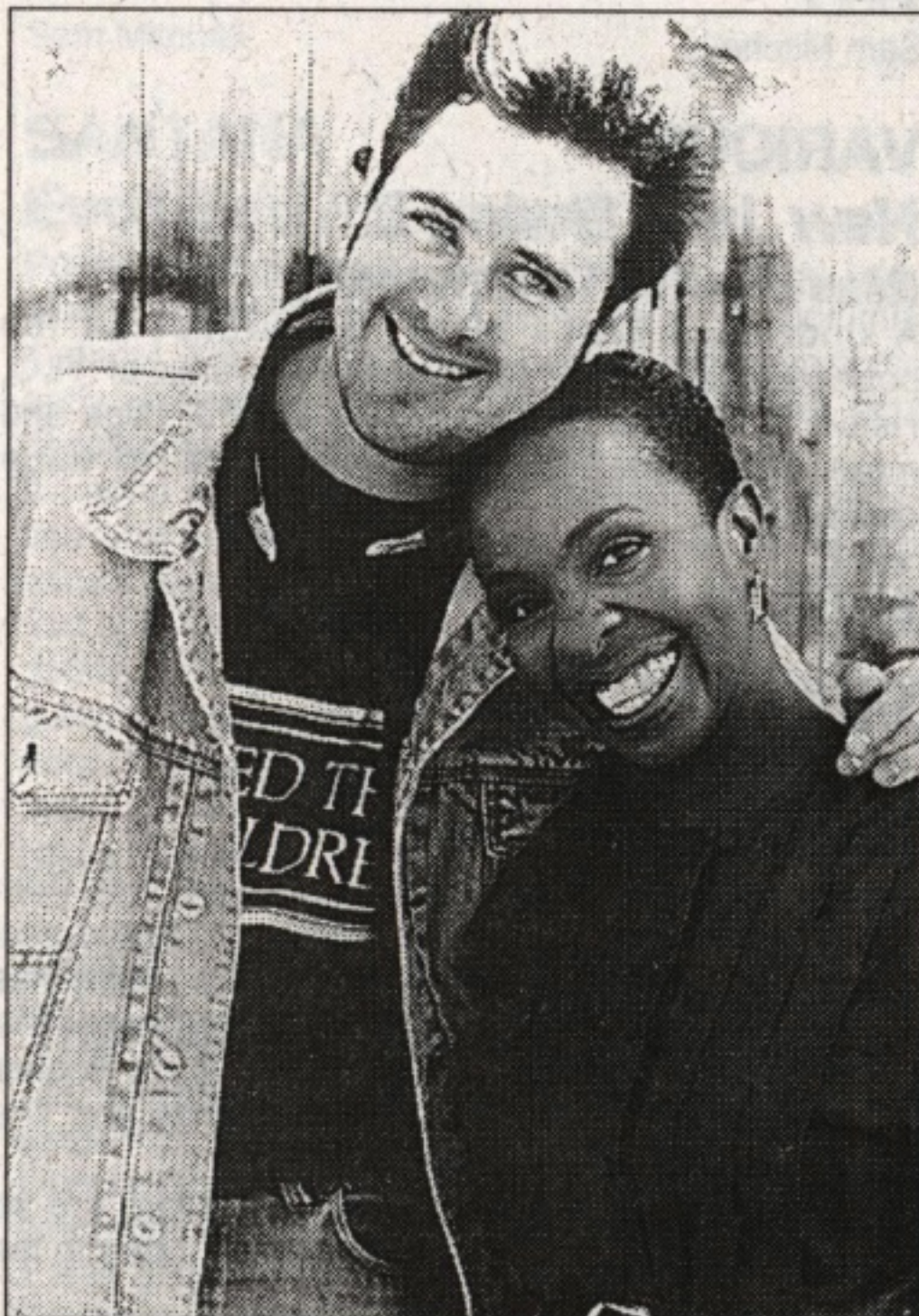
From Spain by way of Argentinean parents and a brief stint in Greenwich Village, singer-songwriter Russo's second album drips 60s troubadour melodies with a warm, almost buttery voice draped across a collection of songs recounting his own experiences and personality schisms of the past couple of years. There's dabs of blues and jazz

here and there, but the dominant style's rootsy pop in almost a cross between David Blue and Lloyd Cole, and there's no question but that he writes both articulate (if occasionally pretentious) lyrics and hummable tunes, none more so than on the unshakeably infectious Clouds Going Round My Head. Not an essential album, but one you'll find yourself playing on a regular basis if you ever acquire a copy.

★★★

Mike Davies

Vince Gill & Gladys Knight



VARIOUS Rhythm Country And Blues (MCA)

The proposition of this album, that R&B and country are basically the same, is sound. Indeed, some years ago, the legendary Willie Mitchell told me that when he was producing Al Green's classics in Memphis, far from wanting to make soul sides, Al was trying to make country records.

It's fitting, then, that of the eleven duets that pair a country singer with a soul stylist, Al Green, in the company of Lyle Lovett, is one of the few to succeed. He and Lyle's Funny How Time Slips Away marries the musics perfectly, then with Al's long-time ambition

and Lyle's blues dabbling with his big band, that outcome could be predicted.

Less predictable is the ordinariness of teaming Clint Black with The Pointer Sisters, Marty Stuart with The Staple Singers, Vince Gill with Gladys Knight and so on. They all sound, well, perfunctory, as if it was done for a Vegas supper show. The imagination was sure left at home.

On the plus side George Jones hams it up with B.B. King on Patches, Aaron Neville gels with Trisha Yearwood on I Fall To Pieces and Sam Moore (of Sam & Dave) sounds great with the late Conway Twitty on Rainy Night In Georgia, even though Moore's ad libbing at the fade is beyond Twitty's country style. And why does the track end with Moore's anguished sounding cry of 'Conway!' - very spooky in view of Twitty's soon after, untimely end.

★★★

Steve Morris

RE-ISSUES

PHIL OCHS All The News That's Fit To Sing / I Ain't Marching Any- more (Hannibal)

It may seem superfluous to reissue this pair of albums from 1964 / 1965, especially as their content is rooted in the journalistic approach to folk that dominated the new writers of the time. It is not though, that simple. Ochs, a trained journalist incidentally, was a complex character and an observant writer whose influence has endured the passing decades. Indeed it is nigh on impossible to hear Billy Bragg without hearing Phil Ochs.

Further, put simply, Ochs' subject matter was, in broad terms, the subjugation of humanity to fear, poverty, violence and indignity in all forms and whilst the sands of the specifics may have momentarily shifted; until all injustice is erased the songs have relevance. And whilst many of Ochs' protest singer contemporaries were simple sloganeers, his language was, and remains, educated, focused and laser sharp.

Sadly, one can't help but feel that Ochs, who committed suicide in 1976, would find the continued relevance of these works rather depressing.

★★★★ (each)

Steve Morris

BLUES & JAZZ

BILL FRISELL This Land (Elektra Nonesuch)

For one horrible moment, the opening bars had me thinking that this was Frisell's application for a place in Garth Brooks' band, but thankfully that soon passed and normality - or at least, what stands for normality in Frisell's mind - was restored.

Don't let Elektra Nonesuch's classical music pedigree fool you - this is jazz in the Windham Hill/ ECM sense of the word, although I don't think anyone's mixed waltz and tango rhythms (in one tune!) on either label.

★★★

Andy Mabbett

JIMI HENDRIX Blues (Polydor)

It's no knee-jerk, cow-towing to the album title that finds Hendrix in the Blues reviews. OK, so he re-directed forever, the course of rock guitar playing, but never forget, that even at his furthest out, he was playing the blues. A black musician on the roads of the USA in the early sixties, civil rights marches and

protest songs notwithstanding, lived the blues. The daily life was not roadies and riders but segregation, distrust and hatred. The music that flowed in his veins and dreams was not formative Vai or Satriani, but something closer to the legacy of Robert Johnson.

Here, among a selection of unreleased and brilliantly remastered rarities, is some of the most hair raising guitar playing imaginable. It's music played with heart rather than head which means that sometimes it meanders, but for the majority of the time it makes the hair on the back of your neck stand tall.

Whichever way you look at it, Hendrix transcends nostalgia and this release, no matter how familiar you think you are with his music, still hits home with the force of a wondrous new discovery.

★★★★★

Steve Morris



Pops Staples

POPS STAPLES

Father Father (Virgin / Pointblank)

Yeah, it was a problem deciding whether the legendary pater of the Staples was a soulman or a blues singer (and what if anything separates the genres), but the folk tinged homely qualities of this fine set tipped the balance.

There's also a gospel flavour permeating the album and a story telling quality to much of it that sits comfortably as blues. And Pops gentle, almost frail vocal style carries more lived anguish, than today's interpretation of the soul sobriquet can accommodate.

However, whatever the classification, this is a mighty record; an eloquent and dignified expression of one man's (that word again) soul. Why Am I Treated So Bad's narrative tale of staples being with Martin Luther King at the time of the civil right's leader's assassination is apt demonstration of that.

As for the gospel flavours; they take the joyous course on Glory Glory and transmute Dylan's Gotta Serve Somebody into a palpable statement of fact rather than belief.

The musical settings will be familiar to Staples fans; it's that slinky, almost liquid rhythm that was honed during their days at Stax. Like Pops voice, it's not an emphatic approach but it too finds strength in its simplicity.

★★★★

Steve Morris

WALTER TROUT BAND

Tellin' Stories (Silvertone)

Trout's Silvertone debut finds him rehabilitated after his last album's ill advised detour into an AOR quagmire. Fronting bass, drums and keyboards, he addresses himself to some high octane blues that leave plenty of space for his guitar to soothe and

slash exactly as needed.

You've heard it all before, for sure but Trout's stories make it all worth hearing again. And that is some achievement.

★★★

Steve Morris

RE-ISSUES

VARIOUS

Six String Boogie (Music Club)

A varied mix of blues, costing under six quid and lasting for an hour and a quarter. From 1950 John Lee Hooker and Ike Turner's 1959 rip-off of Roll Over Beethoven on Prancin', via Peter and Mick Green in 1985, to two live tracks recorded by U.P. Wilson in '92. What more do you want - blood? A true bargain, in anybody's book.

★★★★

Andy Mabbett

REGGAE & WORLD

VARIOUS

Sekunjalo - The Time Is Now / The Official ANC Album (Mango)

Twelve songs, commissioned by the ANC for voter education, this album is, as you might guess, a pretty exuberant musical affair.

Imagine being Hugh Masekela, responsible for not only his own fine Come On, Everybody, but for the set's final production; you've spent a fair chunk of your life in exile because of the foul politics of your homeland and now you're co-ordinating a record of voter awareness for the first election you can take part in, at the age of 55!

A quite remarkable notion, in every way.

More than an album, more a document of hope and deserved optimism.

★★★

Steve Morris

RE-ISSUES

GREGORY ISAACS / DENNIS BROWN

Two Bad Superstars (Trojan)

Two stars, a dozen tracks but only three vocals a piece. Don't be deterred though, 'cos in time honoured tradition each voiced rhythm glides easily into the dub for maximum pleasure; especially when it's Gregory's Loving Pauper or DEB's Let Love In. This is classic stuff, indeed. Good songs, slippery, sensual rhythms and a human feel. Shame they forgot the producer and musician credits tho'.

Sam Mitchell

CLASSICAL

DVORAK

Dvorak in Prague -

A Celebration

Boston Symphony Orchestra (Sony)

Dvorak is one of the breed of composers damned to be forever remembered for one piece of music - his

'Hovis' symphony, the ninth. This live programme, mixing short pieces and part-works, goes some way to redressing that unfair curse. Recorded in Prague with some heavy-weight guest artists (Yo Yo Ma is the cellist) the BSO show that the Carnival Overture, Slavonic Dances, religious songs and others are equally worthy of attention.

★★★★

Andy Mabbett

MARIO LANZA

The Ultimate Collection

(RCA Victor)

The first rock'n'roll tenor, this man. Lanza was an acknowledged influence on Jose Carreras and must have been known to Domingo and Pavarotti, but because no one knew how to market a classical matinee idol in the fifties he took the pop route via film musicals and 'light' classics.

Curiously Mario was also a great influence on Elvis Presley, Presley's It's Now Or Never is Lanza's O Sole Mio, and Lanza's lifestyle became Elvis'. For whilst super Mario may have taken the dollars, he couldn't take the pressure and attempted to dilute it with food, drink and drugs. Indeed, he could be seen as the first superstar death of the rock age, dying, I'm told by a reliable source, from inhalation of his own vomit on the doorstep of his mansion, having been locked out by a long suffering wife, rather than because of a heart attack in a clinic bed as the sanitised biogs have it.

This seventy five minute set is the tip of the legacy which suggests that he was simply four decades too early. Now, his talent would fill the NEC and his hell raising would fill The Sun.

Steve Morris

MICHAEL NYMAN

The Piano Concerto/ MG.V.

Kathryn Stott/ Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra (Argo)

Having enthused about Nyman's score for The Piano in Brum Beat 152, I now beg your indulgence as I positively rave about the concerto he has developed from that music. Delegating the piano role to Stott allows Nyman to concentrate his conducting, 'playing' the RLPO like some grand instrument, equally as bold and brash as his playing for the soundtrack was delicate and mysterious.

The accompanying 'Musique A Grande Vitesse' (an unfortunate title for a piece written to mark the repeatedly delayed opening of the Channel Tunnel), re-unites Nyman's Band, including the Balanescu Quartet and John Harle. The line-up alone will draw those already signed up to the Nyman 'cause', while the music will attract new converts.

Initial pressings include a free Argo sampler.

★★★★★

Andy Mabbett

LUCIANO PAVAROTTI

The Greatest Concert Performances 1961 - 1971

(Music De Luxe)

A set for the devotee rather than casual fan, this one. The performances are as assured as expected from Pavarotti and the material as varied. A version of Nessun Dorma from '64, La Diona E mobile from '68, a superb Kyrie Eleison from '70 and so on. However the sleeve annotation is scant and the provenance of the recordings challenging. The sound is irritatingly lo-fi, giving several performances a bucket like ambience that distracts from the artistry.

★

Steve Morris

BRUM BEAT GIG GUIDE

Please send details of the event, band, name of show plus some background if possible, along with the address and phone number of the venue with booking details and ticket prices. If you have a good photograph, it could help too. Take note that without such info your gig could go unlisted as we need to give your potential audience as much reason to come along as we can.

The deadline for the Gig Guide is the sixteenth of the month preceeding the cover date, though you can send info as far ahead as you wish. Send it to Gig Guide, Brum Beat, 54 Canterbury Road, Wolverhampton, WV4 4EH.

Blues/Jazz

1 May

- **ADE & THE SMOKIN BLUES BAND:** Tickets Free - Saddlers Arms, Warwick Road, Solihull. Tel: 021 705 2938.
- **ENDANGERED SPECIES / BONA FIDE:** - The Alcatraz Club, Waterworks Road, Edgbaston, Birmingham. Tel: 021 471 1437.
- **KING PLEASURE AND THE BISCUIT BOYS:** Tickets £10 - Ronnie Scott's Club, Broad Street, Birmingham. Tel: 021 643 4525.
- **SHIVA NOVA:** - MAC, Cannon Hill Park, Birmingham. Tel: 021 440 3838.

2 May

- **ALAN BARNES QUINTET:** Jazz. 8pm Tickets £6(£5) - Lichfield Arts Centre, Bird Street, Lichfield. Tel: 0543 262223.
- **ADE & THE SMOKIN BLUES BAND:** Tickets Free - The Station Inn, Kings Heath. Tel: 021 444 1257.
- **BILL ALLRED BAND:** Tickets £8 - Ronnie Scott's Club, Broad Street, Birmingham. Tel: 021 643 4525.

3 May

- **FOUR MEN & A DOG:** traditional Irish band. Tickets £5(£4) - Hibernian, 1063 Pershore Rd, Selly Park. Tel: 021 472 0136.
- **BILL ALLRED BAND:** Tickets £8 - Ronnie Scott's Club, Broad Street, Birmingham. Tel: 021 643 4525.

4 May

- **CHARLY ANTOLINI WITH JAZZ POWER:** Tickets £8 - Ronnie Scott's Club, Broad Street, Birmingham. Tel: 021 643 4525.

5 May

- **BLIND JUSTICE:** 8pm Tickets £1.50 - The Wheatshaf R&B Club, Stafford Road, Cannock. Tel: 0543 503109.
- **CANDY DULFER & FUNKY STUFF:** Jazz. 8pm Tickets £9.50/£8(£5) - Birmingham Town Hall, Chamberlain Square, Birmingham. Tel: 021 236 2392.
- **CHARLY ANTOLINI WITH JAZZ POWER:** Tickets £8 - Ronnie Scott's Club, Broad Street,

Birmingham. Tel: 021 643 4525.

- **HELEN WATSON:** blues. Tickets £4(£3) - Hibernian, 1063 Pershore Rd, Selly Park. Tel: 021 472 0136.
- **JOHN MARTYN:** 8pm Tickets £8 - Oakengates Theatre, Town Hall, Oakengates, Telford. Tel: 0952 619020.

6 May

- **ADE & THE SMOKIN BLUES BAND:** Tickets Free - The Lamp Tavern, Barford Street, Birmingham. Tel: 021 622 2599.
- **CHARLY ANTOLINI WITH JAZZ POWER:** Tickets £8 - Ronnie Scott's Club, Broad Street, Birmingham. Tel: 021 643 4525.
- **JON STRONG BAND:** Folk-rock - Hibernian, 1063 Pershore Rd, Selly Park. Tel: 021 472 0136.
- **KIERAN HALPIN:** - Woodman Folk Club, Kingswinford

7 May

- **CHARLY ANTOLINI WITH JAZZ POWER:** Tickets £8 - Ronnie Scott's Club, Broad Street, Birmingham. Tel: 021 643 4525.
- **MICK PINI BAND:** 8pm Tickets £3.50(£3) - Lichfield Arts Centre, Bird Street, Lichfield. Tel: 0543 262223.
- **REV BROWN AND THE EARLY BIRDS:** - The Breerton Bar, Pershore Road, Birmingham. Tel: 021 459 6573.
- **RORY MCLEOD:** - Red Lion, Vicarage Road, Kings Heath
- **THE DUBLINERS:** 7 May, 7.30pm Tickets £12.50-£8.50 - Birmingham Town Hall, Birmingham. Tel: 021 236 2392.

8 May

- **UNDER NEW DEVELOPMENT:** - The Breerton Bar, Pershore Road, Birmingham. Tel: 021 459 6573.

9 May

- **MADLINE BELL:** Tickets £10 - Ronnie Scott's Club, Broad Street, Birmingham. Tel: 021 643 4525.

10 May

- **MADLINE BELL:** Tickets £10 - Ronnie Scott's Club, Broad Street, Birmingham. Tel: 021 643 4525.
- **TABBY THOMAS:** 8pm - Bear Tavern, Bearwood, Birmingham. Tel: 021 429 1989.

11 May

- **MADLINE BELL:** Tickets £10 - Ronnie Scott's Club, Broad Street, Birmingham. Tel: 021 643 4525.

12 May

- **MADLINE BELL:** Tickets £10 - Ronnie Scott's Club, Broad Street, Birmingham. Tel: 021 643 4525.
- **NEW BUSHBERRY MOUNTAIN DAREDEVILS:** Hibernian, 1063 Pershore Rd, Selly Park. Tel: 021 472 0136.
- **THE BACK STREET BOYS:** 8pm Tickets £1.50 - The Wheatshaf R&B Club, Stafford Road, Cannock. Tel: 0543 503109.

13 May

- **MADLINE BELL:** Tickets £10 - Ronnie Scott's Club, Broad Street, Birmingham. Tel: 021 643 4525.
- **REV BROWN AND THE EARLY BIRDS:** - The Bear, Bearwood, Birmingham. Tel: 021 429 1989.

14 May

- **MADLINE BELL:** Tickets £10 - Ronnie Scott's Club, Broad Street, Birmingham. Tel: 021 643 4525.
- **SHARON SHANNON:** Irish accordion player. - Hibernian, 1063 Pershore Rd, Selly Park. Tel: 021 472 0136.

15 May

- **THE BEER BELLY BOYS:** Lunchtime Admission Free - J.B.'s Club, Kings St, Dudley. Tel: 0384 253597.
- **CRUCIAL MUSIC / BASS ELEMENT:** - The Alcatraz Club, Waterworks Road, Edgbaston, Birmingham. Tel: 021 471 1437.
- **THEO TRAVIS AND BROAD STREET CHANGES:** - MAC, Cannon Hill Park, Birmingham. Tel: 021 440 3838.

16 May

- **ADE & THE SMOKIN BLUES BAND:** Tickets Free - The Station Inn, Kings Heath. Tel: 021 444 1257.
- **CAROL KIDD:** Tickets £9 - Ronnie Scott's Club, Broad Street, Birmingham. Tel: 021 643 4525.

17 May

- **ANTHONY BRAXTON AND THE CREATIVE JAZZ ORCHESTRA:** Tickets £7 - MAC, Cannon Hill Park, Birmingham. Tel: 021 440 3838.
- **CAROL KIDD:** Tickets £9 - Ronnie Scott's Club, Broad Street, Birmingham. Tel: 021 643 4525.

18 May

- **CAROL KIDD:** Tickets £9 - Ronnie Scott's Club, Broad Street, Birmingham. Tel: 021 643 4525.

19 May

- **CAROL KIDD:** Tickets £9 - Ronnie Scott's Club, Broad Street, Birmingham. Tel: 021 643 4525.

- **MEAN TOWN BLUES:** 8pm Tickets £1.50 - The Wheatshaf R&B Club, Stafford Road, Cannock. Tel: 0543 503109.

20 May

- **ADE & THE SMOKIN BLUES BAND:** Tickets Free - The Lamp Tavern, Barford Street, Birmingham. Tel: 021 622 2599.
- **CAROL KIDD:** Tickets £9 - Ronnie Scott's Club, Broad Street, Birmingham. Tel: 021 643 4525.

21 May

- **ALIAS RON KAVANA:** Red Lion, Vicarage Road, Kings Heath
- **CAROL KIDD:** Tickets £9 - Ronnie Scott's Club, Broad Street, Birmingham. Tel: 021 643 4525.

22 May

- **MARLENE VERPLANK:** 2pm Tickets £8 - Ronnie Scott's Club, Broad Street, Birmingham. Tel: 021 643 4525.

23 May

- **ADE & THE SMOKIN BLUES BAND:** Tickets Free - The Station Inn, Kings Heath. Tel: 021 444 1257.

26 May

- **EARL KLUGH:** 7.30pm Tickets £12 - Birmingham Town Hall, Chamberlain Square, Birmingham. Tel: 021 236 2392.

27 May

- **JOHN MARTYN:** 8pm Tickets £9.50-£7.50 - Birmingham Town Hall, Birmingham. Tel: 021 236 2392.
- **RICKY COOL & THE HOOLA BOOLA BOYS:** 8.30pm - Bank House, High St, Knowle, Solihull. Tel: 0564 779907.

28 May

- **VIN GARBUTT:** Red Lion, Vicarage Road, Kings Heath

30 May

- **RAPID TRANSIT:** Tickets £8 - Ronnie Scott's Club, Broad Street, Birmingham. Tel: 021 643 4525.

31 May

- **DIRTY DOZEN BRASS BAND:** The legendary New Orleans outfit who once backed Elvis Costello. Tickets £10 - Ronnie Scott's Club, Broad Street, Birmingham. Tel: 021 643 4525.

Classical And Theatre

- **LADY WINDERMERE'S FAN:** by Oscar Wilde. 15 Apr-14 May, 7.30pm Birmingham Repertory Theatre Broad Street, Birmingham. 021 236 4455
- **STAGS AND HENS:** By Willy Russell. 23 Apr-7 May, 7.30pm Tickets £3-£6 Crescent Theatre Cumberland Street, Birmingham 021 643 5858

1 May

- **SUNDAY AFTERNOON CONCERT:** Bell'Arte Ensemble. 2.30pm Tickets £4.50 - Symphony Hall, Broad Street, Birmingham. Tel: 021 212 3333.

3 May

- **A DOLL'S HOUSE:** Arena Theatre University Of Wolverhampton, Wolverhampton 0902 322380
- **CLAIRVOYANT - STEPHEN O'BRIEN:** 7.30pm Tickets £8-£6 Birmingham Town Hall Chamberlain Square, Birmingham 021 236 2392
- **JOSHUA BELL, VIOLIN & OLLI MUSTONEN, PIANO:** Celebrity Recital - Beethoven, Prokofiev & Weber. 8pm Tickets £5 - £17.50 - Symphony Hall, Birmingham. Tel: 021 212 3333.
- **MEN: The Barrogs.** Irish musical. 3-7 May, 8pm. Also Thur 1.30pm, Sat 2.30pm Tickets £5.50(£4.20) MAC, Cannon Hill Park, Edgbaston, Birmingham, 021 440 3838
- **WEST END SHOWSTOPPERS:** 7.30pm Tickets £5.50-£10.50 Grand Theatre Lichfield Street, Wolverhampton 0902 29212

4 May

- **IN YOUR FACE:** presented by Gay Sweatshop. 7.30pm Tickets £4(£2). Arena Theatre University Of Wolverhampton, Wolverhampton 0902 322380
- **ENGLISH SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA:** 8pm Tickets £17.50-£5 - Symphony Hall, Birmingham. Tel: 021 212 3333.
- **NO MAN'S LAND:** Presented by Garden Productions - Peepolykus. 7.30pm Tickets £4(£2) Arena Theatre University Of Wolverhampton, Wolverhampton 0902 322380
- **THAT'LL BE THE DAY:** Rock 'N' Roll Show. 5 May, 7.30pm Tickets £5.50-£10.50 Grand Theatre Lichfield Street, Wolverhampton 0902 29212

5 May

- **CLASSIC FM - MEDICI STRING QUARTET SERIES:** The Mind of Music, Aspects of Love - The Harmony of Hormones. 7.30pm Tickets £8(£5) - Adrian Boulton Hall, Paradise Place, Birmingham B3 3HG. Tel: 021 236 2392.
- **DIRK BOGARDE:** By Myself. 6 May, 7.30pm

6 May

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- **DIRK BOGARDE:** By Myself. 6 May, 7.30pm

Tickets £5.50(3.50) Birmingham Town Hall Chamberlain Square, Birmingham 021 236 2392

8 May

- **CLASSIC FM - MEDICI STRING QUARTET SERIES - THE MIND OF MUSIC:** Mozart's Journey to Prague. 7.30pm Tickets £8(£5) - Adrian Boulton Hall, Paradise Place, Birmingham B3 3HG. Tel: 021 236 2392.

9 May

- **ONLY THE LONELY:** Roy Orbison Tribute Musical. Runs until May 14. - The Alexandra Theatre, Birmingham. Tel: 021 643 5488.

10 May

- **LET YOURSELF GO:** Cancer Research Players. 7.30pm. Sat mat 2.30pm Tickets £4.50-£14.50 Grand Theatre Lichfield Street, Wolverhampton 0902 29212

16 May

- **THE DAY AFTER TOMORROW:** by Roel Adam, a play for 4-7 year olds. 16-21 May, 10am & 2pm Tickets £4 Birmingham Repertory Theatre Broad Street, Birmingham. 021 236 4455

17 May

- **MOTI ROTI, PUTTLI CHUNNI:** Thick Bread, Thin Veils. Hindi film drama on stage presented by Moti Roti Company. 17-21 May, 7.30pm Tickets £5-£10 Birmingham Repertory Theatre Broad Street, Birmingham. 021 236 4455
- **POSTMAN PAT'S ADVENTURES:** 10am, 2 & 6pm Tickets £2.50-£7.50 Grand Theatre Lichfield Street, Wolverhampton 0902 29212

18 May

- **ONE SHOT:** Snarling Beasts. 8pm Tickets £5.50(£4.20). MAC, Cannon Hill Park, Edgbaston, Birmingham, 021 440 3838
- **THE BIRMINGHAM ENSEMBLE:** Dohnanyi, Shoenberg & Dvorak. 7.30pm Tickets £8-£5 - Birmingham Town Hall, Chamberlain Square, Birmingham. Tel: 021 236 2392.

19 May

- **BRIMSTONE & TREACLE:** Big Black Boots. Dark comedy from Dennis Potter. 19-21 May, 7.45pm Tickets £3.50(£2.50) MAC, Cannon Hill Park, Edgbaston, Birmingham, 021 440 3838
- **HAMLET - HORATIO'S TALE:** Maverick Theatre. 19-21 May, 8pm Tickets £5.50(£4.20) MAC, Cannon Hill Park, Edgbaston, Birmingham, 021 440 3838
- **MOSCOW VIRTUOSI:** Shostakovich, Britten, Avro Part & Schnittke: Vladimir Spivakov, Director/Soloist with Neil Mackie, tenor. 8pm Tickets £5 - £22.50 - Symphony Hall, Broad Street, Birmingham. Tel: 021 212 3333.

23 May

- **Fragile:** Physical theatre performed by The Pathway Theatre Company. 23 May. MAC, Cannon Hill Park, Edgbaston, Birmingham, 021 440 3838
- **The Miracle Worker:** by William Gibson, starring Jenny Seagrove. 7.30pm. Wed & Sat Mat 2.30pm Tickets £4.50-£14.50 Grand Theatre Lichfield Street, Wolverhampton 0902 29212

24 May

- **The Prime Minister's Daughter:** Commercially Viable present this new comedy thriller. 24-25 May, 8pm Tickets £4.50(£3). MAC, Cannon Hill Park, Edgbaston, Birmingham, 021 440 3838

25 May

- **MICKEY & ME!** The Sir Barry Jackson Tour, for 11-14 years. 25-28 May Birmingham Repertory Theatre Broad Street, Birmingham. 021 236 4455

26 May

- **FUN WITH THE DOUBLE BASS:** Masterclass & concert with Duncan McTier & Kathron Sturrock. Tickets £1 for masterclass, £5(£2.50) for concert. Masterclass 1.15pm. Concert 7.30pm - Dudley Music Centre, Dudley. Tel: 0384 250333.
- **TOUCHED:** Might & Main present this blend of mime, dance & vocal acrobatics. 26 May, 8pm Tickets £5.50(£4.20). MAC, Cannon Hill Park, Edgbaston, Birmingham, 021 440 3838

27 May

- **DANGEROUS WHEN WET:** Claire Russ Ensemble. 27 May, 8pm Tickets £5.50(£4.20) MAC, Cannon Hill Park, Edgbaston, Birmingham, 021 440 3838
- **THE PLAYBOY OF THE WESTERN WORLD:** by J M Synge. 27 May-25 Jun. 7.30pm Birmingham Repertory Theatre Broad Street, Birmingham. 021 236 4455

28 May

- **Figaro - The Untold Tale:** Compact Opera. 28 May, 8pm Tickets £6.50(£4.75) MAC, Cannon Hill Park, Edgbaston, Birmingham, 021 440 3838

2 June

- **The Marriage of Figaro:** performed by Crystal Clear Opera. 7.30pm Tickets £6.50-£16.50 Grand Theatre Lichfield Street, Wolverhampton 0902 29212

3 June

- **Tosca:** performed by Crystal Clear Opera. 3-4 Jun, 7.30pm Tickets £6.50-£16.50 Grand Theatre Lichfield Street, Wolverhampton 0902 29212

Coming Soon

1 June

- **CRY OF LOVE:** Tickets £6 - Wulfrun Hall, North Street, Wolverhampton. Tel: 0902 312030.

4 June

- **GENO WASHINGTON AND THE RAM JAM BAND:** Hancloppinfootstompinfunkbutt... still doing it two and a half decades on! - The Robin R&B Club, Merry Hill, Brierley Hill nr. Du. Tel: 0384 458826.

5 June

- **MICK GREANEY:** Talented local singer writer plays a prestige showcase. Tickets £5 - Ronnie Scott's Club, Broad Street, Birmingham. Tel: 021 643 4525.

Events

7 May

- **BIRMINGHAM READERS AND WRITERS FESTIVAL:** Runs through to May 14 and features such diverse writers as Brian Keenan, Vikram Seth, Claire Rayner, Susie Orbach. Full details from the Festival Office. - The MAC, Cannon Hill Park, Birmingham. Tel: 021 235 4244.

14 May

- **HANCOCK'S WHOLE DAY:** A celebration of Tony Hancock with two triple bills of famous and rarely seen material. - MAC, Cannon Hill Park, Birmingham. Tel: 021 440 4221.

Rock And Pop

1 May

- **NCP:** - The Breerton Bar, Pershore Road, Birmingham. Tel: 021 459 6573.
- **THE JOURNEYMEN / MIKE SANCHEZ:** - The Robin R&B Club, Merry Hill, Brierley Hill nr. Du. Tel: 0384 458826.
- **THE SOUL SURVIVORS:** - JB's, King Street, Dudley. Tel: 03840 253597.

2 May

- **BABY FACE:** - The Wheatshaf, Stafford Road, Cannock. Tel: 0543 503109.
- **COMPANY OF STRANGERS / MAN BONE ENVY:** - The Robin R&B Club, Merry Hill, Brierley Hill nr. Du. Tel: 0384 458826.
- **IN-PACKT & APES - PIGS & SPACEMEN:** 8pm Admission Free - J.B.'s Club, Kings St, Dudley. Tel: 0384 253597.
- **JUST US:** Admission Free - White Lion, Birmingham City Centre, Birmingham. Tel: 021 692 1071.
- **PULP:** Tickets £6.50 - Wulfrun Hall, North Street, Wolverhampton. Tel: 0902 312030.
- **SORDID DETAILS / TRIBUTE TO NOTHING:** - The Breerton Bar, Pershore Road, Birmingham. Tel: 021 459 6573.
- **THE FORCE:** One of six bands taking part in the Kids International event... 11.15 am to 6pm - Town Park, Telford
- **TORI AMOS / THE DIVINE COMEDY:** Sold Out! Maybe there'll be someone outside the venue with a second hand ticket for sale.... - Civic Hall, North Street, Wolverhampton. Tel: 0902 312030.

3 May

- **FESTIVE ROAD - EX PRESIDENTS:** 8pm Admission Free - J.B.'s Club, Kings St, Dudley. Tel: 0384 253597.
- **ROACHFORD:** - Edwards No 8, John Bright Street, Birmingham
- **THE BUZZCOCKS / THESE ANIMAL MEN:** Tickets £9 - Civic Hall, North Street, Wolverhampton. Tel: 0902 312030.
- **THE SOUL SURVIVORS:** - Austin Sports & Social Club, Tessall Lane, Northfield. Tel: 021 475 1613.
- **VELVET UNDERPANTS / MILE HIGH SMILE:** - The Breerton Bar, Pershore Road, Birmingham. Tel: 021 459 6573.

4 May

- **31/2 LOVE STREET / SHOOT THE MOON / HORIZON DREAM:** - The Robin R&B Club, Merry Hill, Brierley Hill nr. Du. Tel: 0384 458826.
- **PAGAN MOON:** Acoustic Night. Tickets Free - The Breerton Bar, Pershore Road, Birmingham. Tel: 021 459 6573.
- **PULSE / FLOOD / DANIELS REVOLUTION:** A Robannas presentation. - The Ship Ashore, Moor Street, Birmingham. Tel: 021 643 7669.
- **ROUGHNECK:** - The Hibernian, Pershore Road, Birmingham. Tel: 021 472 0136.
- **THE FLOOD:** - Ship Ashore, Moor Street, Birmingham. Tel: 0952 588388.
- **THE STUBBLE BROTHERS:** Tickets £2.50 - Crystal Leisure Centre, Stourbridge. Tel: 0384 442255.

- **FRED ZEPELIN / THE RIPPS:** - The Robin R&B Club, Merry Hill, Brierley Hill nr. Du. Tel: 0384 458826.
- **HARBOURING MONSTERS:** - The Breedon Bar, Pershore Road, Birmingham. Tel: 021 459 6573.
- **NAPALM DEATH:** - The Que Club, Corporation Street, Birmingham
- **STEVE HOWE:** *The legendary Yes guitar man on the solo trail though Not Necessarily Acoustic!* - Adrian Boulton Hall, Birmingham. Tel: 021 236 2392.
- **TERRORVISION / MUTHA'S DAY OUT / WISPLANTS:** - Irish Centre, High Street, Digbeth
- **THE SOUL SURVIVORS:** - Pelham Arms, Alum Rock Road, Birmingham. Tel: 021 328 6595.
- **ZIP & CHUNKS:** 8pm - J.B.'s Club, Kings St, Dudley. Tel: 0384 253597.

6 May

- **1 UP 1 DOWN:** - The Bear, Bearwood. Tel: 021 429 1184.
- **MIGHTY HOUSE ROCKERS / MOVE ON:** - The Breedon Bar, Pershore Road, Birmingham. Tel: 021 459 6573.
- **QUILL:** - The Bear Tavern, Bearwood, Birmingham. Tel: 021 429 1989.
- **RICKY COOL AND THE HULA BULA BOYS / STREET BANNED:** - The Robin R&B Club, Merry Hill, Brierley Hill nr. Du. Tel: 0384 458826.
- **SALAD:** 8pm - J.B.'s Club, Kings St, Dudley. Tel: 0384 253597.
- **THE INNOCENCE:** *Featuring ex Radio Moscow guitarist Rob James.* - The Northwick, Ombersley Road, Worcester
- **THE MACC LADS:** Tickets £7.50 - Wulfrun Hall, North Street, Wolverhampton. Tel: 0902 312030.

7 May

- **ATLANTIC SOUL MACHINE / JUMPIN' JACK FLASH:** - The Robin R&B Club, Merry Hill, Brierley Hill nr. Du. Tel: 0384 458826.
- **CORNERSTONE:** 8pm - J.B.'s Club, Kings St, Dudley. Tel: 0384 253597.
- **ROOSTERVELT:** *Don't leave the gig without buying a copy of the band's excellent Foamin' Haemoglobin CD.* - The Hibernian, Pershore Road, Birmingham. Tel: 021 472 0136.
- **SOMA:** *Featuring the choreography of Finbar O'Boogie.* - Robannas, Cliveland Street, Birmingham. Tel: 021 423 2361.
- **SPITHEAD / TANGLEFOOT / TARBRUSH / COLOURBLIND:** - The City Tavern, Broad Street, Birmingham. Tel: 021 444 2472.
- **THE FORCE:** - Coach And Horses, High Street, Bromsgrove
- **THE GARAGE BAND:** - The Greet, Tyseley, Birmingham. Tel: 021 706 0452.
- **THE SOUL SURVIVORS:** - Bloxwich Memorial Club, Harrison Street, Bloxwich. Tel: 0922 405757.

8 May

- **DEACON BLUE / THE DREAMING:** - AVLC, Birmingham
- **SECONDHEAD:** - The Hibernian, Pershore Road, Birmingham. Tel: 021 472 0136.
- **SENER:** Tickets £6.50 - Wulfrun Hall, North Street, Wolverhampton. Tel: 0902 312030.
- **STABBING WESTWARD:** *Read the feature, this issue!* - Jug Of Ale, Moseley, Birmingham
- **STEVE HOWE:** - Prince Of Wales Theatre, Cannock. Tel: 0543 578762.
- **THE GARAGE BAND:** - Olive Branch, Adderley Street, Sallay, Birmingham. Tel: 021 777 1583.
- **THE INNOCENCE:** - The Rock Tavern, Brierley Hill
- **THE JOURNEYMEN:** - The Robin R&B Club, Merry Hill, Brierley Hill nr. Du. Tel: 0384 458826.
- **THE STUBBLE BROTHERS:** 8pm - J.B.'s Club, Kings St, Dudley. Tel: 0384 253597.

9 May

- **ACCRINGTON STANLEY:** - The Breedon Bar, Pershore Road, Birmingham. Tel: 021 459 6573.
- **ADRENELIN KICK & 3 MINUTE WARNING:** 8pm Admission Free - J.B.'s Club, Kings St, Dudley. Tel: 0384 253597.
- **PRIDE / INDYA:** - The Robin R&B Club, Merry Hill, Brierley Hill nr. Du. Tel: 0384 458826.
- **SUGARLAND / NATIVES IN A CAN:** - The Hibernian, Pershore Road, Birmingham. Tel: 021 472 0136.
- **TWO RIVERS:** Tickets Free - White Lion, Smallbrook Queensway, Birmingham. Tel: 021 692 1071.

10 May

- **LACERATOR / INVERSUS:** - The Breedon Bar, Pershore Road, Birmingham. Tel: 021 459 6573.
- **THE LUMIERES / TILT:** - The Hibernian, Pershore Road, Birmingham. Tel: 021 472 0136.
- **THE SOUL SURVIVORS:** - Sawyers, Burnt Tree Island, Dudley. Tel: 021 520 2100.

11 May

- **BLUR:** Tickets £7.50 - Civic Hall, North Street, Wolverhampton. Tel: 0902 312030.
- **ELO PART 2:** *Charity gig to raise money to build a music centre at Hagley RC High School in remembrance of pupils killed in the motorway crash.* Tickets £15 / £12.50 / £10 - Symphony Hall, Broad Street, Birmingham. Tel: 021 212 3333.
- **NIKKI GREGORY:** *Acoustic Night.* Tickets Free - The Breedon Bar, Pershore Road, Birmingham.

- ham. Tel: 021 459 6573.
- **PLANET GREENFIELD / GODS EGO / JESTERHEAD:** *A Robannas presentation.* - The Ship Ashore, Moor Street, Birmingham. Tel: 021 643 7669.
- **THE BLAGGARDS / TIN RIVER:** - The Hibernian, Pershore Road, Birmingham. Tel: 021 472 0136.
- **VELVET UNDERPANTS:** - The Robin R&B Club, Merry Hill, Brierley Hill nr. Du. Tel: 0384 458826.

12 May

- **DAVID LEE ROTH:** Tickets £15 - Civic Hall, North Street, Wolverhampton. Tel: 0902 312030.
- **DAVID LEE ROTH / SKIN:** - AVLC, Birmingham
- **ELECTRAGLIDE & SONIC BASE CAKE:** 8pm Admission Free - J.B.'s Club, Kings St, Dudley. Tel: 0384 253597.
- **MAGIC: A TRIBUTE TO FREDDIE MERCURY AND QUEEN:** - Prince Of Wales Centre, Cannock. Tel: 0543 578762.
- **RE-RUN / MEGA DAZZLER / SCOBIE NICE / SHORTIE PHANTOM:** - The Breedon Bar, Pershore Road, Birmingham. Tel: 021 459 6573.
- **SUMMIT / SOLID SOUL:** - The Robin R&B Club, Merry Hill, Brierley Hill nr. Du. Tel: 0384 458826.
- **THE SOUL SURVIVORS:** - The Yenton, Sutton Road, Erdington. Tel: 021 373 1130.

13 May

- **BABY FACE:** - The Northwick, Ombersley Road, Worcester
- **CHUMBAWUMBA:** Tickets £7 - Civic Hall, North Street, Wolverhampton. Tel: 0902 312030.
- **COLOURBLIND / SPIN PLAYGROUND:** - The Hibernian, Pershore Road, Birmingham. Tel: 021 472 0136.
- **CURTIS LITTLE / SUSANNA WOLF:** *Get there early for some fine, intelligent songs from Susanna Wolf.* - The Breedon Bar, Pershore Road, Birmingham. Tel: 021 459 6573.
- **GLENN TILBROOK / NICOLA HITCHCOCK / ROOSTERVELT:** *Squeeze's frontman solo and acoustic, playing all of the great Squeeze songs and an unpredictable selection of his favourite covers. Great support bill too!* 8pm til 1am Tickets £5 - The Mezzanine at The Connaught Hotel, Tettenhall Road, Wolverhampton. Tel: 0902 24433 / 09.
- **L.A.DOORS:** *Doors Tribute.* 8pm - J.B.'s Club, Kings St, Dudley. Tel: 0384 253597.
- **MARCELLA DETROIT:** Tickets £7.50 - Wulfrun Hall, North Street, Wolverhampton. Tel: 0902 312030.
- **SOUL SURVIVORS / KEO:** - The Robin R&B Club, Merry Hill, Brierley Hill nr. Du. Tel: 0384 458826.
- **THE GARAGE BAND:** 9.30pm Tickets £2.50 - Tavern On The Green, Lea Village, Birmingham. Tel: 021 783 6975.

14 May

- **1 UP 1 DOWN:** 8.30pm - The Adam & Eve, Bradford Street, Birmingham. Tel: 021 772 8390.
- **CUM-TO-BEDLAM:** 8pm - J.B.'s Club, Kings St, Dudley. Tel: 0384 253597.
- **EMMIT TILL / MOTHER'S PRIDE:** - The Breedon Bar, Pershore Road, Birmingham. Tel: 021 459 6573.
- **KENNY THOMAS:** - Glades Arena, Kidderminster
- **MEDICINE HEAD / MIKE DAVIDS BAND:** - The Robin R&B Club, Merry Hill, Brierley Hill nr. Du. Tel: 0384 458826.
- **SKIN:** Tickets £6 - Wulfrun Hall, North Street, Wolverhampton. Tel: 0902 312030.

15 May

- **100% PROOF:** - Rock Tavern, Hill Street, Brierley Hill
- **BILLY JOEL:** Tickets £20/£23.50 - National Exhibition Centre, Birmingham. Tel: 021 780 4133.
- **EVERYTHING BUT THE GIRL:** *A rare club gig for the bedsit duo.* Tickets £10 - Ronnie Scott's Club, Broad Street, Birmingham. Tel: 021 643 4525.
- **LITTLE SISTER:** - Saddlers Arms, Warwick Road, Solihull. Tel: 021 705 2938.
- **THE GARAGE BAND:** 8.30pm Tickets £2 - The New Billesley, Brook Lane, Kings Heath. Tel: 021 444 2357.
- **THE JOURNEYMEN:** - The Robin R&B Club, Merry Hill, Brierley Hill nr. Du. Tel: 0384 458826.
- **THE SOUL SURVIVORS:** - Red Lion, Vicarage Road, Kings Heath. Tel: 021 444 3181.

16 May

- **MIDEON / FESTIVE ROAD:** - The Robin R&B Club, Merry Hill, Brierley Hill nr. Du. Tel: 0384 458826.
- **MIKE DAVIDS BAND:** Tickets Free - White Lion, Smallbrook Queensway, Birmingham. Tel: 021 692 1071.
- **SUICIDAL SPERM / PEACH RHINO:** *The Sperms are fronted by a rock journo, folks!* - The Breedon Bar, Pershore Road, Birmingham. Tel: 021 459 6573.
- **THE INNOCENCE:** - JB's, King Street, Dudley

17 May

- **BUILDING ROME:** 8pm to 12pm Tickets £2 including food! - Heroes, Thorpe street, Birmingham
- **EAST 17:** Tickets £11 - Civic Hall, North Street, Wolverhampton. Tel: 0902 312030.
- **FIRECHILD / LIVEVYRE:** - The Hibernian, Pershore Road, Birmingham. Tel: 021 472 0136.
- **MARILLION:** - Town Hall, Victoria Square,

- Birmingham
- **PRIDE / MR FIXIT:** - The Breedon Bar, Pershore Road, Birmingham. Tel: 021 459 6573.
- **THE SOUL SURVIVORS:** - Thimblemill, Thimblemill Road, Smethwick. Tel: 021 429 1638.

18 May

- **MEZZANINE / HORIZON DREAM:** - The Hibernian, Pershore Road, Birmingham. Tel: 021 472 0136.
- **RAGGED ARSE RANGERS:** - The Breedon Bar, Pershore Road, Birmingham. Tel: 021 459 6573.
- **TANTRUM / FIRECHILD:** - The Robin R&B Club, Merry Hill, Brierley Hill nr. Du. Tel: 0384 458826.

19 May

- **JOYLAND & UNDER A COUCH:** 8pm Admission Free before 10pm - J.B.'s Club, Kings St, Dudley. Tel: 0384 253597.
- **LITTLE SISTER:** - Old Colonial, Damsonwood Lane, Solihull. Tel: 021 705 9054.
- **STUBBLE BROTHERS / VINCENT FLATTS FINAL DRIVE:** - The Robin R&B Club, Merry Hill, Brierley Hill nr. Du. Tel: 0384 458826.
- **THE AVERAGE WHITE BAND:** Wheatstheaf, Stoke, Stoke on Trent. Tel: 0782 44438.
- **THE NERVE:** - The Chester Arms, Castle Bromwich
- **THE SOUL SURVIVORS:** - The Crown, Broad Street, Birmingham. Tel: 021 643 0444.
- **VAMBO MAMBA / THE DANGEROUS SISTERS:** - The Breedon Bar, Pershore Road, Birmingham. Tel: 021 459 6573.

20 May

- **AUSTRALIAN PINK:** *They probably make a better job of it than the real one is currently doing.* Tickets £7.50 - Wulfrun Hall, North Street, Wolverhampton. Tel: 0902 312030.
- **NINE INCH NAILS:** Tickets £9 - Civic Hall, North Street, Wolverhampton. Tel: 0902 312030.
- **RADIO ONE DJ STEVE LAMAQ:** 8pm - J.B.'s Club, Kings St, Dudley. Tel: 0384 253597.
- **RICKY COOL AND THE HULA BULA BOYS / THE SCUTTERS:** - The Breedon Bar, Pershore Road, Birmingham. Tel: 021 459 6573.
- **STEVE GIBBONS BAND / WALNUT CONSPIRACY:** - The Robin R&B Club, Merry Hill, Brierley Hill nr. Du. Tel: 0384 458826.
- **THE STUBBLE BROTHERS:** - The Bear Tavern, Bearwood, Birmingham. Tel: 021 429 1989.
- **WE'LL ALWAYS HAVE PARIS:** *Recommended.* - The Hibernian, Pershore Road, Birmingham. Tel: 021 472 0136.
- **WE'LL ALWAYS HAVE PARIS:** *The fine duo's last gig before they jet off to America for some gigs.* - The Hibernian, Pershore Road, Birmingham

21 May

- **1 UP 1 DOWN:** 8.30pm - The Junction, High Street, Harborne. Tel: 021 426 1838.
- **COLIN BLUNSTONE:** *Possibly the least predictable revival of the year!* Tickets £7.50 - Wulfrun Hall, North Street, Wolverhampton. Tel: 0902 312030.
- **CRISIS EDGE:** - The Mitre, Lower High Street, Stourbridge
- **RIVER'S EDGE:** - The Hibernian, Pershore Road, Birmingham. Tel: 021 472 0136.
- **STONE TEMPLE PILOTS:** Tickets £9 - Civic Hall, North Street, Wolverhampton. Tel: 0902 312030.
- **T. REXTASY / JUMPIN JACK FLASH:** - The Robin R&B Club, Merry Hill, Brierley Hill nr. Du. Tel: 0384 458826.
- **THE NERVE:** - The Holly Bush, Cannock
- **THE STEVE GIBBONS BAND / DEWBERRY FIRKIN:** - The Breedon Bar, Pershore Road, Birmingham. Tel: 021 459 6573.

22 May

- **FOREHEADS IN A FISH TANK:** Tickets £3 / £2 - The Hibernian, Pershore Road, Birmingham. Tel: 021 472 0136.
- **KINGS X:** Tickets £8.50 - Wulfrun Hall, North Street, Wolverhampton. Tel: 0902 312030.
- **LENA FIAGBE:** 8.30pm Tickets £8 - Ronnie Scott's Club, Broad Street, Birmingham. Tel: 021 643 4525.
- **NIKKI GREGORY:** - The Breedon Bar, Pershore Road, Birmingham. Tel: 021 459 6573.

23 May

- **BOX CLEVER:** Tickets Free - White Lion, Smallbrook Queensway, Birmingham. Tel: 021 692 1071.
- **BRIAN KENNEDY:** *The angel voiced Irish man currently to be found guesting on Van Morrison's new album.* Tickets £9 - Ronnie Scott's Club, Broad Street, Birmingham. Tel: 021 643 4525.
- **DAVID BYRNE:** *Talking Heads mainman with a new four piece band.* - Civic Hall, North Street, Wolverhampton. Tel: 0902 312030.
- **LOVE GARDEN / SHAUN HAYWOOD:** - The Breedon Bar, Pershore Road, Birmingham. Tel: 021 459 6573.
- **THE JOHNS:** - The Hibernian, Pershore Road, Birmingham. Tel: 021 472 0136.
- **VENDETTA / BLIND JUSTICE:** - The Robin R&B Club, Merry Hill, Brierley Hill nr. Du. Tel: 0384 458826.

24 May

- **BRIAN KENNEDY:** Tickets £9 - Ronnie Scott's Club, Broad Street, Birmingham. Tel: 021 643 4525.
- **CRISIS EDGE / UNCLE JAM:** - The Breedon Bar, Pershore Road, Birmingham. Tel: 021 459

- 6573.
- **THE AUTEURS / LUNA:** Tickets £6.50 - Wulfrun Hall, North Street, Wolverhampton. Tel: 0902 312030.
- **THE EMERGENCY:** - The Hibernian, Pershore Road, Birmingham. Tel: 021 472 0136.

25 May

- **A-Z BAND / KICK THE FIRE:** - The Robin R&B Club, Merry Hill, Brierley Hill nr. Du. Tel: 0384 458826.
- **BLEEDING HEARTS:** *Acoustic Gig.* Tickets Free - The Breedon Bar, Pershore Road, Birmingham. Tel: 021 459 6573.
- **BRIAN KENNEDY:** Tickets £9 - Ronnie Scott's Club, Broad Street, Birmingham. Tel: 021 643 4525.
- **FREE SPIRIT / MAN BONE ENVY:** *Presented by Arcadeia Studios. Free Spirit seem to be attracting A&R men like bees to honey.* - Steering Wheel Club, Hurst Street, Birmingham. Tel: 021 622 5700 / .
- **ROOSTERVELT:** *Hometown gig to celebrate the release of the wonderful Foamin haemoglobin mini album.* Tickets £2.50 - The Mezzanine at The Connaught Hotel, Tettenhall Road, Wolverhampton. Tel: 0902 24433.
- **SOME MEN:** - Ship Ashore, Moor Street, Birmingham
- **THE INNOCENCE:** - The Northwick, Ombersley Road, Worcester

26 May

- **BRIAN KENNEDY:** Tickets £9 - Ronnie Scott's Club, Broad Street, Birmingham. Tel: 021 643 4525.
- **EMMITT TILL & THE BACKYARD BAND:** 8pm Tickets £1.50 - The Wheatstheaf R&B Club, Stafford Road, Cannock. Tel: 0543 503109.
- **L.O.V.E.:** *A night of 60s psychedelic and garage with classic 70s and 80 thrown in and topped with a smidgen of Acid Jazz. Played by ex Scene club jock, Mat Becket and DJ Sim from Vertigo.* - Bobby's Nightclub, Caldmore Road, Walsall. Tel: 021 350 8046.
- **RADIOHEAD:** Tickets £7 - Wulfrun Hall, North Street, Wolverhampton. Tel: 0902 312030.
- **TEXAS FLOOD / DANGERFIELD:** - The Breedon Bar, Pershore Road, Birmingham. Tel: 021 459 6573.
- **THE COMMANDMENTS:** - The Robin R&B Club, Merry Hill, Brierley Hill nr. Du. Tel: 0384 458826.
- **THE SOUL SURVIVORS:** - Selly Park Tavern, Pershore Road, Birmingham. Tel: 021 472 0124.

27 May

- **1 UP 1 DOWN:** 8.30pm - Rockwells, Bolebridge Street, Tamworth. Tel: 0827 52359.
- **BRIAN KENNEDY:** Tickets £9 - Ronnie Scott's Club, Broad Street, Birmingham. Tel: 021 643 4525.
- **CALVIN OWENS AND HIS BLUES BAND / HOWARD McCRARY:** *Both Owens and McCrary have pedigrees that include work with the legends.* - The Robin R&B Club, Merry Hill, Brierley Hill nr. Du. Tel: 0384 458826.
- **CUSTOM BUILT / THE SCUTTERS:** - The Bear Tavern, Bearwood, Birmingham. Tel: 021 429 1989.
- **DISARM GOLIATH:** *A blend of Sabbs, Priest and Accept.* Tickets £3 - Spring Rock Fest / Assembly Rooms, Tamworth
- **JULIA FORDHAM:** Tickets £12.50 / £11 - Symphony Hall, Broad Street, Birmingham. Tel: 021 212 3333.
- **METEORS / CUSTOM BUILT:** - The Breedon Bar, Pershore Road, Birmingham. Tel: 021 459 6573.
- **THE GARAGE BAND:** 9pm - Toffs, Damson Parkway, Elmdon. Tel: 021 705 6770.
- **THE SORDID DETAILS / SPLASHDOWN / COPPER TONGUE / MELON:** - The Hibernian, Pershore Road, Birmingham. Tel: 021 472 0136.

28 May

- **BRIAN KENNEDY:** Tickets £9 - Ronnie Scott's Club, Broad Street, Birmingham. Tel: 021 643 4525.
- **COSMIC CHARLIES:** - The Breedon Bar, Pershore Road, Birmingham. Tel: 021 459 6573.
- **CURTIS LITTLE BAND:** - The Robin R&B Club, Merry Hill, Brierley Hill nr. Du. Tel: 0384 458826.
- **WORLD SERVICE:** *Tongues are wagging about this bunch ... with good reason too!* - The Hibernian, Pershore Road, Birmingham. Tel: 021 472 0136.

29 May

- **BARBARA DICKSON:** *Her new Parcel Of Rogues album suggests a shift back to her folkie past. But will the live show follow?* - The Alexandra Theatre, Birmingham. Tel: 021 643 5488.
- **STEVE GIBBONS BAND:** Tickets £9 - Ronnie Scott's Club, Broad Street, Birmingham. Tel: 021 643 4525.
- **THE FORCE:** - Ye Old Seven Stars, Kidderminster
- **THE JOURNEYMEN:** - The Robin R&B Club, Merry Hill, Brierley Hill nr. Du. Tel: 0384 458826.
- **UJIMAH:** - The Breedon Bar, Pershore Road, Birmingham. Tel: 021 459 6573.
- **WORLD SERVICE:** *Special acoustic show ... with 'friends'.* - Jug Of Ale, Moseley, Birmingham. Tel: 021 449 1082.

30 May

- **CROWDED HOUSE / THE CRANBERRIES:** - NEC, Birmingham
- **IZZY THE PUSH / BLOW:** - The Hibernian, Pershore Road, Birmingham. Tel: 021 472 0136.

- **MUTLEY / HEAD 2 HEAD:** - The Robin R&B Club, Merry Hill, Brierley Hill nr. Du. Tel: 0384 458826.
- **PALE BLUE JELLY BABIES / TEN:** *Catch Ten plugging their impressive new album.* - The Breedon Bar, Pershore Road, Birmingham. Tel: 021 459 6573.
- **THE SOUL SURVIVORS:** 1.30pm - The Linthouse, Linthouse Lane, Wednesfield. Tel: 0902 732638.
- **THE SOUL SURVIVORS:** 8.30pm - The Sheraton, Raglan Street, Wolverhampton. Tel: 0902 24514.

31 May

- **LITTLE SISTER / MOD:** - The Breedon Bar, Pershore Road, Birmingham. Tel: 021 459 6573.

Roots

2 May

- **JUST US:** *Reggae.* Tickets Free - White Lion, Smallbrook Queensway, Birmingham. Tel: 021 692 1071.

8 May

- **EDDI READER:** *The superb ex Fairground Attraction vocalist previewing her soon come second solo album.* Tickets £10 - Ronnie Scott's Club, Broad Street, Birmingham. Tel: 021 643 4525.
- **SHOW OF HANDS:** *Steve Knightley And Phil Beer with a mix of English, Celtic and South American influences.* Tickets £4 - The Newhampton, Riches Street, Wolverhampton. Tel: 0902 745773.

13 May

- **BONGO GO SOUND SYSTEM:** *A Tenth birthday special for the system with the wildest mix of global beats.* Tickets £3 before 10.30pm, £ - Coast To Coast, Broad Street, Birmingham. Tel: 021 449 7730.
- **THE OYSTER BAND:** - Lichfield Arts Centre, Bird Street, Lichfield. Tel: 0543 262223.

15 May

- **THE RETREAT:** - The Breedon Bar, Pershore Road, Birmingham. Tel: 021 459 6573.

16 May

- **VINCE GILL:** *Great country singer, songwriter and guitarist.* Tickets £12.50 / £10.00 - Symphony Hall, Broad Street, Birmingham. Tel: 021 212 3333.

17 May

- **IONA:** *Celtic atmospherics from a new band that include ex Kajagoogoo man Nick Beggs. Robert Fripp guests on the beyond These Shores album.* - The Irish Centre, High Street, Digbeth

19 May

- **ALLAN TAYLOR:** *Folk.* Tickets £4.50 (£3.50) - Hibernian, 1063 Pershore Rd, Selly Park. Tel: 021 472 0136.
- **THE PINK DANDELIONS:** - The Flapper & Firkin, Cambrian Wharf, Birmingham. Tel: 021 236 2421.
- **THE RICHARD THOMPSON BAND:** *Features Danny Thompson, Pete Zorn and Dave Mattacks.* Tickets £13.50 / £10 - Symphony Hall, Broad Street, Birmingham. Tel: 021 212 3333.

20 May

- **ISRAEL MOVEMENT:** *Reggae.* 8pm - Lichfield Arts Centre, Bird Street, Lichfield. Tel: 0543 262223.

21 May

- **ABDUL TEE-JAY'S ROKOTO / BONGO GO SOUND SYSTEM:** *A Sierra Leone Special.* Tickets £6 (£4.50) - Moseley Dance Centre, Moseley Road, Birmingham. Tel: 021 449 7730.

26 May

- **KIERAN HALPIN:** *Folk Roots.* Tickets £3.50 (£2.50) - Hibernian, 1063 Pershore Rd, Selly Park. Tel: 0

Andy Tipper's Monthly Guide To Electro, Ambient And The Dance Underground

This Month Club And Release News,
Gossip And ...

An Exclusive Interview With The Cybertrax / Influx Alter Ego, James Bernard

Prolific and versatile American, James Bernard, is currently enjoying a triple career. This future star of techno has already enjoyed success under the pseudonyms of Cybertrax and Influx and now he's released a superb ambient album under his real name.

Atmospherics is his best work to date. It's a wonderful floating piece of ambience that manages to extract feeling from the normal electronic sound. What's unusual is that this is his second album release in one month! The American whiz kid also released the melodic techno album Unique under his Influx pseudonym. So you can see why this man is making waves.

James Bernard and his music are so inseparable from one another, it's almost as if they were joined at the hip like a Siamese twin. Aged 19, he started work for the synth manufacturers Korg, so he could play around with sound during the day and built himself a studio in his bedroom so he could experiment by night as well. Just like Richard 'Aphex Twin' James, he takes apart old analogs and rebuilds them for fun.

For 4 years, James Bernard wrote stuff at home, without even thinking of trying to release anything! When someone finally convinced him to send a tape to a record company, he was snapped up immediately.

"I was happy making music for my own enjoyment, but it's great that things have taken off so well. I can do a lot more things now and branch off in different directions."

There's an awful lot of variety and feeling in his work, and it's easy to see why. The multi-talented American taught himself piano at the age of ten and quickly added other instruments to his repertoire. Influenced by Brian Eno, his extremely diverse musical tastes include Baroque music, as well as artists like The Cure and Pearl Jam! This unusually wide source of inspiration possibly helped him expand into the mixed fields of hard dance, trance, techno and ambient with equal skill.

His best song is found on the Secret Life Of Trance compilation, recorded under his Cybertrax pseudonym. Journey To The Centre Of The Mind is a hypnotic slice of happy trance cake, with an unusual weightless feel to it. It's a modern classic. The new albums simply confirm this early potential.

"I'm really happy with the Atmospherics album. There's 78 minutes of music with no breaks between tracks, so it sounds like one long, dreamy song. Each component has its own separate feeling though. The opening track Euph is short for euphoric and that's probably my favourite, but all the songs try to take you somewhere different. Some tracks were written in the

middle of the night. It doesn't matter what time of the day or night I get an idea, I have to finish it there and then. Most songs are written, recorded and completed in about two hours. Boom! That's it! Too much polishing and remixing can lose the feeling, so I try to capture the sound there and then. It's a very natural process. Squeezing emotion out of an electronic machine is difficult, but that's what I'm aiming to do all the time."

Definitely a star of the future.

CLUBBING

At last! An all-nighter in Brum! Birmingham's club scene gets a welcome boost on May 1st when HOUSE OF GOD take over The Attic in Branston Street from 11pm- 7am. The Orb's DJ LEWIS, the best techno DJ in England will be there, along with PAUL DAMAGE, SIR REAL, SURGEON, and THE STELLAR TORTOISE, plus DIY in the Dub House room. The best event yet.

Meanwhile, big crowds have forced the House Of God to move their regular venue from the back building to the main room at The Institute. Can't wait to see the new lighting effects at House Of God mark 2. The vibe has been snowballing thanks to killer performances from EGE BAM YASI and STEVE BICKNELL, while BABY FORD was greeted by thunderous applause after his recent storming techno set. The club has also showcased hot new acts like GERM and JOHN DOLBY, both of whom are on Luke Slater's label. It's a shame that some people miss out on the surging thrills and glorious variety found within the twisted sound of acid techno, just because Two Unlimited have misused the word 'techno'. Its rather like refusing to listen to rock music because you've heard A Song For Europe. (There are rock songs in that miserable event? Surprised Ed.) Wake up! Give your regular club a miss, and check out a real dance club that's putting Birmingham on the map.

Baby Ford returns to the Institute main room on Friday 13th May, with INTENSIVE CARE UNIT doing the honours on Friday 27th.

An amusing incident occurred at Moseley Dance Centre's recent DREADZONE gig concerning the highly regarded ambient dubster duo FULL

PLUG ME IN

MOON SCIENTIST. After finishing their support slot, the white-coated bespectacled funsters consumed so much happy juice at the bar that they forgot to take their mixing desk back home with them! They had also forgotten where they had left it, and left vague messages with several venues requesting the return of said equipment! Telephone attempts to contact the band were greeted by a cheery answering machine, proudly announcing that if the call was urgent, they could be found down their local pub - anytime after 6.15pm! Ambient rock'n'roll, eh!

More fun'n'frolics on May 7th when FUN-DAMENTAL play Moseley Dance Centre, with URBAN SOUTH who have their Whatever's Clever EP on release at the moment.

Also check BONGO GO at Coast To Coast on May 13th and ROKOTO's return to the Moseley Dance Centre for an African special on May 21st.

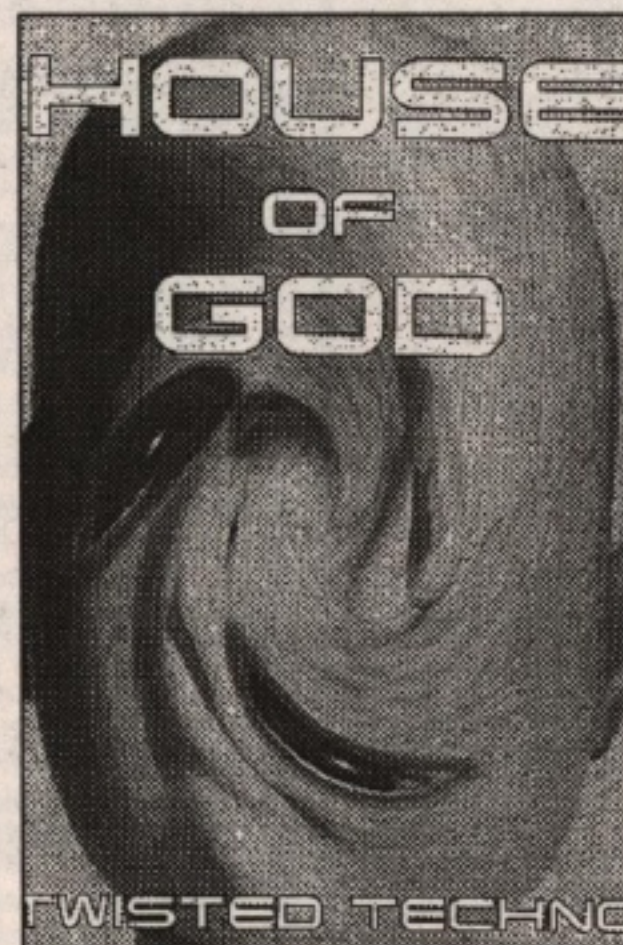
AND VINYL-LY

FRANKFURT BEAT's Synrotron / Deep Thought is a typically excellent product, slipping in and out of trance grooves into a melodic techno trench. If you like Sven Vath, you'll like this.

FLF's Focus EP is storming the clubs getting great reactions everywhere. The 10,000 strong Immortality party in Amsterdam loved its acid techno and dark ambience. This month's best single, just shading the excellent 12 inch by FORMALDEHYD that breaks into menacingly squelchy trance areas. Dark and wonderful stuff. MANDANA's High Noon EP also wades in near the top with some superb juicy trance excursions. Glasgow-based POSITIVE SCIENCE have Sou Feel Free out on Ascension, venturing into dub house, but it probably won't set the word alight. RISING HIGH COLLECTIVE's dancefloor doublepack reveals a wide range to their talents. From the techno-vocal style of Tangled In My Thoughts to an ambient reworking of a New York house classic Liquid, RHC also venture into ballad territory with the in-demand Plavka. Good, but not for me.

CRANIUM HF's Summer Rain is a surprise. Guitars and vocals take this into joyous areas with eccentric outbursts. Impossible to pigeonhole. Great to listen to. JAH WOBBLE's Becoming More Like God should be titled Becoming More Like Pink Floyd, but a Secret Knowledge remix saves the day.

Rumours that PRINCE (Symbol Man / Victor Whatever) is to record an ambient track on his next album are dismaying, to say the least. It's absurd and pathetic. Think again Mr Purple one. Have you no shame?



DEMO LITATION

many people to hear your stuff as possible? Otherwise, why send us your demos? At some point - even if you swear you'll never sign to a major - you'll have to deal with The Man. If you don't like the idea, you're in the wrong game, mate. A lot of the stuff I'm into, majors wouldn't touch with a barge pole. Unlike Spithead (no offence, guys), whose material is quite safe and (lyrics aside) unchallenging -

kind of a punky Ye Fungus or RDF. I always felt my own involvement in punk rock, bands, fanzines and magazines (for instance) was geared towards replacing tired old tosh with a new, fresh and exciting alternative that I could help turn a wider audience on to, not just an elite few. Why keep it to yourself?

And now the gold envelope please ...

DEMO OF THE MONTH FLOWERHOUSE

This is not to say of course (he said, about to contradict himself!) that we can't use what's gone before and get off on it. I caught this bunch of melodic, southern-fried rockers supporting Valve at the Hib. 2 months back and was well impressed. Usually demos don't do bands like this justice. Not so here. This is accomplished, crackling rock which retains their raw, live edge. Guilty, Mr. Heidi Jinx and Blinded aren't tanked-up steamers, more like mid-paced groovers (except where Blinded breaks out into a real Stonesy, Crowes-y rock-out) with some deft guitar work from Eugene, evoking that laid-back, humid, honky-tonk atmosphere. Brill.

The Nerve



THE NERVE

A second copy of the demo they sent last month that included on one of three promised tracks. Inevitably, they blame me, suggesting that I erased the others. Yes, boys ... I hoped the two missing tracks would stand up to the names they dropped of artists whose material they covered live (Purple, Lizzy, FNM). Nope. Just diluted pub rock. Try demoing some of those covers, guys. They also ask what I do with demos after I've reviewed 'em: the best I keep, the longer and better quality ones that contain milky toss, I use to copy more worthy stuff (unless tapes are requested to be sent back and they include an SAE), the rest sit in a huge bag while I muse on the moral dilemma of whether or not I should bin them. Guess where yours is...

SPECIAL ATTENTION Demo-lititionists!
From this very issue, the makers of the *Demo Of The Month* will receive free of charge **THE ARC MUSICIANS DIRECTORY**, a £15.99 reference work that no self respecting band should be without. In it you'll find names and addresses and phone numbers for everything you'll need from labels to venues to legal advice. It'll tell you how to set up a home studio, how to release a record, where to learn to play and how to find a session man if you fail to! In other words it's the working band's lifeline. It's published by Arc Publishing; you can order it at any bookshop (tell 'em the ISBN is 0-9521466-0-6, they'll understand!) for £15.99 - it's worth that in phone numbers - or you can simply send in a *Demo Of The Month*!

Good, good, good!

Not only is more info accompanying demos now, but also reactions to some of my comments are coming in - good and bad. My, aren't some bands touchy these days! Wouldn't have it any other way! I want to re-emphasise though that Demolition is a personal, subjective opinion. I have a very wide taste in music, but I don't like everything - who'd want to? There's a lot of rubbish out there. So, just because I may not dig your particular baby, don't for one moment assume that some big-wig you want to impress won't. And if you're not into impressing the suits, then you shouldn't care what I say either. Which brings me to Spithead. (And thanks to Bleeding Hearts for the cool missive) ...

SPITHEAD -

Kill Two Pigs With One Stone

Vocalist / guitarist, John accuses me of assessing tapes on whether they're likely to achieve mainstream success (don't worry, John, no offence taken). Bollocks. I assess 'em on whether I like 'em or not, sometimes along with an opinion on what I think other people in the biz might think. After all, I assume you, along with every other band on the planet, want as

UNCLE LUCY

Fucken hell! The intro to Teenage Mind nearly took the top of my head off! And very nearly got the DOTM title for doing so. It calmed down slightly, but still continued in an admirable FNM-like mix of hard rock and funk. Track of the tape is the pounding Nahida, which at the end has Beavis and Butt-Head giving the only verdict that counts: "That kicked ass! Huh, huh, huh..."

VIVID - Chromatic Groove

A superbly metallic funky outfit, spoilt only by characterless vocals that just don't suit the groovy power of the rest of it. They'd make a neat instrumental combo, like say, Pulse.

GRAFFITI

Uninspiring, cock-rockers from Lichfield with a hint of Alice Cooper humour and a naff, ballady intro to one of the songs. They'll never set foot outside the pub circuit.

WORLD OF SAD

This is interesting - a hypnotic, Suicide-esque sprawl that'll never make 'em rich, but which sticks a sore middle finger in the face of commercial pap. In other words, great.

BETWEEN WORLDS

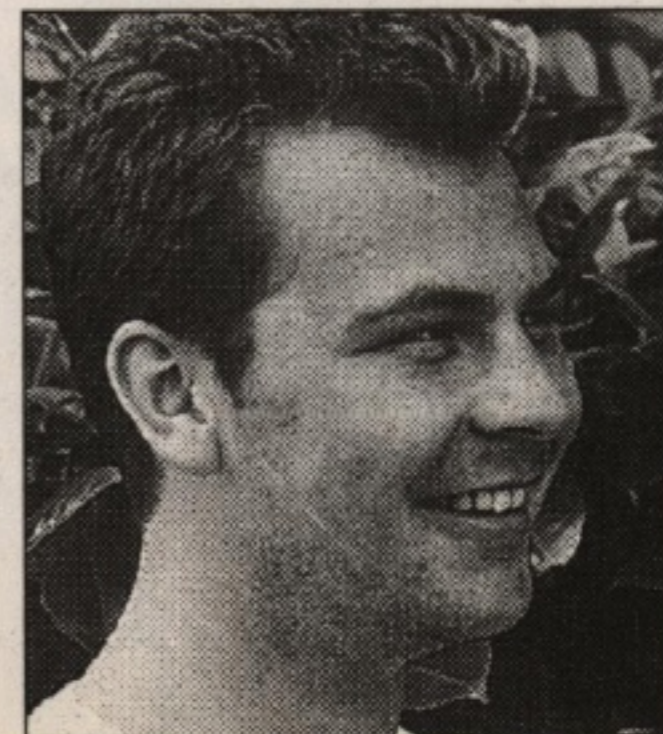
First track, Believe is a radio edit, which includes the DJs comments. Oh dear! 'World class material!' What the hell does that mean? No, no, this won't do at all! Where's the passion, sex and fire? Rocky pop that could never sell on the strength of its material. Backed by cold, hard cash, maybe. Whoops! Just noticed that guitarist Gabriel is the sister of an old mate...

BIG SHOT - Listen To This!

More big, professional, funky noise from these Wolvo rockers. Two of the tracks I reviewed in our Dec.93/Jan ish, so good as they are (especially Crazy), I'll skip 'em here. The other two are as equally in-ye-face FNM (again!) thrash (though I did make a Scat Opera comparison last time). I love Crash.

LEE THOMPSON - Head Remedy

Bloody 'ell! It was only the Feb. ish that I reviewed his last efforts! I thought the man had a family now! But I haven't got a problem listening to Lee's stuff. On Bring Life's Beauty Back, he accompanies himself on vocals and adds a bit of excellent slide guitar. The brand new Thankful is a sad little number, the intro of



which reminds me of Cooder's soundtrack to Paris, Texas. And there's a cover! Ellington's Don't Get Round Much Anymore - just Lee and a guitar. Simple, innit? Keep it coming, chap.

DEMOS REVIEWED BY MAX

THE KINGS OF SPAIN / LANE - ROBERTS / RACHEL'S BASEMENT

The Bear, Bearwood, Birmingham

The evening began with some decent songs interestingly performed by Rachel's Basement, a duo using guitar / vocal with soprano sax / flute. Something reminded me of Stephen Duffy. Lane - Roberts were three, not two as I'd expected. They produced a strong set with considerable power coming from acoustic guitar and snare drum. The raw throated, imposing looking, singer is quite a presence.

The Kings Of Spain wandered on stage and one by one began playing a single chord to a gentle, flowing, beat. Over the rhythm the violin swooped and soared. The free approach of the four musicians demonstrated an unerring confidence. When singing was finally added to this chord and lapping beat we'd been taken effortlessly from the introduction to the first song. The song had a haunting melody and lyrically sounded almost as much like poetry as pop. Then from nowhere an explosive and impassioned ending which demonstrated a tremendous dynamic between the players. Throughout their set T.K.O.S. produced wonderful moments of musicianship and memorable songs, notably Angel I Can Fly, Joy Of Making Money and Seen It Before. Spain it seems is a place of fragile beauty and passionate wailing and the Kings constantly draw the audience from one extreme to the other.

There is no single, easy, reference for this group; their poppy edge has a quirkiness reminiscent of Talking Heads yet their ethereal and soulful side might be likened to Van Morrison circa Into The Music. If these seem disparate references it's because T.K.O.S. use an eclectic mix of influences with which they've successfully created something fresh and quite original.

Dawn Brooker

GARTH BROOKS

NEC, Birmingham

This, I reckon, was an important gig. A fact that goes beyond how good Garth was on the night or indeed whether Brooks himself sowed the seeds of a long term UK career.

It was a night when the concept of a song based rip roaring good time was reintroduced to an audience apparently gasping for it. It's simple stuff too; an announcement encourages the gathering to take as many flash shots as they like, a far cry from the camera phobic shakedown normal to the NEC door staff. The star dispenses with safety barriers and trusts his audience; he touches and mixes with them, he confides with them. In fact it's almost the Springsteen route to winning friends and ...

... the show? Well it's high tech honky tonk; the cowboy attired band push the rowdy button and the dampen eyes in equal measure. They play rather well and the songs are strong but it's Brooks who is the dynamo. He charges about involving every section of the audience who sing, clap and stomp along - occasionally drowning the band. This amazes Brooks who, by virtue of honesty or showmanship (why are we so guarded or cynical?), tells 'em that he expected a laid back response.

Now at this point, that cynicism might point to a visible number of Saturday night country fancy dressers and an audible selection of Uncle Sam's children as being behind the adulation, but they were a handful of the 12k strong throng, the bulk being ordinary gig goers.

In short Brooks was damn good and an audience discovered that country was OK after all. Now when they discover the rest of it and other promoters are brave enough to book the likes of Rodney Crowell, Dwight Yoakam, Steve Earle et al, confident of labels working as hard as EMI have for Brooks, things will brighten. Whether Brooks mania lasts or not, and I feel it will, he certainly was the key of the door for many past doubters.

Steve Morris

THE JOHN OTWAY BIG BAND

Breedon Bar, Birmingham

Within every school there's always going to be one teacher who defies decorum and strives to get the job done in his own twisted fashion.

Step forward John Otway.

Having long since lost his Wild Willy, Otway continues to dash about the country, falling into pubs and staging his anarchic shows. With gig 2000 now under his belt, the great man remains as over-enthusiastic as ever. Dripping with sweat, his saturated white shirt grips his skinny frame like a second skin.

The Otway Big Band offers an oddball punk-silliness sound, aping classic rock tunes like House Of The Rising Sun with audience response.

Otway: There was a house.....

Crowd: Where was it John ?

Otway: Well I'm glad you asked. Now I seem to remember it being somewhere down in New Orleans.

Great Stuff, and there's merchandise too. Including a t-shirt that reads 'John Otway - One Hit Wonder'. And there lies the key to Otway's charm. Should he have notched up a mass of hit singles and gold albums we'd have lost his genius forever. The N.E.C would have swallowed him up whole. That's not to say he lacks the talent to fill a sizeable venue. He's got the goods alright, but with an Otway gig, it has to be intimate. Atmosphere is

his greatest strength. Followed by charisma, a solid band, unique voice and a pair of sturdy step ladders.

He plays around with Blockbuster, You Ain't Nothing Yet, and even gets a nation's revenge on Rolf Harris with a riotous rendition of Two Little Boys. His own material is sharp and silly as you might expect, but all of his songs are well crafted, especially Really Free, the chart hit from '77 that earned him the T-shirt slogan.

If you've never seen an Otway show, keep your eyes on those gig listings and await his return. You owe it to yourself.

Tim Wright

THE TEA PARTY / ROOSTERVELT

Hibernian, Birmingham

I'd had my ear bent about Roostervelt for some time, but - well, you know how it is. However, I finally caught up with them and I was impressed. They're ragged and stressed out (that's 5 minute soundchecks for you) and alive. They turned out a loose, R&B-torched set that out REM'd REM in the tune dept., and sometimes echoed that shuffling Violent Femmes feel. I dug 'em enough to blag a copy of their Foamin' Haemoglobin EP. You'll have to buy yours. Do it anyway. Money well spent.

This was Ontario-raised Tea Party's debut British gig - a real feather in the Hib's cap. If you were absent, you



Daniel Rachel, Rachel's Basement

missed a strange and moody good time. But I'll wager they'll be back - they had a gas too.

By 'strange and moody', I'm talking about a candle-lit set providing a flickering setting for the trio to embark on an indulgent 2 hour trip of songs that rarely clocked in at less than ten minutes. A trip, a look and a sound that was so Doorsy that it came THIS close to being a Doors tribute night. Pretty obvious stuff. But who cared? Not the jammed Hib., because the Party pulled it off with style, expertise and conviction. They knew where they were coming from too and so everyone got off on a vibe that was nothing new, but which sure felt good.

So while Jeff Burrows and Stuart Chatwood beat out a haunting, stumbling Apocalypse Now rhythm, vocalist, guitarist and all-round Morrisonesque figure, Jeff Martin snaked on down The River, cried out Save Me and led us through the mutant blues epic of Sun Going Down.

A long and satisfying party.
Max

TANGLEFOOT

Que Club, Birmingham

Back again - the energetic foursome who've written more tunes than you've had hot dinners. That's Tanglefoot's Secret Weapon - they may look like any other hip gang of punky slackers (that's not a criticism - just that everyone looks like a rock 'n' roll star these days), but they really know the value of memorable riffs, catchy melodies and neat harmonies. Heard 2 Step, Laughing Matter or Different Is Not The Same recently? You ought to get out more.

So while Simon leaps into the air and stares into space like he's somewhere else, providing sharp licks and hard 'n' heavy power chords and scratchy ska rhythms, under which Paul lays fast, funky runs, complemented by Mark's snappy patterns, rag-doll frontman, John acts the punky Mr. Motivator whilst barking his heart out. They all collide in a blur of colour and sound and the result is an exciting, frenetic show.

There are plenty of bands who can whip up a storm live and plenty who can write good songs, but there aren't that many who can put the two together. Tanglefoot can and are just waiting for the opportunity to prove it to a wider audience.

Max

KEROSENE

Jug Of Ale, Birmingham

I mean, what do I know? I've got my metal head on at the moment and anything that doesn't butt me in the nose and drag me around the dance floor means diddley. So when a band comes along that has all the 'charm' and 'commercial appeal' of say, Jesus Jones or The Wonder Stuff, coupled with a Nirvana-type punk-poppiness, I am far from moved.

Don't get me wrong - given time, Kerosene will be stars - the way the whole band coyly eyed up the natty Oriental girl with the impressive dreads in the audience, showed

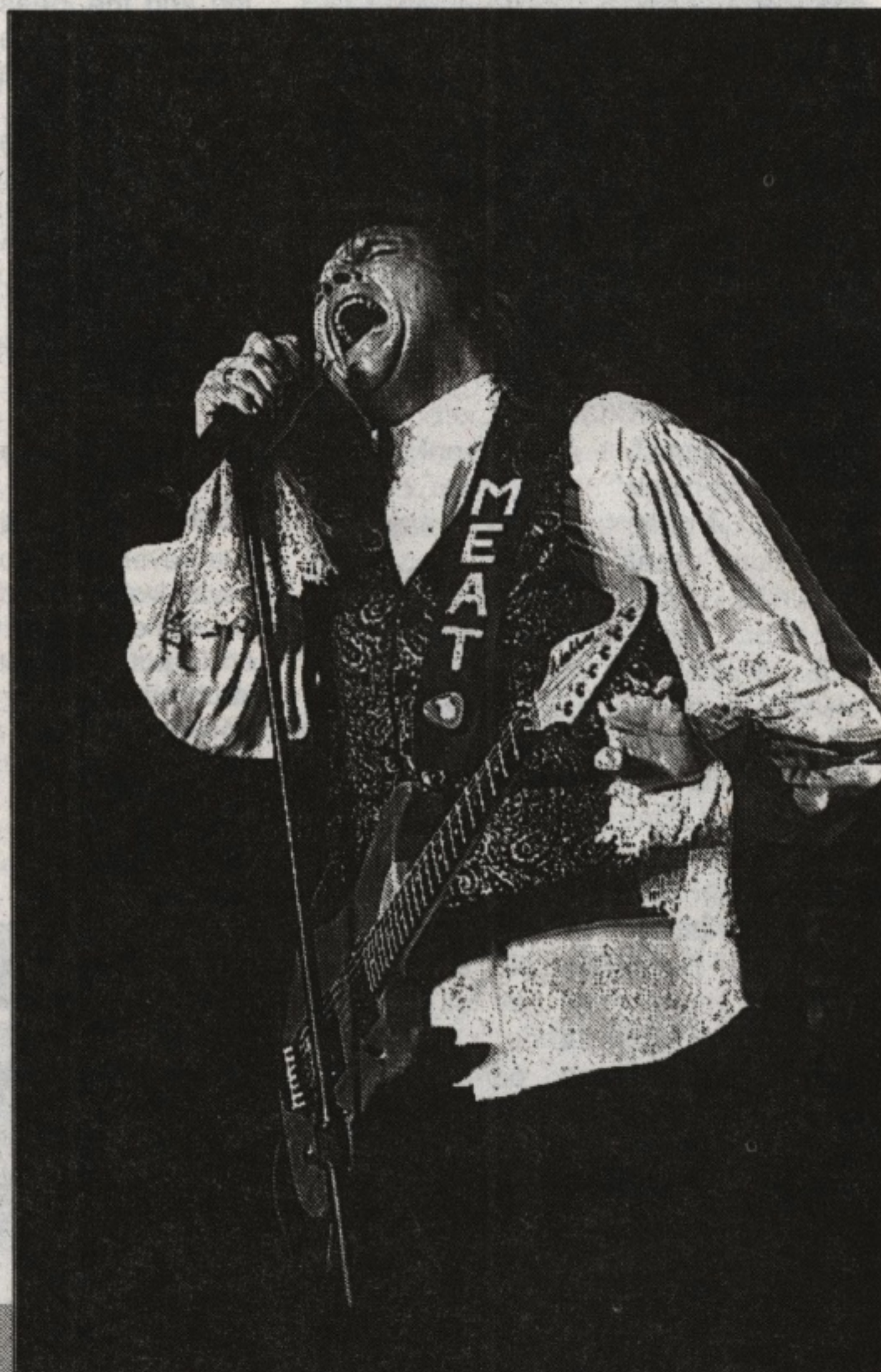
that they've got their priorities right. And their fresh, youthful good looks will soon win the hearts of more than the handful of (admittedly energetic) faithful followers here tonight. Weird thing about the bedimpled vocalist, Paul though, is that unlike his well-sculptured pals, he doesn't look like a rock star. I s'pose a few more years on the road'll cure that.

I'm not entirely sure Kerosene need two guitarists either - I couldn't quite work out who out of James and Chris was doing what. However, I wouldn't like to be the one who hands the loser his P45.

There's nothing intrinsically wrong with what Kerosene do - there are some genuinely uplifting moments on their Arrhythmia album that are given the fiery live treatment (Spring, Everybody's Icon and Come Alive are tasty little highlights) - but there's nothing special about them, nothing that makes you walk away feeling you've just witnessed a band branding their name on pop music with a hot iron. Just one more frenetic little combo with a talent for coming up with whistleable tunes.

Some say that's what it's all about. Oh God...

LIVE



Exclusive photo for Brum Beat by Mark Hadley

MEAT LOAF

NEC, Birmingham

For this leg of the tour, Meat Loaf's set had been re-arranged and the string quartet intro dispensed with. But although the show's opening has lost something, the remainder of the performance was exceptional. More energetic than before, perhaps resulting from his weight shedding, Meat combined extrovert theatrics with a flawless vocal performance. (The theatrics resulting in a fall and a broken toe). Although great musicians, Meat's band added little visually to the show with the notable exception of Patti on vocals.

With so many bands relying heavily on lighting and effects to instil excitement into an audience, it's refreshing to experience such an exuberant and theatrical performance. The trouble is everything else now seems tame by comparison.

Mark Hadley

SATELLITE, CABLE & BOG STANDARD TV NEWS

The return of THE NAKED CITY on Channel Four is marked with an appearance from SMASH in the first show (April 27) which also features a satirical look at NWOTNW (or satirical as the press info, rather more interestingly, promises!) for acronym fans, and a chat with the legendary GEORGE CLINTON. The second show (May 4) drags both SENSER and BLUR into the studio for live bashes.

MTV lunges into the month with 24 HOURS OF ROCK'N'ROLL on Sunday May 1. Curiously it actually only manages to fill ninety minutes from 2.30 to 4pm but it does include a Smashing Pumpkins rehearsal, interviews with Lynyrd Skynyrd fans, celebrity trash collectors, Janet Jackson's choreographer, a rock'n'roll neurosurgeon and visits to a moshpit and a college radio station. ROXETTE are awarded a WEEKEND of their very own with Unplugged, Rockumentary and Hits specials keeping you glued to the screen over May 7 / 8. The following weekend (that's 15 / 16 - do pay attention) it's STYLE WEEKEND; a round up of youth phenomena they tell us with wacky hairstyles, dance crazes, tattoos, body piercing and, ooh, what rock stars are wearing! Order the pizza delivery now! The month's other weekends are CANNES, with movie madness (May 21 / 22) and FESTIVAL PREVIEW (28 / 29) which is kinda self explanatory. REGGAE ROCKUMENTARY (May 16) should be worth a look; this premier screening features interviews and performance from Bob Marley, UB40, Maxi Priest, Ziggy Marley, Shabba Ranks and more whilst THE BEST OF MOST WANTED (May 23) gives you the chance to tape some fine live shots from Tori Amos, Crowded House, Aerosmith, The Cure, k.d. lang, Bon Jovi, Björk and more. Look out for PASSENGERS, a new hour long Channel 4 show aimed at 16 - 30 year olds. It starts on June 16 and promises to poke its nose into everything on a pan global basis; there'll be items on the hedonism of the young on holiday, from bar-room to bedroom; American crack babies, Australian surfers, female kick boxers, cyberpunks - get the picture? And it'll all be done with no presenters whatsoever!

VIDEO

MUSIC

U2

Zoo TV: Live From Sydney

(Island Video)

Two hours from the tail end of U2's groundbreaking global communications extravaganza. It's easy to be cynical about the immense scale and indeed pretension that was Zoo TV, but watching again the information overload, the scattergun sloganeering and the ideas and challenge of the material pumped at the audiences you can't but help admire the manner in which the band shifted the ground on which rock tours are built. And then there's Bono's character adoption and the manner in which he exaggerates rock star cliché with an almost overblown subtlety into a parody that almost passes over the heads of an audience apparently getting what they want and not realising what they've been given.

Great rock band too.

Steve Morris

PJ HARVEY

Reeling (Island [15])

I've never been able to get a handle on Polly Harvey. Always had the feeling that I should like her but somehow didn't without any real reason. I tended to put it down to a simple reaction against the unctuous sycophancy of the rock weeklies.

Never mind, this video would give me a chance to

review my position. Guess what? No change. OK the fly on the wall, warts and all on the road footage - captured by resident PJ image maker Maria Mochnacz - reveals a likeable enough character but doesn't really add much to an understanding. The concert footage is strong enough and there are moments when, well maybe but not quite.

For fans a feast but for the uncommitted, little to change that position.

Sam Mitchell

Sam Mitchell

Sam Mitchell

Sam Mitchell

ADAM & THE ANTS

Live In Tokyo

(Arcade Home Video)

Having already given us the hits on album and video and the live album tied to the hits album to squeeze further sales, Arcade throw the live video into the ring. There are no details as to exactly when Adam wowed Tokyo's pubescents tho' a copyright date of 1981 is a good indication. It's a plainly filmed gig that lacks any visual rhythm to lift

it above the mundane. That let's you concentrate on the band and, frankly, they're not so hot, certainly lacking in the dynamics of the studio. And yet Adam remains the perfect pop star, all cheekbones, charm and homely sexuality as if designed by Cindy.

Sam Mitchell

DR. DEVIOUS &
THE WISEMEN

VR3 - Hardcore Style

(GJ Productions)

I remain baffled by techno / rave videos. Surely the fundamental part of the music's appeal is the sweaty camaraderie of the dancefloor, the group experience. Certainly it must depend on a pumping volume level and mind warping banks of lights to trigger the experience.

So, who's gonna sit at home staring at the visuals on a twenty inch screen with the music strangled through a three inch speaker? Alright you can plug it into the stereo and crank it up, but that still leaves the event hermetically sealed inside the box, beyond reach.

Actually, the computer generated neon candy coloured visuals with the ghost of live performance flickering sporadically are quite good though, in my opinion, best viewed on slow motion with an early Pink Floyd album replacing the awful row that I'm guessing is the music track.

Sam Mitchell

MOVIES TO BUY

INDECENT PROPOSAL

(CIC / Paramount [15])

Given enough money and the backing of the Tinseltown publicity machine you can, I'm sure turn base metal into gold. And here is the evidence. You know the scam; Robert Redford offers a million bucks for a one night rutting licence for Demi Moore and that, give or take a little window dressing in the form of the should she, shouldn't she prologue and the love conquers all epilogue, is it.

Where it smells is the obvious notion that the very question at the heart of this will be asked by every couple seeing this and that the same question is irresistible bait to every TV and radio talk show on the planet. Instant free marketing. How can it fail?

All you need are stars and a competent film and that's what you get. But is the pop video style footage that occurs, like a sore thumb, only in the casino scenes a sign of the director's boredom?

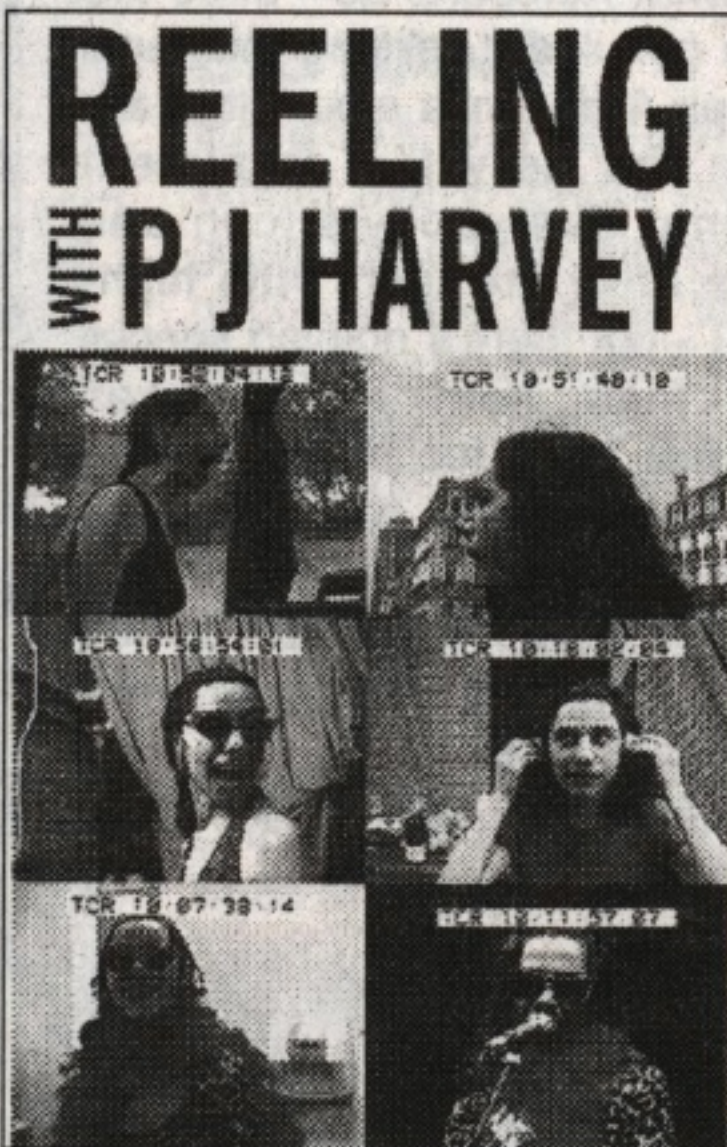
Sam Mitchell

BOXING HELENA

(Entertainment In Video [18])

The controversial tale of a sexually dysfunctional surgeon who effectively kidnaps the object of his lust by the simple expedient of amputating her limbs. Directed by David 'Twin Peaks' Lynch's daughter Jennifer, it is of course dressed up with much significance, though the cop out ending worthy of a Dallas plot reversal suggests a lack of bravery when the chips were down.

I've no problem with the delicious Sherilyn Fenn losing her clothes on screen but there's no need to disguise the erotic / voyeuristic motivation, especially with indifferent acting and a poor script, because you then end up with a sick comedy that is beyond justification as the underlying attitudes



SCREEN SEEN

are questionable in the extreme.
Sam Mitchell

PARIS, TEXAS

(Connoisseur Video [15])

Simply a great movie. Harry Dean Stanton and Nastassja Kinski star in Wim Wenders' exploration of relationships and responsibility, both personal and intra-personal. There's both a vastness and a claustrophobia about the movie that's amply reflected in Ry Cooder's masterful soundtrack. Must be seen.

Sam Mitchell

HONEYMOON IN VEGAS

(Reflective [15])

Overhyped comedy about a love triangle set against a Las Vegas backdrop. A gentle smiler rather than a rib tickler though the well trailed Flying Elvises do raise a wide grin. Great songs on the soundtrack though.

Sam Mitchell

UNDER SIEGE

(Warner Home Video [15])

Simple stuff; two bad guys, Gary Busey and Tommy Lee Jones doing a kind of malevolent Keith Richards, set about stealing a nuclear warship. What they haven't bargained on is the chef, Steven Seagal, who is really an undercover martial art expert and commando type. It doesn't take much imagination to run the resulting movie in your head, though it has to be said that it's well made, has a certain tension and the melodramatic playing of Jones and Busey add a, perhaps unintentional, slice of evil humour.

Sam Mitchell

UNLAWFUL ENTRY

(Fox Video [18])

Take a standard middle class couple, Kurt Russell and Madeleine Stow let's say. Now introduce, as the result of an unfortunate, yet 'normal' incident - make it a foiled armed burglary - a psychotic cop, he might look like Ray Liotta, with evil intent. Shake it up and you have a new addition to the Pacific Heights / Single White Female genre. It's not bad, quite compelling in fact but because the cynical commercial roots of the idea are so plain, the overall impact is dulled.

Sam Mitchell

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RIPE FOR PICKING

Dave Massey Tastes The Fruit Of The Birmingham Label

For a provincial label, Birmingham's Ripe Records have been smiled upon by the Gods over the last five or six months to such an extent that they feel it will not be long before they triumphantly hold aloft the Golden Fleece. Their debut album for saxophonist Alvin Davis is currently wowing the colonials, with one cut, Sundowner, storming to number 4 on the R&R New Adult Contemporary Airplay Chart. As a result of such success, Ripe have clinched a distribution deal with Sony, and all of a sudden space travel does seem possible.

Malcolm Bell took time out to explain the history of Ripe Records.

"The idea behind the label goes back a long time, I had a record store and I was a DJ for about 18 years. I'd been involved in a recording studio with a partner, doing remixes and other things. I went away to the States, came back and found out that my partner wanted to start a new dance label, so we did it. As the label progressed, Rob James came on board, he has a lot of experience in the sales side and it blossomed from there."

With a distinct leaning towards jazz - funk, it might have seemed that a relatively new label like Ripe was doomed to rapid extinction, if not fossilisation, but the advent of Jazz FM and re-surge of interest with Doop pushing the dance frontiers back (into what, Birdie Song territory? Ed), things could not look much brighter.

"On the jazz side, I had come across artists who I used to sell quite a lot of in my shop, that didn't really break. People like Kim Waters and records on a New York label called Warlock. So one of the first things we did was to make a deal with Warlock to get Kim into our catalogue. We've had three albums and a single since, which have all done quite well."

OK, so that's the foundations built, but does Ripe have a long term vision?

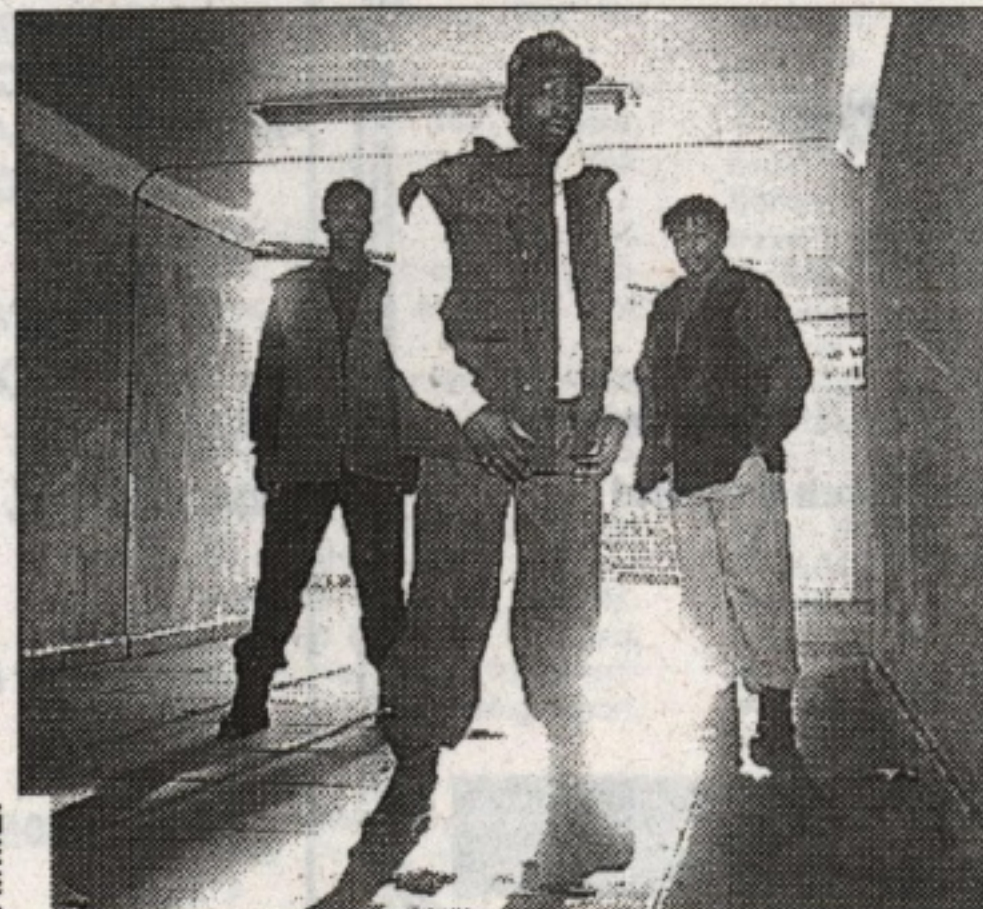
"The idea behind Ripe is that the acts we take on are long term; their albums can still be selling in ten years time rather than your average dance record, which is in one week and out the next. A lot of our market is in the States because of the success Alvin is having over there at the moment. I took Alvin over there a couple of weeks ago, and the reception he got was incredible. A lot of American DJ's like a lot of what is coming out of England, because the UK guys have picked up on what is essentially American music and put a slight English feel to it that makes it different enough for them to really go for it."

Alvin Davis is not the only hot act that Ripe are promoting.

"Our single from the Diplomats, Last Chance, is receiving an amazing response at the moment. RME are doing well too, they're three young rappers from Birmingham who have a new single coming out soon. That'll be the follow up to On A Jazz Tip which got them air time on Central and most of the local radio stations. We believe that they're an act which will shoot on through to the top before very much longer!"

The ethos behind the label seems to be to pick up on local talent and give it an outlet, but I couldn't help wondering if the Jazz-funk flavour was going to set limits. Diversity is, after all, a prerequisite of survival ...

"Our idea is that we can build up acts whilst still having fast moving stuff coming through and making the charts. We want to promote local talent as much as we can. Long term, we are promoting acts, not just taking tracks and trying to promote sales from that. There doesn't seem to be an independent label like us which has deals which cover the whole of Europe. The next step is to get a deal in the States and then that only really leaves the Japanese market - and all this has happened in just the last five or six months."



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♥ **32** Attractive nice man, seeks attractive free thinking humorous woman 20/35 enjoys country walks, theatre, cinema, affection. Please write. Box No. HL4242

♥ **ACTIVE** male varied interests GSOH, WLTm male 20-40, weight training, fun, genuine friendship. ALA. Birmingham. Box No. HL4891

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♥ **ATTRACTIVE** Asian male (25) graduate seeks attractive female 18-25 for friendship, possibly relationship. Box No. HL4429

♥ **ATTRACTIVE** caring male 31, seeks beautiful woman, any age, for fun laughter, good times, affection. I enjoy most things. Box No. HL4253

♥ **ATTRACTIVE** female graduate, 22 seeks, witty, intelligent, cute man for fun and romance. Photo please. Box No. HL2304

♥ **ATTRACTIVE**, interesting male, 30's seeks females for fun times and friendship. A.L.A., S.O.H., N.P.A., G.M.S. Box No. HL5210

♥ **ATTRACTIVE** lady 50, tall sincere driver, seeking tall caring 50ish reasonably affluent sincere single gentleman. Box No. HL4286

♥ **ATTRACTIVE** male 19, car owner, seeks girl 17-20 for friendship or relationship. Box No. HL4737

♥ **ATTRACTIVE**, youthful 44 woman, independent. Enjoys arts, seeks clever, wicked humorous man for relationship Photo? Box No. HL5133

♥ **BI-FEMALE**, friendly, open minded, unattached. Seeking Bi-people, male/female, especially black guys. Photo receives mine. Box No. HL4110

♥ **BI-MALE 24**, straight-acting, genuine, seeks fun and friendship. Discretion offered. Birmingham area. Photo appreciated. Box No. HL5111

♥ **BI-MALE** would like to meet single males/ females or couples for friendship and fun. Box No. HL5122

♥ **BISEXUAL** male 18, good looking, seeks male, 18-24 for discreet honest, N/S, S/A, friendship. ALA. Box No. HL4781

♥ **BISEXUAL** male, 18, very attractive, tall seeks similar guys, especially Black/Asian. ALA £3's refunded. Box No. HL4561

♥ **BI-SEXUAL** male, seeks discreet male friends. GSOH, into music, videos, relaxing times age/colour immaterial. Box No. HL5386

♥ **BLACK** bi-sexual male, seeks open-minded discreet guys. Into keep-fit, TV'S, wrestling. Age immaterial. Box No. HL4176

♥ **BLACK** female 24, WLTm new friends to socialise. Eat Pizzas Baltis, Chinese and go to cinemas. Box No. HL4858

♥ **BRAZILIAN** lady sincere, educated, seeks gentleman 50's 60's, tall, honest, good character for friendship. Box No. HL4528

♥ **CARING** divorced father seeks new partner, intelligent, wide interests. GSOH. Any colour single mum ok. Box No. HL4616

♥ **CLOSET**, discreet TV with corsetry interest wishes to visit no nonsense bespectacled lady, expenses paid. Box No. HL4473

♥ **ELEGANT**, intelligent female with big, brown eyes and warm smile. Seeks 32 plus, gorgeous male. Box No. HL4572

♥ **ENGLISH** male, 27 seeks Asian girl for friendship and romance, living in Sandwell/Birmingham Area. Box No. HL5089

♥ **FEMALE** and visiting Bristol? Needing an attractive, male companion, conversation, fun? Stylish, Discreet. Please make contact. Box No. HL5056

♥ **FEMALES** wanting positive people happy go lucky, ages 19 -30 for friendship. Box No. HL5408

♥ **FINANCIAL** Services Manager,

young 42, tall, slim, non-smoker, house, car, smart, seeks attractive female investment Halesowen. Box No. HL5309

♥ **FOR Sale:** Gay male 26 short cropped hair, bluey grey eyes, one previous owner, good condition, needs a little TLC. Photo appreciated. Box No. HL5430

♥ **GAY 27**, slim, fun, sincere, seeks kind, educated, N/Smoker older man for 1-2-1. SAE. ALA. Box No. HL5287

♥ **GAY 33** slim, fit, health, interested in art, pref wants to develop 1-1 with similar. Box No. HL4869

♥ **GAY** Asian professional male 25. Seeks professional Gay or Bi cross dresser for fun/friendship. Box No. HL4044

♥ **GAY** guy 22 seeks 1-2-1 close relationship. Interests: art, theatre, cinema. Photo ensures reply. Box No. HL5144

♥ **GAY** guy 25 from torch social again! Come and see me I'm waiting for you! Box No. HL4132

♥ **GAY** guy 26 intelligent, cropped hair, genuine, good personality, seeks friends for fun friendship ALA. Box No. HL5276

♥ **GAY** male 22 seeks big muscular balding cropped haired workman 30+. Please send photo. Box No. HL4913

♥ **GAY** male 22, seeks gay/bi male (under 24) for fun and friendship. Photo essential ALA. Box No. HL4759

♥ **GAY** male 30, kind, genuine and sincere, seeks similar for real friendship and fun. Box No. HL5243

♥ **GAY** student, 25 attractive, seeks witty, S/A non-scene guy, (brains in head, not pants!) no anoraks! Photo! Box No. HL5166

♥ **GENT** in ladies undies seeks discreet understanding lady with whom I can share my interest. Box No. HL4484

♥ **GENTLEMAN** single, seeks mid-30s trendy lady, no ties, with jeans, walking boots, Ford Fiesta. Box No. HL4264

♥ **GENUINE** caring male graduate 28, seeks attractive intelligent female for lasting friendship/relationship. Birmingham. ALA Box No. HL5452

♥ **GENUINE** male 29 mature single lonely. Seeking older woman for friendship/ relationship, age, looks unimportant. Box No. HL4099

♥ **GREAT** company, true friend, latent romantic, thirtysomething gent, seeks woman wanting loyalty, optimism, quality. ALA. Box No. HL4462

♥ **GREEN** eyed brown skin friendly career male, seeks level headed honest, caring 18-30 brunette for romance. Box No. HL5199

♥ **GUARDIAN** /NME reading male, 23, seeking female company for gigs, cinema, etc. Age unimportant. ALA. Box No. HL4715

♥ **HANDSOME** male 22 seeks warm, attractive, intelligent female for nights out, friendship or romance. Photo please. Box No. HL4539

♥ **INDIE** music fan, seeks new friends for pubs, clubs, gigs. Bring a friend along. Box No. HL4979

♥ **INTELLIGENT**, attractive, tall, 30s male seeks couple for safe adult fun. Straight, discreet. Photo appreciated/ returned ALA. Box No. HL4363

♥ **INTELLIGENT** male, tall dark attractive, SOH 35, likes Indie music, seeks kind intelligent female. Box No. HL5463

♥ **INTELLIGENT** professional, all round nice guy, 28, seeks warm clever female who probably won't reply! Box No. HL5023

♥ **ITALIAN** Stallion 19, car owner, good occupation, wishes to meet girl 18-21ish fun or relationship. Box No. HL5012

♥ **LADY** 30's based Sutton Coldfield area seeks gent N/S 35+, theatre, music, cinema, genuine. Box No. HL5100

♥ **LICHFIELD** male, 32 W.L.T.M. female 25-34, interests: sports, mountains, oceans, cinema, eating out (and in). Box No. HL4308

♥ **LIVELY** sexy, loving female, needs friendly humorous male companion for the second half of life. Box No. HL5298

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♥ **MALE 21** Walsall area, kind and caring seeks similar female for friendship/relationship, GSOH essential. Box No. HL5331

♥ **MALE 22** attractive inexperienced sub seeks dominant lady for fantasy fun. Box No. HL4550

♥ **MALE 26**, wish to meet very understanding respectable, caring, older female, for loving relationship. Box No. HL5364

♥ **MALE 27**, long hair, 5'6", rock music, guitars, animals, countryside, wishes female penpal. Please reply. Box No. HL5078

♥ **MALE 30**, seeks female cycling companion for miles of friendship, good listener, Solihull Sheldon areas. Box No. HL4143

♥ **MALE 30** wishes to meet young wild lady (20-30) for adventure, travel, romance. Photo please. Box No. HL4418

♥ **MALE 31**, graduate, into hillwalking, horse riding, travelling to Paris, seeks attractive female. Photo please. Box No. HL4726

♥ **MALE 31** single seeks oriental lady, n/smoker for friendship, romance. Phone number appreciated. Box No. HL4495

♥ **MALE 32** into Muses/Hersh. Unemployed, penniless. Seeks similar female for relationship /friendship. Photo please. Box No. HL5254

♥ **MALE 32**, seeks female 18-30 friendship /relationship possibly marriage and prospect of children. Photograph appreciated. Box No. HL4902

♥ **MALE 32** seeks girl 18/28 students welcome, good times friendship/relationship. ALA. GSOH. Photograph appreciated. Box No. HL4627

♥ **MALE 36** N/S, divorced, 2 children, seeks genuine female for reliable relationship, enjoys music, socialising, travel concerts. Box No. HL4297

♥ **MALE 43** musician, conservationist, birdwatcher, seeks slim, like-minded female for making music!! Photo essential. Box No. HL4033

♥ **MALE 47**, N/smoking, homelover. Own house, car, cat. Interested railways. Seeks lady with similar interests. Box No. HL4693

♥ **MALE** late 40's own business 6' attractive, NS, like to meet smart young lay for good times. Lichfield area. Box No. HL4638

♥ **MALE** physically, mentally toned, 29, 5'7" seeking lady into sport, excitement, life. Honest self-appraisal appreciated. Box No. HL5067

♥ **MALE** requires female, age, colour unimportant adult afternoon fun /friend-

ship. North Staffs area. ALA. Box No. HL4077

♥ **MAN**, single, 42 Solihull, restricted social time, seeks occasional, civilised intimacy with buxom untied black lady. Box No. HL5034

♥ **MIDDLE** aged educated man, seeks slim, non-smoking, fit woman for fun and physical togetherness. Box No. HL4836

♥ **NICE** alternative Wolverhampton male, twenties, long hair, enjoys gig going, seeks bright alternative female company. Box No. HL4770

♥ **OPTIMISTIC** attractive 40's woman seeks solvent professional man for friendship, sharing, caring - where are you? Box No. HL4847

♥ **PERSONABLE** professional, perspicacious partner/playmate sought by sociable, sparky lady, 40's. Box No. HL4330

♥ **POSITIVE** thinking, well educated, friendly female seeks tall, honest happy, caring male, 35-45. Box No. HL4803

♥ **POSTGRAD** woman 40, seeks similar woman to share, walks, food, conversation, music, relaxed, enjoyable friendship. Box No. HL4792

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VOCALIST/GUITARIST seeks a band, ability, creativity & good humour essential. No Punks and no Grunge. (Black Crow, Paul Rodgers...) Call Macintosh on 021 680 4642

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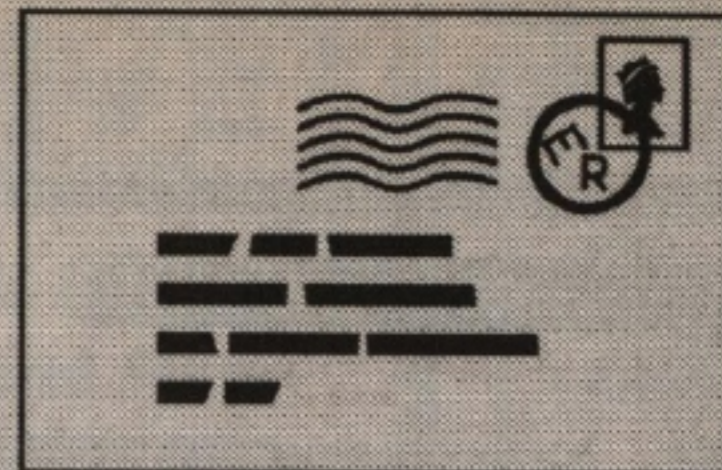
For one of the first ambient videos, Eat Static make full use of kaleidoscopic visuals and pyrotechnic pictures to simulate a musical mind trip. The music is largely culled from last year's excellent Abduction album, - but also includes four previously unreleased tracks as well. It's classic ambient, with futuristic moods painted on developing dancescapas.

It's easy to lose yourself in the screen image and the music. Effects tumble off the screen, increasing in colour and complexity throughout the video. Everything is revealed slowly, and even the blurred images of the Static ones performing live become clear by the end. Another success from Planet Dog.

Brum Beat has five to give away. Usual form; postcards to Eat Dog at the relevant address and lo and behold, the first five pulled on June 1st etc. etc.

BRAVO - TIME WARP TELEVISION: MERCHANDISE

Satellite and Cable TV couchies will need no introduction to the bewildering charm of BRAVO. Proudly billing itself as 'Time Warp Television', it's the channel that offers re-runs of such cult classics as The Beverley Hillbillies, The Avengers, Saber Of London, Mary Hartman, Mary Hartman, The Donny And Marie Osmond Show, Car 54 Where Are You?, The Twilight Zone, Get Smart and a mountain of other kitsch memory maulers. Bravo have given us a bag of handy spring weather accessories, all branded with the famous Bravo logo; we've got 10 large golf umbrellas and 10 pairs of sunglasses to toss your way, so if you fancy being recognised in the street as an aficionado of tacky TV send a PC to Bravo Mario at the usual address. The first 10 pulled on June 1st snaffle their senders a broly and glasses each.



FROM OUR CORRESPONDENCE

Dear Editor,

I very much appreciate your magazine and its Gig Guide which provides one of the very few opportunities to find out where live music is going on in the Midlands. One thing I find very difficult to understand is why there is such a differential in price between gigs. I recently attended a great set by the Curtis Little Band in the great surroundings of the Crown, Broad Street for nothing, when, only a few months earlier, the same band were appearing across the street at Ronnie Scott's (probably at their £8 entrance fee).

It might be thought that music is of a better quality when there is a cost involved but this is usually not the case in my experience. This is perhaps best exemplified by the annual blues and jazz festivals when the artists playing in the small bars usually 'blow away' the headliners who usually end up with dreadful sound systems in cold and clinical venues.

Why on earth does a subsidised place like the Midland Arts Centre have to charge for gigs when they probably sell as much booze as any ordinary bar when hosting a reasonably good performer? Indeed drinks usually cost more when you have paid to get in than at free gigs. The MAC ends up as an elitist place which actively discriminates in favour of the better off members of the community. Maybe the best idea of all is Warwick University's Saturday night Whip rounds when most of those attending are happy to throw £2.00 into a box passed around the capacity crowd when such excellent music is on offer from name bands promoting their records.

Why doesn't the MAC at least give this a try?

In order to encourage more promoters to be progressive in this respect, I wonder if your gig guide could give more space to the free venues or at least indicate those who charge.

Thanks again for a very good (cheap!) magazine.

Colin Barnes
Coventry

Hmm; we'll have to leave the MAC, Ronnie Scott's and other promoters to speak for themselves on this one - but briefly if you do write in guys - as for the GIG GUIDE, we can only give the details we are given - and you wouldn't believe how many bands, venues etc. simply ignore the request for detailed info.

Finally, Colin, we are not 'cheap'; inexpensive maybe and free, if you look in the right places. Ed

Dear Mr. Ed

I must agree with young Lewis' outburst in last month's issue about Credit To The Nation's over activity. Having seen CTTN before, I decided to arrive late for the Therapy? gig at the Civic so that I didn't have to sit through them again, which does save getting aggravated.

Could I add that your review of Therapy? was very disappointing. They made a great sound - and what about the Joy Division cover?

Jane West
Wolverhampton

What the hell is it with you lot and Credit To The Nation? At least you isolate one problem you have, Jane, why would you want to sit through them? They play dance music! And as for Therapy? - we just wanted to print a rather fab and exclusive pic, we've covered the band in depth quite recently after all. And if cover versions are so important, let me introduce you to Bjorn Again. Ed

And would Jon Fortgang of Balsall Heath please send us a phone number, we'd like to take you up on the points you raised. Ta!

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