

BRUM BEAT

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loneliness: tanita talks

*plus: the troggs * rick wakeman * capital wow....*

ALONE AGAIN OR ..

Mike Davies discusses the options with Tanita Tikaram

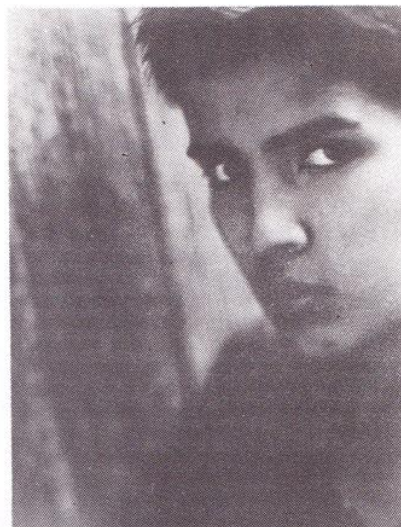
Discussing her last album, 'Everybody's Angel', Tanita Tikaram spoke enthusiastically about recentering herself, about the album expressing her finding faith in others, of putting isolationism behind her and in looking for the good in things. With such an unbridled mood of confidence and optimism, it's no surprise to find the new album totally self-produced.

The arrangements are inventive and adept, playfully suffused with humour even, as with the Spectorish 'You Make The Whole World Cry' or the pachydermal rhythms of 'Elephant' which aims to evoke what Beat poetry might be like as done by the English. Her vocal range too is more expressive and adventurous, particularly in exploring her blues influences. Yet while something like 'To Drink The Rainbow' may be about innocence, the mood of the songs is virtually the polar opposite of the previous album's. While only borrowing the title 'Eleven Kinds Of Loneliness' from Richard Yates' short stories collection because it sounded good, nonetheless it doesn't paint a picture of Tikaram as a happy puppy.

"You often think you've got things sussed," she

explains, "and then you wake up the next morning and all that security is taken from you. The album really is about that. 'Elephant' for example, is all about the physical awkwardness I feel I have, about being the wrong size or feeling fat or not being brave enough to have an experience. And it's about stubbornness in others too. When I began to write, all these ideas about self, strength and identity tumbled out. I found I just didn't know myself anymore. I didn't know where I ended and other people began. How did I fit in? how did other people see me? As a successful young woman I often feel that intimidates people, that it can turn people away as much as it can draw them to you."

While still recognising the importance of family, she continues "I understand now things are more treacherous than I first thought. 'You Make The Whole World Cry' is about suddenly realising that although you thought you were, you're not in control and you don't know what to do. It was that feeling that prompted most of the songs. Then 'Hot Stones' reflects that weariness about life the English have and which is terribly infectious. That jaded feeling of having done it all



TANITA TIKARAM

and there's nothing left. I love England but I can't see how that feeling can in any way be constructive.

"I think having made the album I feel in a much better mood, but I don't think I'm in the right frame of mind to go touring. I want to try and broaden my mind and the things I do. I have to find things to keep me interested."

Making his UK debut this month is Californian born, New York based singer/songwriter Tom Russell, along with his four piece band. The fact that in a live situation they are probably the best honky tonk band in the Universe, is matched by Russell's second to none mastery of the songwriters art. Although the bulk of Tom's recorded catalogue is self penned, past collaborators have included such divergent talents as Nanci Griffith, Ian Tyson, Peter Case, Katy Moffatt, and Dave Alvin. That list should give you a flavour of the man.

Round Tower have just released an essential 16 track compilation album, 14 cuts of which are drawn from Tom's four solo/ band albums to date - a review appears in Recorded Delivery. And now we come to the sad news. Unfortunately, there's no local date for Tom Russell and the boys; the nearest venues being April 1st - Manchester [venue to be confirmed]; April 2nd - Guild Hall, Gloucester and April 5th - Town & Country 2, London. Miss this rare opportunity at your peril.

Back from his March 14th date at the Cactus Cafe in Austin, Texas as part of the annual SXSW music celebration, Reading's Terry Clarke appears locally on three occasions during the month. First off on Thursday 2nd there's his solo date at the Harborne Junction; three weeks later, he returns in the company of David Halley. Two years on from the release, by Demon, of Halley's debut disc 'Stray Dog Talk' we finally get his first UK

ARTHUR WOOD



TOM RUSSELL BAND

concert tour. Seems that a batch of new Halley recordings is in the pipeline.

Born in Oklahoma, David Halley was two weeks old when his family moved to Texas. Halley has been a sideman to Ray Wylie Hubbard and Jimmie Dale Gilmore, enjoyed a Top 10 chart success when the late Keith Whitley cut 'Hard Livin' and was responsible for penning one of the most atmospheric and truthful songs ever, 'Rain Just Falls'. That date again, Thurs 23rd at the Harborne Junction. Rate this billing as 10 out of 10. Twice over. And finally on April 30th, at the Irish Centre in downtown

Digbeth, TC supports Paul Brady who will be doing a rare solo, all acoustic show. Bonnie Raitt cuts his tunes. Some guy called Dylan rates Brady as a quality songwriter. Now, it's over to you to be there.

In trying to assess whether these really will be the twelve months of total takeover by Tori ... whether she is truly the next awesomely talented songwriting goddess to waft through our awareness ... to address the question as to whether she is self taught wacky or the label marketed brand ... the opportunity to answer none/ some/all of these questions can be yours when Tori plays

Birmingham Town Hall on Sat 11th.

On precisely the same night at the NEC, on a megastar level, we have The Highwaymen. Not a reunion by the early sixties folk quintet who charted with 'Michael Row the Boat Ashore'! The NEC Highwaymen are none less than Willie Nelson, Kris Kristofferson, Waylon Jennings and Johnny Cash. Considering the void left by the demise of the annual Wembley country music festival, seems like there will be a West Midlands outbreak of stetson topped dudes come mid April.

The line-up in local folk clubs for April goes like: Fri 3rd: Singers Night (Woodman, Kingswinford), Singers Night (Market Tavern, Old Moseley St); Sat 4th: R. Cajun and the Zydeco Brothers (Red Lion, Kings Heath); Fri 10th: Tim Wood (Woodman), Chris Foster (Market Tavern); Sat 11th: Artisan (Red Lion); Fri 17th: (Woodman - Closed for Easter), Singers Night (Market Tavern); Sat 18th: (Red Lion - Closed for Easter); Fri 24th: Mike Silver (Woodman), Beggars Velvet (Market Tavern); Sat 25th: Mel Harrold & Ollie Blanchflower (Red Lion).



TORI AMOS

THE PASADENAS

Yours Sincerely
(Columbia)

Cynics have already renamed this record The (career) Resurrection Shuffle. That well known remedy, reinterpret the oldie and claim the result as an homage to those without whom ...

Here The Pasadenas almost transcend the cynicism; 'I'm Doing Fine' is a straight re-run that showcases the guys' voices to harmonic perfection, Bread's 'Make It With You' is a future hit, and, surprisingly, even Marvin Gaye's 'sacred' 'Let's Get It On' works, despite being a mite overlong. A comment that applies to Marley's 'Waiting In Vain' too.

Sadly the a la mode murder of 'Lucy In The Sky With Diamonds' is a clinker of inordinate proportions.

The Pasadenas' performances throughout impress, however, and the album will sell. After all, it's a proven formula. one can simply hope that such innate talent can find original expression in the future. In the meantime, despite the above reservations, there is much to enjoy here.

Steve Morris

VARIOUS

Three Minute Heroes
(Virgin)

The Sound Of The City
(Columbia)

The Indie Scene
78 / 79 / 80

(Connoisseur Collection)

Gawd, the punk revolution has finally become the TV advertised midi-system fashion accessory. The low volume murmur of nostalgia for that special dinner party. The snarl of the seven inch subdued to cassette and CD.

The times sure are a changin' ...

As might be expected the majors concentrate on the big names; Columbia offering Blondie, Ramones, Stranglers, Pretenders and Costello whilst Virgin counter attack with Sex Pistols, XTC, Adam And The Ants, Joe Jackson and Buzzcocks. Classics all. Even where artists duplicate, tracks don't (marketing collusion?) so buy both.

Rightly, the indie (Connoisseur) offers the interesting haul with three further probes that catch The Undertones mighty debut ('Teenage Kicks'), TV Personalities, Shane MacGowan's Nips (all '78); Teardrop Explodes, Big In Japan, Monochrome Set and Spizz Oil ('79) and Bunnymen, Swell Maps, Joy Division, Cabaret Voltaire and more ('80).

Nostalgia it maybe, but the vigour, life and attack that the punk and post punk embrace of the indie ethic threw up,



PASADENAS

seems to on the wane as corporate might again controls. As The Desperate Bicycles said at the time, 'It was easy, it was cheap, go and do it.' So if you're in a band waiting to be given a deal, bear that in mind. Things could be healthier and every one of these five albums is testament to pop's pounding pulse.

It would be awful to have to regard the period celebrated here as the last golden era of the single when we desperately need another,

Steve Morris

GEORGE THOROGOOD
Bad To The Bone
(BGO)

If you like your guitar music a cross between blues 'n' boogie then George Thorogood will be one of your fave artists. He's been plying his trade since the '70's and he's still lickin' it out with his Fender at full speed and the twelve bars hanging on for dear life. Here 'Back to Wentzville' is chilli hot, 'It's A Sin' a pet shop howler, 'Wanted Man' a Dylan cover that blows apart the original and the Chuck Berry classic 'No Particular Place To Go' proves to be Thorogood being thorough-baad, Rock'n'roll and some.

Kevin Wilson

PETER CASE
Six Pack of Love
(Geffen)

After his previous predominantly county-rock singer-songwriter flavours, this comes as something of a wake-up call. Opening proceedings with the Costello/Hiatt R&B taste of 'Vanishing Act' and continuing via the pumped-up rockabilly express train of 'When You Don't Come' to the Jerry Lee Lewis shouter rock'n'roll of 'It's All Mine' and an oo-wee sea cruise round 'Why Don't We Give It A Go?' Only the acoustic steel of 'Never Comin' Home' takes any sidetrip from the bar. Side two though rings a variety of changes. 'Last Time I Looked' is a 60's guitar twang sad country love song evoking both Orbison and Len-

non & McCartney, 'Why?' and 'It Don't Matter What They Say' recall the Steve Earle comparisons (the latter with a dash of 'Green River' swamp), 'I've Been Looking For You' is 60's pop and 'Beyond The Blues' has obviously been to Austin. And what the hell the 'Yellow Rose of Texas' sounding Dixie march and whistle of 'Wonderful 99' is about is anyone's guess. Pretty much what you'd expect from a guy who called his last album 'The Man With The Blue Postmodern Fragmented Neo-Traditionalist Guitar' really.

Mike Davies.

VARIOUS
The Lunatic O.S.T.
(Mango)

10cc man Lol Creme makes his cinematic debut with 'The Lunatic', a comedy set in Jamaica. The soundtrack features the likes of Aswad with Shabba Ranks ('Fire'), Black Uhuru ('The Youth of Eglinton'), Toots and the Maytals ('Beautiful Woman') and Burning Flames ('Worky Worky'). All good time reggae with a cutting edge. The film? Pass.

Kevin Wilson

THE SKELETON CREW
Blue Mania
(Musidisc)

Homegrown blues that clearly respects its roots but has no problems giving them a contemporary set of threads. Smooth without being anonymously slick, adept with flashy dazzle, they can be as good 'n' greasy as they can be laid back, throwing out distinct nods to the Collins and King but also JJ Cale and G. Jerry Garcia. More likely to appeal to the Clapton than the Gary Moore school, there's a couple a full flamers but mostly they cook on simmer. It doesn't all work - 'Chinese Eyes' is a bit Level 42 and lyrically 'Mississippi Burning' is a bit late out of the gate - but tracks like 'Glory Hunter', 'Trail of Tears' and the Feelgoodsy 'See Me Later' deliver with, as the opening cut says, 'Satisfaction Guaranteed'.

Mike Davies

COLIN SCOTT

Lesley Lady Love
(White Label)

Now resident in Amsterdam, Scott is/was a 70s also ran. A singer/songwriter who made several well received albums that never quite sparked the fire. (Jonathan Kelly, where are you?).

Consequently this self released set arrives as a surprise. It's a live in the studio, one man, one guitar creation featuring Scott with his own material running the gamut from intimately personal, 'Lesley Lady Love' to politicised, 'God Bless America' and the universal, 'Missing Mister Marley'.

It's pleasant rather than revelatory and will not, at this remove, reignite a career. Nostalgists, completists and the songwriter fixated should contact Leisure Sounds at 17 Norton Terrace, Norton Canes, Cannock WS11 3RY for purchase / distribution details.

Steve Morris

THE CHURCH

Priest = Aura
(Arista)

Regular church-goers will be both desperate for the latest sermon and aware that whilst priest may indeed equate to aura, Church equals enigma. So what does a new album bring?

Well, a fourteen track set that does little to destroy / enhance the image but something rather more immediately attractive than the last band album, the Jack Frost side-trip or most of the other sabbatical projects. That's not to say that there's an abundance of ringing anthemic guitar pop songs. Nope the path is too well trod for such a reversal! However, there is a lot of rather fine guitarring from Marty Willson Piper, in both axeman and lyrical mode. There is also a lot of frontman, Steve Kilbey's enigma variations. The album title alone

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being a good guide!

Perhaps it's a mite self conscious in parts; the result of a band getting back together to make a record and trying to be the band that only constant interaction produces maybe? Whatever, it is on balance a cracking good record full of texture and low key dynamics that mist the audacious and pretentious.

Curiously, considering their 'guitar band' status, the album would be a rewarding purchase for open minded Japan / Sylvian fans too!

Steve Morris

DAVID OLNEY

Roses
(Phila)

Top To Bottom
(Appaloosa)

[both available via Topic Records]

A Nashville, Tennessee resident for nigh on two decades, these solo outings are respectively albums four and five, in a recording career which kicked off in 1981 with 'The Contender'. Since then, Olney has remained precisely that. A writer of ace songs, who hardly ever fits the traditional Nashville songwriter mould. Back in '81, Dave and the X-Rays were a legendary hard rocking live outfit. Many of the converted still await their resurrection. Subsequently, his songs plumbed depths of perception and emotion, rarely known in Nashville. Lyrically, 'If My Eyes Were Blind' just tears your heart out. On 'Roses' Dave is mostly introspective and occasionally rowdy, while his first outing for the Italian Appaloosa label finds him checkin' out his former goodtime rockin' chops, while lacing in a couple of slow ones along the way. Where indeed did the good times go Dave?

Just keep making albums your way, is my initial thought.

Arthur Wood



THE CHURCH

LIVE REVIEWS

WET WET WET/ GEOFFREY WILLIAMS NEC Birmingham

Williams is a well muscled, plaited, black with a nifty line in funky pop. Instantly liked by the packed hall, a decent video or two should, er, Seal his fate.

And the Wets? Well you can't argue with a frenzied pubescent mob, can you? Fortunately their awe is well placed. Wet Wet Wet are a classic pop band. Memorably melodic, instrumentally articulate and blessed with a frontman of style and substance.

Yup, grinning Marti Pellow can sing; he phrases well, skips around the melody with grace and has a range and flexibility that guarantees a future beyond TOTP.

Sure there's a certain gaucherie in their presence, as though arena shows are a novelty, and an uncomfortable one at that, but the (credited) inclusion of covers from The Temptations, AWB (with Pellow on bass) and Mose Allison display an intelligence that their detractors choose to ignore.

Steve Morris

PEN & WIG

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WET WET WET

ROOSTERVELT

JBs
Dudley

One of the hardest gigging bands in the midlands, Roostervelt take to the stage again to play us some of their challenging and earthly music.

Roostervelt's songs travel well, spontaneously finding themselves as they move on. 'Bad Night's Work' is immediately affecting with its mood of isolation - yet contains harmonies that are expressed with a feeling of courage, responding to the subject matter. 'Little America' is a good example of the band's wit and wisdom, fused with a melancholy and savoury taste. Musically, it has some unnerving interplay and construction between the individual musicians, representing the levels of presence and involvement they have.

As their set heads towards home, Mick takes a step back for James to take the lead vocal on 'Jackson' - a song that draws you in on its edge, to follow line by line. With Mick producing some apt and awesome guitar of the discomfiting variety, this song about being in a rut, talks of "The Devil's in my doorway and the dogs are on my path," and asks "...and I don't know if I'll make it through."

With the current crowd pleaser 'The Judge' and the uplifting 'A Change', they close in with 'This Is How' - a song about critics with the line "You try to hide what you mean and then you say it straight. Either way they'll put you down. This is the land that loves to hate." They annoy me too, but let

them try and keep this good thing down... see you next time.

P.S. Where was 'A Punch Between Friends' ... You can't do this!!!
Spartacus

JAY TURNER

The Junction, Harborne

TERRY CLARKE

'Spokes'/Castle & Falcon,
Moseley

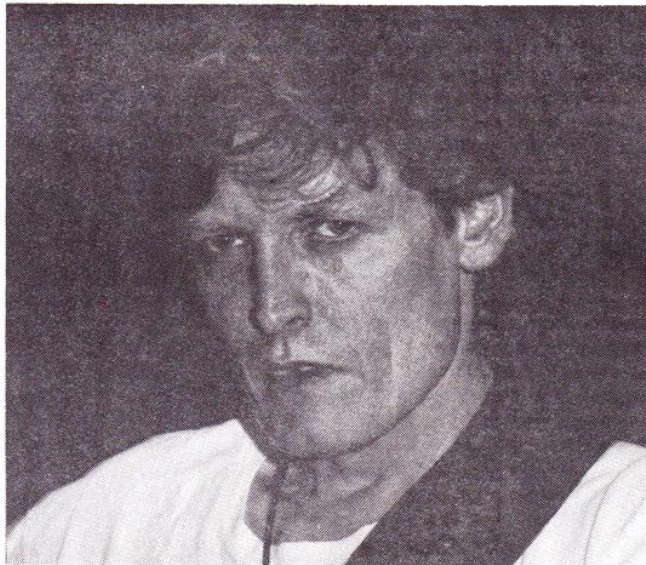
Launching energetically into the international political arena that is 'No Man's Land', Jay's sixteen song set continued with 'Mountains And Mist' and 'Dreamtime'. Considering his proposal to intention to conquer the states via Texas in the 1992 Kerrville New Folk Contest, I'd thoroughly endorse employment of 'Rhythm Of The Universe' on his audition/demo tape. A newbie and definite keeper. Continuing the set with a mixture of cuts from his three solo albums, Jay also slipped in the recently penned 'Mariachi Man' and his Amnesty International single 'Writing For Freedom'.

Yet another goodtime promotion for those privileged to be present.

Forty eight hours later, Clarke delivered what I consider was his most stunning live set ever. Maybe it was the elation he obviously felt, considering the approaching prospect of his third Texas visit. Maybe it was the appreciative reaction of the packed Spokes crowd. Maybe it was the bunch of Kings Heath hecklers sat at the front who finally had their way on the final song 'Rhythm Oil'. Personally, my votes went to the extended remix of 'Hometown', 'Belfast Heart', a chunk of classic Clarke and the recently penned 'Welcome Jimmy Swaggart, To The Promised Land'. In the latter epic, the shamed TV evangelist gets to meet the late Gram Parsons on Airport Highway, New Orleans. Realism has always been Terry's strong suit.

A word of advice or maybe more. Terry's scheduled to appear in Birmingham on three occasions during April. See if you can strike the jackpot there. And the next time Jay's around, be there, or I'll send da boys around sharpish.

Arthur Wood



TERRY CLARKE