

BRUM BEAT

THE MIDLANDS ENTERTAINMENT MONTHLY

NUMBER 123

MARCH 1991

Tanita Tikaram

'Elvis' Hippie Daughter'

**Mike Davies
shares
the joke**



**STEVE
BOOKER**

DARDEN SMITH

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NEWS ● REVIEWS ● COMPETITIONS



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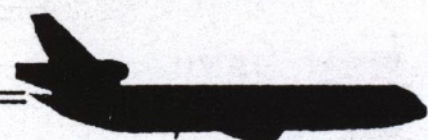
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CHECK-IN

PICK OF THE MARCH DATES

4

FATIMA MANSIONS

Barrel Organ, Birmingham
The latest vehicle for the unpredictable Cathal Coughlan. The recent 'Viva Dead Ponies' caused a critical stir, expect no less from this gig.

8

THE LA'S

Hummingbird, Birmingham
A sixties pop group cast adrift in a vinyl Tardis or the advance guard of a new sensibility? Either way, Lee Mavers and his buddies refresh the parts that others have forgotten about.

10

THE RAILWAY CHILDREN

Goldwyns, Birmingham
Top 30 at last, the group have found their true home. 'Every Beat...' is the first of many.

10

TANITA TIKARAM

Hippodrome, Birmingham
Tikaram is quite simply an assured, mature writer and performer. Impressively so for her years. A fact that seems to incite many older critics unable to accept the wisdom of youth.

11

LITTLE ANGELS

Wulfrun Hall, Wolverhampton
Melodic metal with an R&B gait fuelled by rasping brass and steamy Hammond organ. They want to be 'Young Gods' and they might just be on the right track.



Little Angels

12

THROWING MUSES

Goldwyns, Birmingham
First UK live dates since the REM support in '89. To celebrate they have a new bassist, Fred Abong and a new 4AD album, 'The Real Ramona'.

15

WHYCLIFFE

Institute, Birmingham
Soul, funk and rock iced with a set of golden tonsils. Win laminate passes to this gig in this issue. See Competitions.

20

JOSE CARRERAS

NEC, Birmingham
A member of the PDC supergroup goes solo. You might be tempted to cry 'give us a tenor' with tickets at thirty five and fifty quid!

25

JIMMY SOMERVILLE

Civic Hall, Wolverhampton
The exception to the rule. Intelligence, wit and political passion can fill dance floors and remain listenable. What's more he's developing into a fine vocalist.

BRUM BEAT

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AN EYE ON THE PRIZE

Arthur Wood explores Steve Booker's Dreamworld.

One of the nearest songs to surface from last year's melee was Steve Booker's 'Wedding Day'. When first released the tune comprised one third of an EP of the same name. The remaining two, 'Hurricane' and 'Dreamworld' failed to make it into the final eleven cuts selected for the debut album even though, strangely, it eventually bore the title 'Dreamworld'.

The EP marked the opening gambit in Booker's solo career. Sadly both it and the following single, 'Everytime You Walk Away', sank without making significant impact chartwise. 'Dreamworld', the album, was released around the time of that second single. Considering their undoubted quality both singles will be reissued once Booker enjoys a higher international profile. By the way, that future profile is not a wild prediction, it's a certainty. (Ed's note: the album escaped during November '90 but such was the buzz that Feb '91 saw it relaunched)

IN THE BEGINNING

Born in London some 28 years ago the influential portion of Booker's childhood was spent living in the Sussex countryside. By the time he began studying maths at college, he was also holding down the position of bassist in late seventies anthemic rock band, The Cast. Kenney Jones, drummer for The Who/The Faces managed the group. A spell with sixties style pop combo, The Jerseys followed. From those days guitarist Dave Clifton remains a close friend and collaborator. he's MD of Steve's current band.

An indie single made by the band, 'Right and Wrong' picked up some airplay and led to a Virgin Records deal. Only one single, 'Two Way Radio' was issued and The Jerseys split soon afterwards. On his chosen profession Booker reflects, "I literally fell into a career in music through joining those bands. It wasn't a calculated thing. Following The Jerseys decisions about the future had to



Steve Booker

be made." Intent on following a career in music, he concluded that it would have to be from a totally new perspective.

Steve Booker, bassman, would become Steve Booker, songwriter. Arming himself with an acoustic guitar he spent the next thirty six months isolated from his fellow man.

GETTING IT TOGETHER

From time to time he would emerge to test his songs on an unsuspecting public. They were his barometer, his gauge as to whether the course was true. Following every public foray Booker returned to his domicile a little wiser.

Lyrics were continually rewritten. Polished. Lines were set aside for another day, melodies discarded, often totally. With each passing day, he made visible forward progress.

It so happened that the former lead singer of The Cast lived nearby and, more to the point, owned a portable four track studio. Demos were made on a regular basis.

After three summers of this lifestyle his compositions numbered dozens.

THE INFLUENCE OF RUMOURS

And what had influenced the creative process, "Those wonderful arrangements on Robbie Robertson's solo album. One day I'd like to make an album which has the feel of Fleetwood Mac's 'Rumours'. Dave Clifton introduced me to the music of Fairport Convention and Fotheringay years ago. In addition, where I grew up in Sussex there was an active folk scene. At that time the pop charts were dominated by acts like Mud, Sweet and Suzi Quatro but if you looked deeper there are always other styles of music around. For instance, those early Jethro Tull albums had a really rough feel to them, they'd mix fuzzy guitars with things like fiddles, which was different. When I was younger I had this cassette with two albums on it, 'Led Zeppelin 4' and The Rolling Stones' 'Beggars Banquet'. I loved Zeppelin's music, especially

the folkier bits whilst the Stones album was their attempt at an acoustic album".

Fuelled by this input Booker's own unique style began emerging. Musically there is a definite folk influence, it draws on the traditional music of our islands. Lyrically, his songs seek to explore subjects as diverse as our national heritage, the positive and negative faces of human relationships and the mere act of surviving.

THE DEAL AND BEYOND

And so in November 1989, following a change of management and the signing of publishing and recording deals, it was time to cut the real thing. Supported by an aggregation of carefully chosen players, Booker found himself ensconced in the Mill Recording Studio in Berkshire. Producing was Jon Kelly fresh from Fish' solo debut and with a CV naming Deacon Blue, Chris Rea and Kate Bush.

Live dates followed with a new band, still featuring long

time accomplice Dave Clifton on guitar, that included supports to Suzanne Vega, The Lilac Time, then Jericho and Bob Geldof.

Presently Booker is touring with Vagabond Joy on the college circuit but the wise among you should look out for solo dates in the near future.

And what of that future?

The next target is to see 'Dreamworld' issued in the States. And then? "After I recorded 'Dreamworld' I wrote ten to fifteen songs. I've got loads of ideas and I have a home studio now which helps a great deal. Now I can regularly demo new songs. Of course I also possess a large backlog of older material which I still really love. The trouble is those songs have been tarnished by the fact that they didn't make it onto the first album. Despite that, I'd like to record a couple of those songs for my second album. I still believe strongly in the song 'Dreamworld'. It has a lovely naive quality which I would find difficult to recreate these days".

ON WITH THE SHOW

Over a bottle of scotch and with brows furrowed at the impenetrable legal manoeuvrings of richly bound contracts, Brum Beat fell into the possession of Brum Beat Ltd in early February.

The reasons for the move were well represented in last month's magazine so let's concentrate on the future this month. I'm not going to promise sweeping changes, any improvements made will be introduced with care and consideration. Let's just say that from now on Brum Beat will be available at the beginning of every month providing

a comprehensive view of entertainment in the Midlands.

We're available on 021 643 8899 or 021 643 3060 which is a combined Fax and 24hr answerphone. You can call and leave your band's dates if you wish!

Brum Beat is now a truly independent publication determined to be at the heart of the Midland's entertainment scene. After a kind of rebirth, Brum Beat is alive and kicking.

Steve Morris Editor

A DAY TO NOTE

The Day have undergone a line up change and secured a support slot that turn out to be the stuff from which legends are made. The band's founding members, ex-Felt men Tony Wille and Marco have amicably chosen separate paths leaving The Day without a bass man.

Undeterred the band have accepted a booking at London's Mean Fiddler Acoustic Room on Wednesday March 6. They will be playing a drumless acoustic support set to US cult band Chickasaw Mudd Puppies whose new album (reviewed in this month's *Recorded Delivery*) is co-produced by REM's Michael Stipe.

Brum Beat has been told that it is 99% certain that Stipe will be part of the Mudd Puppies that night, which if true would make it a unique occasion.

Bearing in mind the fact that it's only a hot rumour, The Day are organising a coach to the gig. Call Tony on 021 449 4746 for info. You can use the number if you're a hot-shot bassist too!

LOU ON THE LOOSE

Birmingham singer, songwriter and performer, Lou Dalgliesh is on the road again with a new band and a new purposeful image. The band is an unusual and interesting amalgam of natural and high tech elements. It features a unique blend of acoustic guitar, natural sax and discretely, but effectively used sequencers. Meanwhile the new image reflects Lou's growing stature in the business. Her striking new publicity portfolio is the work of photographer Simon Fowler. Fowler is the man who received the royal summons to snap Queen



Lou Dalgliesh

for the 'Innuendo' album campaign and who is the cameraman chosen by such as Michael Hutchence, Betty Boo and Jason'n'Kylie.

Lou and her band can be caught nationwide this month at, Birmingham Poly (1st.), North Staffs Poly (8), Bath, Moles Club (12), Can-

terbury University (13), Wolverhampton Poly (22) and London, Powerhaus (26).

WHITNEY CHANGES

Because of the gung-ho antics of her own countrymen, soul chanteuse Whitney Houston has been forced to re-schedule her UK tour. With "concerns for the safety of the entire touring company the prevailing factor", her March and April NEC dates have been switched to August and September. Thus April 1st moves to August 27th, April 4 to Aug 28, April 5 to Aug 30, March 30 to Aug 31 and March 31 to Sept 1. Perhaps the confident announcement of these late summer dates suggests that Whitney's advisers know something that the US State Dept. seem not to!

Paul McCartney

Madonna

Michael Jackson

David Bowie

Status Quo

The Rolling Stones

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● Advertising typeset by
PIONEER TYPESETTERS LTD
Parkhall Crescent,
Castle Bromwich.

● Typeset and printed by
BAKER BOND
Brownhills, Walsall

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COMPETITIONS

WHYCLIFFE

★ Whycliffe, the rock 'n' soul sensation discovered by Nottingham's Submission label and now pacted to MCA is set to turn Birmingham's Institute into his own 'Magic Garden' (a non too subtle plug for his new 45 !) on Friday March 15th.

MCA have given us a clutch of highly prized laminates that will get ten readers and their guests in free of charge. The first five correct entries drawn will win one pair of laminates each.

Closing date for this competition is Tuesday March 12th.
Name Whycliffe's current single.

SMOKEY ROBINSON: WRITER & PERFORMER

★ Dino Entertainment have recently issued an excellent and intelligently compiled tribute to the man Bob Dylan honoured as, 'America's greatest living poet'.

'The Tracks Of My Tears, The Best Of Smokey Robinson, Writer and Performer' is an 18 track distillation of the man's astonishing career. It features not only performances by Smokey, solo and with the Miracles, but also the cream of his compositions interpreted by Marvin Gaye, The Temptations, The Four Tops and Mary Wells. An essential addition to any collection. Brum Beat has five CDs of the album to be won. The first five correct entries drawn after April 1st will win one copy each.

The Temptations had a hit with Smokey's 'The Way You Do The Things You Do', which Birmingham band revived the song recently?

INTERNATIONAL HOSTAGE RELEASE

★ FM/Revolver recently released an exceptionally good double album titled 'Everybody's Got To Learn Sometime' to raise money for the families of hostages, the hostages themselves, The International Red Cross and other relief agencies.

Many of the biggest names in rock contributed tracks to the enterprise including Simple Minds, Dire Straits, Peter Gabriel, Clannad and Chris Rea. A superb combination of good intent and excellent music.

Brum Beat has 5 double, twenty six track CDs to be won. The first five correct entries pulled after April 1st will win one copy each.

Name the Church of England envoy still held hostage.

MIKE OLDFIELD

★ Mike Oldfield has released his final album for Virgin Records, the label he launched in 1973 with the groundbreaking 'Tubular Bells'.

'Heaven's Open', the new album represents all that is good about Oldfield including a hallmark side-long work on side two. Brum Beat has three CD copies of 'Heaven's Open' (on which the side-long piece becomes simply a long bit, we suppose!) to be won. The first three correct entries opened on April 1st will win one copy each.

Name three of Oldfield's albums, excluding T. Bells

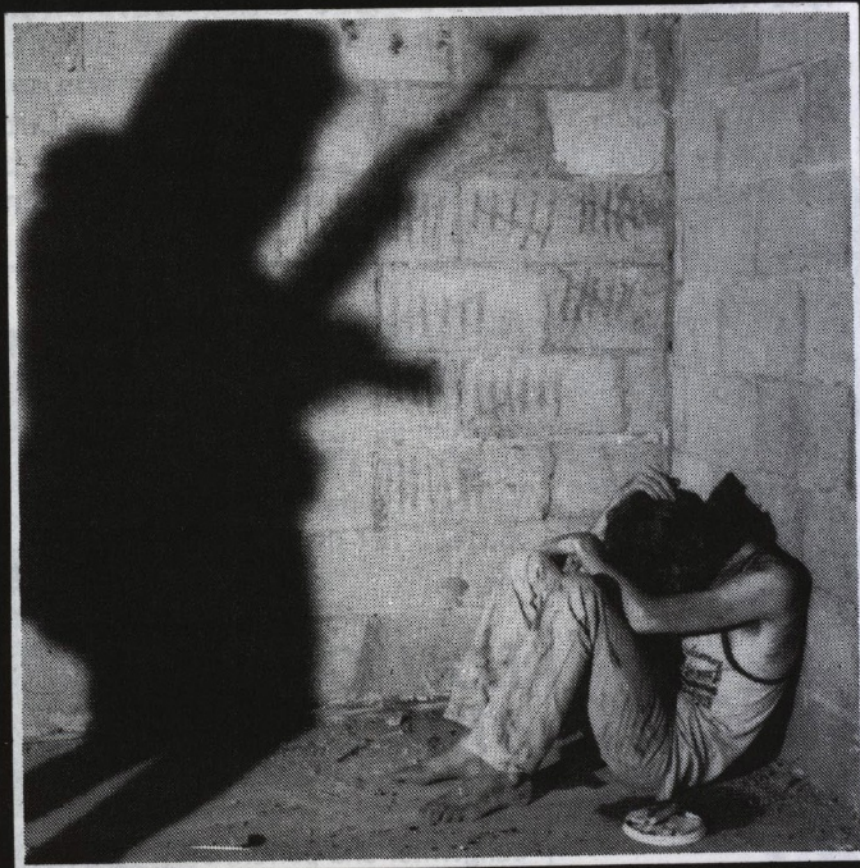
HOW TO ENTER

★ 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, Premier House, 43-48 New Street, Birmingham B2 4LJ.

INTERNATIONAL HOSTAGE

RELEASE



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Clannad, All About Eve and many more.

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Cassette: WKFM MC 155

BMG

BASHFUL NOT NEEDED

Vocalist Tony Mills has quit Brum rockers Shy. His departure, coinciding with the expiry of the band's MCA Records deal has left the band taking stock and searching for a new frontman.

Shy bassman Roy told Brum Beat that, "we'll probably change the name 'cos it won't be Shy without Tony. We're looking for

a pro, not a bathtub singer. The band is carrying on, there are deals being negotiated as we speak."

If you could front a band determined to make it and give at least 110% dedication call Roy on 021 420 3882.

CATAPULT AT FULL STRETCH

The Hare and Hounds based Catapult Club and its

parent organisation, Terayne Management are behind a flurry of vinyl releases in the coming weeks.

Firstly there's The Catapult Compilation, a local band showcase set to be issued through ATC Records. Full distribution is being finalised and the album should be in the region's better record stores before the end of April. Featured on the thirteen tracker are The Watchmen, The Liberty Thieves, Diabolo Go, The Last Association, Born

Blind, Good Question Derek and, on side two, Hector's House, Come, Kuomintang Party, Moon, Depth Charge, Kick and The Chemists.

Hot on the heels of that comes a pair of 45s from bands associated with Terayne. Born Blind's debut 12", a four track affair with 'Children's Song', 'Just Passing Through' filling side a and 'Wired'/'From Out Of Nowhere' side b.

The second single comes courtesy of The Liberty Thieves. Produced by Dave Morris and distributed by

The Cartel/Backs it offers 'Put It Away', 'The Smile On Your Face', 'Equal', 'Sadness' and 'I Regret Nothing'.

FAT AND FAST

Fat and Frantic, the unlikely cult band and friends of Nerds of '90, Trevor and Simon are back on the road. They bring their 'Fast Food Tour' to Wolverhampton's Wulfrun Hall on Friday May 3rd. Tickets are now on sale.

SPACE JUNK

KEVIN WILSON

The only Satellite -
TV column in the
West Midlands ...

With British Sky Broadcasting ruling the extraterrestrial airwaves (and with BSB's Movie Channel and Sports Channel moving to Astra in mid April - More details next issue) what can music lovers expect in the way of 'Sat'isfaction? On Marco Polo (BSB's sat) The Power Station is still pumping out the goods with high class DJs and VJs to help it along. Suggs, of Madness fame and manager of The Farm, hosts Suggs on Saturday, a

bally collection of the man's preferred tastes, presented in a slick 'n' quick fashion that MTV's Ray Cokes could do with copying! Weekday mornings see the Carmen Ejogo Video Show on screen. This is a smart and snappy hour long extravaganza of popvids and forgotvids. Weekends on The Power Station means live in concert footage with the good (Phil Collins, Tina Turner), the bad (Tina Turner, Phil Collins) and the up and coming (29 Palms, The Four Of Us) to name but a few. March should be even better but will it be a swansong for the channel?

Over on MTV, 'Bootleg MTV' makes its debut on March 1st (10pm). Introduced by US VJ Andrew Daddo, the show presents only live footage of big names past and present opening with Guns 'n' Roses at The Ritz in '88,

Bruce Springsteen performing an acoustic 'Born To Run' and Van Halen from their '86 tour. Future shows home in on The Police circa 'Synchronicity', Billy Joel from last year, Bon Jovi in Moscow in '89 and Led Zep in the UK as long ago as 1969.

Also on March 1st, The Cure feature in 'MTV Unplugged' (on air 1am, repeated 10pm March 4th). Master rapper MC Hammer is the subject of a Rockumentary (March 2, 4.30pm) whilst at the end of the month there's a Doors weekend (29th/30th/31st) with action shots, live footage, video clips, commentary and opinion on one of rock's most innovative and respected acts. Should be a winner! And don't forget that Lifestyle comes to life every night at midnight until 5am with the Satellite Jukebox, a dial-a-video service featur-

ing the best of new, best of old and best of the rest in music simply by phoning 0839 65 65 65 to make your selection. A right good friend for insomniacs everywhere. For the film buffs among you Sky Movies comes up trumps this month with premiers due for 'Dead Poets Society' with the Morkish Robin Williams as the quaintly believable English teacher and 'The Fly II', a twice as nasty as the original follow up that sees Eric Stoltz as the buzziness man who gets swatted in a particularly grizzly finale and Michelle Pfeiffer carries all before her in 'Married to The Mob', a clever gangster movie that zaps along at the pace of an Al Capone farewell greeting! By comparison The Movie Channel offers 'The Karate Kid III', a film that died a death in the first ten minutes of 'The Karate Kid I' and the

truly kitsch 'Child's Play' which is just sick, silly and not a little irksome.

Finally, a recommendation to watch live coverage of the closing stages of the European Basketball on The Sports Channel with the UK's Cadbury's Kingston battling for vital points against Limoges from France on the 6th. (7.30pm) and Leverkusen from Germany on the 21st. (6.30pm). If you happened to catch Kingston's truly spine tingling, breath holding, heart stopping last second win in over-time against Aris Salonika recently (a match played at Crystal Palace in front of 500 home fans and 2000 banner waving, coin throwing, loud chanting Greeks), you'll know that buying a dish simply to catch European Basketball is a must! Go get 'em Kingston! KEVIN WILSON

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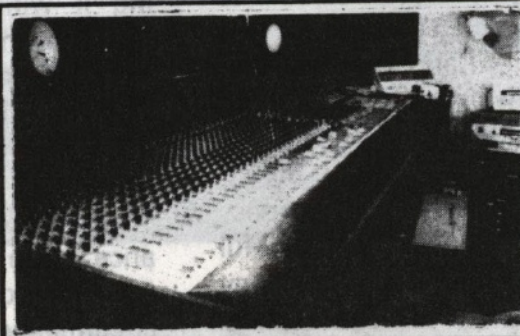
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ARTIST: ABC, Adrenalin MOD, Angie Gold, Bernie Albretch (New Order), Arthru Baker, The Blow Monkeys, Candy Flip, Cash Money, Chrome Molly, Derrick May, Electronic, Erik B and Rakim, Freeze, The Funky Worm, The Glitter Band, God Flesh, Imagination, Impedance, Jan Hammer, Kevin Saunderson (inner City), Kicking Back, MC's Logik, Roxanne Shante, Snowboy, T Coy, Unique 3, Wolfsbane, Whycliffe, 808 State, "some who have sworn us to secrecy?? (Getting mobbed in Nottm is no fun!).



SHORTS

● **DAVE JUSTE**, the metal monarch of the near legendary Edwards No8 turns DJ for the Xposure Club to be held every Friday in the old XLs premises to be found in Birmingham's Five Ways. Sharing the decks with Steve Webb, Juste promises the best in new and classic rock with great videos and lashings of sleeeeezze. Admission is three quid pre 10.30pm and four afterwards.

● **THE RHYTHM METHOD** hope not to get caught out during March when their show takes the stage at The Old Courthouse, Tipton (5), The Spring Cottage, West Bromwich (8), The Gate, Sutton Coldfield (20), The Paget Arms, Wolverhampton (28) and The Pitcher's Tavern, Stafford (30).

● "A SIZZLING stir fry of Southern States street jazz, gospel, cajun, country and New Orleans funk". That's The Roots Doctors according to The Observer. Their particular dish of gumbo can be tasted at the Lichfield Arts Centre on Sunday March 10. Local bluesers The Sleaze Brothers support. At

the same venue later in the month, Sunday 24, Quimantu, "the definitive South American group" will be panpiping up a storm.

● **GIVING** the CBSO the elbow for one night, big band nostalgist and, according to acquaintances of the editor, sex symbol, Harry Connick Jr. opens his UK tour in the opulence of Birmingham's show piece Symphony Hall. The new bobbysoxer's delight appears on Thursday May 16, tickets are now on sale. Call 021 782 8282.

● **YES**, the band that likes to...are together once more. With differences settled between the two factions, they combine into an eight man line up for a one off tour this summer. Jon Anderson, Bill Bruford, Steve Howe, Tony Kaye, Trevor Rabin, Chris Squire, Rick Wakeman and Alan White come together under the Yes banner at the NEC on June 25th. Tickets are now on sale at the usual outlets and there is a credit card hotline on 071 587 1414.

● **KIDDERMINSTER ROCKS** at The Market Tavern in March with Ginhouse(8), Kernal Clarke/Madison Blues Band(9), Progression/Lester's Skyline Radio Disco(15), Ambelian/Canaan Rose(16), Band Of Gypsies(22), Power/Fond Of Dogs(23), Megas(30) and kicking off the foolish month, Stomp(April 1).

● **BIGFOOT**, Telford's hard hitting, aggressive blend of jazz, metal, funk and blues hit the local trail over the next few weeks with gigs at Birmingham, Barrel Organ(March 10 and April 2), Dudley, JBs(April 8), Brierly Hill(14), Lichfield, Arts Centre(19) and Telford, The Duke(26).

● **SMACKERS** in Cannock is rapidly becoming the place to be seen in those wild parts! The Shining appear on March 6, hotly followed by Speaking Tongues (13) and Jump The Gun/Aftertouch (27). Regular happenings at Smackers include Rock Night on Mondays, Indie Night (Wednesday), Indie Disco (Thursday) and coming soon the ambient house night a.k.a. Fishtank and TV.

● **GERRY COLVIN** takes a break from recording the debut album with plans to take a live video (filmed at The Mean Fiddler?) over to Austin, Texas to shake up the natives and sort out a few yee hah gigs.

● **MECHANICAL HEARTS** have launched, via their management, Mechanartz Ltd, a sophisticated fan support service including travel, merchandise and concert promotion. Already available is a tasty looking T-shirt on sale at a sensible six and a half quid inc p&p. Call 0902 755888 or send used banknotes to PO Box 110, Wolverhampton WV6 9PS.



Bigfoot

LIVE REVIEWS

RAIN POETS/ MERCENARY TREE FREAKS

JBs
Dudley

Jbs is currently attracting every outfit with a remote affinity for 60s regression and Mancunian localities. The overall quality var-

ies from just about bearable to absolute garbage. Mercenary Tree Freaks and Rain Poets belong quite firmly in the latter category. Neither act has any songs, any charisma or any humour. By virtue of their infuriating smugness the MTFs have the painful edge. Not surprisingly they attempt to rip off The Wonder

Stuff's erratic pop, failing on all counts to encapsulate any melody or dynamism. The jokey banter is really straight faced, the end a relief. Rain Poets have a frontman who is the spitting image of The Monkees' Peter Tork. No doubt aware of this they make the mistake of covering "Last Train To Clarksville" removing any semblance of charm and replacing it with a ceaseless dirge. "We're from Yorkshire" the Tork-clone offers as an excuse for "Whitby Cliffs". They would have been well advised to stay their judging by the frenzy of indifference they whip up. Free entrance, cheap beer and a decent PA offer little compensation in such circumstances. PAUL REES

MANIC STREET PREACHERS

University
Birmingham

The Clash comparisons are inevitable. The songs, the stance and even the expletives are fifteen years too late. But who cares? This is a band with bollocks! The Preachers staggered around all eyeliner and attitude in a somewhat Pistolesque way and played a fast and furious set of three minute blasts of brilliance. Don't believe the hype however, the ideals are far too tired to be subversive; but still, on the strength of their material they deserve a decidedly more receptive audience than they received.

Mark Cook

VINYLISED

So after 11 years here we are at a new beginning. Same unreasonable deadlines though. Mind you, chances are the month on the cover and the month on the calendar may actually coincide now. So, kiddies, what little gems do we have for this new dawn?

● With a release schedule that rivals British Rail for punctuality, the **STEVE GIBBONS BAND** turn up with 'Maintaining Radio Silence', (Episode), recorded back in 1988. Although a local hero and big in Scandinavia, Gibbo's never got the recognition he's deserved and frankly it's unlikely this will change matters, pleasant though it is. The usual country flavoured easy rolling rock (nice pedal steel), a few ballads, some up 'n' pumping R&B boogie, couple of chooglies and a dash of reggae combine for an easy on the ear, mostly laid back collection that includes a cover of Brendan Croker's 'Don't Trade Me In'. No earthquakes, but a nice glow.

THE LIBERTY THIEVES launch both Catapult Records and their own vinyl career with an impressive four tracker that prompts words like floaty, wispy, folk-jazz, psychedelia and ethereal with evocations of early Everything But The Girl and The Sundays, but it's not limp-wristed and cheesecloth by any means. Clare Finglass has an interesting voice, the band can certainly play and, as 'The Smile On Your Face', 'Equal', 'I Regret Nothing' and 'Sadness' show, know how to knock a decent song together too. As might be expected the band also crop up on **THE CATAPULT CLUB** compilation album ('Smile...') which gathers together some of the best of the new local talent, the common link being guitars and gigs at the Club's Hare and Hounds base. This sort of thing is invariably a mixed bag of quality, usually ending up with a couple of minor nuggets among the slag. Surprise then that this is an 80% thumbs-up. I've already reviewed most of Side One in 1990's demos form, but to recap there's **THE WATCHMEN** ('Manchester'), **DIABOLO GO** (the renamed Hallelujah Trail with the wonderful 'Honey Girl'), **THE LAST ASSOCIATION** ('Feeling OK') and **BORN BLIND** ('The Drink Talking'), the exception being folksy pop-outfit **GOOD QUESTION DEREK** who keep the standard up with 'Time'. Over on Side Two things kick off with **HECTOR'S HOUSE**, long absent from my post-bag but if 'American Daydream' is any indication most welcome anytime they care to drop by. Ditto **THE KUOMINTANG PARTY** with a Bunnymenish 'The Candy Floss Killers'. **KICK** hark rather too emphatically to a cross between U2's 'With Or Without You' breathy drama and Joy Division's 'Atmosphere' on 'Rain', but I'm a sucker for that sort of big build anthem. Last cut comes in moody jazzy form from **THE CHEMISTS** with 'Cherish', okay but the vocal's rather too harsh, leaving **COME** ('Never Stop') and **MOON** ('Cheapside') as less persuasive to these ears and **DEPTH CHARGE**'s thrashy 'I'm Not Yours' as my token no goer. A strong collection, a brave venture and hopefully a showcase for some rather fine music.

BORN BLIND (currently seeking a new bassist with the departure of Rob Wakelin) have their own EP awaiting your acquisition, a 4 tracker featuring established favourites 'Children's Song', 'Just Passing Through', 'Wired' and 'From Out Of Nowhere'.

M I K E DAVIES

TAPE DECKED

After a lengthy absence from the music scene and a lot of time listening to the Big O, **JENNY JONES** (formerly of Mood Elevators, Flamingos and most latterly Hudson Giants) returns with a highly impressive two-tracker in the form of 'Wild, Wild Heaven' and 'Blue'. Rather than waste time waxing lyrical, just imagine Chris Isaak with a sex change. That good. **PHOENIX** (seemingly operating as a 3 piece with backing tapes at the moment) have been re-mixing and re-recording, the latest collection involving a new version of 'Looking For A Better Man', a new vocalled 'Timbebomb' and 'Tie Me Down' (re-worked from 'Big Wheel').

The Hendrix/Isley funky-rock still scorches the ears, though I'm increasingly thinking 'Silver Lady' bears more than a passing resemblance to 'Stairway to Heaven'. Also back in action is Rick's former partner Maggie with **KAHAL & KAHAL**. Planning an album and working in a Shropshire cottage, a three track acoustic demo sampler arrives that sets the saliva flowing. Her voice has rarely been better and the songs, moodily laid back, are excellent; 'Injecting Thunder' a slinky smokey blues, 'Dance With Me' a slight jazzy gospel-soul flavour with flamenco-ish guitar and the gorgeous, Buddy Holly flavours of 'Living On Love'.

Turn it up a bit now for **THE LOVELESS**, a solid driving bunch of guitar boys, well aware of a past that includes Richards, Reed and McGuinn, two

of whom get a namecheck on 'Chelsea Drug Store'. True archetypes they sing about fast bikes and fast women for 'Girl On A Motorcycle' (what, another Stones allusion?), crank up the revs and motor hard. And a sturdy version of 'Child Of The Moon' too.

Not too hard to figure the inspiration for Lichfield's **THE MADCAP LAUGHS** and, with an occasional slip, the 'Prunes and Prisms' tape keeps the ears interested with a nice art school line in lyrical wit, some inventive playing and a voice that reminds me (but not you because you've never heard of them) of American outfit Pop Art. Rather good. Also based in Lichfield, though from Pelsall and Burntwood, sextet **THE GREAT DIVIDE** are a definite modern pop band who have the ability to write songs ('Singular') you think you've heard a dozen times. Skip along and quirky, imagine a mix of Haircut 100, The Beautiful South and the late lamented Stump (especially on 'Yahoo') and you have a rather intriguing concoction. A rather clever band. **THE ANCESTRY** go from strength to strength and give good T-shirt, 'Absolution' being the latest four tracker to summon up their mix of Siouxsie and Goth. Joie Slater could still do with more colour in her vocals or explore more in Sugarcube areas, but the likes of 'Crusade' and 'Kieren' show they're adding extra muscle to their musical limbs. Former Last Association vocalist **SCOTT ROBERTSON** goes solo with a switch of direction towards ambient and dance for 'Mistakes', which also betrays an interest in the works of Mr Michael. An insidious little number that repays several listens. Second on the demo is a string (machine) enriched version of The Beach Boys' 'God Only Knows', a nice enough (if somewhat slow) baroque treatment, and sensitive reading, but, I have to say, rather pointless.



Jenny Jones

Mike Davies talks about growing pains with Tanita Tikaram.

A new haircut a new album, a new maturity. Tanita Tikaram is back to face the usual misguided press cynicisms about being moody, reserved and humourless, writing songs of sixth form grammar girl angst. Just to confound them the voice on the phone is bright, cheerful and bubbly, she sends up the received image on several occasions, and is quite open about the inspirations behind the new material. And humourless? Someone who has a song called 'Hot Pork Sandwiches'? "People think it's serious," she says amazedly. "How can you get romantic about a sandwich! Besides which, I'm vegetarian." The track features on her new album, her third following 'Ancient Heart' and 'The Sweet Keeper', which respectively took her to Numbers 3 and 2 in the charts. Titled 'Everybody's Angel', it's been said to show a new breadth of musical influence, expanding from the familiar Celtic and jazz colourings to embrace a touch of reggae and, most noticeably, gospel and soul, often conjuring up echoes of Al Green. In fact while the expression is new, the influence is old since Tikaram says this was the music with which she grew up, it's just that until now she didn't have the confidence to try and do it justice.

ELVIS' HIPPIE DAUGHTER

It's certainly a confident album, reflected in the fact that as opposed to the gap between the others, it's come around fairly quickly. It would probably have been here sooner (the songs were written by December '89) had time not been taken up with hugely successful tours to such unlikely lands as Turkey where, much to her surprise she's the most popular international artist. When she played there she was greeted by a shower of seat covers, apparently a good

sign, as opposed to having the seat itself thrown at you, and quite useful if you're into collecting soft furnishings. "They think I'm Elvis's daughter", she laughs, calling to mind another popular press dig.

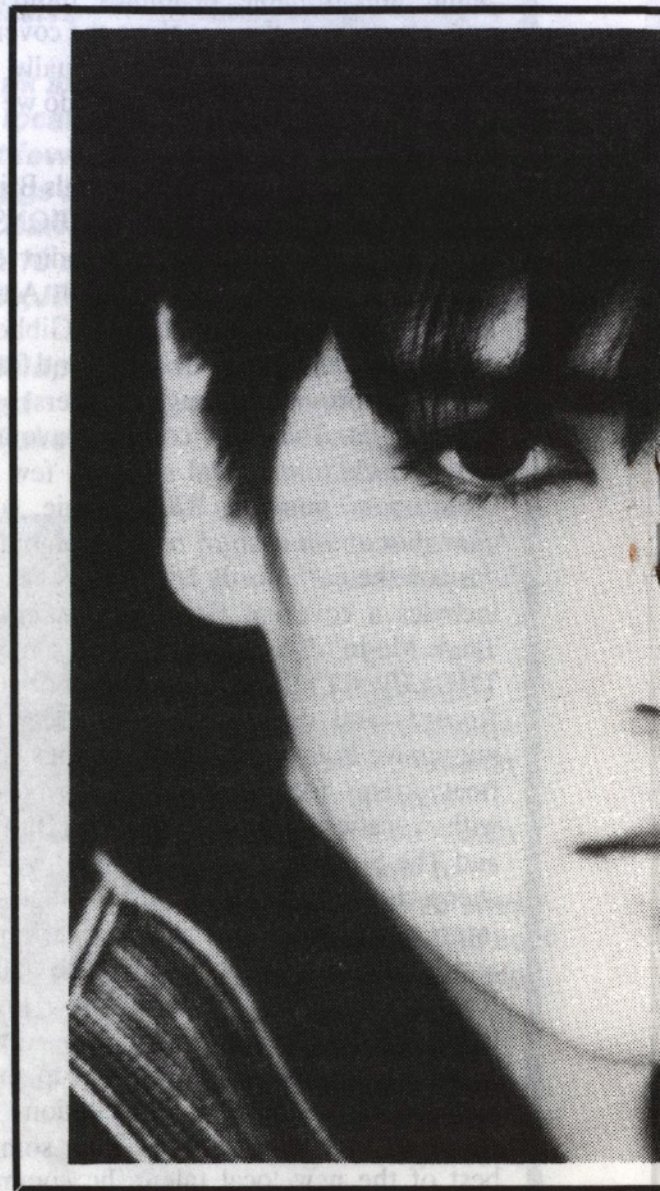
Another delay in the timetable was the need to find the right studio. Having written the material quickly she wanted to record with the same speed to capture that spirit. Eventually they settled on Bearsville, Woodstock, "because I'm a hippie. She laughs again to emphasise this is a joke. But even so confesses that the place had definite vibes going for it, allowing her and the musicians to approach the project in a concentrated but relaxed way. The mood certainly comes across, the album flowing with far less tension than 'Sweet Keeper'." I know this sounds wierd but it was done really innocently, like being a kid again. You felt you didn't care how it turned out because there was such a good feeling about doing it."

To prove she did care, Tikaram takes a co-production credit with regular knob twiddlers and musicians Peter Van Hooke and Rod Argent. "I had definite ideas on how I wanted to record and sound. I'd built up a good relationship from working with the musicians before and that meant I now had the confidence to take that responsibility. I've never been as definite about what I wanted as on this album. I feel that the modern recording approach, layering on the tracks is clinical. The older records have a spirit to them that's hard to achieve with modern techniques even if the technology is better. It was recorded virtually as live. There's something about four musicians in a room, playing off each other, that gives a different feeling."

SPIRITUAL

Not everything went down as was. Although thrilled to be able to have one of her idols, Jennifer Warnes (who'd offered

The Angelic C



Tanita Tikaram

her services following an LA gig a year or so back), provide harmony on two tracks ('Only The Ones We Love' and the raunchy 'Mud In Any Water'), the two of them didn't share the same studio. The results, Tikaram

TROUBLE NO MORE (or Any)

Arthus Wood caught up with the Texan singer - songwriter Darden Smith when he hit Birmingham recently.

AW: Tell me about your early life...

DS: I was born in Brenham, Texas in 1962 and we lived on some land which my family owned. That was 'til I was about thirteen or fourteen years old. Then we moved to just outside Houston. I came from a totally non musical family. Neither of my parents were musical, my brother played music a little bit though not much. I distinctly remember sitting in the choir loft at church and hearing the pipe organ, that really moved me, I would have been about four or five years old and that's probably the first musical experience I ever had. After that I just got into music and started writing songs. I also started playing guitar. Once I started writing songs, I just wanted to continue doing it. I wrote my first song when I was about ten years old. Probably wrote one song a year for a couple of years. I was fourteen when I really started writing regularly. Pretty stupid songs, you know!

By the time I was sixteen or seventeen I was regularly playing gigs. The earliest of my songs which I still perform is 'Two Dollar Novel', I was nineteen when I wrote it.

When you cut your first album ('Native Soil' for local Texas indie label Redi-Mix) you wanted to record something "which would stand up for a long time". Do you think you succeeded?

I think it's a good record. I don't listen to it much, but when I hear it on the

radio I think it still stands up. I think that ten years from now it'll still sound fresh. It's very hard to find that record as it's out of print now, though I am going to try and get it put out again.

Presumably that record attracted the attention of Epic and resulted in a deal

Well, that album allowed me to travel and play around the country. I was able to get gigs and a lot of press and stuff. That in turn attracted a publishing company and subsequently a recording deal. It all happened via a series of small steps.

You visited the UK a couple of years back as part of the 'Route 89' country music campaign. What do you feel about categorisation?

People have to hook it on something. It doesn't matter to me what they call it. What I'm doing now I call acoustic rock. There are folk influences on it, but that's just my music. It's just what I do.

How did the songwriting partnership with The Bible's Boo Hewerdine come about?

I was introduced to him by his A&R manager. I had met him in Texas and he called me up and asked if I'd be interested in coming over to write with Boo Hewerdine. I didn't know who Boo was, I'd never heard of The Bible. I realised that it meant I would get a trip to London for a couple of weeks

so I said I just wanted to do a week off

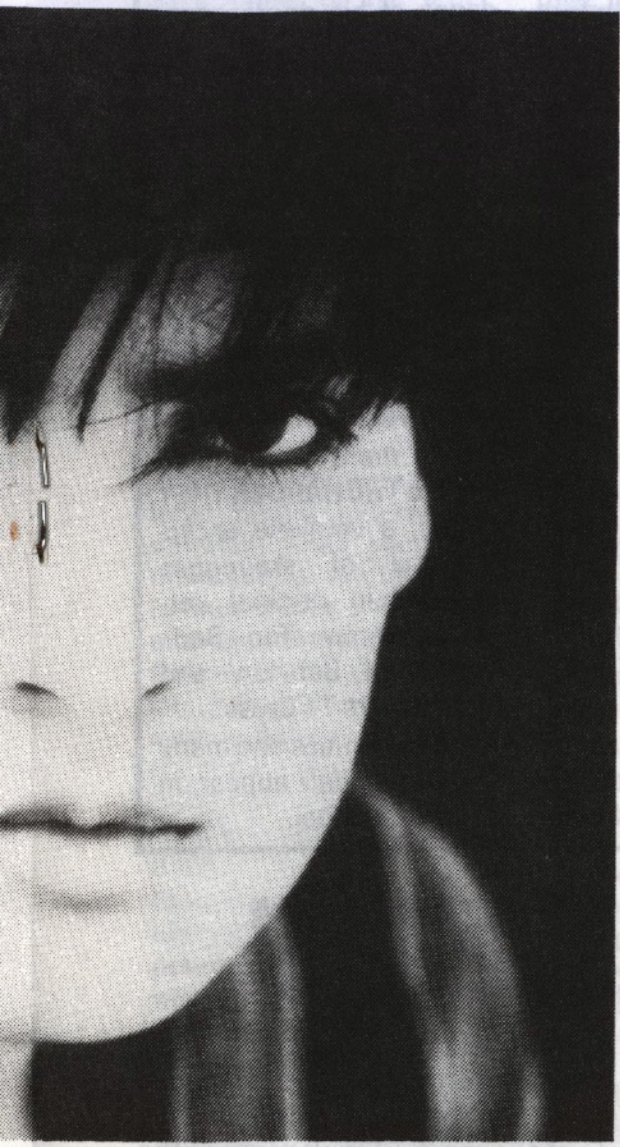
'Long Way with Boo

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DS: Def influence of the stu House. I that, that think, He really bri Incidenta Epic. It's evidence Darden S

Conversation



a Tikaram

confesses, surprised her. "She has her own way of doing things and it was a case of wait and see what she came up with. But if you listen to her voice track alone, she sings so precisely it doesn't

make any sense without mine. The funny thing is she obviously sits down and thinks carefully about her parts but you can't tell that by listening to her voice. She's quite methodical which I find wierd given she sounds so spiritual.

Spirituality (as distinct from religion) is a word that applies quite neatly to much of the new album's mood, most notably on the closing track 'Going Home' which evokes the simple style and musical influences of The Cowboy Junkies (Tikaram admits to being devoted to 'Sun Comes Up It's Tuesday Morning'). The track was deliberately the last recorded, going down as virtually first take and providing a moving backdrop to the early morning farewells. It also pinpoints the major theme on the album, that need to get back to a roots base, a family and friends, to have somewhere secure where you know you belong. No accident then that 'Only The Ones We Love' is the opening track.

"I used to want to be by myself all the time but last year I made a deliberate effort to spend time with my family and it's a direct result of that. I'd rented an apartment in Paris to try and write a song for Mark Isham's album (the eventual result being 'I Will Never Know' which she also sings along with a version of 'Blue Moon' - though not as Wicked Witch of the West-like as the demo apparently) and I heard people laughing outside and it just hit me, what on earth was I doing there by myself among people who don't know me. The only people who can make sense of my life are those I care about. You need to be reflected in the people who love you and whom you love. It's becoming more obvious that my roots are not in any country but in my family and friends. 'This Stranger' (from where the title line comes) is about that too. It's a 'there's a place for us song', but as I get older I find rather than

being some sort of ideal that place already exists in the people who care about you.

"I think more and more about why I do things. I think this album is very much about finding faith in people and looking for the good in things. I often mention the sun on it (especially on 'Sunface') which is a symbol of warmth and caring. It's been a very interesting year. I had to turn it around for myself. I found I could no longer be somebody so isolated. When you're younger you're drawn to that but then you begin to wonder why you push people away all the time. What's the point. You do need a place for solitude and seriousness, but what's more important is that I keep people who know me around and that I find the good and not the dark in things".

But where next? Whatever happens with the new maturity, it's unlikely that album four will follow the same pattern. "I don't feel I could do an album again like this. It became apparent making the 'Sweet Keeper' that I dislike going into situations I'm already familiar with. There's no thrill in it. I now have to find a fresh way of recording the songs. Also those I'm writing now have a far more direct, simple language rather than the 'emotional' style I've used previously. "There's other things I'd like to do too. Collaborate with someone or write more for others perhaps. Or a film soundtrack (Wim Wenders naturally). And there's always this thing about writing a book or poetry because a part of you says you're not a proper writer if you don't. It's a different discipline and it allows different aspects of you to come out. I'm just not sure my writing style isn't too obscure.

"My brother and I always talk about making a film too. If you're in a position to be able to do these things you should. That sounds awful, that you're just doing it for fun. But I think perhaps fun is a good reason for doing something."

Anything for Billy)

said, yes I'd love to do it! It was pretty selfish from my point of view, I wanted the vacation. The plan was to work for a week, then have a week off. It turned out to be one of the best things I've ever done.

g Way Home' on the new album, 'Trouble No More', was co-written with Boo. Is the partnership an ongoing one?

Yeah. There's songs that we've written that'll probably show up on the next album. I play one in my live show, a tune called 'Love Left Town', which will probably be cut next time. While I'm over here in England I'm probably going to write with Boo. The Boo Hewerdine/Darden Smith collaboration will continue, probably forever.

What other songwriters have influenced you?

Definitely Bob Dylan. Paul Simon. Early in my career I was influenced by Guy Clark though not so much anymore. And then some of the stuff that Chrissie Hynde has written for The Pretenders. Crowded House. I think that Boo has had an influence on me you know, people like that I have come into contact with. You hear a good song and you think, Hey that's pretty neat. Some of Springsteen's tracks I think are really brilliant. That sort of covers most bases.

Originally this piece's subtitle is in honour of Darden's press officer at the time. It's the title of a book by Texan writer Larry McMurtry. More evidence that Texan writers are a breed apart! Darden Smith is reviewed in concert in the Live section.



Darden Smith-photo by Arthur Wood

Let's kick off with what could prove to be the CD bargain of '91. From **CHARLY** it's the **KING/FEDERAL SAMPLER** a.k. a **GOOD ROCKIN' IN HERE**, twenty cuts from the legendary labels sounding better than you'd dare expect thanks to some excellent digital remastering. Featured are such giants as Albert King, Freddie King, Memphis Slim, Hank Ballard and Tiny Bradshaw. What's more the tracks offered are not cast offs but bona classics. An absolute must for anyone interested in the genealogy of pop music and you get one penny change from three quid! Obvious pupils of the King/Federal school are Kidderminster's **BIG TOWN PLAYBOYS** whose **NOW APPEARING** album (**BLUE HORIZON**) has just gone silver. Sadly not in sales

but certainly in format. The world is probably wearying of KINK's compilations but **FAB FORTY: THE SINGLES COLLECTION 1964-1970 (DECAL)** collects, in a double set both A&B sides of the band's first twenty singles; almost. For some reason 'Dedicated Follower Of Fashion' is missing, not through lack of space either. That lack aside, it remains a prime cut of solid red pop meat. And speaking of perfect pop, Polydor now have ABBA's album catalogue on CD at mid price. **THE SINGLES-THE FIRST TEN YEARS**, a hit bound double at eleven quid or so, being essential. Even further back it was **THE EVERLY BROTHERS** who held a country candle for rock 'n' pop. **SONGS OUR DADDY TAUGHT US (ACE)** explores their roots in applying their peachy



Kentucky harmonies to the European folk tradition. Arguably the spawning of country music illustrated on one disc.

Now Island Records seem determined to financially embarrass CD buying reggae fans. Their Reggae

Refreshers mid price reissues, sees a flood of excellently remastered gems simply demanding purchase!

Birmingham's **STEEL PULSE** head the list with their dynamite debut **HANDSWORTH REVOLUTION** and its better than remembered follow up **TRIBUTE TO THE MARTYRS**. The man Winston Rodney, known universally as **BURNING SPEAR** weighs in with two discs **MARCUS GARVEY** and **MAN IN THE HILLS**. The former is essential, a classic late seventies rallying cry made more desirable by the addition of its dub, **GARVEY'S GHOST** onto the same disc. A decade later and **BLACK UHURU**, driven by Sly and Robbie's turbo charged rhythms were changing the sound of reggae. **RED** and **SIN-SEMILLA** were the bluep-

rints for the sound of eighties reggae.

If you need your reggae enigmatic, look no further than **LEE 'SCRATCH' PERRY**. There's an abundance of his dry, resonant dubwise production on **REGGAE GREATS** and **SUPER APE**. Both contain a plethora of classic cuts.

Perry's also in the producer's chair for **MAX ROMEO's WAR IN A BABYLON**. A set of Rastafarian inclination at odds with Max's 'Wet Dream' rude boy image.

Finally there's the soundtrack to **THE HARDER THEY COME**, a veritable encyclopaedia of ska/reggae including, in original versions, 'Johnny Too Bad', 'Rivers Of Babylon' and 'Many Rivers To Cross'.

All of these titles and many more essentials appear on the Mango label.

THE VOLUME DEALERS

Loud mouth-piece Chris McLaughlin Overpowers Paul Rees

The press are infatuated with Loud.

According to many rock journos the 90s are theirs for the taking. A debut album, 'D-Generation' that attracted reams of concentrated hyperbole, tours with Andy Taylor and Killing Joke, an event in the making no less.

For some reason I missed the second coming. December's Brum Beat bore witness to the fact; "...almost inconceivably average" were the words. A movement mourned.

Two months on 'D-Generation' may have slipped from sight but Loud's songwriter/spokesman, Chris McLaughlin

remains unshaken. An anomaly in the rock field, McLaughlin is an intelligent, witty raconteur though his tales are meant more for the converted than my thus far indifferent ears.

NEW MODEL JOKE

McLaughlin's tenure with New Model Army and Jaz (Killing Joke) Coleman's production of 'D-Generation' have resulted in parallels being drawn between Loud and the two established cults. How do they react to such comparisons?

Chris: "The press do overplay the connection. At least the fact that I was in NMA has given Loud a reference point and Jaz did produce the album so I suppose Killing Joke have

had an influence. I know that we will be a band in our own right though"

After the remarkable amount of praise are you concerned about the backlash?

"I don't wish to be offensive but I really don't care what the press says. I'd rather get a good write up from the Guardian than from any pop magazine. In any case, the very good and the very bad reviews I take with a pinch of salt. As long as there are no average reviews I don't mind"

NOT AN HM BAND

Thus far a lot of the band's support has come from Heavy Metal mags. "Yeah, I suppose that is surprising," admits McLaughlin, "I thought we would have been more of a Melody Maker type band judging by some of our lyrics. There are no complaints though, they've been great to us. Anyway, most of the reviews concede that we're more offbeat than the usual metal bands. We share an attitude with metal but we're just a rock band. A good rock band"

Despite Loud being overtly British they have designs on Stateside success. They are though, aware of the pitfalls.

"Well we're going over there to play some showcases in the major cities like New York, Los Angeles and Chicago to see what the business and punter vibe is like. The thing is

that it takes so much planning and money to set foot in the States and the sheer size makes it the most difficult place in the world to break. If we do have to support, I'd prefer it to be a British band and crew"

Shunning any pretence of diplomacy he qualifies his preference; "The Americans are such bastards" (But their money's OK, eh Chris? Ed.)

I DON'T WANT MY MTV

Indeed it's hard to imagine Loud embracing the marketing approach favoured by MTV concious America.

"The people that enjoy that kind of thing are thick. In fact all Americans are stupid, they don't really know or appreciate anything" roars Chris before starting on the UK's rock attitudes, "I ignore rock 'n' roll conventions, I go out of my way to ignore them. I would like to do Top Of The Pops, it's a good show, an institution. I remember watching it just to see Slade at number one. It's part of my life. I think that the music biz has to turn itself around. Music should be a moving, emotive art form"

With headlining tours in the planning stages and album two's studio time booked, hopes and dreams for the future remain stoked. The next album will be better than the debut, it has to be, otherwise there'd be no point continuing"



LOUD

ARTHUR WOOD

Not too long ago, a friend of mine showed me a letter from an acquaintance of his who lives in Nashville. The main thrust of the letter revolved around the fact that, although Nashville is supposedly a music town, many folk there were only interested in hustling the next big deal. Personal self interest, by any means available. In that Tennessee town, the soul and spirit of musical communion and communication had been consistently kicked out the door by that personage, the almighty dollar. On the final page, in increasingly large capital letters, was scrawled, some people in this town just don't get it!

In fact it was a universal message whether you live in Brisbane, Bangkok, Birmingham or Boston. What's more it doesn't really matter if it's music or just the daily task of having to breathe. Could be anything really.

However, one thing is definitely not on. The act of perpetrating the con. That is what's hardest to take. Particularly when there's no

substance to back up those exaggerated claims. Now it's your opportunity to figure the next bit out.

Some people in this town just don't get it

With her newly shorn locks and black polo neck pullover image, Tanita Shocked Tikaram pays a visit to the Hurst Street Hippodrome to promote her third, latest (and possibly vinyl?) WEA album "Everybody's Angel" on Sunday 10th March. She was acclaimed in the January 26th issue of N.M.E. (I getta namecheck, you getta namecheck) as the newly crowned Queen of Hock N' Roll. The inclusion of her "Hot Pork Sandwiches" ditty on the aforementioned set, lending most weight to that nom de plume. This lady's work continues to leave me cold. No, not cold turkey silly! On second thoughts maybe it is aural cold turkey. Her current four track single leads with the vacuous "Only The

Ones We Love". Just proves that the 'let's heap up more hype and don't spare the full page expense' principle is a religious belief in some quarters. My friendly advice, on the strength of the instrumental mix of 'Cathedral Song' from the current single is that there could be a nook for Tanita in the scheme of things, somewhere around Windham Hill. Music for the mall of mind.

Paul Brady was in town a couple of Mondays ago to promote his forthcoming album for the Fontana label, 'Trick Or Treat'. His first release following a three year lay-off was recorded Stateside and produced by Gary Katz of Steely Dan fame. Paul has a Birmingham Town Hall date for April 13th and if the five song live solo set he per-

formed whilst here was a fitting foretaste of his album it should be worth your while catching him at the top of New Street. Meanwhile 'Nobody Knows', the first single to be drawn from 'Trick Or Treat', is available at your friendly local disc emporium. The album follows on March 25th.

Music for the mall of mind

The current state of play as far as rootsy stuff is concerned, locally and live, is somewhere on an audible level of approximately adequate. Last month I mentioned that honky tonk country artist, Robert Joe Vandygriff was scheduled for another UK tour kicking off in March. Seems that RJ's whole schedule has now been wiped out. Will we ever bridge the gulf which is an ocean in reality? That apart, March events currently read something like: Fri 1st Jon Strong (Breedon), Blackeyed Bidy (Woodman, Kingswinford), Vin Garbutt (Bell and Pump, Old Philipians, Edgbaston), Singers Night (Old Market Tavern, Moseley Street). Sat 2nd Steve Gibbons (Breedon), King Pleasure and the Biscuit Boys (Red Lion, Kings Heath). Thurs 7th Wild Turkey (Breedon). Fri 8th Singers Night (Woodman), Kelly's Heroes (Bell and Pump), Dave Swarbrick (Old Market Tavern) ticket

only, ring 021 331 4146 for details. Sat 9th Curtis Little (Breedon), Isaac Guillory (Red Lion). Wed 13th Chris Daniels and the Kings (Breedon) check out their Provogue album 'That's What I Like About The South'. Thurs 14th Tony McPhee (Breedon) on this occasion a solo set. Fri 15th Allan Taylor (Bell and Pump), Dick Gaughan (Woodman) despite the date quoted in the Jan/Feb issue of Folk Roots this is the correct one, Singers Night (Old Market Tavern). Sat 16th E Numbers (Breedon), yes, the one and former Strangler gone solo. Thurs 21st Bare Wires (Breedon). Fri 22nd DTs (Breedon), Dempsey's Lot (Bell & Pump), Artisan (Woodman), Strawhead (Old Market Tavern). Sat 23rd Mike Elliott (Red Lion). Fri 29th Steve Gibbons (Breedon), Nick Fenwick (Bell and Pump), Singers Night (Old Market Tavern). Sun 31st U.P. Wilson (Breedon).

Watch out for the return of the Lubbock born bluesman, Jesse Taylor in April. He plays the Breedon on Saturday 13th.

And finally, a whisper from an insider. Not only are the old Joe Ely albums being remixed and re-issued by MCA but there is a plan afoot to go on the road to promote the releases with as many original band members as possible in tow. Do you believe it?

Stop Press: David Grissom is leaving the Joe Ely Band. The Indiana born axeman is about to team up with another muso from the same area of his home state. John Cougar Mellencamp is the name you need. 'Til the next time.....



Paul Brady



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CONTACT TERRY YATES

NEMESIS
The Day Of
Retribution
COURT RAVEN
Storm Warning
DYOXEN
First Among Equals
(all active records)

Three metal workers specialising in the grunge rock of St. Iommi. Count Raven come closest to the early Sabs doom atmosphere whilst Nemesis eventually metamorphosed into Candlemass tagging two 'mass demos onto this long lost set to prove it.

Dyoxen, however spread their poison at a much sprightlier gait.

Steve Morris

VARIOUS
Circle Dance

(Hokey Cokey)

Been out a while but still worth mentioning this compilation in aid of disabled children. It brings together some of roots top names with material either recorded specifically for the project or in the shape of previously unreleased tracks or rare demos. Names include the likes of Swan Arcade, Gregson and Collister, June Tabor and Sandy Denny, but the particularly essential inclusions are otherwise unavailable live versions of Iain Matthews "Reno Nevada" and the Cropredy Fairport/All About Eve collaboration on "Who Knows Where the Time Goes", John B. Spencer's "May This House Be Blessed" from his unissued album, a 1985 Linda Thompson demo for "Her Father Was a Sailor" and ex-hubby Richard with bassist Danny Thompson on "The May Day Psalter". Sounds good and does good.

Mike Davies

HELEN O' HARA
Romanza
(New World)

Small print addicts will know Helen from the classic Dexys "Come On Eileen" period and latterly Tanita Tikaram's albums and tours.

RECORDED
 DELIVERY



Helen O'Hara

Neither set of credentials can, however prepare you for this solo debut.

it is a completely instrumental set that cynics will no doubt deride as 'new age'. It's not. What it is an excellent blend of proud cinematic themes that suggest a successful movie scoring career to come and pastel-mist celtic shades that recall Alan Stivell's classic "Renaissance Of The Celtic Harp" album.

Helping Helen paint the eight delicious soundscapes are such luminaries as session keyboard king Nicky Hopkins, ex Bowie sticksman Woody Woodmansey, pedal steel star B. J. Cole and several exquisite contributions from Incredible String Band man Robin Williamson. Finding this CD/cassette release may not be easy though one listen will make you more than glad you persevered.

Steve Morris

ADAM AND
THE ANTS
Peel Sessions

(Strange Fruit)

A pre teen mania Adam featuring future Bow Wow Wows Dave Barbarossa and Matthew Ashman in a collection of spiky raunch far removed from the later Prince Charming teen trivia. In many ways this is a far more substantial offering.

Steve Morris

VARIOUS ARTISTS
The Wild Wild World Of
Mondo Movie Music
(Big Beat/Ace)

"This CD includes such audio delights as Rockin' Ron Haydock, Arch Hall Jr. and one of the best "bird" songs ever recorded by Rocky Roberts and the Airedales. To make this record even more pleasing we have tucked between the tracks booming voices extolling the virtues of forthcoming attractions. You will be warned of the dangers you may encounter if unlucky enough to meet "homicidal maniacs"; hear about women who indulge in unnatural sexual practices, and learn about the "twilight people".

This time believe the sleeve!

Wierd, wierd. wierd.

Steve Morris

DEAN FRASER
Moonlight

(Greensleeves)

Dean Fraser is *the* saxman of reggae having given alto appeal to the likes of Marley, Brown and many, many more. Now, on this solo offering he gets the chance to mix the rootsy reggae sound with the jazz tinged soul that he learned from his mentor David Sanborn. The single, 'Moonlight' is a lush, silky smoocher of a track that could be the theme for any romantic movie. 'Copacabana' fuses reggae and salsa whilst his interpretation of Dave Brubeck's 'Take Five' is as fine as I've heard in eons.

A nice surprise of an album; don't let it pass you by.

Kevin Wilson

LA MIX
Coming back for more
(A&M)

No, not The LA's....LA Mix. You know....90's hipsters, all fun, froth and frantic fanaticism. A bit KLF in places, a touch of EMF in energy value and street dreams of urbanite funksters everywhere. The mix is LAudible.

Kevin Wilson

MONKEY MESSIAH
Loooose Fish

(Loca Lola Records)

What we seem to have here is a band of undoubted talent and a not insignificant amount of imagination clinging to the dance raft.

Led by Adey's inventive, distinctive vocals the Messiahs lock into a seen it, heard it, danced it groove that attracts only by virtue of a quality performance and not, as it should, by means of a strong song or any sense of punch.

Monkey Messiah



LOOOOSE FISH

However over on side two, 'You'll Be Sorry' reveals hidden assets. An acoustic floater builds into a potent AOR mood with Adey's vocal counterpointed by a distant weaving guitar. All this track needs is a killer production to snap it into winning focus.

Monkey Messiah have the potential, they're obviously clued up to the game they are playing, singer Lorraine transforming into the more energetic sounding Adey and having their business handled by Shark Management(!) but sadly the bite is lacking. A solid producer and better songs are needed. And an avoidance of the dance trap, there is too much talent here to squander in that area.

Steve Morris

BOB MARLEY AND
THE WAILERS

Talkin' Blues
(Tuff Gong)

Combining a collection of live in the studio performances from the Wailers 1973 US tour (when headlining Sly and the Family Stone bounced them after being unable to follow them on the tour's early dates!) with unreleased studio cuts and a roof raising 'I Shot The Sheriff', captured the night before the 'Live At The Lyceum' album was recorded. That track, the closer, is seven

minutes of red hot heaven, the perfect explanation of Marley and the Wailers sinuous, slinky, sensual rhythm system.

The US radio live cuts catch the Wailers still with Peter Tosh in the line up and playing with a loose limbed precision and spaciness that makes the studio versions of the songs sound busy. 'Talkin' Blues' is not a cash in but an essential addition to the Marley catalogue and a sad reminder of how reggae has floundered without his hand at the helm.

Steve Morris

DONOVAN
In Concert

(BGO)

Thanks to the Happy Mondays Donovan is again a man in vogue and this nifty offering from 1968 catches him singing adoringly silly songs to men in loon pants and girls with painted breasts. Oh happy daze.

'Mellow Yellow' is the best known cut followed by the very silly 'The Is A Mountain' which wins my award for lyric of the decade (just listen to it, OK) The rest are mostly love songs ('Celeste'), songs of love ('Guinevere'), love nature songs ('Isle Of Islay'). As a celebration of 1968 it's a classic. To 1991 it's about as relevant as 'Morning Has Broken' is to Cat Stevens.

Kevin Wilson

VARIOUS ARTISTS
Heaven & Hell Vol 2/
Through The Looking
Glass 1966

(Imaginary)

Two more tribute compilations, one to the legendary Velvet Underground the other an eclectic pick'n'mix supposedly representing the year's diversity. The Velvets score higher marks, not least because the material itself is so consistently top grade, with gold medals in particular due to The Mock Turtles loving version of 'Pale Blue Eyes', The Reegs's mostly instrumental mindtrip though 'All Tomorrow's Parties' and Bill Nelson's amusing 'Lonesome Cowboy Bill'. Mind you nothing here's a patch on the Red

Shoes' passionate heart-tearing 'Femme Fatale'. The 1966 set on the other hand, murders The Mamas (sic) & Papas 'Monday Monday', removes all emotion from Scott Walker's 'Montague Terrace' and lumbers through 'Eleanor Rigby'. The guilty parties shall remain nameless. Only saving grace is Ride's 'Eight Miles High', but it's not worth an album.

MIKE DAVIES

VARIOUS ARTISTS The Wheel Compilation (Ruff 'n' Ready)

A Walsall Showcase by any other name, and a fine idea too. Compiled by Bliss: The Pocket Opera's bassman, Dee it seeks to represent the amazing variety of music within the borough, and succeeds. Not that all of the participants are major league contenders, from it but the fact that they've seen the vinyl light of day should give them and others operating in that area a warm blast of encouragement. Sakki get things under way with a funky commercial bhangra that's quickly followed by the lifeless rap bragging and hopeless sexism of *Audio Kings* who seem to feel that referring to women as 'bitches' increases their machoism. *Bo Peep And Her Exploding Sheep* are a minor revelation. Live they were awful when I last saw them, on record a biting wah wah guitar saves them from a limp production.

Stationary Dance are techno shop boys and as drab as their Pet Shop heroes.

Pointy Finger reveal a pop-Brechtian approach whilst the *Walsall Youth Jazz Band* do justice to their Chick Corea sourced material. *Conspiracy* top their bubbly soul dance with good, promising vocals and bring to mind Simply, er, pink! *Sue Nichols* specialises in pop with big production values and *Catherine Sky* attempt, a mite late to board Spandu Ballet's bandwagon. The album snarls to an end with a trio of spiky-guitar post punk attacks. *The Fauves* have a rich, interestingly structured fuzz tone approach whilst *Lost Souls* race through a skiffle thrash. *The Moneygods* close proceedings with a slice of their tongue in someone else's cheek nouveau pop that has already won them friends in low places.

A mixed bag then, as might be expected in a project of this kind. Full marks though for pulling it off.

Steve Morris

KALEIDOSCOPE White Faced Lady (Kaleidoscope)

Back in '67, Kaleidoscope were one of the great white British progressive hopes, a fusion of pop, rock, folk and poetry. They produced two great, ignored albums, mutated into Fairfield Par-

lour recorded another brilliant folk-pop album, two superb singles ('Bordeaux Rose'/'Just Another Day') and split up. They also made this hugely ambitious pre-Raphaelite conceptual (discovery, rise, fall and death of a film starlet) double album complete with lavish orchestral passages. Now, 22 years after the record company refused to release it, it's finally out on the reformed band's own label.

Complex, nostalgic, melancholic, poetic, it's a masterpiece and hopefully heralds the awakening to one of British music's best kept secrets.

MIKE DAVIES

BACHDENKEL Lemmings/Stalingrad (World Wide Records[CD])

Launched in Birmingham, 1968 and hailed in *Rolling Stone* the following year as Britain's greatest unknown group, Bachdenkel subsequently relocated to France and became hip enigmas (the British thought they were German). What they played was an inventive, complex and articulate brand of acoustic biased progressive art-rock that embraced folk, rock and classical influences; a sort of cross between Genesis and the Moody Blues. 'Lemmings' appeared in 1970, 'Stalingrad' (funded by subscriptions) in 1975, yet much still sounds remarkably fresh. The latter release also contains bonus live cuts and much sought after unissued singles, including the Focus-like folk fusion, instrumental 'Sirocco'. The Bachdenkel revival starts here.

MIKE DAVIES

VARIOUS Where The Pyramid Meets The Eye (Sire)

A tribute to acid casualty rocker and general voodooed head case Roky Erickson, former 13th Floor Elevator and seminal force

RECORDED
DELIVERED

in acid trip psychedelic rock more honoured in legend than success. An electric assembly it is too, opening with ZZ Top growling their boogie way through 'Reverberation' and closing with Jesus and Mary Chain's moody shadows version of the same song. In between you get indie guitar dance boys Primal Scream, avant-garde experimentalists Bongwater, former Television man Richard Lloyd, some heady swamp from Sister Double Happiness and falsetto/bass soul from Chris and Tabby Thomas. No dodgy tracks here and some particularly interesting interpretations, but when the laser hits the stand-outs have to be 'She Lives In A Time Of Her Own' by the psychedelia-garage of Judybats, John Wesley Harding's kickass 'If You Have Ghosts', Julian Cope with 'I Have Always Been Here Before', T Bone Burnett's plaintive Hollyish acoustic 'Nothing In Return' and, naturally, REM's 'I Walked With A Zombie'. The only question is, how come nobody did 'Don't Shake Me Lucifer'?

MIKE DAVIES

PETE ATKIN Touch Has A Memory - The Clive James/Pete Atkin Songbook '67-'74

(RCA)

Yup, Clive James the balding pontif of the cathode ray was once a rock contender, lyrics division.

Pete Atkin was the Elton John to his Bernie Taupin except they operated in the grey end of folk. A singer songwriter in two parts as opposed to the usual one.

What's more they were as unusual then as the idea seems now. James as you might expect had a way with words, his lyrics are

exquisitely crafted, diamond honed and tightly packed with ideas, images and challenge.

Atkin's musical settings were fine too though they never quite rose to the occasion James had set. Though, in fairness, his word patterns would have posed any composer a headache. In the event the result is uncluttered allowing the tales to breathe easily.

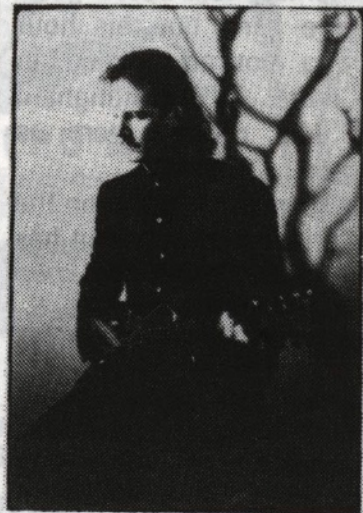
Altogether this is a fair sampling of the duo's magnificent catalogue. It is a mystery though as to why 'Driving Through Mythical America', the nearest thing they had to commercial success, is missing. Does it suggest an imminent Vol. 2 or maybe a full reissue programme?

I can only hope so after such a mouthwatering hors d'oeuvres.

Steve Morris

ROGER McGUINN Back From Rio (Arista)

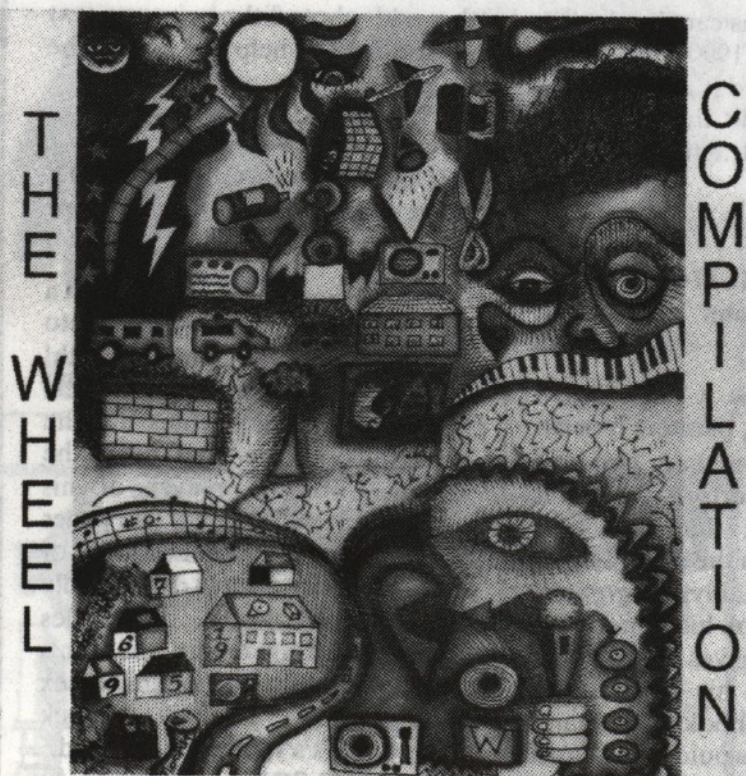
As the Rickenbacker 12-string rings into opener 'Someone To Love' it's clear that McGuinn is indeed back.



Roger McGuinn

The nasally vocal nods to early mentor Dylan, the 'Eight Miles High' guitar solo stylings on 'Car Phone' all combine to help this set stand proudly next to the recent Byrds box set rather than cowering as could have been expected. Whilst it would be crazy to suggest that 'Back From Rio' recaptures that creative wave it proves that somewhere inside Roger, Jim is still looking for a way out.

Steve Morris



Walsall's Wheel Compilation

SCREEN GEMS

VARIOUS ARTISTS

**Awesome
(PMI)**

...or Now, That's What I Call a Name Change! Same format as the Nows, a collection of hot chart hits video style. MTV for the dishless.

You get the hapless Vanilla Ice, a clutch of identikit dance cuts accompanied by witless video's, Soho welding Johnny Marr's earthquake 'How Soon Is Now' riff onto a patchy pop platter with the conviction of crash bars welded to a Robin Reliant and little else.

Awesome only in name; Now, That's What I Call Marketing, would have been nearer the mark.

STEVE MORRIS

LINDISFARNE

**Lindisfarne Live!
(Castle Music Pictures)**

Lindisfarne used to be a shambly folk based good time band but this hour long concert, filmed in Central TV's Nottingham Studio reveals them as pros.

It seems that years on the Christmas tour circuit has turned them into pop cabaret. Not that everything is lost, they still have moments of wit and bite but the decision to relegate frontman, composer and former guiding light Alan Hull to the sidelines has turned the band into the cabaret nightmare they probably had back in 1970.

STEVE MORRIS

VARIOUS Folk City (Hendring)

Filmed in 1985, this is a celebration of the Greenwich Village club's 25th anniversary and many of the artists it launched return to pay tribute, among them Tom Paxton, Joan Baez and Melanie. There's plenty of good

moments, contributions from Eric Anderson, Roger McGuinn, Suzanne Vega, the talented but unknown Ferron and Peter Yarrow's nostalgic Puff The Magic Dragon among them. But given the show ran five hours, it's hard to see how this 80 minute version can justify three tracks from the Violent Femmes.

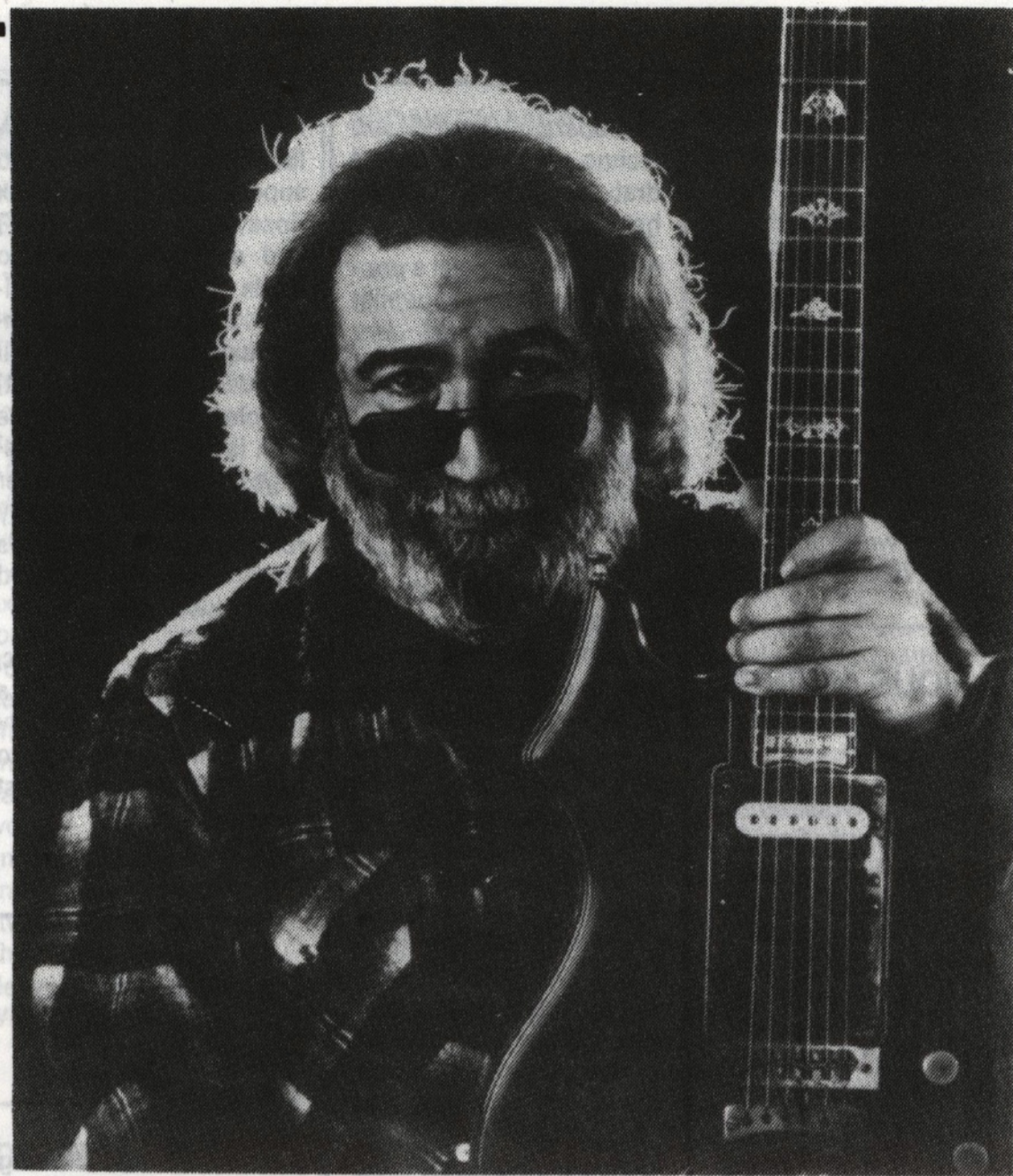
MIKE DAVIES

BRUCE HORNSBY AND THE RANGE A Night On The Town (BMG Video)

Over the last couple of decades as Joel tinkled the ivories, he lyrically charged his songs with the New York smarts. Conversely, Hornsby sprang to prominence during the latter part of the eighties as the eco aware, jazz influenced country boy who eventually came home to Virginia. Fashion!

Thankfully this sixty minute video manages to avoid the extemporised excesses from which the finale of Hornsby's recent UK tour suffered. Aided on LA's Paramount Soundstage by, among others Jerry Garcia, Shawn Colvin and David Mansfield (an ex early Range Rider), I have but one question.

Why are all the players intent on having the viewer



Jerry Garcia guests with Hornsby's Range.

believe that an audience was out front, enjoying a night on the town?

Compose one extendable riff. Pen words of care and concern. Multiply them by three albums and make yourself rich. Ain't life a.....

ARTHUR WOOD

THE KARAOKE is about to invade your video machine! This month PMI release 'The Original Karaoke Volume One' (threats of more to come?). This means that you, and your chums, can sit in front of the TV and follow the

bouncing ball through a swathe of faves including, 'It's My Party', 'Like A Virgin', 'New York, New York', 'Blue Velvet' and more. "The Original Karaoke", say PMI, "is no average party tape!" Who can argue with that?

print out

WHAT'S NEW IN PRINT ● EDITED BY KEVIN WILSON

CRAZY DIAMOND. SYD BARRETT AND THE DAWN OF PINK FLOYD -

Mike Watkinson and Pete Anderson (Omnibus)

If, like me, boyhood memories are relived by scouring the LP collection and rewinding the Floyd's 'Arnold Layne' and 'See Emily Play' this new biog of Syd Barrett's sadly brief pop career will be a major boon. Barrett has been labelled a drug crazed genius by more than the odd critic but, in the hazy, lazy days of the early and mid sixties, Barrett was of the young society that he belonged to. He merely lived his life in a slightly faster lane than most and eventually crashed! Now he lives happily in solitary refinement somewhere in Cambridge. He writes, he paints but he doesn't

play music. He was caught playing a guitar during 1990 but when spotted he dropped it immediately and sheepishly quit the room. As the saying went....the madcap laughed.

KEVIN WILSON

THE ART AND MUSIC OF JOHN LENNON - John Robertson (Omnibus)

John Lennon was a total artist; song writer, poet, painter, lyricist, author and film maker. Now, at last, John Robertson has put together a book that draws its raison d'être from the premise that Lennon was, arguably, the greatest all round artist of his generation and the author gives us a lot of proof to support his nomination. By the end of the book I was nearly won over but I would have been totally convinced had there been

the odd photo/litho/print or text illustration to help me along the way.

KEVIN WILSON

MILES:THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY Miles Davis with Quincy Troupe (Picador)

Listen, my jazz appreciation is on a par with my road sense Skoda into a skip that pulled out into my path! You could say that I'm not the best person to appraise Miles but the general concensus that he is the greatest trumpet player of his generation, will do me. The pages are filled with recollections of other greats (Dizzy, Bird, Billy Eckstein and more), the battles against drugs and racism, the man's adventures with the opposite sex and, of course, scandal! As rock biogs go, it's a right rivettin' read.

KEVIN WILSON

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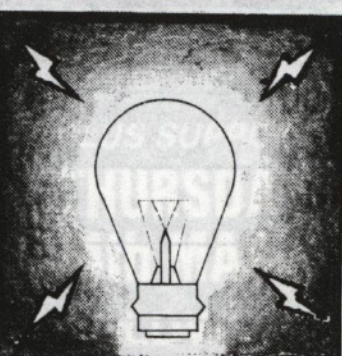
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LIVE REVIEWS

DARDEN SMITH AND HIS BIG GUN

Breedon Bar and
Border Cafe
Birmingham

Minutes into traintime on the opening number 'Frankie and Sue', and Darden was strumming a five string guitar. Alternate acoustic axe in hand, 'Trouble No More', 'Listen To My Own Voice' and 'All The King's Horses' came and went with little or no discernable space between the opening and closing chords. Hell, the boy had a new Epic album to push and we'd already eavesdropped four of the eleven cuts. Song five, a newie, seemed to rotate around the fact that the 'Revolution Is Back In Town'. Like a supersonic bat fired from the bottomless pit, the number brought the show to its first peak. The groundwork set in place by the initial quartet of tunes, was paying dividends. Smith's Big Guns were originally a duo. Percussionist Paul Percy is now his Big Gun. Through the ongoing highs and lows of Darden's music the audience, to a person, were indulging in that jaw dropped, agog look. Hardly surprising in the light of skills which Percy was displaying on his stand-up kit. Me? I'd decided to become Clovis Morose for

the evening. Blase. Who me? The first occasion on which I saw Percy perform in a live situation, nearly five years ago, he was backing Darden Smith. Every piece fits, eventually. 'A Town Called Blue' from the Boo Hewerdine 'Evidence' duo project followed. Introducing the song Smith revealed that they'd composed it two days prior to the kick-off date, for that album's sessions. While Percy took his first break, Darden proved that he could cut the mustard as a solo with renditions of 'Johnny Was A Lucky One' and 'Fall Apart At The Seams'. Both items of further evidence from 'Trouble No More'. And the night grew older, tune by memorable tune. Audience appreciation reached another climax following 'Midnight Train', the opening track on Dar-

den's new album. Fifteen tunes down and Messrs Smith and Percy left the Breedon stage. 'Bus Stop Bench' from Darden's minor label debut set 'Native Soil' launched the three song first encore. Next up was 'Reminds Me (A Little Of You)' followed by 'God's Will' with the duo harmonising on the chorus 'My God is a loving God', as they departed through the appreciative Breedon crowd. Reappearing on his own, with the self depreciating jibe "Cheap theatrics gets them every time", Darden proceeded to reprise his roots and influences with Dylan's 'Tomorrow Is A Long Time'. But maybe not. Seems that the duo are set for a return visit come April. The boy from Brenham and his Austin based percussionist sure done good.

ARTHUR WOOD



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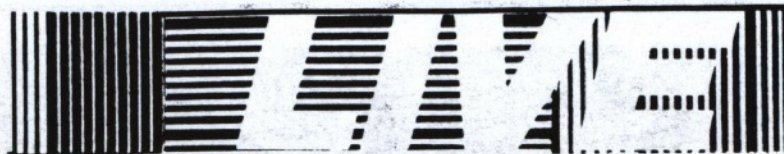
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3rd LORD RAGLAN
WOLVERHAMPTON

Sir Colin Campbell



LIVE BANDS

MONDAY, TUESDAY, THURSDAY NIGHTS

**BANDS LOOKING FOR GIGS
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NO MATTER WHAT STYLE OF MUSIC PLAYED**

ALL BANDS MUST RING SABBS BETWEEN 7 AND 8 p.m.

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EVERY NIGHT**

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(24 Hrs)

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