

BRUM BEAT

THE MIDLANDS ENTERTAINMENT MONTHLY

OCTOBER 1990

PREFAB



COMEBACK

▲ THE PADDY McALOON INTERVIEW BY PAUL FLOWER

PLUS ● **CRAZYHEAD** ● **PATRIOT**
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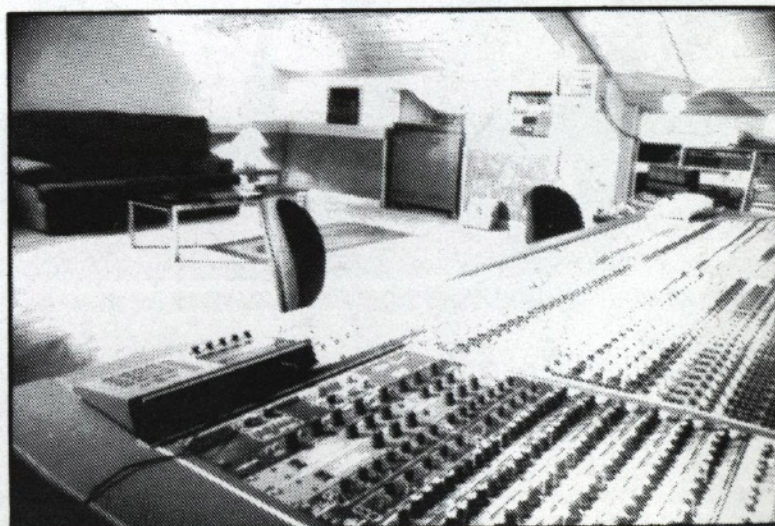
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CHECK-IN

6 **PREFAB SPROUT.** Aston Villa Leisure Centre (021-328 8330 for info — 021-328 5377 credit card bookings). A case of Prefab: The Comeback, maybe? Support, courtesy of The Thrashcan Sinatras pushing their new single 'Circling The Circumference' guarantees a night of quality pop.

8 **CHRISTY MOORE.** Wolverhampton Civic Hall (0902 312030). Wolvesfest appearance by Ireland's finest singer/writer.

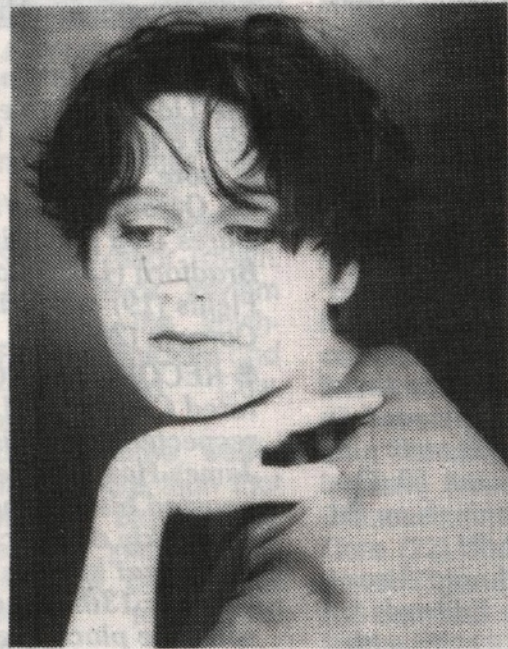
CHRISTIANS. NEC (021-780 4133). Whatever happened to the impetus of that debut LP? They've hardly stormed the charts of late but their live firepower should remain undimmed.

10 **BILLY JOEL.** NEC (021-780 4133). Despite the soft, MOR-friendly image Joel is capable of fine, thought-provoking writing. Whether or not he's settling for the celebrity life, only gigs such as this can reveal.

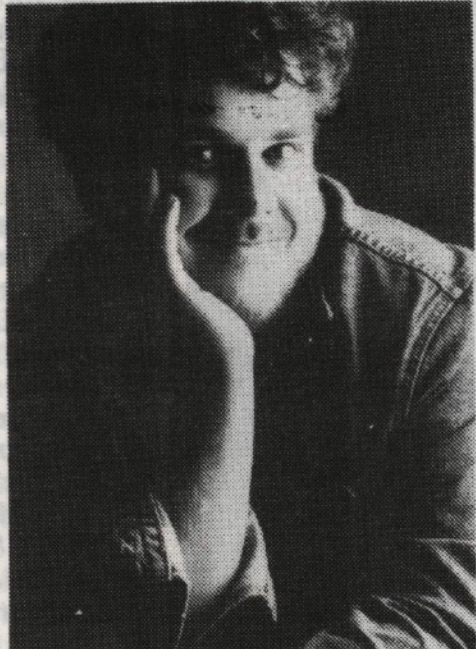
PICK OF THE OCTOBER DATES



▲ THE POGUES



▲ THE COCTEAU TWINS



11 **THE POGUES.** Wolverhampton Civic Hall (0902 312030). More Irish flavouring for the Wolvesfest. Is Shane McGowan back in harness or is this tour (and the new album) The Pogues' swansong?

20 **MARTHA AND THE VANDELLAS.** Tic Toc, Coventry (0203 630877). Believe it or not this promises the absolute original trio. Never as big as the Supremes but always grittier. A night on which to witness true Motown magic.

24 **HAWKWIND.** Wolverhampton Civic Hall (0902 312030). The legendary 'long strange trip' drops into the Black Country for an evening of let's-do-the-time-warp. Surprisingly a packed house is guaranteed.

29 **THE COCTEAU TWINS.** Hummingbird, Birmingham (021-236 4236). "Flibideebop," said Liz. "Spacey jingle jangle," said Robin. "Revelation," said the fans...

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MIKE LLOYD ^{is} **MUSIC**

SHORTS

● **COMPUTER USING** music collectors and recording studios may like to know about Cavalier Software's 'Re-Chord' program. This simple to operate package (even the Ed. got the hang of it ... eventually) allows users to log their entire collections on floppy disk; to categorise by format, CD, LP, cassette, video etc; by style, R&B, opera, ska, country and so on and to trace items by artist, title, recording date or whatever. Say you have a number of versions of one song, you could track them all down at the touch of a button. Car compilation tapes are catered for too; tap in the track details and 'Re-Chord' will print you out a detailed cassette inlay. The program is

and CD single versions of the current outing include a fine B. South reading of the Dramatics, soul classic, 'What You See Is What You Get'.

● **IT'S OCTOBER** and that means one thing - it's Christmas! Well it does if you're Lindisfarne who this year have sensibly, if not soberly, teamed up with Theakston's wonderful Old Peculier to present 'The Old Peculier Christmas Show'. Midlands ex pat Georgies can 'Swing Together' at Wolverhampton Civic Hall on December 9th, Oxford Apollo (12), Leicester, De Montfort Hall (17) and Nottingham Royal Centre (29 & 30). Released to coincide are two videos, 'The Complete Lindisfarne' and

● **WANT TO** be part of a Beatles for the 90s? Well the Electric Energy Peoples Boogie Revolution Band are looking for female backing vocalists. Main man Lee tells us that the band have "actual songs" and are in no way a Happy Mondays/Stone Roses soundalike. Branding their sound "electric energy music", Lee is currently dealing with interest from Polydor and WEA. So potential backing vox-ettes should call Lee on 021-453 2348.

● **THE DARKLY** named Death By Chocolate will be putting at least a pint and a half into every member at Walsall's Three Crowns (October 4) and Darlaston's Staffordshire Knot (25).

● **HANDSWORTH'S SEVEN** piece roots, rock, reggae aggregation, Connecting Routes take their spirit lifting sound to Wolverhampton's Wulfrun Hall on Sunday October 14th. Showtime is 8pm.

● **ALICIA**, the Birmingham rock band stride out on their 'A Crash Course In Entertainment' tour with dates at Birmingham Barrel Organ (October 7 & 16); Oxford, Dolly (17); Lichfield Arts Centre (19) and Bedford, Angel (November 4th).

● **ROADRUNNER RECORDS** seek to pay the rent by sending their bands out on the road this autumn. Xentrix play Walsall Junction 10 (October 7), Birmingham Edwards No. 8 (21). Sacred Reich and Atrophy call into Edwards No. 8 (October 16) with Obituary knocking 'em dead at the same venue (November 2).

● **ZEDD**, a heavy rock outfit it seems, appear at Edwards on Monday October 29th. The Hull based outfit specialise in brain rot it would seem; try this from their press release "From the hinterland on the outskirts of comprehension, where the minds eye cries and souls bleed into a foul, malodorous pit of pustulant mucus comes something so ominous, so earth shattering, so immense as to make your toes turn green, your scrotum shrivel and your armpits ooze rich brown glue".

All together ... "B****cks". Playing gigs on Bilton Grange is no excuse either!

● **WATCH OUT** for Just Absolute. The Brum band may have been quiet on the local scene - in fact they haven't done a home town gig in a year or so preferring to

What's more it's not a Bill with the biz pedigree, Mike Hatton is a Blues On The Loose - Tom Farnell is a Raymond Froggatt sideman and one time Fairport Convention alumni whilst John McKinley recently made many fans at the Amsterdam Blues Fest.



▲ **THE BEAUTIFUL SOUTH**

win over college audiences throughout the UK - but nationally the buzz is getting louder. Their hard edged mainstream commercial sound is currently to be found behind the bikesheds with the Erasure/Depeche Mode management in seduction mode. Keep an eye on these pages for Absolute dates.

● **OVER IN** Oakengates The Lion Street Centre have a great indie month is store. On October 5 Rig/Dan Dares Dog play with Bradford (13), Asia Fields (19) and Brilliant Corners (26).

● **RECORD MIRROR** rated Coventry DJ Lof, respected columnist James Hamilton recently boosted his ego, has set up weekly dance club, Downbeat kicking off on October 13th. Downbeat will take place every Saturday. "A new direction in dance" is promised with the rider that "Downbeat will be better than the Hacienda". Helping Lof in this project are ex Specials Lynval Golding and Jerry Dammers.

● **BLUES IS** the name of the game at The Boat and Railway in Stoke Prior near Bromsgrove. Bill (ex ELO and Wizard) Hunt leads Rock The Boat (Bill plus Mike Hatton, bass; Tom Farnell, drums and John McKinley on guitar and vocals) thru' a rockin' blues set on Thursdays October 4th and 18th. It's a meagre £2 in and start up is 8.30pm.

● **COVENTRY'S STOKER** has a fun filled October schedule. The purpose built venue, s in the rolling uplands Stoke Green, a gentle half mile stroll from the city centre and complete with in build quality F and lights, perfect staff and food (enough for guys?) presents the lo service medal winning Groundhogs (October The Beyond/Empire F (6), Sonny Curtis of the Crickets (9), Friday's Child (11), Tubilah D (21), The Hamsters (2), Escape (26) and Helte Skelter supported by Eyeless In Gaza man, Martin Bates' new aggregation The Hungry 1 (27).

● **THE MONEYGODS** whose 'All Roads Lead To Sedgley' EP has been declared an album by Gallup, enabling it to reach the coveted number one slot in the Lichfield/South Staffs chart, are on an October tour at present. Kicking off on Thursday 4th at Dudley Churchills the tics roll on to Cannock/Smackers (10) at Birmingham Lamp Tavern (27). The Cannock and Brum gigs are freebies, too, folks!

● **INFORMATION** regarding the following came in a letter promising the bearer a free 'verage' should he attempt to demonstrate that Brum Beat is beyond hyping we have decided not to mention that Kbitz and Step Forward are at King's Heath H and Hounds on Wednesday October 3rd.



▲ **OBITUARY**

suited to a range of machinery and is sensibly priced. Further details from any sensible software shop or from Cavalier Software at PO Box 32, London SE15 2HS.

● **THE BEAUTIFUL SOUTH**, whose charmingly idiosyncratic 45, 'A Little Time' is currently charting the way for a still to be completed second album, call in at Wolverhampton Civic Hall on Saturday November 17th. The 12"

'Bedrock - Lindisfarne Live' and sounding like a must to avoid 'Fog On The Tyne Revisited (Gazza Rap)' featuring the band with, yup that Brut smelling football person.

● **PETER MASON** is promoting a series of events at the Yorkshire Grey in Edgbaston's Dudley Road. Under the 'Raven Days' banner his October line up is Sound Of Spaghetti Junction (5); Steve Ajao (20) and Neil Cox (26). More details available on 021-429 2912.

news

KIDDERMINSTER ROCKS

★ LIVE MUSIC returns to Kidderminster's Market Tavern this month with a clutch of gigs promising the best in local and national sounds. The season kicks off in style with Carter - The Unstoppable Sex Machine (October 3) and delivers a quick second blow with John Otway

(4). The rest of the month lines up as The Seven Deadly Sins/UXB (6); Ransom (12); Band Of Gypsies/Canaan Rose (13); Prime Time/Starving Rascals (19); The Incomparable Kernel Clarke (20); Mr Big (26) and Island Records' future hopes, Helter Skelter (November 3).

The Market Tavern is to be found in Comberton Hill near Kidderminster's railway station.



▲ FRANK SKINNER

SANDWELL ARTS FEST

★ FOR TWENTY-TWO days in October (6-27th) Sandwell will be coming alive with Art of all persuasions.

The Sandwell Arts Festival is by no means as straight-laced and correct as the name suggests. With events in pubs and on the street it's more like a multi-cultural carnival.

Events to note include The Pie Factory Folk Music Festival with Swan Arcade at the Little Pie Factory, Tipton (Oc-

tober 7); A Night At The Cotton Club with Slim Gallard and Will Gaines (Bear Tavern, Bearwood, 8th); XXXX Cabaret featuring Frank Skinner (Bear Tavern, 12th); Roots, Rock, Rhythm Night starring The Rhythmites, Floor Technicians and Bongo-Go (Red Cow, Smethwick, 27th).

Obviously in three weeks there is far more than that happening. *Brum Beat* advises that you call the festival office on 021-588 2962/3850 for full information.

MORE XXXX-ING CABARET

★ WOLVERHAMPTON has fallen to the onward march of alternative cabaret. Yes the XXXXers have annexed the Cleveland Arms in Stowheath Lane on Wednesday nights. Tim Clarke is resident compere and £2.50 buys you all the belly laughs you can sensibly use.

BANG BANG FREE OFFER

★ BANG BANG Machine, the Cheltenham-based rock 'n' roll group with Photos connections, have had their 'Aim For The Heart (Ramone)' promo video snapped up by BSB's satellite 'Power Station' channel for showing in the 'Sneak Preview' slot.

Negotiations are also going on with MTV and Central TV for future screenings of their Mark Grindle directed, Abbey Manor staged movie debut.

To tie in with this wave of small screen activity BBM's manager, the enigmatic Dr. Rokk, is offering a free cassette to anyone prepared to install a BSB system and invite the group around to watch themselves. Challenged about the cost, Dr. Rokk, a man believed to be behind the Weo Goran scandals of the late 80s, is reported to have screamed "Hang the expense ...".

Meanwhile BBM can be caught in the flesh at West Bromwich, The Marksman (October 7); Evesham, Electric Fishtank (13); Birmingham, Breedon Bar (16); Gloucester, Steam Rock Cafe (22) and Birmingham, Barrel Organ (November 4). BSB installers should call Dr. Rokk on 0242 512726.



▲ PATO BANTON

BIRTHDAY FE PATO

★ BIRMINGHAM'S CURRENT reggae King Pato Banton teams up with hitmaking duo Peter Spence and Tipa Irie to celebrate G. T. Management's fifth birthday inna ragga stylee at The Porsche Club, Birmingham

on Thursday October 18th. The terrific toasting trio will be performing live with a full backing band.

Pato's 'Wize Up' album on IRS and the Spence/Irie Mango label treatment of 'Girl Of My Best Friend' would suggest that the £6 price tag is at bargain basement level. Doors open 10pm. Early arrival is crucial.

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Let me focus on books that alcoholics anonymous would frown upon this month and first off, a pair of tomes that seek to euologise the 'elixir of life' ... whisky.
First off ...

► **THE WHISKIES OF SCOTLAND** - John Murray (R. J. S. McDowall £8.95)

In this book, we're taken on a tour of whisky making right from the selection of the grain through to the intricate process of distillation and the finished product itself, either the delicious malt or the less celebrated blended varieties, it is no matter to a lover of the demon scotch. Just sip the luscious liquid and relax! The final chapter on The Pleasures of Whisky is very interesting because while too much alcohol can cause cirrhosis of the liver and even a reduction in brain size, there is also medical proof suggesting that a man drinking around a bottle of whisky a week (and no other alcohol) is less likely to suffer heart attacks than a teetotaller. Now there's a sobering thought!

► **THE ESSENTIAL GUIDE TO SCOTCH WHISKY** - Michael Brander (Canongate £4.95)

This is basically a history of whisky distillation in Scotland followed by a more than useful guide to malt whisky which is crucial fayre for any discerning whisky drinker because a dram of the malt is scotch drinking at its very best. Take a tip from me, forget Glenfiddich or the other best loved malts, head for Macallan, a Speyside favourite which is a delight at 10 years normal 40%, but is a total dream at 57% volume. Try it!

WHAT'S NEW IN PRINT ● EDITED BY KEVIN WILSON

► **DAFT ABOUT LAGER** - Rohan Daft (Sphere £3.50)

Lager fans will find this aptly named book a useful device as the new craze for bottled foreign lagers reaches a new peak this autumn. Sure, there is time spent on the Carlsbergs, Carlings, Skols and Harps but Daft is disparaging about them (quite rightly) and spends a lot of time and effort examining the merits of Mexico's Sol, America's Michelob, Czechoslovakia's Budweiser and India's Kingfisher. If you truly want to call yourself a lager lover, this is your kind of book.

► **THE LIFE OF JIMI HENDRIX** (Scuse Me While I Kiss The Sky) - David Henderson (Omnibus £7.95)

First published in 1978 and now available in the UK for the first time to coincide with the 20th anniversary of Hendrix's tragic death in September 1970, this never less than irreverent biography has been labelled the definitive work on Hendrix and I found it a rivetting read from cover to cover thanks to the approach that spends time on the Seattle childhood days, the airforce experiences and the introduction into musodom via session work but Henderson gets into the business of wild man of rock as soon as he can and then never lets go as the heat is turned up to maximum and the stories get more eccentric, the account gets rauchier by the page and the legend grows in front of your very eyes. Some pages come alive, especially the concert wordage which positively leaps from

text to action in one foul swoop. As rock biogs go, Henderson has written a classic but he could've spent more time on the Plaster Casters though.

Kevin Wilson

► **JIMI HENDRIX: ELECTRIC GYPSY** - Harry Shapiro & Caesar Glebbeek (William Heinemann £16.99)

Whilst Henderson's book paints a fascinating image of Hendrix, Electric Gypsy simply and thoroughly details the reality. Whilst regarding Hendrix as a genius in his sphere, Shapiro and Glebbeek, the latter being the founder of the Dutch-based Hendrix Information Centre, reveal him as a contradictory character; gentle yet bad tempered, a perfectionist yet unreliable on stage.

However where the book comes up trumps and stakes its claim as THE Hendrix book is in the astounding appendices. Gig lists with set lists where available; inventories of equipment owned by JMH including serial numbers and current whereabouts. There are exhaustive discographies and bibliographies too.

Essentially a complete reference work on the finest electric guitar player yet to achieve prominence and probably the most influential rock player ever.

Steve Morris

► **PET SHOP BOYS LITERALLY** - Chris Heath (Viking £12.99)

Even the media shunning PSBs have fallen into the book trap. Heath was given generous access to the secret world during their world tour. Lowe and Tennant teasingly claim in their cover endorsement that they stand to learn as much about themselves as the reader. What this means is that the PSB enigma bubble is burst and that Neil and Chris are ordinary human beings! It's not a bad work actually nowhere near as pretentious as a PS Book might have been.

Steve Morris

SHORTS

● **ROSETTA STONE** are set to bring their 'In Perpetual Darkness' tour to Birmingham's Barrel Organ on Tuesday October 30th.

At the tour's end R. Stone go into Slaughterhouse studios with Mission producer Colin Richardson. The results are set for release in January '91. The Mish comparison is hardened by Phonogram A&R who described them succinctly as "A lot like the Mission" and Wayne Hussey who states "Like The Sisters when they wuz good"(!). Ancestry supply the support at the Barrel Organ outing.

● **LOU DALGLIESH**, Birmingham's fast rising singer songwriter takes to the road this month with gigs at Kent University (6); Birmingham, Newman College (10); Northampton, Nene College (11) and a top of the bill booking at the career launch pad, London's Mean Fiddler Acoustic Room (17). The Fiddler's Acoustic Stage is the very point from which Billy Bragg and Tanita Tikaram sallied forth to riches and fame. Sensible money suggests that Lou Dalgliesh is set to follow in their famous footsteps.

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POST

BRUM... A POOR SECOND

Dear Sirs,
I am writing to you in a pretty confused state of mind. Myself and two compatriots left our native N. Ireland to come and ply our trade as a hot little trio (in 1987) in Birmingham. Since arriving in Brum we have been experimenting and expanding our line-up, with local musicians.

We have recently completed our line-up and are now ready to fulfil our earlier promise, as a five-piece outfit. We have been flitting into and out of the local 'scene' during our experimentation period and it is what has happened or rather what hasn't happened, which has me in my present state of perplexity.

I mean, correct me if I'm wrong, but I was under the impression that Brum was England's second city? So being in that position it should have a music scene to match? Nowhere else have I ever seen such apathy. Everywhere else that we have played on the mainland, we do so to full houses. In Ireland, where we toured recently for the first time in *three years*, the venues all had to refuse entry to an average of 150 people a night, due to lack of space within.

If the rest of Great Britain can get it together why not Brum??

Yours faithfully,
Liam McMurray,
Birmingham

● *Damn good question Liam! Brum Beat would love to hear from anyone with a point of view on the subject, punters and those 'in the biz' alike.*

BRUM BEAT

GIVEAWAYS

TIMOTEI DANDRUFF SHAMPOO

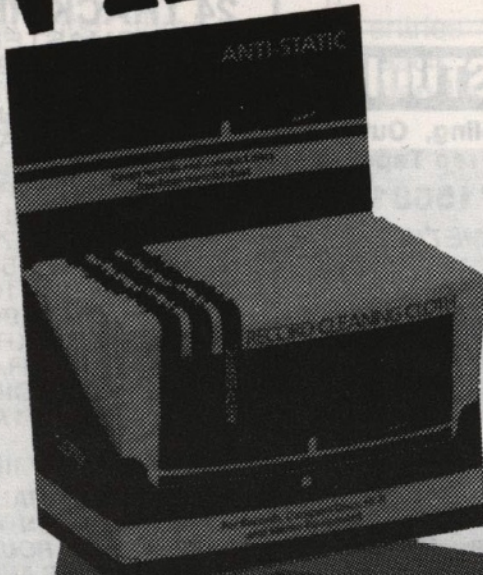
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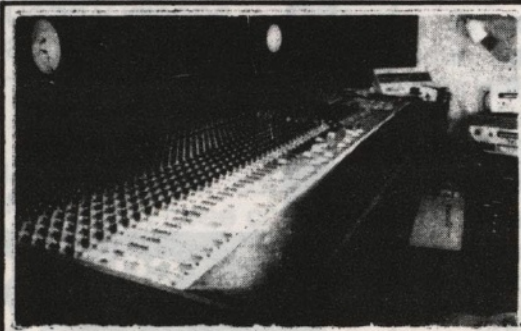
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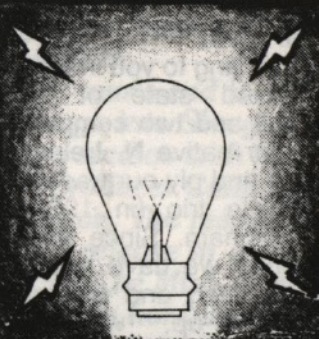
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WARNER HOME VIDEO

★ **IT'S Bugs Bunny's 50th Birthday and to celebrate *Brum Beat* is giving away five Warner Home Video four packs.**

Each set consists of a Bugs Bunny tape (naturally!) plus 'Nico', 'Twin Peaks' and 'Empire Of The Sun'.

Bugs is, of course, the world's most famous rabbit, an ageless character who despite half a century of rough and tumble has made it to fifty years old - and just the one grey hare.

Accompanying the Bugs movie is 'Nico' - a Human Lethal Weapon. Nico made a star of leading man Steven Seagal in the role of the tough Italian cop with an "undercover in Vietnam" background. An explosive movie.

'Twin Peaks' comes from the fertile mind of David 'Eraserhead' Lynch and has been described as "Peyton Place meets Blue Velvet". Set in small town America, 'Twin Peaks' is a seemingly straightforward murder mystery, shortly to become a TV series. This is the feature film version.

'Empire Of The Sun' is a Steven Spielberg World War II epic starring Christian Bale, Nigel Havers, Miranda Richardson and John Malkovich. The movie deals with a boy's coming of age against a background of war in the bitterly savage far east. It has the sweep, scale and sensitivity that is Spielberg's hallmark.

Warner Home Video have a collection of Bugs Bunny videos, 'Nico', 'Twin Peaks' and 'Empire Of The Sun' available in all good video stores at £9.99 each.



WARNER HOME VIDEO

Brum Beat has five sets each containing one Bugs Bunny movie, 'Nico', 'Twin Peaks' and 'Empire of The Sun' to be won courtesy of Warners.

The first five correct entries drawn after November 1st will win one set of VHS tapes each. As 'Nico' is an 18 cert. please sign your entry "I am over 18 years of age".

- 1. What is Bugs Bunny's famous catch phrase.**
- 2. Which Frank Herbert sci-fi novel did David Lynch turn into a movie?**
- 3. Who wrote the book on which 'Empire Of The Sun' is based?**

HOW TO ENTER

Brum Beat competitions are free and easy to enter. Simply send your answer on a postcard stating clearly which competition it applies to (one postcard per competition please, if entering more than one several postcards can be put into one envelope to save on stamps). Please include your name and address and daytime and/or evening phone number (if possible). Send to:- **Brum Beat Competitions, PO Box 944, Edgbaston, Birmingham B16 8UT.**

STEVE MILLER TICKETS

★ **THE LEGENDARY Steve Miller Band fly into the UK to appear at the Birmingham NEC on Saturday November 17th.** Currently enjoying a belated number one with the seventeen-year-old 'Joker', Miller is a long respected rock blues guitarist with a plethora of classic albums under his belt alongside numerous hit singles.

Brum Beat has three pairs of tickets for the NEC date to be won. The first three correct entries drawn after November 1st win one pair of tickets each.

What is the title of Steve Miller's most "magical" hit single?

RUNRIG VINYL

★ **RUNRIG - Scotland's best musical export have a storming four track EP currently on release on Chrysalis.** Captured in those four songs is the full passion of their celtic hearts. It is an essential addition to any collection.

Brum Beat has three copies of the EP, 'Capture The Heart' in its very limited 10" vinyl format to be won.

The first three correct entries drawn after November 1st win one copy each.

What was the name of the band's 1989 Top 20 album?



▲ **RUNRIG**

THAT LOVING FEELING—VOL. III

★ **ROMANTICALLY** following on where Volumes I and II left off, 'That Loving Feeling Vol III' is another collection of heartwarming songs of loves won, lost and longed for. A double album set crammed with thirty certified classics from, among the many, Marvin Gaye, Michael Jackson, Sade, Elton John, Gloria Estefan and Al Green.

Brum Beat has six copies of the Dino Records double set to be won. The first six correct entries drawn after November 1st win one album set each.

Who recorded the hit versions of: 'Let's Get It On', 'Careless Whisper', 'Your Love Is King' and 'How Long'?

SELECT SUBSCRIPTION

★ **SELECT** is one of the new breed of glossy monthlies that deals in music as music and not as a fashion accessory. Edited by Tony Stewart, a man with oodles of experience as a music journalist, *Select* makes the perfect monthly companion to *Brum Beat*!

SELECT

We have a one year subscription to *Select* to be won and three *Select* T-shirts for three runners-up. The sub will go to the first correct answer drawn after November 1st with the next three correct answers drawn copping a T-shirt each.

What was the title of the free cassette given away with the October edition of *Select*?

GREGSON AND COLLISTER

★ **CLIVE Gregson and Christine Collister** appear in concert in the acoustically perfect setting of Birmingham's Adrian Boult Hall on Sunday November 4th.

Clive and Christine are surely folk-roots' most interesting duo, combining Gregson's fine compositional skills with a boundary breaking choice of covers. And all delivered with fine musical panache.

Brum Beat has three pairs of the tickets to be won for the show, courtesy of Mike Lloyd Artistes.

The first three correct entries drawn on November 1st win one pair each. Please include a daytime phone number so that we can inform winners.

What is Gregson/Collister's new album called?

COMPETITIONS

HOUSE BRICKS AND TALENT

Roving reporter PAUL REES joins Walsall-based rockers PATRIOT on the long and winding road to Tamworth ...

2.30pm. As grey clouds begin to congregate above the Black Country skyline, Patriot's cheerful bus starts the journey to Tamworth. Not exactly the Utopian 'Rock Capital Of The World' but home to The Rat Hole and a promising support gig with Wolfsbane. Drummer Jon Cooksey (minus the house brick attachments he wears on his feet for band photos) is at the wheel - using an old walking stick to reach the pedals. The rest of the band (minus keyboardist Chris Hayward, who has dreaded work commitments until the evening) engage in the normal good natured conversation and schoolgirl admiring. Lock up your pencil case.

3.45pm. After trundling around a one-way system several times we locate The Rat Hole, a tiny upstairs venue that breathes smoky atmosphere. Wolfsbane are



in the process of 'setting up' but graciously acknowledge our presence with mumbled messages. Rather than sit in their illuminating presence Patriot decide to unload the van. After hauling a multitude of technical things up Everest-style steps I make a mental note to wear my arm in a plaster cast next time.

DEXTERITY

4.30pm. With typical rock-star class we converge like baying hounds upon one of the more salubrious local restaurants. The Big Mac was fine, unfortunately the medium fries were slightly over salted. Dean Lathbury, revealing a bassist's dexterity, elected to throw his orange juice on the floor. Decadence and debauchery?

5.15pm. The dreaded sound-check. To these tender ears the sounds of a constantly beating bass drum is about as appealing as a package tour to Kuwait City. Add to it vicious screams from other instruments and you have a rough idea of

what purgatory is like. Patriot manage to limit this doodling to two hours of white noise, climaxing when the bar opened. Guitarist Rob James discovers that the band's luxurious dressing room will in fact be the Hole's public convenience. Wolfsbane are using the only available dressing room and we're obviously carrying some highly contagious disease. There couldn't be any other reason ... ?

7.45pm. Chris Hayward arrives, overcome with excitement and presumably participating in a sponsored talk. Whilst the other support act, Babyface, run through a routine set the band pass the time in the toilets. What they were doing in there is open to debate but very few desperate drinkers actually ventured within the white tiled walls.

DYNAMICS

9.15pm. At long last Patriot take to the stage. The first time I saw them at JB's in Dudley they were obviously talented,

despite the appearance of some unwelcome faults. Tonight, in front of a sizeable crowd, the band were far tighter, with the songs I had initially ignored becoming much more accessible. Patriot play uptempo melodic rock, thankfully concentrating on skilled musicianship and catchy hooks. 'Show Me The Way' is a first class example of their style, a fluid structure giving way to the massive chorus. Other notable moments were 'Big Noise', 'Mercy' and 'Don't Tell Me Now', David Hayward's rapidly developing voice a perfect foil for the instrumental dynamics. Talent, house bricks and a positive response make Patriot one of the Midlands' better propositions for better things.

11.45pm. With enough promotional material to paper the surrounding town distributed, we return to the bus and the road. More good natured conversation, schoolgirl reminiscing and deja-vu later, and the day is complete. Anyone need a roadie?

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M I K E DAVIES

● First note has to be **PENELOPE'S WEB'S** Cherry Red debut, somewhat inappropriately titled 'Potboiler'. Always a musically mature outfit, this maintains the intelligent poetic nature of Dominic Silvani's lyrics yet takes things beyond the occasional bedsit aspects while still retaining their attractive naivete. 'Lowsun' and the fine skipping 'Mistress Quickly' complete the package and the early Al Stewart references still apply as do previous superlatives bestowed upon them. Inevitably too articulate and too English for the charts, but sensitive young Graves and Swiburnes etc won't be disappointed.

POP WILL EAT ITSELF keep up the attack with 'Dance Of The Mad', which elbows its way across the dance floor (and is that a 'Crazy Horses' sample?) like **BAD** on adrenalin-cubes. Controlled cacophony and decidedly brain-scrambling with what I detect as a passing reference to the Stuffies. **THE MONEYGODS 12**, 'All Roads Lead To Sedgely', is now actually sitting patiently in the stores awaiting your favour as is 'Touch of Class', some above average swaggering hard rock from **LOVE & WAR**.

Amazing as it may sound, **THE LILAC TIME'S** 'And Love For All' album has finally escaped from Phonogram and sounds as good as when it was first reviewed back in 1967 or whenever it was supposed to appear. Yeah God, born again into thrash as **UGLY NOISE INCORPORATED** have the wittily titled 'D*nce Like A Bastard!!' out on Chapter 22 (whose **NED'S ATOMIC DUSTBIN** have been inked to CBS in a piece of blindly optimistic signing desparation by the major) and it's actually rather good stuff. Having taken time to write lyrics they realise it might be worth being able to hear them, and there's more structure and variation of their guitar frenzy than most of the genre too. Angry, nasty, loud and a good mosh.

TAPE-DECKED

"Snapped up" by Sire/Reprise worldwide, **THE MIGHTY LEMON DROPS** have been demoing for their fourth album. And on the evidence of tracks Mr Newton sent over it promises to be the best since their debut. The distinctive Drops sound and melody phrases are still there, but there's a new dimension to a lot of the material that lifts them out of the occasionally narrow furrow they've ploughed in the past. 'Un-Kind' is a glorious piece of jubilant guitar pop that sounds a custom-built single, 'My Shadow Girl'; takes the beat down into mid 60's territory and given a full-blooded production could raise ear-blisters on the heart, 'Cold Cold Heart' has a chunky dance rhythm with reggae 'n' blues undertones. 'You Don't Appreciate Me' is another 60's beat reminder that strolls amiably along into the reverb guitar and phasing of 'Colourful Loving Me' that shimmers and bares teeth into a soaringly wonderful chorus hook that explodes into a cascade of bliss. 'Annabel' is another single contender and seems to wear some Julian Cope influences on its sleeve which leaves 'Driving Me Insane', a mid-tempo builder that harks to their Echo scrapbook and is probably the least impressive of the set. And to round off, a ferocious cover of 'We Love You' destined for a future B side, and before bandwagon jumping accusations surface, a reminder that the Drops covered the Stones ('Paint It Black') ages ago.

Best debut demo in ages comes from **THE JAIN FAITH** and 'King Of The World', a track I played a dozen times in succession on the car stereo the day I got it. Formed from the ashes of The Touch and In Fear, the sound's guitar-pop/rock but incandescently wonderful with a 60's injection, a captivating slightly rough-edged vocal and an irresistible hook that simply explodes into your heart and mind. Good song too as is the other cut, the more musically complex 'Top Of The World' with its acoustic passages and ringing guitar phrasing. If

you're pushed for comparisons you might take Skids without the Celtism, but the band deserve better than being labelled with other people's histories. Fiction and Go-Discs have already shown interest and well tuned ears should be seeking this out as soon as possible.

"THE SORT OF THING THEY SAMBA AROUND TO IN HOLIDAY ADS"

After a bizarre flurry of faxed indignations over my recent comments on **THE SLOW CLUB'S** 'Amsterdam', Simon from the band drops a line assuring me that while agreeing the lyrics are "no major addition to art" he can be as "deep and probing as the Dylans and as crude and shallow as the Mac (sic) Lads" and asks whether I can find anything to say about 'Taking My Time', a weedily funky item about "being hot and rampant on the beach". No.

At last people seem to be waking up and paying attention to **MAGDA**. Quite right too and the latest two track demo adds further evidence as to why. 'Take Me Home' is in her Marianne Faithful mode, you know the stuff, melodic, hook chorus and ripped and torn vocals (with a dash of country

BIG IN TEXAS don't wear oversized hats or shout Yee Haaa. Instead they're a Coventry indie quartet fronted by one Stella, featuring some polished guitar from the attractively named Shagpile and on the more abrasive side of Darling Buds pop. What they need is someone to lash their sound into a tightly reined attack and a sturdier vocal edge, but the building blocks are certainly firmly in position. **BORN BLIND** continue to build upon their abilities, edge towards more mainstream guitar ground with the 'Workington' demo but losing none of their muscular inventiveness. 'This Is The Drink Talking' and the exceptional 'Wired' are striking evidence of firm talent. **BOB BENNETT** (one time singer for Blue Street raiders) seems to have an identity crisis. 'Spanish Sunset' is the sort of thing they samba around to in holiday ads, 'Soldier Of Love' has Buddy Hollyish 50's aspirations and 'Love Don't Make Sense' is a smokily laid-back soulful ballad that sounds as though it might have once known 'Love Don't Live Here Anymore'. Well put together and performed but none really invite excitement to tea. **ALEX VANN** returns having put Phil Collins back in the cupboard, though do I detect a dash of Paul McCartney on 'Don't Try'. Having gone some way towards releasing his own identity, things have improved considerably and I'm particularly fond of the acoustic 'Buy A Dream' which vividly recalls the same naive fresh sound of the old Lovin Spoonful hit, 'Rain On The Roof'. **TONY WILLE** has been taking time for some solo material while **THE DAY** go about their separate projects. One man and an acoustic folksy guitar stuff and rather attractive, the demo offers up a wonderfully sunshining and infectious 'What A Day I'm In' (which deserves covering by someone or other), a folk-bluesy 'High In The Branches' and 'Don't Wake Me Up', all of which



▲ **BIG IN TEXAS**

flavouring) while 'Not The Way' keeps the vocal style but the song itself is far darker and jagged. One day this lady will be a major star and everyone will wonder why they didn't notice it before.

Even if he hadn't cheerfully admitted it, it's easy to guess from his new demos ('Cruisin' 1960) that **MARK LEMON** is currently under the Robyn Hitchcock spell and to quote "keeping the 60's and 50's guitars and marching into house and hip hop rhythms". Most interesting are the poppy 'Leave Us Alone', the raga influenced macabre 'Voodoo Man', 'Spread Your Wings', with Brian Duffy on keyboards and 'You You You', described as Monkees meet the dancefloor. Not obvious material but growers.

Mr W will be offering in his planned solo dates. There's also new material from the band, a three track demo of again highly pleasant if sparse and rough-shod acoustic driven material of which 'Seven Trees' is the strongest. Sort of stuff Cherry Red should be taking a listen to.

Finally a two track sampler from cassette album 'We Don't Know Yet' on Reptile (so why not send the album?) by Lichfield's **LIFE IN GENERAL** featuring Beaver (who apparently appeared four times at Glastonbury 90) and the vocals of Tracy Jewell and who on this evidence are seen to be an acoustic outfit with global leanings, 'Breathe' incorporating some American Indian chantings and Burundi style drums. Interesting.

STILL CRAZY-HEAD AFTER ALL THESE YEARS

MIKE DAVIES meets the band in order to use a long overdue Paul Simon pun ...



▲ **CRAZYHEAD**

ONCE dubbed kings of grebo rock, Leicester's Crazy-head have just wound up yet another gruelling series of dates in support of new single 'Everything's Alright' taking a brief rest before they out again at the end of the month to promote the forthcoming album, 'Some Kind Of Fever'.

So much running and yet seemingly standing still can get a band down. As guitarist Kev Reverb says, "Sitting in the back of a van, cold and wet you sometimes think 'what a joke'. But once you get on stage and play it's great".

More than great, live work kept the band going after they parted company with Food/EMI last year, a move that didn't exactly cause huge distress to the band. "We lost loads of silly money that was being wasted on things but we got the chance to make records the way we originally envisioned. When we signed to Food we saw things the same way, that it wouldn't be an overnight thing but that it'd take a lot of hard gigging to build things up. But as soon as the EMI deal happened there were these people coming round throwing Bon Jovi at us and it ended up being a working relationship with people we had nothing in common with".

Having left EMI Kev admits they weren't confident about securing another deal, though says that if a major had come along waving cheque books they'd have taken the offer. "We'd have

been dubious in case it turned out the same as EMI, but we have to face reality. We have to live, we have to carry on earning money".

AFRICAN INFLUENCES

This they did before signing to FM/Revolver subsidiary, Black

with the aforementioned stream of gigs, including some interesting overseas jaunts to Romania and Namibia.

"Our agent speaks Russian and the British Council use her a lot as an interpreter. She put us up for Romania and we got on well with the British Council

and so we got put forward for the African thing (for the Independence Day celebrations). They wanted an acoustic band, they got us. It was weird. The concert lasted all day and it was mostly African bands and they were playing these really complicated rhythms. But afterwards they'd be coming up and saying 'how did you get that sound?' They were asking us and our artistry isn't exactly as well developed as theirs!".

But no plans to do a Paul Simon on the next album? "No, though Namibian TV did this programme on the concert and they were saying it was obvious from going backstage that Crazyhead had been influenced by the African bands! What!". No African influences perhaps, but it'll be interesting to see what the new album sounds like, especially since the single was the poppiest and best thing they've done. Ironic in a way.

"It was one of the last sets we gave to Food/EMI. When we left we had to sign a piece of paper saying we'd recorded no demos of songs that were up to standard for release. In fact except for two everything on the album is songs that were turned down by EMI because they were rubbish!".

"PEOPLE ask me how I know God exists, and I say 'look at this' and show them the record contract". Thus speaks Dave Williams, manager of Christian thrash metal band Seventh Angel from Halesowen. Considering the band has sealed the deal (with Music For Nations) after only a dozen or so gigs, that the debut LP, 'The Torment' (with artwork by Rodney Matthews) is due out in the Autumn, and that the band's age range is only 17-22, it's as good a reason as any I suppose.

GOD'S LOVE AND MORMONS ...

This isn't the only striking thing about the band. I mean, if you're anything like me the term 'Christian' conjures up images of Jesus people spreading God's love, and Mormons. However this band blew away my expectations. Four young thrashites: Ian (vocals/lead guitar), Scott (rhythm guitar), Simon (bass) and Tank on drums. The most eye-catching member of the band is Tank, who has an earring through his nose, a mohican haircut and a bull-like structure. In fact, they look just like any other metal act, but they are born-again Christians.

GOD MUST BE A BOOGIE MAN

PHIL TAYLOR meets **SEVENTH ANGEL**, the only signed Christian Thrash Metal Band in Halesowen!

"We come up against scepticism on all fronts", said Dave. "On stage we have to convince people we are serious about our music; in the church, we have to persuade them we are serious about our faith". Live, their music (very much in the Slayer mould) hits hard. The pendulous hair, drill drumming and ultra-fast super-charged riffs are all in evidence, the sound potent and

impressive for a group so young. The lyrical content is the only thing to belie their religious leanings, dealing with issues such as abortion (Dr. Hatchef), drugs (Eye Of The Needle) and the sincerely rendered 'Katy', a song dedicated to the courageous and inspirational six year old Christian girl who died of leukaemia. "We don't listen to secular bands as the lyrical content is offensive to us", said Scott.

JUST FOUR ORDINARY GUYS

This is an unusual band indeed, one of only three or four Christian acts in the country and the only signed Christian thrash band in Europe. But to talk to they are just four ordinary guys who play thrash metal, who happen to be sincere about their Christian faith.

Scott sums up the band's attitude: "The Christian basis of the band is very important to us. But we don't want to preach, because it would only alienate our audience. If people want to discuss our views with us afterwards, that's fine, and often happens, but we don't force it. We want to show that being a Christian doesn't mean that you can't have fun".

One Helluva Night

A couple of month's ago when I was approached to write a feature to mark Demon's tenth anniversary, their sizeable back catalogue remained a mystery to me. After a chat with Mike Stone, the band's manager, record company boss and producer, the problem was solved. Nowadays the likes of 'Breakout' and 'Taking The World By Storm' are almost permanent fixtures on my turntable. It's disturbing to think however, that there is a world class melodic rock band in this country who have been criminally ignored for so long.

When I met Mike and founder member/vocalist Dave Hill we discussed matters concerning Demon past and present. The present focussed upon the excellent 'One Helluva Night' live double album which has been recently released. Despite its rather frail production the album provides a fine retrospective and/or introduction to the band's sound.

GET THE MOBILE IN

"We were doing the German tour last year", explains Dave "and things were going so well we decided to get the mobile in". The response on the continent has been encouraging, with over 15,000 units shifted in a relatively short period. According to Dave, "The situation in Europe emerged at just the right time. After 'Taking The World By Storm' I thought that if we weren't going to get a reaction some-

BY PAUL REES

where with that album then we never would. Critics over there have anticipated a second wave of British Rock, fortunately we were in the right place to capitalise". If Europe hadn't begun to

open up there is a possibility that the band would be extinct today. Indeed, the state of affairs in the UK is one of virtual anonymity. During the early 80's they emerged, amongst a plethora of NWOBHM bands, on the Carrere label via 'The Night Of The Demon' and 'Unexpected Guest' albums. A degree of press interest was generated by a theatrical and faintly absurd live show, featuring graveyard sets and all manner of ridiculous costumes. "We decided not to stay with the image thing forever", reflects Dave, "You have to move on". A switch from Carrere to Stone's Clay (now Sonic) label ensued for 'The Plague', which highlighted a far more mature direction and the end of fancy dress. Dave says, "The reaction to 'The Plague' proved we'd done the right thing, we didn't want to do ten records in exactly the same style".

intentions. "I think Britain has been overwhelmed by a radiation of American Glam bands", Dave continues, "Magnum excepted, we are missing a good melodic UK group".

MUSIC SPEAKS LOUDER THAN IMAGE

Hopefully the future will witness a resurgence in the type of traditional rock that Demon specialise in. Following the tragic death of co-founder/guitarist Mal Spooner in '83 the line-up of Dave, Steve Watts, John Waterhouse, Nick Bushell, Steve Brookes and Scott Crawford has stabilised itself. At present they are writing material for the next album, tentatively scheduled for February '91, a release that Dave views as an important focal point in their career.



PUSHING THE STUFF

TERESA BASSETT falls under the spell ...

MUCH has been written about Pushing The Stuff of late, and justifiably so: it's a reflection of the hard labour they have devoted to their art, and in their case you don't switch off immediately when you hear that ubiquitous phrase 'The Next Big Thing'. For this five-piece from Great Barr really do have a certain something ... to start with they possess - all too scarce in these days of mass blandness - an individuality, a presence. Singer Jayne's freshness and naivete are pleasing, enchanting even.

The music is upbeat and danceable, a pop concoction, yet undoubtedly there's a shade of mystical moodiness too. Sweet-sounding vocals are backed by clever musicianship, and the whole blends together into a carressing roundness, appealing to both sight and sound.

BRAVADO

They have recently released a demo 'Yeah', which captures something of the charm of their live performance (especially in the song 'In My Dreams'), and soon they are due to appear on the arts magazine programme 'First Night' - sturdy steps in the right direction for such a new band. So maybe this time it's not just bravado and youthful hope, maybe this time it really is 'The Next Big Thing'. That would be nice. Certainly time is on their side, so I'll just sit back and wait and see ... and let this muse-music drift over me.

Nevertheless, Demon's profile dwindled in these not-so-fair Isles, climaxing in the decision to cut down on home appearances.

HEADLINE

"We persevered until twelve months ago but it became totally embarrassing having to play in tiny back street venues". The vocalist explains, "In Germany there are 'proper' places to play which aren't glorified pubs. We're only going to do select gigs in the UK where we can do credit to ourselves". One such venture was a headlining at the first Wyatt's Lake Rock Festival in September. With the Thrash movement and a wave of 70's revivalism operating at two extremes of the spectrum there is surely a gap in the market place that Demon could fill. Dave agrees, "Yes, I think there is a market for our type of music. What's so frustrating for us is that people do love the music when they're given the chance to hear it". Anyone with a taste for Magnum would definitely appreciate Demon's similar

With the prospect of wider acceptance in Europe beckoning the intention is to maintain the progression displayed on the last two albums. "It's a logical step on from 'Taking The World By Storm', although it may be slightly heavier", Dave comments. With titles like 'Lion's Share' and 'Eastern Sunset', about an incident on the West/East German border, set for inclusion, the lyrics will still examine the world in general and the music will speak louder than any contrived image. Until then you can track down the live album and scout the racks for Demon's proud history. With hand placed firmly on heart I can honestly say that Demon are the finest UK band I have encountered since someone pressed a pristine copy of 'Chase The Dragon' into my hands years ago. After ten years of quality they should merit respect and a higher standing, as Dave points out, "We've stuck at it for so long because we believe very strongly in what we do". It's up to you now, the discerning rock fan.

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PADDY McALOON is alive and well and living in other people's bodies, more of which later. He's also voraciously taking on all challengers in the war of interpretation that continues to surround his musical masque - Prefab Sprout.

The almost mythical northern quartet are out on the shop counter again and this is known to all if only by virtue of the weight of critical acclaim which justifiably follows the release of any new Prefab Sprout material. If Paddy, the singer, songwriter, guitarist and keyboard player is surprised by the praise, he makes an excellent job of hiding it.

"It's flattering", he explains, "but no matter how moving it is you have to treat it as irrelevant. If I sat around thinking I was God's gift I'd never write another song".

Perhaps not God's donation to popular music (though inevitably and reasonably many would disagree) but the NME rarely dishes out accolades like 'The most innovative songwriter of the decade'. "I'll tell you what balances that definition out", he begins in one of the bursts of laughter which are to dominate the interview. "The techno journal, International Musician, called us - when we first appeared - 'the most important band since Kenny'. That has always stuck in my mind and tempered any temptation I've ever had to take the kind things to heart. Kenny, those tank tops ..."

Released in May 1985, 'Steve McQueen' was the album that started the stampede of the journalistic appreciation society. In droves they flocked to lay praise at the McAlloon altar. No small burden to bear, image to fulfil, act to follow. Have his efforts since then been an attempt to distance the band from this history? "Most of the songs on 'Steve McQueen' were pretty old when we recorded them", he reveals, "so we were already significantly distant from them which I believe sometimes helps in the translation. After we'd finished it I knew we could do better whereas with 'Jordan' these are the things we've been doing over the past year and while I think we can do better I don't really know 'cause I haven't written a good deal since".

SEX, DEATH AND ELVIS

Bizarrely 'Jordan' is better, and at nineteen songs - long. A conscious effort to hide 'McQueen' behind a wealth of material? Or was 'Protest Songs' the instant reaction?

"'Steve McQueen' was the first professional record we'd ever made and there was a lot of praise for it", he recalls (modestly). "So we were due to go out on tour and I thought I could diffuse the follow-up scenario by putting something out straight away that was modestly recorded but that sort of back-fired because we then didn't release it for four years in true Sprout fashion".

The irony brings out laughter, though one is forced to wonder at the initial chaos the recording created at CBS HQ. "In answer to your question on hiding 'Steve'", he continues, "I would prefer it

that there were a few records of and people would have the favourite album".

At risk of labouring a point of obviously well trodden path, the of 'Steve' still seems to drift through corridors of Paddy's mind. become a masterpiece monster control in the way that 'Pet Sound to the Beach Boys?

"It's weird", he ponders. "Obviously better to have one record about people will say 'that was a record', but by the same token if you're being hit over the head by something that you recorded five years or, in Brian Wilson's case twenty years ago! It's great to be remembered but you'd like to think that what now is as good".

Unnecessarily - and one might say only the changing tastes of the dictate these things - it has the Kane scenario about it ...

"Yeah, the things you did when you were younger are better than the you do now. It's started to worry me adds in a concerned fashion. "It used to but eventually you've reach a day where your best work the past".

At least it didn't send you the way Brian Wilson, you didn't stay taking drugs for ten years.

"Or at least no-one found out about he laughs.

SERIOUS - MOI

By virtue of its title and the separation of songs into four segments or serials, the word 'concept' cropped up in reference to 'Jordan Comeback'. Did the songs occur in a particular period or was Paddy McAlloon attempting to join Rush and Maiden writing specifically for themes?

"They happened to be on the theme", he confesses. "At least three were about Elvis Presley so I saw that happening I thought I might well make something of it, make a little chunk of the record. Similar found that there were songs about and the Devil. Eventually I got to thinking that rather than burden even with Paddy's little ideas that you'd to go along with, I could pad the record with different things that depending your mood you could tune into different moments. That's why it's nineteen long so I could couch the serious between lighter tracks. It also gives it a sense of value for money. I'd love to go out and buy an album that had nineteen songs on it".

I'm sold even with producer The Dolby's suggestion that the album should have been called 'Sex, Death and Elvis' though this would have cut out the constant theme of 'the comeback' - the Devil asking for a come to heaven, Elvis out in the desert world for that one great song so he could emerge and a so-far unreleased 'Meet The New Mozart' which is a Mozart re-incarnated to make money. Does Paddy see Prefab Sprout as re-emerging?

"It certainly doesn't hinder us on a crass level of publicity to say this

PREFAB COMEBACK



★ **PAUL FLOWER** delves into the life and times of **PADDY McALOON** and finds **PREFAB SPROUT** to be ... **The Most Important Band Since Kenny!**

comeback. When we go away we really do disappear off the face of the earth; we're not in the gossip columns with Matt and Luke".

Like many authors who, some might say lazily, use a writer as their main character, 'Jordan' sees Paddy singing about, or in the guise of, other rock stars. Unusually though these seem to be totally opposite to his own personality or at least it would be safe to assume the excesses of Elvis are far from Paddy McAloon.

"Well, I'm fond of the odd cheeseburger", he professes - straight-faced enough to shatter any myth of him being humourless. "If you hang a song on a character like Elvis you get the chance to do a lot of things you don't find in pop music. You get a chance to be funny, whereas serious songwriters are serious songwriters and they wear that very heavily on their sleeves. You can also write about things like compassion. By making a song about another character you deflect the weight of seriousness", he adds, thoughtfully (not seriously). "If I was writing a song about compassion and it was called 'Compassion' you might move onto something else. In

these songs with Jesse James and Elvis Presley, it's there but it's underneath the surface".

Sadly the simple notion of pop dictates that whoever sings the song is personally associated with it, even if it's Paddy McAloon singing in the guise of Elvis ...

"I find the idea of it having to be about yourself somewhat irrelevant", he contradicts. "If you've written it, of course it's about you. Even if it's about Elvis Presley it tells you that Paddy McAloon views the world through other eyes and would like to have you think it was about others when really ... (conspiratorial pause) ... You can read all of these things into it".

Though I would hardly dare to enter PMcA in the same sentence as Marlon Brando, Mickey Rourke and (video star) Rob Lowe, is he not writing about himself but actually painting his personality into a role much like a method actor?

"You're hiding the fact of what you're really like", he admits. "But although I tell you this you don't know how much is in the character and how much is in me. I like the mess, the confusion of that. The

fact that you have to puzzle it out, fans like that, they like something to work on. I would use 'Steve McQueen' as an example because it's been out five years and people still talk to me about it; I presume they still listen to it and read things in - it gets tied up in their lives. That's good".

BACK ON THE ROAD AGAIN

The Comeback is also a tour, the first Prefab Sprout live dates for five years! Why has live work been avoided, was it too rock 'n' roll?

"I've avoided it because it's repetitive, it's seductive in the wrong ways and it feeds your ego", he states giving a new slant on the live performance. "It doesn't help you write the next song - it maybe suggests that you should write in a vein which pleases audiences. If you hear that 'Faron Young' gets the most applause out of all the songs or 'Cruel' gets all the cheers you might be tempted to write more songs like that".

My theory was that too many people treat Prefab Sprout like a personal experience and that the live interpretation in some way ruins that ...

"I don't think so, I think a lot of people who've seen us have been quite surprised - we're more virile live - I don't know whether people listen to the records with the volume down, I've got a soft voice n'all, I turn them up and I listen to them as if I were listening to Michael Jackson or Prince; I don't listen to it as if it were for me Grandma".

Finally on a topical note, two songs on 'Jordan' cover the life and times of Jesse James (through the eyes of Elvis, just to confuse matters) but who are the modern cowboys?

"Jon Bon Jovi", he screams in horror. "He's a modern cowboy. I remember this absolutely brilliant quote from him where he was talking about touring and he said (adopts a Texan drawl) 'It's great man, it's just like being a cowboy (laughs) ... You ride into town (pauses) ... fraternize ... with the local girls and then you split' and I had visions of him actually splitting in two, this complete idiot".

So it's safe to assume Paddy McAloon won't be Riding Into Town, Fraternizing With The Local Girls And Splitting? "I certainly won't be splitting".

SPACE JUNK

THE PIE IN THE SKY
SATELLITE COLUMN
BY KEVIN WILSON

★ WITH THE Satellite TV 'boom' period over, i.e. launch euphoria tailing off, no major events on which to latch special offers and the non-Murdoch media still waiting for premature death, it's time to take stock of the two UK Sat-TV stations. Sky, despite still making a loss, is, at the very least, beginning to come out of the downward curve. Every street seems to have an Astra dish and the quality of the programmes is improving (see item elsewhere). The attraction of continental channels is strong and, in late 1990/early 1991 when Astra 2 is put into space, a doubling of channels available is in the offing. If Rupert baby can hold his nerve Sky may well survive and even prosper in the course of the next 2 or 3 years. BSB however is a different story. I've only seen BSB dishes in the

greener suburbs of Birmingham and a friend in London has detected a similar story. BSB has, it seems, an upmarket market. It's *Movie Channel* has delivered less than mind-blowing films, its *Now Channel* has been more like a *When Channel* and the *Sports Channel* has produced lots of Scottish Football and sportscasts galores. And as for the *Channel For Living*, I'd add the word Dead onto the end. BSB is heading for a premature fall if it doesn't seek to mend its bridges with Sky or else shift out of its parochial and anachronistic attitude to 1992 and all that ... and quick.

Back on *Sky One*, welcome to *The Simpsons* (Sunday 6.30pm). Screened in the traditional God-Slot time for the terrestrial channels it is proving to be a real winner for Sky as Homer and Marge Simpson grapple weekly with their three adorable children, Bart, resplendent in his 'Underachiever ... and proud of it' T-shirt and cock sure arrogance; Lisa, the quiet and peace loving daughter acting as a perfect foil to Bart's histrionics and then there's the dummy sucking baby, Maggie, who steals the show with her six-month-going-on-six-year approach to life. To put it

simply, *The Simpsons* are an odd family, they look strange and they act strange. They've been dubbed smart, vulgar, hilarious and witty and they are all of these. They're also mighty entertaining, kids love the rebel in Bart and the nerve of Maggie as well as the thrill of seeing parents constantly fouling up. Adults love it as they

their net a little wider than the Tarrant family and friends for suitable videos this time out. Music fans will need to tune to *Sky Movies* on Saturday October 6th (8pm) when, live from Barcelona, Tina Turner makes her farewell European appearance on the massively successful *Foreign Affairs* tour. If you miss it first time around, it

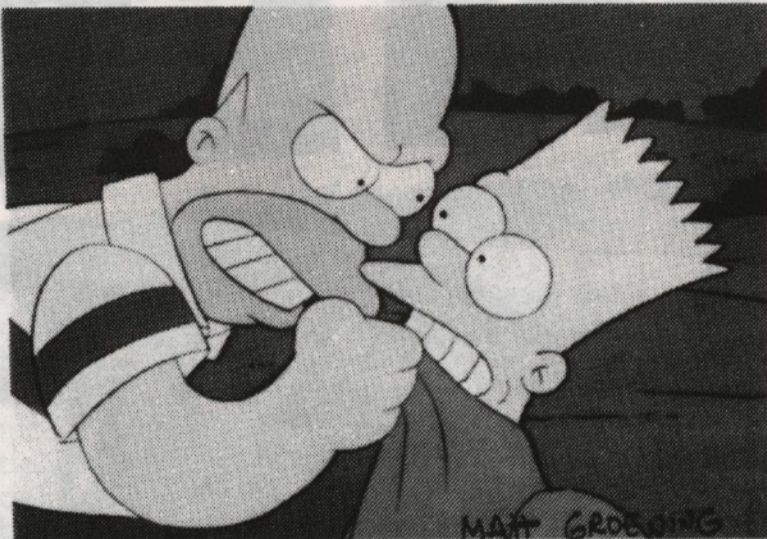
twick with a line up of Cher, Pfeiffer and Nicholson. Sigourney Weaver gets up to a whole lot of monkey business in the absorbing *Gorillas In The Mist* and I can recommend *Innerspace*, an updated *Fantastic Voyage* from Mr Spielberg, which I recently saw on ... BSB.

In case you're wondering where my BSB preview coverage has gone to this month, my supplier, BSB TV Month has failed to deliver the goods on time so to all readers with BSB wanting to know what's upcoming, I can only apologise to you ... Mr Ronald Dangerfield of Four Oaks. Sorry Ron.

Lastly, will the thousands of Sky subscribers in the region please note that there is a new satellite service specialist offering the back up technical know how to all Sky subscribers, so if you have any problems with your equipment contact Sky Installations (Eastern)Ltd., Lakeview, Waterfront, Elstree Road, Elstree, Herts. (Tel: 081-905 1626 and don't hang up there are 15 lines). The Customer Services Manager is Alan Dawson. Ring him directly if you're having a bad time with Sky.

Tell him Space Junk sent you!

Kevin Wilson



▲ THE SIMPSONS

can recognise what makes it so appealing to kids. In short, *The Simpsons* will be massive in the UK and Sky can take all the credit. Chris Tarrant's *Secret Video Show* returns to *Sky One* on October 24th (7.30pm) with a one hour special prefacing a new series beginning on the 31st (7.30pm). I trust that the producers have cast

will be repeated on *Sky Movies* on the 11th (8pm) but as Ms. Turner is, along with Madonna, the hottest female star around, catching her in the flesh first time around is highly recommended.

Also on *Sky Movies*, Bruce Willis' tranquil offering *Die Hard* is premiered along with the previously seen on BSB, *The Witches Of East*

SCREEN GEMS

THE RED HOT CHILI PEPPERS Psychedelic Sexfunk Live From Heaven (PMI Video)

This phenomenal 40 minute slab of audio-visual inner-thigh stroking has been available for some time in the States, but thankfully is in our shops now, and honestly, it's one of the best music videos around at the moment.

Psychedelic Sexfunk is a superb introduction to the Chili Peppers live show for the uninitiated, and an adequate stop-gap for those who can't wait to see them again.

The video, directed by Doug Freel and edited by Benjamin Lehmann, is split into three veins - the sound-

check, the gig and pre and post show backstage antics of a Long Beach Arena event earlier this year. It shows an important aspect of the Chili Peppers - they are a real BAND, a TEAM, they know each other inside out, they can rely on each other, which is what makes their live shows so together.

Aerial camera shots give a superb bird's eye view of the Chili's simple, but powerful logo, the centre of which, vocalist, Anthony (The Swan) Kiedis uses to plant his mike stand and whirl around like some funky dervish. The slow-motion work is great too, showing the guys in glorious full-flight.

And effective hand-held shots on stage allow us an intimacy with the band, whilst quick-fire edits refuse to allow our attention to wander.

As the credits roll, there are strange scenes from their Japanese tour, including a brief glimpse of this sox-on-cox prank.

If this video isn't enough, whilst I was in New York, I saw the 'Positive Mental Octopus' promo-video compilation, which will be available here February '91 -

stunning. If I die tomorrow, I'll die a happy man.

MAX

RICHARD MARX Volume 1 (PMI)

Richard Marx is, in essence an inoffensive AOR popster. His ripped denim and leather persona suggest that in his mind he is 'rock 'n' roll'. His between video banter sug-



▲ THE RED HOT CHILI PEPPERS

gests that he sees the promos herein as having greater worth than as maximum rotation MTV ads. He also sees his pop platters in the same light as the singer-songwriters of days gone; even a simple love song has to be painted in pomposity. It's this extra baggage strapped to the simple pop music that drags it down.

Heard as radio 45s Marx's output is perfectly palatable; made into mini movies and given "importance" it becomes laughable; a banquet presented by Mr. Kipling.

STEVE MORRIS

M C HAMMER Hammertime (PMI)

Rather too much of this fifty five minute tape is taken up with a documentary portion

extolling the virtues of Hammer and his "Please Hammer Don't Hurt 'Em - The Movie" project. Then again lyrically most of the audio time is taken up with eulogies of something called 'Hammer'.

The good MC is currently hot and incendiary tho' this release does little to cast any light on the phenomenon. He

may be an above average rapper laying down the usual bragging onto stolen, sorry sampled, tracks but so what? His dancing is energetic but little more than Fame '90 in reality.

That's right for all the right on expressions at the core M C Hammer is pure showbiz.

STEVE MORRIS

VARIOUS Now Dance 902 (PMI)

Well, apart from the ongoing debate as to whether 'dance' music is meant to be watched, the saddest part of this set is seeing Parker, Brains, Lady P et al reduced to propping up a dodgy dance track to make a buck instead of saving the world! The balance of the tape is a routine set of fast cuts and fancy footwork with the occasional blast of psychedelic lightshow graphics top give druggy overtones.

Features alongside MC Parker are Stevie V; Beats International; Soul II Soul; Maxi Priest; New Order; Betty Boo and more including the unexpurgated video for Blue Pearl's 'Naked In The Rain' (there is, incidentally nothing to expurgate!)

STEVE MORRIS

WELL, I suppose that all avid readers of this column are wondering what happened to most of the September gigs at the Breedon Bar, which I listed in last month's column. Without poking needlessly through all the gory details, I'd like to make one comment. As far as certain characters, currently walking this parish are concerned, I'd refer them to the B side of Ian Dury's No. 1 chart

Bennett & The Famous Motel Cowboys (Oct 1st) - the Idaho honky tonkers, back in the UK for something like their fourth tour in two years; Jesse Taylor & Tornado Alley (4th) - see later; Sonny Curtis (8th) - former Cricket, hit songwriter and one of life's good guys; Man (13th) - Welsh rockers reincarnated; Andy White (18th) - back for another complimentary (ie. as in free) *Brum Beat* live

"FOR MANY OF US, LIFE HAS NEVER BEEN LESS THAN A CUSTARD PIE"

success from the winter of 1978. Yet another analogy: in real life, I have lived, eaten and breathed the 1974 Health & Safety at Work Act, since it became a statute. Taking every step to preserve life is something from which none of us should ever shrink. Laws, or no laws. That said, if you rigidly followed every law and rule, nothing would ever happen. In this Thatcherite age of "cut off your brother's legs for profit", common sense has gone out with the baby's bath water. As I write this, the current onstage situation at the Breedon, can be summed up as follows: Singles and duos are AOK, but groups are still a no-no. For many of us, life has never been less than a custard pie. The 'singles and duos' situation, might all change tomorrow. I'd suggest that you continue to check with the Breedon (021-459 6573), for an update on the situation. Should a resolution occur, then the calendar could possibly read as follows - Pinto

review; Eddie Walker & John James (21st) - acoustic blues; Jesse Taylor (26th); Gordon Giltrap (28th) - folk rock and classical guitarist par excellence; Tempest (30th) - American band who come across with a folk 'n' cajun mix. Into November, and the welcome return of singer/songwriter Tom Pacheco, is currently pencilled in for the 8th, with John "hey Bob, look at me swinging from the rafters" Otway, on the following evening.

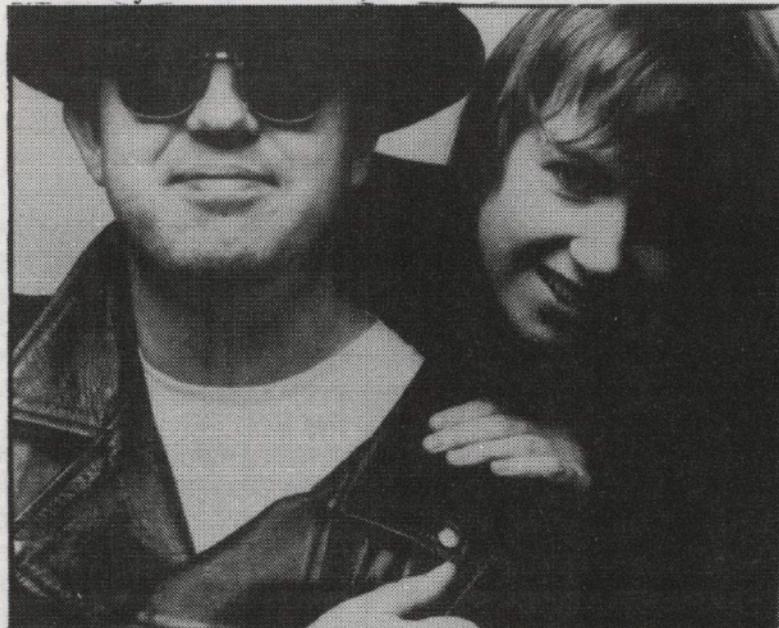
JESSE Taylor will also be appearing locally, at the Wulfrun Hall on Saturday 6th October, as part of the first Wolverhampton Music Festival. While you're contemplating the mouthwatering prospect of hearing, and seeing, one hell of a fine Texas guitarist, you won't go far wrong by also checking our Jesse's debut album 'Last Night'. It clocks in with ten, solid rockin' blues tunes. Stateside, it was a cassette only release, marketed by the man himself. 'Last night' is now available here, on the Bed-

ARTHUR WOOD

rock label.

UP country to Trysull Village Hall now, and some bad news to begin with. Having spent more years than I'd care to remember, waiting to hear Mickey Newbury in concert (the Easter debacle at Wembley, doesn't count), seems that I'll just have to wait for a little while longer. Due to a family bereavement,

terms with his past life, Townes now concentrates on presenting items in concert from a songbag which is chock full of folk/blues classics. An essential musical experience, Townes plays Trysull on Monday October 15th. Careerwise, coming up fast on the inside track, is that songwriter from Fort Worth, Hugh Moffatt. With two memorable



▲ GREGSON AND COLLISTER

Newbury has cancelled his first, full solo tour of the UK. That apart, there's a couple of Mondays during October where singer/songwriter Nirvana comes to Trysull. Those of you who caught the legendary Townes Van Zandt on his second Acoustic Roots date last Spring, will know what to expect. Having come to

solo albums to his credit, Hugh has, in addition, already amply proved in concert that he has a long, fruitful performing career in front of him. Hugh appears on Monday October 29th. On November 7th, Trysull goes Irish, with piper Liam O'Flynn. Once a member of Planxty, Liam subsequently worked with per-

formers as divergent as the Everly Brothers and Mark Knopfler.

NOW that the sun is headin' South once more, the folk club season is almost back into full swing. At the Bell & Pump Club (Old Phillipian Boys) on Waterworks Drive, the next few Friday nights look like this: Chris Newman & Maire Ni Chathasaig (Oct 5th); Tuxedo Bay and The Copycats (12th); Harvey Andrews (19th); Sean Cannon [of the Dubliners] (26th) and R Cajun & the Zydeco Brothers (Nov 2nd). Out in Kingswinford, the Woodman Folk Club actually kicked off last month. During October the bill reads, Nick Dow (5th); Hand On Heart (12th); Archie Fisher (19th) and Singers Night (26th), with Tom McConville (Nov 2nd).

FROM the viewpoint of a particular and personal musical bent, seems that Aileen Vance, one of the winners of the New Folk Contest at the 1990 Kerrville Folk Festival, is visiting these shores during October/November. Although a Birmingham date was originally included in the schedule, that has now been cancelled. At the time of writing this, Aileen's nearest West Midlands date is on Friday 19th October at the 'Lock, Stock & Barrel' in Worcester. Now, guess where I'll be on that evening.

AND finally, on the horizon is an Adrian Boulton Hall date by Gregson & Collister on Sunday, November 4th. Their next Special Delivery album, 'Love Is A Strange Hotel', out this month.

► NICK BAKER

Seminal seventies rock/funk in grave danger of spilling into cabaret mode. Get your bingo cards and find your seats. It's not that bad but most major musical clichés are in evidence and the bass player's straight out of one of those outfits which includes an Afro wig and lapels like hydrofoils. 'Laughing At The Rain' is ten miles too long and 'Skin Deep' shows up a lack of imagination with stolen samples and much too much reverb which I usually associate with a weak voice. Some nice tunes but a long way to go.

► BLACKENED

As soon as I saw the name I knew this was going to be a hard rocking bunch, proba-

bly dripping leather and Jack Daniels. Pretty unimaginative with it too. Shades of Sabbath cringe further into the shadows in an effort to rid themselves of copyists and meatheads who are unable to write two lines that are different without plagiarising some unfortunate.

On the good side, the singer hasn't got a terrible voice. Not brilliant but the songs don't help. Man of the match must be axeman Anderson. Best song; yet to be written, but the potential is there.

► THE KINGS OF IRONY

Simplistic and badly recorded, a guitar overloading on treble and a girl drummer. Bound to be crap isn't it. Well, yes and no... The vocals are nothing to write home about but that's fairly

DEMO LISTEN

JOHN SLATER RATES THE TAPES

immaterial. The tunes are there. Maybe a bit scratchy and veneered with naivety but, something draws you to warm yourself by their musical fire.

Their innocent little hooks and obvious independence coupled with simple originality make for some pleasurable listening. Vaguely reminiscent of The Freshies in places, definitely worth a second look but sort those vocals out. This ain't 1976

you know. Not yet awhile anyway.

► PUSHING THE STUFF

This lot just go from strength to strength. The best demo out of Birmingham since The Street People's 'New Kiss'. Jayne's voice laughs along with a cheeky lyric and endears you to her instantly adorable style.

The band seem to be improving by the minute and even experiment with a couple of adult rhythms which gives the music a wonderful lilt and conjures up mental images of Birmingham's most famous haircut skipping though the audience encouraging shy punters to invade the empty dance floor. Brilliant and imaginative. Should be signed before too long if they continue

to improve at this rate.

► THE JAIN FAITH

Fast and fascinating with shades of The Cure, Simple Minds (early period) and many others. 'I'm The King' is Prefab Camera. Great voice, fabby band, tight as a Duck's arse and headed for far greater things if this is only the tip of the iceberg. 'Top Of The World' is only marginally less clever and hints at influences which could include The Waterboys and the Wonder Stuff. Beautifully articulate snare drumming pushes the song along as it wraps itself in melody to keep the secret of its success closer to its rhythmic, beating heart. Bloody great.

● John Slater is talent scout for London Records.

THE HAMSTERS

Electric Hamsterland

(On The Beach)

New label, with a timely release from a Southend-based blues/R&B trio dedicated to keeping alive the spirit of Cream, ZZ Top and especially Jimi Hendrix. Twenty years ago today (ish), Hendrix died and four books have recently been published about him, so there's substantial media and public attention for his work - a celebrated Hendrix epic was 'Electric Ladyland', which explains this one's curious title. Virtually a 'Best Of Hendrix', with early hits like



▲ THE HAMSTERS

'Hey Joe', 'Purple Haze', 'Watchtower', 'Voodoo Chile', etc., even 'Star Spangled Banner' played a la Hendrix at Woodstock, Arthur Wood would probably damn this as unoriginal other than conceptually, but he'd be missing the point, because it's very well played - singer/guitarist Snail's-Pace Slim (once a Kursaal Flyer with another name - surprise!) and his rhythm section have already received accolades from the metal and blues press, and this combo provide a useful service a la The Bootleg Beatles in constantly touring (23 club gigs booked for October, support to Dr. Feelgood through Nov. and Dec.) to show those who were too young at the time what an early Hendrix gig sounded like. A smart and enjoyable release.

John Tobler

GREGSON & COLLISTER

Love Is A Strange Hotel

(Special Delivery)

After the band project, the finest 'roots' duo in the land get back to basic acoustic folk 'n' blues, utilising guitar and piano on an intriguing and intelligent collection of covers from the likes of Joni Mitchell, Hank Williams and Tom Snow. Among the best

RECORDED
DELIVERY

moments are a jaunty run-down of 10cc's 'Things We Do For Love' and emotive versions of 'One Step Up', 'How Men Are' and a live recording of the Merle Haggard/Bonnie Owens honky tonk beer sobbing classic 'Today I Started Loving You Again' with Collister at her bluesy-heart finest for Ste-

phen Fearing's 'Beguiling Eyes'. They're out on tour in November too. Must be Christmas already.

Mike Davies

INXS

X

(Mercury)

INX-tricably the secret of INX-Success is the not so mysterious X-factor. They X-ude sex with a capital X. It's not merely Hutchence though he will always be the focal point and his growl and croon vocal the foil around the band's X-perienced fusion. More than this a decade of relentless effort allows them to kick out quality rock-funk (personally categorized grind-funk) with casual X-erion; another X-ample of how six able Australians will, within the next 12 months, funk the masses.

Of eleven here only one would not a superb single make and even that is border line. All bases are covered and loaded from the distinctive trademarks packed into 'Suicide Blonde' through to the infectious catches of 'Lately' and the lighters aloft of 'By My Side' and 'Hear That Sound'. More than this generation's Rolling Stones on this evidence if INXS were a cricket team the ashes would never see English soil again.

X marks the spot for X-citement. X rated.

Paul Flower

VARIOUS

This Is Manchester

(Essential)

14 tracks clinging desperately to the Madchester myth. A lacklustre collection of demo standard offerings from a collection of bands unified by nothing more than regional accident. Some of the material is O.K., but little of it has that sit-up-and-take-note sparkle, though DNA's acoustic and techno mix is ear catching. If, given the fawning media spotlight currently stranded at the wrong point on the M62, the West Mids couldn't seriously embarrass this offering, I'd be very surprised.

Steve Morris

VARIOUS

Super K's Bubblegum Explosion - 1968-70

(Sequel)

In the smooth sophisticated 90's, it's hard to believe that someone could ever take songs with titles such as 'Yummy Yummy Yummy' and 'Chewey Chewey' into the Top 10 in Britain but American Bubblegum band Ohio Express did in the late 60's and a nation swooned. Thanks to a cartoon series called The Archies and the boyish Beateish brash pop ideology of The Monkees, Bubblegum the movement was born and Messrs Kase-netz and Katz became the gurus of gum. Taking silly lyrics, silly sappy subjects and inanely silly melodies with extremely singalong choruses, these guys made a mint thanks to 'Simon Says' (1910 Fruitgum Company), Ohio Express and a natty little bubbleheavygum number, 'Quick Joey Small' (Kasenez Katz Singing Orchestral Circus). This CD revolves around these anthems but includes many more fine examples (and a few dodgy ones) of the genre. Where did bubblegum go? Listen to 'Shake', a dreamy almost punky little number and then dig out 'Black Betty', a 1977 smash for Ram Jam. That's where bubblegum went!

Kevin Wilson

JOE JACKSON

Steppin' Out - The Very Best Of ...

(A&M)

Curious, really. Artist leaves label after a run of, shall we say, disappointments. Label issues Best Of and it promptly charts; bought, no doubt, by the masses who 'always

thought he was good'.

Well J. J. has joined that club with a faultless 15 track (on CD) career summary. Included are choice cuts from all of Jackson's albums bar the two soundtracks and his quasi-classical orchestral release.

Put together in such a fashion the material reveals two things; his strength as a composer both musically and in his observant lyrics and a seemingly devil-may-care approach to commercial considerations.

After all, Costello apart, which other 'new waver' has moved on to encompass Jump-Jive, Jazz, AOR et al or thrown his audience more body swerves, demonstrating that music is music is, well not commercial.

That is until you tell the world that it's the best of ...

Steve Morris

NO SWEAT

No Sweat

(London)

Since the band sent this direct from Ireland, only fair to cock it an ear. Fairly traditional hard rocking with the swaggering guitars, pumping bass, thumping drums and keyboard drive with vocalist Paul Quinn obviously well versed in the school of Jagger, Tyler and Coverdale as well as the more fist-punching US FM graduate classes.

'Stay' does the rock ballad and 'Waters Flow' rings a few bluesy changes, but for the most part this sticks to one-level of rocking out without ever really throwing up anything to lift them into major league status. However, there's obviously energy and guts here and the next album should see them more firmly consolidated.

Mike Davies

GEAR DADDIES

Let's Go Scare AI

(Polydor)

Closer to Green On Red - or the sadly defunct Waggoners - than Waylon Jennings, but it's still traditional sounding honky tonk guitar, complete with pedal steel and dobro and the emphasis on acoustic country strumming. There's a couple of messed up by beer and women songs, but generally the likes of 'Statue Of Jesus', 'Heavy Metal Boyz' and 'Boys Will Be Boys' are a long way from the usual Nashvilleisms. Much recommended and I'd love to see them at The Breedon. (I'll second that... loudly - Ed).

Mike Davies

NEIL YOUNG & CRAZY HORSE

Ragged Glory

(Reprise)

It's the classic formula.

Two guitars, drums and bass cranked up to the point of valve overload and rockin' good.

Young and the crew do just that with a great hour of thrilling guitar licks and heartfelt lyrics.

And essentially that's it. Except to say that in these days of synthetic overproduction, listening to 'Ragged Glory' makes you tingle with the reaffirmation of a faith in rock 'n' roll.

Quite possibly the musical equivalent of being born again and certainly one of the very best albums of the year.

Steve Morris

PETER BLEGVAD

King Strut and Other Stories

(Silvertone)

Former member of Henry Cow, Slapp Happy and occasional Golden Palomino, Blegvad has been carving himself an equally cult solo career for some years, gradually edging more towards mainstream crossover. This isn't the breakthrough but it will get him halfway through the door.

Largely acoustic based folk-blues with an injection of rock, the album's ample evidence of Blegvad's intelligent songwriting skills, making clever use of word-play. Simple arrangements and a frequent semi-spoken approach recalls the better work of T Bone Burnett, especially the story-song 'King Strut' or 'On Obsession', while the bizarre 'Chicken' enters Dr John gris gris territory.

Mike Davies

CRIME & THE CITY SOLUTION

Paradise Discotheque

(Mute)

A mighty follow-up to the stunning 'The Bride Ship' from the Australian-born outfit who specialise in themes of alienation, restlessness and generally downbeat lyrics (deftly encapsulated in their cover of the old blues number 'Motherless Child'). Though not a barrel-of-laugh album, there's an injection of black humour this time but the real attraction is the darkly atmospheric grand mood of the music that at times seems a marriage of Floyd and The Doors, accentuated by singer Mick Harvey's omi-

nous, menacing and oftentimes tortured-soul vocals. And the four part epic narrative 'The Last Dictator' is worth the price alone.

Mike Davies

SKIN LAGOON

Adventures In The Love Trade

(Big Life)

Not, as the name might suggest, another indie guitar dance outfit, but a singer-songwriter from Sheffield with a well-tuned ear for grown-up rock and a bias towards romance. Terry Gamwells, for it is he, most often comes over like a marriage of Chris Rea and Lou Reed, the latter's vocal inflections often being to the fore while the former is echoed by the musical crafting. Hugely unfashionable in the contemporary instant-hit market, but songs like 'Dance With Me', 'Northern Girl' and the infectiously jaunty 'Bumper To Bumper' show stalwart class that must surely one day finally reap its rewards.

Mike Davies

JESSE 'GUITAR' TAYLOR

Last Night

(Bedrock)

The man's middle name says it all.

This is a hot rockin' album of classic R&B steeped tunes played by a brassy line up with Taylor's guitar scorching its brand onto them.

Taylor himself is an in demand Texan session and roadman best known for his long tenure in Joe Ely's influential early eighties line up.

This record sees him indulging his love of the blues, courtesy of a late relative's will paying for studio time.

In some respects it suffers the constraints of the studio giving the listener the impression that the man must be a killer live and his voice is a mite weak, but overall it's a collection to crank up and enjoy, not a set to change the face of rock.

Steve Morris

ERIC JOHNSON

Ah Via Musicom

(Capitol)

Another guitar picker from Texas, and another virtuoso. Half vocal and half instrumental, the set is perfectly structured to display Johnson's seemingly limitless stylistic turns.

One minute the guitar is burning in Hendrix induced powerdrive, the next the man is doing a little western

swing-tinged clean country picking. What's more he's covered all the ground between too! And so good is he that somehow the end result is a seamless whole rather than a show off's scrapbook.

Eric Johnson may be an unlikely name for a guitar god, well it doesn't have the ring of Vai or Satriani does it, but he has far more talent in his fingers than nearly all of those so deified.

Steve Morris

JUDAS PRIEST

Painkiller

(CBS)

Presumably released to coincide with what they hoped was an end to the suicide case in America (chances are it's going to drag out further now), the Priest forge back like a battering ram with an album crammed with cliches. After all this time they're still hung

up on hoary old HM fetishes about motorbikes and rebels, liberally interspersed with Black Sabbath textbook images of hell and demons and dressed up like ads for Skin 2. If it wasn't so pathetic it'd be laughable. If it wasn't so laughable it'd be pathetic. Of course there's that good old standby of visions of nuclear aramgeddon to cloak it in 'relevant' symbolic comment, but you can almost hear the imagination creak on songs like 'Metal

Meltdown' and 'Between The Hammer & The Anvil'. 'A Touch Of Evil' is undoubtedly one of the most ponderously grinding metal songs in years and although there's a hint of their former glories on 'One Shot At Glory', for the most part this is just Priest's version of heads down breakneck speed metal. The title's half right, but it ain't no killer, it ain't no suicide trip, it's just a case of justifiable homicide.

Mike Davies

SPECIAL! DELIVERY

DEMON

The Whole Catalogue

(Sonic)

Back in the early eighties when the nascent Smiths were beginning to set the pace of hipness, I used to round off a Friday of leaning on chart return shops by calling into Mike Stone's Clay Records in Stoke. One such Friday, along with the regular coffee and chat, he pressed a cassette onto me with uncharacteristic insistence. That tape was of Demon and despite a modicum of indifference to 'eavy rock I found that the sound pouring from the car stereo helped cut the travelling time home by a substantial margin.

Since then Mike has suffered the financial repercussions of the label's distributor going bust and Clay Records is no more.

Instead he has Sonic for which he retained Demon, hence the welcome reappearance and CD debut, of their entire catalogue.

And hasn't it worn well... The debut, *Night Of The Demon*, despite the squashed sound burying the power of the band, fizzles with potential. *The Unexpected Guest* sees the same team moving closer to harnessing the atmospheric and drive that are still fighting to escape. Two LPs in and the mark of something special is becoming clear.

With *The Plague*, the album I heard that Friday, Demon took on the

production chores and upgraded the studio standards, drafting in the respected engineer Julian Mendelsohn (Frankie Goes To Hollywood/Bob Marley) to do the mix in Trevor Horn's Sarm Studios. The result is an almost fully realised vision with the material and musicianship better focussed and fully committed. The album also features Demon's first bona classic, *Blackheath*. *British Standard Approved* was to be the last album with founding guitarist Mal Spooner who, tragically, died se-

ven days after recording was completed. This classy, almost Floydian work stands as a fine monument to the man. *Heart Of Our Time* continues the ascent with the rousing title track opener giving fair warning of the outfits play-to-win intent. The album also marks a new collaborator for front man Dave Hill, the sad demise of Spooner placing him with keyboardist Steve Watts, the new pairing creating a potent melodic rock album.

1987's *Breakout* was a more sharply etched

album with a bolder and (synthetically) brassier sound that climaxes in the anguished and power-drenched

Through These Eyes. Also notable is the cloth cap nostalgia of *England's Glory*. No sentimental flag waver this; it's a hard rocker that gives Dave Hill's unsentimental national pride a non-jingoistic free reign.

Taking The World By Storm sees a line-up shuffle bringing in a new muscularity. The set's pivotal cut, *Remembrance Day* is a potent protest piece fuelled by the Enniskillen massacre, that focusses on the heart of that problem better than pious attempts by the likes of Simple Minds. It

of *One Helluva Night* demonstrate that Demon are no phenomenon of the studio but a more than capable road unit. Incidentally there's an unintended symmetry with the set being titled after the debut album's closer and being recorded on the anniversary of Mal Spooner's sadly premature death. But far from being the closing of the book of Demon, the mass availability of this solid and valuable catalogue should open more than a few eyes to their glorious power, and see an end to their unchosen role as British rock's best kept secret.

And there's the rub, why are Demon such a secret? Why, despite a clutch of stirring studio albums and a double live blockbuster, are the guys still, necessarily, semi-pro?

In a world that throws up Vixens and Poisons, bands manufactured and peroxided for a video age in which music is a second thought, and rock and roll is an L.A. lawyer's son's career move, it seems that Demon's well-honed, gritty, sweaty rock is too strong for the public's taste.

Despite the worn denim and macho leather trimmings, rock fans have apparently become the music world's shandy drinkers. Thankfully for those who need the full proof spirit blast that is the heart of rock, Demon carry on.

All of the above albums on Sonic are available at any local record shop, Mike Stone's new label is distributed by the giant BMG organisation, if they argue tell 'em that!

Finally, for many a day the legendary Nick Lowe referred to things intrinsically good as 'Demon' - spooky or plain common sense?

Steve Morris



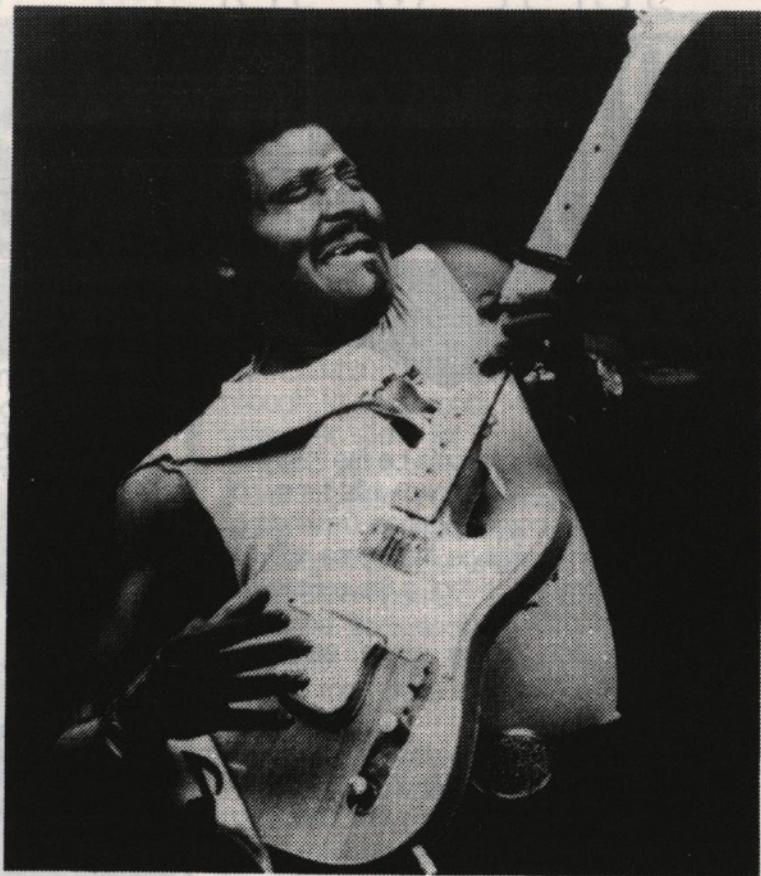
SILVER turns Blue this month. With *The Healer*, John Lee Hooker's guest studied newie selling hundreds of thousands of copies throughout Europe and rock stalwart Gary Moore finding profit in pain, the rush is on to grab a share of the action.

So Virgin launch a specialist imprint, Point Blank, and other majors, we hear, are not far behind. However, October is Blues Guitar Greats month, not courtesy of a marketing dept. but by the good grace of Bruce Iglauer's Chicago-based specialist Alligator label. To celebrate the best in six string Blues, Alligator, via Sonet Records, have eleven recent gems re-racked and rarin' to find places on your CD shelves.

'Showdown' by Albert

vely to round off the *'Hot Wires'* album in fine style. **Hound Dog Taylor And The HouseRockers** are something else entirely. Their eponymously titled disc is down right raw. The line up of two guitars and drums is hard and loud creating a small drinking club atmosphere right there in your living room. Taylor's friendship with Elmore James seeps out of every cut of this essentially-low tech yet glorious album. **'Bad Axe'** finds **Son Seals** covering a lot of ground. His blues travels from the 12 bar *'Going Home'* to the Latin tinged *'Just About To Lose Your Clown'* and kicks up some dust with the rockin' *'Cold Blood'*.

'3rd Degree' finds **Johnny Winter** reuniting the trio last heard on his CBS recordings and drafting in **Dr. John** on



▲ ALBERT COLLINS

shoot) were Alligator's modernists. **'Midnight Drive'** has a rock production ring to it and whilst there's nothing wrong, the edge is missing.

Tinsley Ellis is as contemporary as the Kinseys but **'Fanning The Flames'** is a more rockin' R&B affair. Ellis is a band player rather than show off, though *'Fender Blender'* allows him display space and his solo on *'So Many Tears'* puts his heart on the line.

Now **Clarence 'Gatemouth' Brown** may be a legend but on **'Standing My Ground'** the wily old Texan turns in a cabaret set. The band arrangements are better suited to supper club politeness than the grit of the Blues. If you can mentally block out the muso excesses you can just about hear the old man on the, in the

circumstances, provocatively titled *'I Hate These Doggone Blues'*.

'Let's Buzz' finds the Stray Cat-styled **Paladins** joined by Los Lobos horn man **Steve Berlin** and Fats Domino sideman **Lee Allen** for some rockabilly-flavoured blues. Guitarist **Dave Gonzales** covers an impressive range of styles finding exactly the right axe voicing for each one.

Last, but not least, **Lonnie Mack. 'Live! - Attack Of The Killer V'** was reviewed last month; suffice it to say that on the evidence of this rip snorter of a live disc The Memphis Man and his trusty Gibson Flying V (serial No.0005, trivia fans) are still whamming. The promotional blurb warned us to get ready for the real blues guitar



greats on the real blues label, Alligator. For once I'm not about to argue. Finally a quick mention for a boxed set that'll have CD equipped bluesers running to the stores. American **Columbia** have issued a well packaged two disc set containing **The Complete Recordings'** of **Robert Johnson**. Included is a book of biographical notes, discography, lyrics and endorsements from **Eric Clapton** and **Keith Richards**. 41 remastered tracks in all and I picked up my copy for less than twenty quid at the Record Rack in Dudley. Whether or not the set will see a UK release in this form I don't know. Prudent Johnson fans should call the shop now.

Steve Morris



▲ ROY BUCHANAN

Collins, Robert Cray and **Johnny Copeland** might come as a surprise to Cray's regular buyers. It's a rawer record all together with the three men goading each other to impassioned heights both vocally and instrumentally. The whole gamut is run from the rockin' *'T-Bone Shuffle'* to the moody *'Bring Your Fine Self Home'*.

Roy Buchanan's exciting picking often polarises blues fans. His edgy, screaming style being, some argue, more rock than feel. But the easy blues, *'That Did It'* reveals enough emotional content to defeat them, whilst the eight minute long *'The Blues Lover'* lets RB stretch out impressi-

piano. Winter himself excels on both searing electric and rootsy National Steel guitars. He even manages to reinvest the mistreated old classic *'Shake Your Money Maker'* with feel and that, friends is like making the lame walk.

Albert Collins, the master of the Telecaster, brings a **'Cold Snap'** on which the Iceman's incisive playing is cushioned by a strong brass section and jazzier **Jimmy McGriff's** soul tinged keyboard. Collins' guitar is on top form, check the way he plays against the steamy Hammond background on *'Light's Are On But Nobody's At Home'*.

The Kinsey Report (now packed to the Virgin off-



mad hat

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L I V E

REVIEWS

**STEVE EARLE
AND THE DUKES**Civic Hall
Wolverhampton

Having been so vigorously sold as New Country in the marketing campaigns of old, Steve Earle finds himself the victim of dilemma. Preconception riddled audiences finding a freeway eating, eighteen wheeler in place of the hayride. See, Earle and the Dukes actually share the same lineage as Springsteen and the late E. Street Band. Blue collar rock and roll with Earle's Texan roots showing as country whilst the Boss' New Jersey upbringing majored on pop and R&B. The meeting point must be 'Billy Austin' the 'Nebraska' flavoured track from Earle's 'Hardway' album that served as the stunning centrepiece in a faultless two-and-a-half hour career summary.

Saving 'Guitar Town' for the rabble rousing climax he and the six piece Dukes pulled no punches in delivering a stage hardened greatest hits package. Not that it was all full tilt rock, Earle has a softer side though his drawling rough voice, counter pointed by his younger sister, Stacey's Emmylou harmony, keeps him a safe distance from out and out romanticism.

During the first encore Earle apologised to purists about his "being sidetracked into being a rock 'n' roll singer" adding that he'd play a "good hillbilly song" before launching into a fine cover of the Stones 'Dead Flowers'.

Finally it was back home for Earle with a rollocking pairing of 'San Antonio Girl' and 'She's About A Mover' a song by San Antonio old boy and Earle-y influence

Doug Sahn.

In better times it would be the NEC that staged Dukes' doos and whilst it may not please his career planners I'm kinda of glad for a change that these are not better times and that a Steve Earle gig can be party sized.

Same time, same place next year please?

Steve Morris

BLACK SABBATH

Civic Hall

Wolverhampton

In traditional Sabbath style the set was launched with the usual overpowering choral/orchestral Omen-style intro, in pitch darkness. As the curtains were drawn back the extensive lighting rig (the largest I've ever seen in a venue of this size) burst into operation, bathing the dramatic stage set, and the band, in light. From the opening 'Anno Mundi' and 'Neon Nights', throughout the two hour set, the Sabbs performed as never before. This was heavy metal as it should be, played by the band who started it all. Tony 'The Cat' Martin's stage presence, song presentation and confidence had

greatly improved since the last tour. He and Tony Iommi in particular were clearly enjoying every moment. The preceding week-long, full-production rehearsals at the Civic Hall had clearly paid off. The performance and the extent of the stage set dispelled any suggestions that the 'Tyr' tour was a financial exercise.

The actual set list was predictable, featuring 'Headless Cross', 'When Death Calls', 'Iron Man', a smattering of songs from the new album, and the encore of 'Paranoid' sandwiched between strains of 'Heaven and Hell'. The only minus factors were the now obligatory bass guitar and drum



▲ **BLACK SABBATH**
pic: Mark Hadley

solo spots. Cozy Powell's drum solo was outstanding and unusual in its presentation with him accompanying taped classical pieces, but it all seemed somewhat superfluous.

It is good to see the guys back in action again. And, after 20 years in the biz, Birmingham based Black Sabbath are still THE definitive heavy metal band.

Mark Hadley

BOB GELDOF

Assembly Rooms

Derby

Forget the crap about Bob being the second coming, or about Live Aid being a vehicle to save his own waning musical career. If anything Live Aid did more to hinder his musical exploits than anything else. I couldn't claim to be a great fan of Bob Geldof, or for that matter of the Boomtown Rats. 'I Don't Like Mondays' is clearly a classic (of monumental proportions) but apart from that I'd always thought of Bob as a fairly rough vocalist. The two hour set at Derby's Assembly Rooms, played to an extremely sparse audience (partly I suspect due to a total lack of publicity) convinced me, however, that Mr Geldof, is in fact a highly talented songwriter, performer, and indeed a fine vocalist. Although including the aforementioned Rat's track and featuring the band's old bass player in Bob's new backing band, 'The Vegetarians Of Love', the music was largely Irish folk orientated, featuring accordion and fiddle throughout.

The lyrics were full of poignant observations about people, life and politics. The show was not without its light hearted moments however. "I don't suppose any of you know any of the ****ing songs do you?", the ever polite Mr Geldof suggested. The set featured a selection of songs from his solo albums, which indeed I didn't know. Included were two renditions of the catchy 'Song Of Indiffer-

ence', the current single 'Love Or Something', 'Happiness', 'Let It Go', 'The End Of The World', originally written as a joke but now aptly dedicated to Saddam Hussein, and encores 'Big Romantic Stuff', 'Love Like A Robot' and 'Everybody's Got A Hole To Fill', subtly dedicated to Kate and Martin (Martin having proposed marriage prior to the gig without a response). Forget the illusion that Bob Geldof is a scruffy, dirty, hairy, has-been still riding on the success of Live Aid - he is both a talented songwriter and performer and is really quite clean and presentable. Furthermore he had his audience, albeit small, dancing and singing throughout the auditorium. The band wasn't bad either.

Mark Hadley

**MAGNUM
NEC**

Birmingham

Without a doubt this is the most difficult, disturbing review I've ever had to write. Magnum are a band I've followed obsessively for more than a decade, my all-time favourite act, the only group to induce tears of joy when they sold-out this arena in December '88. Along with other loyal supporters I was proud of their deserved success, achieved as it was without compromise but with guts and determination.

'Goodnight LA' might be an inoffensive trans-Atlantic rock album, the accompanying designer videos may be chic, they don't belong to Magnum though. The hardcore fans protested by not turning up, leaving the back tier of seats curtained off and aching spaces all around, the 'new' crowd have been reared on MTV. When 'Days Of No Trust' opens the show whole blocks sit impassively, ignorant to the fact that Magnum used to claim devotion from their followers. Gone are the classics, 'Sacred Hour', 'Kingdom Of Madness', 'Don't Wake The Lion', replaced by cliched pop-pap like 'No Way Out'.

When the past is briefly recalled, via an acoustic 'Spirit', the teen-dreams don't know the words. The hugely emotional singalong is relegated to a near silent response. Even the pomp and majesty of 'Les Morts Dansant' and 'Storyteller's Night' are lost amongst the sickening polish and corporate greed. Sadly, every song was met with tepid applause, forcing you to realise that this isn't really Magnum. A thought enforced by Tony Clarkin's bald head; what's happened to the endearing Dickensian character, he could be anybody now?

Commercial ambition has ripped the heart and soul out of Britain's finest band, it could also signal the end of their career unless they take drastic action. Whatever the members might say, they knew something was desperately wrong tonight. Bob's friendly demeanour, Wally's gleeful smile, the overwhelming wave of noise at encore time, were all noticeably absent. They rushed through 'Last Dance' as people streamed towards the Exits, hopefully beginning a re-examination process.

"We'll be back in December", Bob said at the end. I'll be there because I love them too much to go away, I CARE passionately about Magnum. Read through your own words to 'Days Of No Trust' Tony, can so much have changed in two years. I cried again tonight, frightened that my best friend had left forever.

Paul Rees

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THE BLUE NILE/ SHAWN COLVIN

Town Hall
Birmingham

The phone rings, I lift it. A voice at the other end asks, "Guess who is supporting The Blue Nile on their tour?". And that's how the opportunity to see Shawn Colvin in concert, finally presented itself. Support acts can sometimes be a best kept secret!

Shawn opened her account with 'The Dead Of The Night', the closing track from her debut CBS album 'Steady On'. Dressed entirely in black and white, topped by a beret, Colvin proved with the next number, that small finely proportioned things can sometimes possess immense power. On 'Another Long One', her voice truly soared. A few minutes further on, Colvin delivered 'Steady On' with a deal more soul than the studio version. Just to prove that the girl from South Dakota, despite her folk leanings, is thoroughly immersed in the music of New York these days, the penultimate tune was a cover of Talking Head's 'Naive Melody'. 'Diamond In The Rough' followed and she was gone, leaving me with the thought, "More, more".

Throughout her nine song set, Colvin's right foot incessantly tapped out the rhythms, while she acquitted herself well in the guitar playing stakes. No doubts here. The lady is into obscure tunings. Shawn also possesses the ability to spot a fine melody (when one comes along), which she ably matches with intelligent lyrics. We'll hear more from her, believe me.

Arthur Wood

Playing the majority of 'A Walk Across The Rooftops' and 'Hats', The Blue Nile drew a warm and genuinely emotional series of standing ovations from the packed hall. That the three Niles and three sessioneers using all the high tech available created an atmosphere of heart and soul and not an allergic reaction known to the medical world as Deexsevenblanditis is in itself a testament to their sheer taste.

Vocalist Paul Buchanan, the phenomenon's composer, is possessed of both an individual musical vision and the gift of a voice to achieve it; he has in his larynx an instrument of absolute joy. Song lists are in the event surplus, the Blue Nile create an almost seamless whole.

That such an 'un-natural' line-up could achieve such natural warmth is surely unique. A word that sums up the event and The Blue Nile.

Steve Morris

NAPALM DEATH/CEREBRAL FIX/IMPAILER

Goldwyns
Birmingham

It ought to be said that anyone submitting themselves, voluntarily, to a three-band thrash needs their head examining. However, the former premise obviates the necessity of the latter, it being too late anyway! The morning after I'd developed a soft spot for Napalm Death ... between my ears. Once, the band were held as purists of the 10 second song genre, their fans considering anything longer as an appalling trend towards complete sell-out resulting in a concept-single of anything up to one minute long! Such anathema didn't manifest itself at the gig as punters literally threw themselves into the occasion with wild abandon. The delightful pheno-

REVIEWS

mena of stage-diving appears, at first, intimidating if not openly insane. Venturing near to the stage one is gratified on two counts: firstly, it's a damn-sight quieter behind the PA stack, and secondly, the thrashers invariably cushion the plummeting divers ... usually! Cerebral Fix seemed intent on underlining every entry in the Observer's book of collected obscenities, the 'C' word being liberally endorsed. "You W**nkers on the f**kin' sound-desk, turn the f**kin' monitors up we can't hear no f**kin' guitars!". Judging by sound man's ashen face as a fearful array of warning lights kept flashing on the desk (the slides being up to eleven and beyond) everything was quite f**kin' loud enough, thank-you very much! Not a great deal to say about Impailer apart from their being rather noisy. Should one feel inclined to take-up the sonorous role as Thrash vocalist (akin to aural-sex with a nymphomaniac chain saw) the following advice may help. Adopt torso posture thus: raise microphone hand with out-raised arm parallel with shoulder-blades (cheese-grate implanted tattoo optional extra). Invert mic towards mouth with clenched intensity. Coagulate generous litre of phlegm near the base of spine, ruminate latter viciously then expel vocal tone of demonic-possessed characters

seclusion Electribe 101 refused to be restricted by the electro boredom many had forecast. The angelic voice of Billy-Ray Martin was the antidote, soaring and shrieking to disprove all suspicions of studio trickery. She is the Euro-diva we all worshipped in the New Romantic era, prepare to worship once more.

On Top Of The Pops Adamski plays the clown cum psychopath of dance culture, the man who most would like to get close enough to understand. M.K. Bowl is a wide open space far from the claustrophobia of clubs, here his music drifts and is well received - grasped rather than swung. As the wanna-be extra from Clockwork Orange Adamski could become the Vince Clarke of the 90's but only if he transcends the rave scene successfully - evidence today suggests that this may prove more difficult than Killer suggested.

What Adamski lacked in numbers Was (Not Was) more than made up. A sprawling mass of talent and dexterity spewing eclectic funk, performing tricks and musical stunts that probably made many amateurs go green and give up their Bert Weedon play-in-a-day lessons. If you ever have the opportunity to experience them don't let it pass you by.

To many Erasure remain a mystery, to whom do they sell records, why are they so successful? The answers are perhaps far too obvious. Erasure are the sound of perfect pop theory crushed into a listenable and infectious format. Simple songs sung and played well and many hitting the homes and anxieties of young multi-cultural-ambitious and more tolerant Britain. As a front man who combines the roles of pantomime horse and socio-political orator Andy Bell is larger than life and deserving of the adoration he

their own. Diminutive, but stocky rapper Rude Boy immediately grabs our attention and earns our respect as he leads the band through possibly all the material from the 'Mental Floss For The Globe' LP, straight away inviting the audience to indulge in a little stage diving. Which of course, they comply with. By the third number, the stage is jam-packed, but at no point is there any hint of things falling apart. Rude Boy is in complete control, not missing any of the sometimes complicated intricacies of 'Deeper Shade Of Soul', 'Brainstorm-UDS' and 'Piece Of Rock', even when being tossed about on a sea of hands above the dance floor, reminding me of Angelo's superb antics when Fishbone played Goldwyns. Even bassist Silly Phil managed to keep that thumping funky rhythm despite being forced to play in a horizontal position above people's heads, or precariously balanced on a fan's shoulders.

Part of U.D.S.'s sound relies on a fairly nifty use of tapes and scratch desks, which always works well in the studio, but is often difficult to reproduce live. No such problem here. D.N.A. manages to freak out but also deliver weird and effective taped inserts at the right moments, while the rest of the band launch into a frenzied display of funky craziness.

They couldn't get away without an encore, part of which were the immaculate 'No Kid' and 'Fast Lane'. Right up to the end, the whole show had a manic party atmosphere, and was only marred by inevitable, unnecessary strong-arm tactics by Astoria security, 'Top Guard'. Shame.

Still, I'm sure these Dutch funksters will be back soon to even bigger audiences, and maybe Birmingham too. Catch 'em. Seems like Europeans can be funky too!

Max



▲ NAPALM DEATH

aka The Exorcist. Gozor a la Ghostbusters and the slight nuance of Norman Tebbit hosting a Bhangra festival. 'Hhllugh-loughhh, sclughrrrrgrughhguhnn... baby!' Good fun, really. Well done Goldwyns, an admirable touch of promotional pluck.

John Kennedy

ERASURE/WAS (NOT WAS)/ ADAMSKI/ELECTRIBE 101

Bowl

Milton Keynes

Aversion to the open-air concert ended here. No more the bombastic and blustering stadium rock, no heaving masses but 55,000 people on a day trip to the class end of commerciality.

Emerging from far too long in studio

inspires. Pure yet sophisticated, Erasure are wild, witty and ultimately affable - Erasure are entertainment, something none of us should turn our backs on.

Paul Flower

URBAN DANCE SQUAD/ HEADS UP

Astoria

London

Yo! Listen up! Once again, I find myself reviewing a non-Brum gig. But sometimes, some bands who don't make it to Motor City are too important to let by without comment. Urban Dance Squad are such a band.

Now Urban Dance Squad openly admit their Chili Peppers influence, amongst others, but go on to develop a sound all

DESIRE

Featuring DEBBIE BONHAM

JB's

Dudley

Billed simply as 'Debbie Bonham', Desire played to a packed club tonight on the strength of a name. Of course, it cuts both ways; a host of preconceptions beckoned the ghost of Zeppelin. Many prepared to make ridiculous comparisons.

As soon as the opening song began to breath however, every prejudice was rendered obsolete. The sound itself can be drawn towards the late 80's Christine McVie contributions to Fleetwood Mac, while Debbie's superb voice brings to mind both Stevie Nicks and Kim Carnes. It is a band situation though, with each musician - notably guitarist Gary Morris - comfortable in the spotlight.

Now, the material will never court my particular tastes but there is no denying its excellence. 'Don't Stop Believing' and 'I Need Your Love' are consummate radio friendly rock; they don't set the nerve ends jangling, maybe they're not supposed to. Morris does toughen up the more restrained melodies, his influence exerting itself to greater effect towards the end of the set. 'Guinevere' is a majestic, mystical excursion, 'One Love' a dormant hit single waiting to wake.

With an array of polished tunes, a name for initial introduction and a warm response tonight it is difficult to conceive any notion of failure for Desire. Even for one of more dangerous convictions they are extremely good.

Paul Rees

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ONE TEA DISPENSER TOO MANY

AFTER ten years of working with vending machines, Mike Hamblett decided he'd seen one tea dispenser too many. He went off to start his own company in the industry he was most interested in, and Sub Zero Music was born.

In his Dudley office, adorned with posters of clients and a huge print of Dali's 'Swans Reflecting Elephants', Mike told me how the company came about:

"Sub Zero Music began because I played in and also managed a band called Sub Zero, from the late 70s to the mid 80s. We did quite well, so in 1984 I set up in business in a small way, initially to promote the band. When the group split up I carried on the name as a PA and lighting company, publishing company and record label, and it all developed from there".

WEIRD RECORDS

He remembers without malice some expensive errors:

"I produced some weird records I must admit, when I first started out", he laughs, "I don't like to say this, but we released a single with Emyln Hughes and Suzanne Dando. It was a mad idea I had, a Christmas record, quite novel I thought at the time ... I lost a fortune".

Undaunted, Mike accepted that record releases might not be his speciality, and he gave up the record label a few years ago in order to concentrate on the PA and lighting aspects of the business. Since then he's never looked back. Now employing

TERESA BASSETT dons thermals to go SUB ZERO

six full-time and several part-time staff, the company has achieved a high status, enjoying a solid reputation for hard work and reliability.

Life is certainly varied in the world of sound: over the years they have worked with scores of acts, major and unknown, from jazz (they've covered the Birmingham Jazz Festival for the last six years) to Indie, from rock and thrash to bhangra. They have also worked with hypnotists, cabaret artistes and even Neil Kinnock! So what can Sub Zero offer?

Well, you can hire concert PA systems 1K-8K, DIY Vocal PA systems from 150w-500w, concert lighting rigs up to 48k, radio mics and effects such as strobes, smoke machines, UV lights, mirror balls and followspots. There are also drum risers, drum kits and megaphones, backline systems and disco outfits available.

The company also sells and installs equipment from all reputable manufacturers, though long experience has led them to specialise in Peavey and Yamaha. They are also manufacturers of flight-cases, trunks, leads, cables, multicore systems, custom built speaker cabinets ... basically just about anything a musician might desire.

"Being an ex-musician I do know what people want", said Mike. "I think it's all a

question of attitude. Bands and technicians must be able to work well together. At the end of the day we're all there to provide a good concert ...

CONTINUAL INVESTMENT

"It was hard in the beginning, and I didn't make any money during the first few years, it was continual investment. But I always try to plan ahead and look at things in the long term; for example I've just bought a seven-and-a-half ton truck for touring. I do things slowly, carefully. Even when you're established it's no good standing still. You've only got to do a couple of bad concerts and you lose your name straight away".

Has he got any advice for would-be workers in the music biz?

"It's a funny business and it's a funny job, very unsociable hours, working at night and so on. It's hard to find people with the right frame of mind. I feel the music industry is still not very organised in many respects: it's not like dealing with business people. Some continue to treat it as a hobby. I suppose my own business started off as a hobby, but I've always treated it like a business".

Mike is a most unlikely entrepreneur: clearly success has not turned him into an android, and you never doubt his sincerity. "I want to keep improving the equipment, the service and the quality", he says, "Hopefully I'll still be here in ten years' time, and I'll be able to say the same thing"



WELL STRUNG!

● WHEN IT COMES to musical hardware, the term 'best' is one to take with a pinch of salt. After all which is 'best' - a Strat or a Les Paul? And that ignores any question of variants within those glorious marques. But for guitar players the question of 'best strings', the area where most experimentation takes place, is a proverbial minefield.

After all, personal taste and intended use are prime considerations.

So when Maxima Strings boldly announce their Gold and Chrome ranges to be 'The Ultimate In Guitar Strings', it's time to take a good look.

Both metals are made for electric and acoustic instruments with both styles fully catered for in terms of gauges, with the electric range also offering the flatwound option.

Prices of the Chrome strings range from £7.08 to £9.16 for the mains powered variety and £9.54 for wooden axes. The Gold are £10.08 to £13.06 and £10.78 for

their respective sets.

To check out Maxima's bold claim we fitted out a Strat with Gold strings and an acoustic with Chrome.

"Putting 24 carat plated strings onto the Strat was a novelty", reports *Brum Beat's* resident axe man, "it seemed that they were a rich man's toy rather than a working musician's tool. And at about a tenner, more or less double the price of normal strings".

However, the novelty soon wore off. Maxima Golds were smoother to play than others and above all, sounded better. They have a fuller, richer character with more harmonic content that resulted in less fiddling with eq. circuitry to get the right sound. But having only had the set on for a short spell, Maxima's claims re long life cannot be verified though early indications are good.

On the acoustic side the same indications hold true. At seven quid they are again higher in price than normally used strings but feel better and perform impressively. The sound is best characterised as bright but balanced. The guitar used was an ageing but well known Antoria jumbo with a rather rich sound of its own and the Maximas suited this well, their natural clarity cleaning the sound impressively. Certainly in finger-picking mode the individual strings and notes were rich, clear and powerful.

Overall Maxima's Chrome and Gold strings are recommended heartily. We shall be returning to them later to report on length of useful life and to check out Chrome electric and Gold acoustic performances.

PICK IT!

● GUITAR PICKS, bought in bulk and taped to mike stands often seem simply disposable; mass produced so-whats.

Therefore a range of custom-made picks with prices from £4.80 through to £14.00 and made from ebony, coconut, horn, bone or a range of stones are simply OTT, right?

Wrong. Dugain Plectra are special. Made by Jean-Charles Dugain, the devices - they are indeed a more complicated object than a simple pick - reflect musicians' long established fascination with different sounds made by different substances. Brian May's experiments with coins being a prime example of this almost black art.

Dugain's picks utilise the obvious notion of differing densities and hardnesses causing different sounds but it doesn't end there. Each pick is sculptured to put the players fingers into optimum playing position; something lazy pickers will have to adjust to though the benefits of a discip-

lined grip soon become apparent; a bonus being that in sweaty fingers the indentations cause the picks to stick. So no lost picks; the high-ish prices soon make sense, eh?

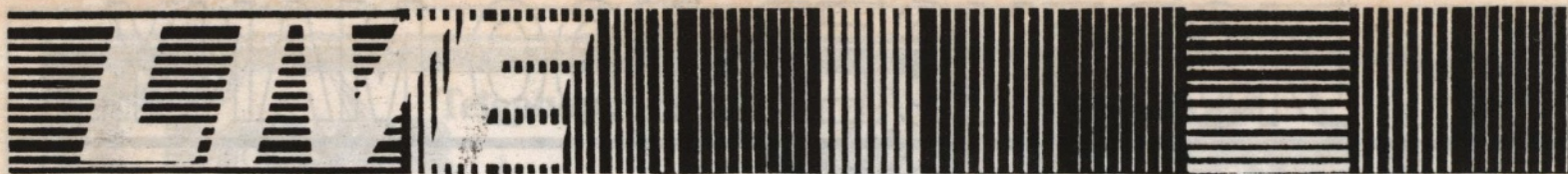
Picking at an acoustic with almost 5 quid's worth of Ebony Dugain was a delight. There was some adjustment of style (and lazy grip!) necessary and a lighter touch needed but the sound was wonderful; switching from the normal plastics to the Dugain was like opening a door on the sound. It became fuller, richer; the harmonics sang with a new vigour.

With a Dugain Horn pick on electric guitar the story had a familiar ring. Again used to the softer plastic disposables using something as intrinsically hard as horn was cause for concern. The sound quickly evaporated that worry.

Improved string contact means that the full output of its individual sound is realised. Most noticeable are the full harmonics and the full bodied sound achievable. All of this without any undue overemphasis of bass or treble, simply a natural, yet full balance.

Logic, of course, decrees that the pick is the essential link between imagination and sound source (its what you hit the strings with OK!) but cheapness often overrules such considerations.

Dugain Plectra reaffirm the importance of this vital link in the playing chain in a very clear manner.



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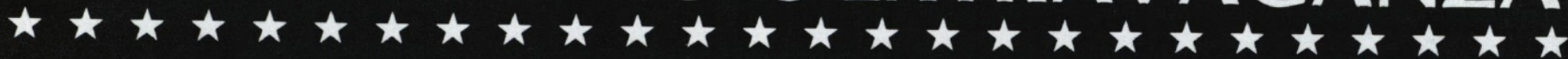
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