

BRUM BEAT

THE MIDLANDS ENTERTAINMENT MONTHLY

OCTOBER 1990

PREFAB



COMEBACK

▲ THE PADDY McALOON INTERVIEW BY PAUL FLOWER

PLUS ● **CRAZYHEAD** ● **PATRIOT**
● **DEMON** ● **SEVENTH ANGEL**

► NEWS ► REVIEWS ► COMPETITIONS ► GIVEAWAYS ► AND MORE!

WIN!
20 WARNER
VIDEOS ►

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

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

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

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

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

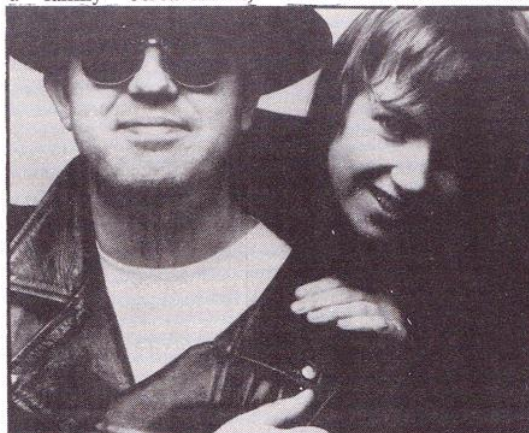
JESSE Taylor will also be appearing locally, at the Wulfrun Hall on Saturday 6th October, as part of the first Wolverhampton Music Festival. While you're contemplating the mouthwatering prospect of hearing, and seeing, one hell of a fine Texas guitarist, you won't go far wrong by also checking our Jesse's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

ARTHUR WOOD

rock label.

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

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



▲ GREGSON AND COLLISTER

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

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

formers as divergent as the Everly Brothers and Mark Knopfler.

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

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

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

► NICK BAKER

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

► BLACKENED

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

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

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

► THE KINGS OF IRONY

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

DEMO LISTEN

JOHN SLATER RATES THE TAPES

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

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

you know. Not yet awhile anyway.

► PUSHING THE STUFF

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

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

to improve at this rate.

► THE JAIN FAITH

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

● John Slater is talent scout for London Records.

L I V E REVIEWS

THE BLUE NILE/ SHAWN COLVIN

Town Hall
Birmingham

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

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

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

Arthur Wood

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

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

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

Steve Morris

NAPALM DEATH/CEREBRAL FIX/IMPAILER

Goldwyns
Birmingham

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Max

DESIRE Featuring DEBBIE BONHAM

JB's

Dudley

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

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

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

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

Paul Rees



▲ NAPALM DEATH

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

John Kennedy

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

Bowl

Milton Keynes

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

Emerging from far too long in studio

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

Paul Flower

URBAN DANCE SQUAD/ HEADS UP

Astoria
London

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

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