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The Midlands Music Monthly and more!

# BEAT

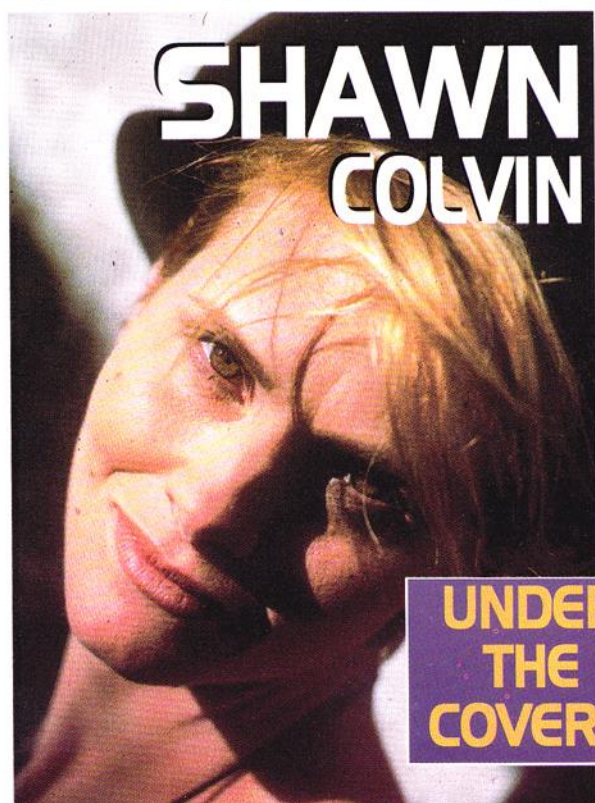
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ISSUE: 164

## FREE SPIRIT



**Single Minded**



**SHAWN  
COLVIN**

**UNDER  
THE  
COVERS**

# Manics

## The Year Of Living Dangerously



**PLUS:- DEP INTERNATIONAL  
COMPETITION THE WINNERS REVEALED  
... American Music Club ... News...  
Reviews... and so much more...**



Curiously the album's chosen chronology places her debut *As Tears Go By* at the end, perhaps as counterpoint, rather than letting the tale spin out naturally. And, given the truncated CD length, couldn't compiler Chris Blackwell have added *Come And Stay With Me* or *This Little Bird*?

That said, the impact of Faithful's lived in voice has not been diminished one iota since 1979, when *Broken English* signalled her artistic rebirth. It's that album's title track that opens here with the same set's *Ballad Of Lucy Jordan*, *Working Class Hero*, *Guilt and Why D'Ya Do It?* making up a coruscating twenty odd minute reminder of her worth.

It's not all nostalgia though. The previously unheard Keith Richards produced version of Patti Smith's *Ghost Dance* and the finely executed Angelo Badalamenti collaboration on *She*, both destined for her new album, *A Secret Life*, demonstrate a maturing muse. And the plaintive *Trouble In Mind* with Mark Isham's mournful trumpet is a gem.

★★★★

Steve Morris

## VARIOUS

### The Colpix - Dimension Story

(Sequel)

Colpix and Sequel were two of the sixties quintessential US pop labels. In reality they were one business; the major difference being that product designated Dimension came from the powerhouse team of Carole King and Gerry Goffin. Thus the interesting material in this double disc set carries the scent of their success: King's own *Rain Until September*, *Little Eva*, *The Cookies* etc. whilst the Colpix stuff majors on the gimmicky white bread pop of James Darren, Shelley Fabares, The Marcels and so on.

Collectors will however be quick to note the presence of a Michael Blessing track - he later reverted to his own surname - Nesmith.

★★★

Steve Morris

## DANCE & SOUL

### BOOTSYS NEW RUBBER BAND

#### Blasters Of The Universe

(Rykodisc)

Got your Funk Cards, ya'll? Cuz you'll need 'em. You can't get it up without your Funk Card, baby. This double CD funkasmatron is for the most serious funkateers only. If your Funk Card has run out...well, I guess Bootsy has got a little funk left over for ya. Bootsy is a never-ending fountain of funk - he's had it from the start, when he was a 17 year old bassist for Mr. Jaaaaames Brown! Now it's 1994 and Bootsy has assembled the cream of the funk team to release a cooking 23 tracks to get your booty moving. Just check out some of these names: Bernie Worrell, Maceo Parker, Fred Wesley (and his Horny Horns), George Clinton, Buddy Miles! They're all here, my dear! Wanna blast?

Funk 'n' express yourself! Just for the funk of it.

★★★★★

Max

## URBAN DANCE SQUAD

### Persona Non Grata (Hut)

Thinking back to 1989 and UDS' debut album, *Mental Floss For The Globe*, how ahead of the pack were they? At the time, me and a bunch of funkateers embraced these Dutch rockers as yet another (albeit slightly odd) funk-based metal

band. In retrospect, they were covering similar ground to *Rage Against The Machine*, who'd yet to raise their politically correct heads. But UDS always had an added, finely-tuned sense of soul, unafraid to break it right down and still retain that hard-edged groove. *Mental Floss*... knocked me out, but *Persona*... walks all over it. It's up an' at 'em from the start with the single, *Demagogue* and coolly smooth on numbers like *Alienated*. Live, UDS are blistering. *Persona Non Grata* is the next best thing.

★★★★★

Max

## BOBBY WOMACK

### Resurrection (Continuum)

The veteran R&B legend's first album since the turbulent personal crises that left him divorced, emotionally ruptured and penniless, could rank on the Tina Turner scale of comebacks. Pumped full of drugs, booze and cigarettes, *Womack* did the big clean-up and then, taking all the shit he'd been through and channelling it into songs, he came up with this autobiographical powerhouse that walks from gutter to the mountain top. It's not quite Marvin Gaye's *Here, My Dear*, but it's on a nearby path.

Inevitably introspective and retrospective, it charts his attempt to get back the Good Ole Days (the opening calypso soul nostalgia dance), details what a prat he was (*So High On Your Love*) and ultimately finds redemption (*Wish*) while finding time to point a finger at America's shitty treatment of its veterans (*Cousin Henry*) and getting all warm and tender over fatherly love (*Color Him Father*). He also turns in a nifty cover of John Fogerty's *Centrefield*, investing it with a whole new personal slant. Old pals like Rod Stewart, Keith Richards, Stevie Wonder, Ronald Isley, and Ronnie Wood drop by to pay respects, but there's no questioning where this album's star shines brightest. It's *All Over Now* he once wrote. Now it begins again.

★★★★

Mike Davies

## RE-ISSUES

## THE CRUSADERS

### And Beyond ... (Music Club)

An ideal Crusaders primer for £5.99 that takes in *Street Life* (natch) in extended form as well as the band's work with Bill Withers and Bobby Womack. The major plus here is the solo cuts from members Stix Hooper, Joe Sample and Wilton Felder.

★★★

Sam Mitchell

## VARIOUS

### Committed To Soul (Arcade)

40 cuts spanning four decades of soul, 60s to 90s. But with James Brown, Otis Redding, Barry White and Al Green leading the attack for the first two decades, the later twenty years look shaky with Gabrielle, Kenny Thomas, Billy Ocean and Color Me Badd offering the reply.

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Steve Morris

## VARIOUS

### Logic Trance 2 (Logic)

Excellent double album! The MTV Party Zone logo is liable to put people off, making it sound like it's some kind of K-Tel offering, but anything put out by Logic is bound to be quality stuff. There're tracks here that'll help it sell, like those by The Orb, Orbital, *Future Sound Of London* and Jam & Spoon, but there're also interesting,

unknown inclusions by the likes of *Fires Of Ork*, which is normally difficult to get hold of, but well worth the effort. Great album!

★★★★

Sarah

## THE WHISPERS

### 30th Anniversary Anthology

(Sequel)

The Whispers may not be as revered as some soul aggregations, so this double set spanning some thirty years of hit-making comes as a pleasant surprise. The UK hits - *And The Beat Goes On*, *It's A Love Thing*, *My Girl* - may have them pegged in the late seventies disco vein, but the band's forte seems to be adaptability, making them at home with a variety of styles and producers with whom they've moulded their doo-wop rooted vocalising into the soul sound of the day. And I do mean soul; The Whispers may have made great dance tracks but at the heart of every one is a beautifully judged vocal arrangement overflowing with feel.

★★★

Sam Mitchell

## FOLK & COUNTRY

## MARK COLLIE

### Unleashed (MCA)

Collie may sail under a country flag but I can't help but suspect his ambitions lay more in a Springsteenian direction. Of course the material wouldn't dare lick the Boss' boots but Collie's whitebread take on the panoramic boogie is passably entertaining - even if he looks like your mum's idea of a successful son.

★★★

Steve Morris

## RODNEY CROWELL

### Let The Picture Paint Itself

(MCA)

At last a UK release for what might just be Crowell's best work yet. Put simply it's a faultless set of songs that matches honestly crafted and incisive lyrics to perfectly metered melodies. Finding a duff track on this is as easy as finding the proverbial pin in it's agricultural home.

And forget the country tag. Crowell always wanted to be a Beatle and it's their eclectic legacy you should look to fitting him into rather than the CMT conveyor belt.

★★★★★

Steve Morris

## TISH HINOJOSA

### Destiny's Gate (Warner Bros)

With a twelve string jangle, the uptempo album title track opens this dozen song collection. Nothing more I feel, needs to be said about *Destiny's Gate*. The principal themes which run through Hinojosa's compositions are those of relationships - within the family group, for the person you love and on a wider canvas, for mankind. Saying *You Will*, *What More Can I Say In A Song* and *I'm Not Through Loving You Yet*, being typical examples of the first two categories. Through the years, Tish has repeatedly declared in album liner notes and in her songs, an undying love for her late parents. *Love Of Mine* recalls her mother, Maria.

*Destiny's Gate* will in time, prove to be the recording which (finally and deservedly) catapulted Hinojosa's career on to an international platform. Just wait and see if I'm wrong.

★★★★ Arthur Wood



## ALAN HULL

### Back To Basics (Mooncrest)

Can't help but think that Hull would have been better recognised as one of the UK's better writers had not Lindisfarne, his day job, not sunk into an oldies circuit cabaret show. This January '94 taped live set brings together fifteen of the songs that'll support that argument. Stripped to the basics of the title. Is it a welcome back or a regretting the loss? Only Hull can decide.

★★★

Steve Morris

## SAMMY KERSHAW

### Feel'n Good Train (Mercury)

The former George Jones wannabe has found his own voice with a solid cover of the Amazing Rhythm Aces' Third Rate Romance and a selection of good time boogies like the title track, If You're Gonna Walk, I'm Gonna Crawl, Better Call A Preacher and the duet with George Jones, Never Bit A Bullet Like This. The ballads however are too smoothly produced, but you can't win 'em all.

★★★

Steve Morris

## IAIN MATTHEWS

### The Dark Ride (Watermelon / Direct

Distribution)

As far as the recordings of Mr. Matthews are concerned, I'll admit that I'm a Johnny come lately. These days Iain is based just north of Austin and it seems like he has been thoroughly dusted by the local brand of songwriting stardust.

On The Dark Ride Matthews explores the past, relationships current and long gone, tales of blood relatives and wrestles with his own emotions. In London it's the early sixties, while the retrospectively titled Tigers Will Survive (Part II, Darcy's Song) is written for and about his daughter Darcy. The painfully honest For Better or Worse and the wonderment in Rooted To The Spot are for his Texas born wife, Veronique. When it comes to dealing with his own internal mechanisms, I Drove, This Is It and the title cut cover the bases. As for picking songs by other writers, a quarter of a century on, Tim Buckley's Morning Glory remains a sparkling diamond, while Save Her Love comes from the pen of current Austin cause celebre, Michael Fracasso. An essential set even if it's your introduction ...

★★★★

Arthur Wood

## LISA MEDNICK

### Artifacts of Love (Dejadisc / Direct

Distribution)

This recording grows in stature each time I taste it. We are after all, talking gourmet music. I'd already selected the trigger words for this review, then I spied Peter Holsapple's (ex DB's) liner notes. In all their magnificence, he'd selected traveller, absorb, journey and reflect. Particularly absorb.

Born in Boston, Massachusetts, on her life journey to date, Lisa has touched down on all three (US)coasts. From the margin of distant oceans, this traveller observed the Southern Cross and the Northern Lights (The Lay Of The Land). Where her journeys dimensionally equate to length, history is Mednick's suit for depth. From the Middle Ages, comes the belief that wearing gold offered protection against the devil (Filling The Gaps With Gold). She bonds the birth pains of her own nation with the preceding, bloody carnage in the fields of Harper's Ferry. Her explorations of the twentieth century, encompass observations of another birth. One with an eerie, uncertain future. That of nuclear technology (Alamogordo). Finally, there's the width. I was

going to pose the question, How absorbent is Mednick? Irrespective of what went before, the trick is to imbue your music with an off-beam twist. From her lyrics you cannot escape the conclusion, that Mednick is a restless seeker and traveller. Her melodies are stretched across a panoramic canvas, having absorbed the rhythms and nuances of American folk, blues and country music and then been embellished with garnishes of world rhythms. Americana viewed by an internationalist.

When You Say Strong is an enigmatic and edgy tale of a woman's death. There's a veritable maelstrom of strings stirred up in the middle break by John Hagen's cello, followed by a placid, piano led interlude from Lisa. And there's lines such as Every face hides a mind that shelters thoughts of dying. Being one of the most complete songs I've ever heard, it stands as a reflection of each and every one of us.

★★★★★

Arthur Wood

## JOY LYNN WHITE

### Wild Love (Columbia)

Ms. White has inexplicably added a Lynn since her debut album. Is it the numerology that added an e to Dionne Warwick or a religious move like Jim Byrd becoming Roger?

There's obviously something in it as this collection of honky tonk dancers and weepers rather hits the mark.

★★★

Steve Morris

## RE-ISSUES

### VARIOUS

#### Folk Routes (Island)

The punning title shields an excellent mid price eighteen track trawl through Island's enviable folk roots vaults that showcases Mike Heron, Incredible String Band, John Martyn, The Amazing Blondel, Richard Thompson, Nick Drake, Traffic - in John Barleycorn mode - Fairport Convention and an exceedingly rare Sandy Denny cut.

Nostalgia for some, a new garden of delights for others but either way proof that, in the world of real music, the road goes on forever and the story never ends. Hmm, heard that in a song, somewhere!

Now then Island how about a CD version of the superb Electric Muse box set?

★★★★

Steve Morris

## REGGAE & WORLD

### BOUKMAN EKSPERYANS

#### Dangerous Crossroads (Mango)

Boukman originate from Haiti where their music is censored and gigs are patrolled by militia to prohibit the playing of said material. Somehow they get their message across by a network of illegal cassette duplication.

And yet despite it, or maybe because of it, the music has a proud gospel heart.

★★★

Steve Morris

### JOHN KPIAYE

#### Red, Gold & Blues

#### STEVE GREGORY

#### Bushfire

(both UKJ Records)

Discerning reggae buyers will be all too familiar with the names of Kpiaye and Gregory from album small print in recent years, but these albums mark, to my knowledge, their first step into the front-line.

As you might predict both sets are musically watertight, though neither collapses into the mire of indulgence. Kpiaye's set is a mellow, self produced ten tracker that, almost naturally, calls to mind Ernest Ranglin but, as on Ijah Echoes, expands the vocabulary with South African township flourishes.

Steve Gregory puts Dennis Bovell in the production chair to give his sax a high-tech cushion. Consequently it's the spikier of the two records. And it's good to see a jazz inclined soloist using an interesting and less predictable rhythm setting.

★★★★ each

Steve Morris

### VARIOUS

#### Real World Presents (Real World)

A budget priced cocktail from Gabriel's fascinating label with Sheila Chandra's awesome La Sagesse, S.E. Rogie's ultra cool Koneh Pelawoe as well as Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan Shui-De and more. If world music is, as they say, a foreign country to you, there's no better cheap day excursion than this.

★★★

Steve Morris

### VARIOUS

#### Soca Carnival 94 (Ice)

The soca fad of a few years back when Arrow's Hot Hot Hot was omnipresent may have waned but the music is as hot and peppery as ever in its Caribbean home. This twelve track collection of the current soca successes proves just that with a breathless collection of twelve tunes that need only the addition of an inhibition erasing imbibing of Bacardi to have your limbs well and truly rubberised.

★★★

Sam Mitchell

## RE-ISSUES

### CREATION REBEL

#### Historic Moments Vol. One (on U Sound)

Produced by Adrian Sherwood and taped in deepest London at the height of punk - 77 / 78 - this two albums on one CD set from the band that specialised in live dub before becoming the mighty Prince Far I's back-up outfit, is, well, bloody wonderful. Strong yet supple rhythms that explode and fade and tease right before your ears.

★★★★

Steve Morris

### KEITH HUDSON

#### Pick A Dub (Blood & Fire)

One of the great dub albums; pure rhythm, unadorned by gimmickry. The excitement here comes from the depth charge solid track and the mix that simply serves to pump the adrenaline.

What's more on CD the sound and bass weight make the album wickedly narcotic. If ambient is your bag you really should buy this and move over to the full strength experience.

★★★★ Steve Morris



## DISSIDENT PROPHETS / OBVIOUSLY FIVE BELIEVERS

**Hare And Hounds, Kings Heath, Birmingham**

Obviously Five Believers, from the Telford area, are fronted by Nathan, their slightly camp, stylish and occasionally ridiculous lead singer who was dressed in a sharp suit, partially open-chested white shirt and who delivered his lyrics in a deep but tuneful voice - a kind of Jarvis Cocker / Nick Cave / Tindersticks hybrid if you will. To contrast with Nathan's acoustic guitar, on lead guitar there was the spectacular Hendrix-style of Jim, complete with facial contortions, all brought together with a tight rhythm section incorporating a distant-looking but occasionally amused fretless bass player. Some memorable numbers here, particularly Grace to Come, I Won't Let You Down and Shoot, the powerful six-minute song with which they finished their set.

Dissident Prophets, from Moseley, comprise former members of Hector's House, Doodlebug and two ex-Pink Dandelions - they have recently played gigs under the name of Quench and have just been the recipients of more than a merely cursory A & R glance. Their show consisted of pop songs built on a wonderful dual assault of beautiful guitar sounds and chord sequences from Andy and Tom, backed up with Smudger's meaty bass and drummer John rendering varying tempo as required along with an appealing unpredictability. They hadn't played live for nearly two months and the freshness, warmth and good vibes were easy to sense from an overall sound which seems to owe a respectful debt to Cope, Bowie / Black-Pixies and Boo Radleys amongst others. The highlight was Hanging Around Your Neck, a superbly constructed piece which, arguably more than any other song in their set, suggests that they will be gaining national recognition before too long.

Dave Hector-Gutierrez

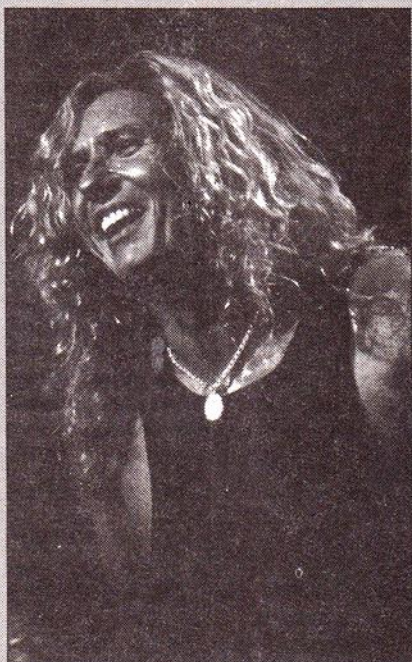
## WHITESNAKE / PRIDE & GLORY

**Civic Hall, Wolverhampton**

Potentially Pride and Glory, featuring Ozzy axeman Zak Wylde, could have been astounding. In fact they fell well short. The most inspiring track was in fact an Ozzy cover; the remainder slipped into insignificance. Weak songs, with guitar work uncharacteristically restrained as Zak also took the vocal reigns. Outstanding gobbing technique though.

Whitesnake appropriately delivered their catalogue of classic rock toons to mark the release of their Greatest Hits album and apart from the crap dual guitar piece and extensive drum solo (will they ever learn) the show was superb. What the gig lost in fancy guitar work, (Vai having departed since the last tour), it made up for in the quality of Coverdale's vocals.

It's also good to see venues such as Wolverhampton's Civic Hall attracting bands that usually play in impersonal arenas and stadiums. Mark Hadley



## SWAMP MAN GIRL

**The Jug Of Ale, Moseley, Birmingham**

Old rockers never die, they just form new bands with ever more absurd names. Matt Adcock, previously of The Love Hysterix, and the woman he left that band to marry, Fiona Boyle, are the main players in Swamp Man Girl; he writes the songs and she sings them. In front of a largely empty upstairs room at the Jug of Ale, the Swamps knocked out eight or so songs. Matt takes more of a minor role on stage nowadays and a second guitarist plays the few lead lines there are. The music is well crafted indie-pop and, although she hasn't the strongest voice in the world, Fiona looks stunning. The last point is important because, however politically correct it may be to say that good looks should not be a prerequisite for pop stardom, the fact remains that the charts are full of pretty boys and girls.

Some people might consider that if you haven't succeeded after 10 years you might as well hang up your Fender for good; but rock'n'roll is a jealous old whore who doesn't give up her past flames easily. So will Swamp Man Girl provide Matt and Co. with their fifteen minutes of fame? Go and see them yourself and make your own mind up!

John Vincent

## SANTIAGO JIMENEZ JR. / TISH HINOJOSA / GUY CLARK / JUNIOR BROWN

**Queen Elizabeth Hall,**

**South Bank Centre, London**

Part of a week long South Bank Centre event titled The American South, this event was put together by producer Nancy Covey, who joined MC Andy Kershaw at the microphone during the opening introductions to pass on a few of her comments about this evening's particular Southern sub-species - The Texas Night.

Singer / accordionist Santiago Jimenez Jr. soon transported the audience into the world of Tex-Mex rancheras, polkas and waltzes, which his family has been writing, archiving and lovingly performing for generations. Just try and keep your feet still once Santiago hits the infectious beat - it's darned impossible, and a neat opening set to boot.

Considering this appearance marked her UK stage debut, Tish Hinojosa displayed such disarming confidence, that ten songs later you could only draw a single conclusion; you'd observed the UK birth of yet another, Texas bred, writing and singing star. Mixing her English lyric compositions with those penned in Spanish, later in the performance Tish brought Santiago Jimenez back on-stage to help out on Riverside Bird. Prior to her single song encore, By The Rio Grande, Tish performed Closer Still, a track from her Culture Swing album. Well folks, on the latter number her voice soared skyward and considering the tenor of lyric, grown men in the audience were seen to choke on their Adam's apple and more. If you're a UK concert promoter and considering Tish's current CMT Europe profile, I'd get on the phone to Austin right now, if you follow my meaning.

Which brings us to Guy Clark. The love affair began almost two decades ago with Old No.1. Over the years it sometimes ran hot and sometimes cold but it never ran out. It's been a little cold recently, certainly on the live front. Aided and abetted these days by his five string, fretless bass playing offspring, Travis, what we're talking about now is Guy Clark, renaissance man. There was an unspoken joy and electricity which flowed between the two throughout their performance, which simply translated into, father and son up here havin' lotsa fun. Kicking off with Baton Rouge from his Elektra/American Explorer series collection Boats To Build, Guy proved that he could still make the chills run down my back when, mid set, he produced a stunning rendition of his classic L.A. Freeway. Closing out with a gritty encore performance of Let Him Roll, I'd like to take this opportunity to publicly apologise to the big man for even contemplating losing the faith.

Now if it weren't for the loud n' long haired, major record label rep / yee-haw who was located immediately behind my right ear, Junior Brown's performance would have at least been mildly palatable. OK, there's no denying that the guy is a virtuoso on his guit-steel - as in Jimi Hendrix duels with Chet Atkins. Unfortunately, my yearnings lean more toward sustainable content, than mere style. Maybe I lack a sense of humour. What we may be talking about here is a fine dividing line, where you begin to wonder if there really is a subtle joke in there or not.

Closing out the show, the quartet of performers took the stage for a rousing, Santiago Jimenez led Tex-Mex finale. How about a week of Texas Summer Nights next year, I've already got the running order ready Nancy, and I'm only a phone call away.

Arthur Wood