

# BRUM BEAT

THE MUSIC MAG OF THE MIDLANDS

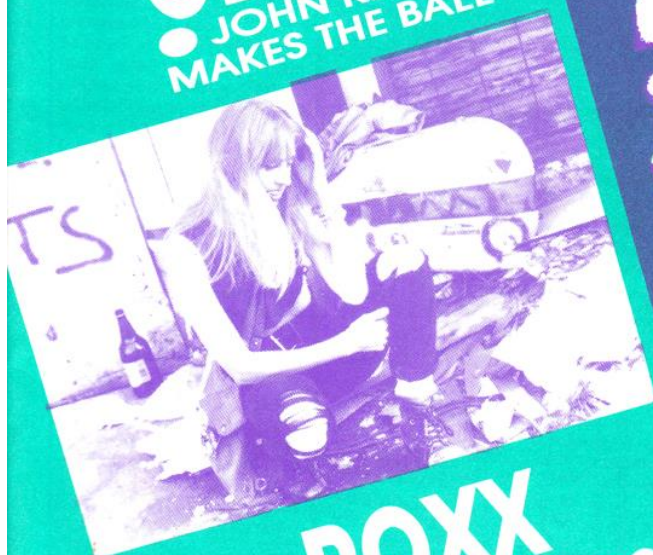
NOVEMBER 1989

## LEMON DROPS

MIKE DAVIES LICKS HIS LIPS

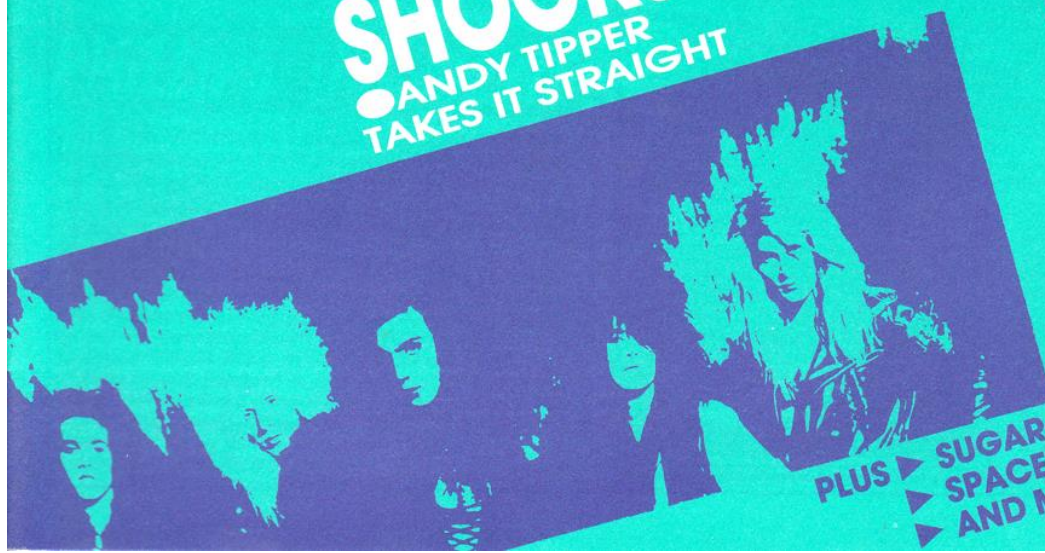
## CINDERS GLOWS

JOHN KENNEDY MAKES THE BALL



## ROXX SHOCKS

ANDY TIPPER TAKES IT STRAIGHT



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# EVERY WHICH WAY BUT ROOTS

In the October edition of the Austin music calendar, *Music City*, former *Time Out* writer and expatriate Brit Jon Conquest wrote, "Once upon a time there was a Texas girl who wrote beautiful songs and sang them like a sophisticated angel. She fell in with the great and wise Jim Rooney who made beautiful records of those songs and toted her guitar round cellars and bars across America. A lot of people started thinking she was pretty wonderful and some of them wrote about her in dinky little music magazines. Then one day she got into a game of 'Lets Make A Deal In Nashville'; now limos pick her up from airports and take her to concert halls and she appears on national TV. The records aren't as good anymore, the songs are sometimes just songs, but she's famous, so does it matter? Conquest concluded his piece with the comment that, even considering all those facts Stevie Nicks, Reba McEntire and the once rowdy Miss k.d. lang didn't com-

pete in the same league. In spite of being an ocean apart, time-served Nanci Griffith fans are beginning to feel a yearning for those long gone days of the true believer.

By  
ARTHUR WOOD

Whatever wave you came in on, you can catch Nanci on the 24th at the Town Hall. To be honest, I concur with Jon. A considered opinion of her latest MCA album, *Storms* locates it closer to elevator muzak than I thought she would ever dare to tread (there's an unintentional pun in there somewhere). The final outcome proving little more than an exercise in filling every space with the sound from at least one instrument, human or otherwise. Apart from *It's A Hard Life Wherever You Go*, lyrically limp would be some kind of a summation.

Now if there is one good reason for being present at the Town Hall on the 24th, it most surely comes in the shape of the latest recruit to the Blue Moon Orchestra – its lead guitarist, David Halley. Another songwriting son of Lubbock, from the line that stretches from Buddy Holly through the triad of Ely, Hancock and Gilmore, Halley's name and songs will gain some long overdue national exposure via this stint with the BMO. For that astute move, Nanci is to be kindly congratulated. Back home in Austin, David cut a seven track demo of his songs late last year. The recording failed to generate any record company interest. Eventually, Halley issued it himself. Currently it is the fastest selling 'home brew' cassette tape in Austin. On the week of its release the cover of the *Austin Chronicle* featured the liner photograph with the headline "He's hot, he's sexy and he's not dead, though somebody should tell the record companies".

Like lemmings, the A&R guys from those companies were searching for the next Griffith, while many songwriters of the male gender currently remain firmly on life's backburner.

The late Keith Whitley scored a Top 10 Country single with David's *Hard Livin'*, two years ago. Ely covered that tune on his rocking *Musta Notta Gotta Lotta* album, six years earlier. Jerry Jeff Walker has been warbling about how *Rain Just Falls* for what seems like eons; one day someone will make that song another massive Halley-penned hit. Tunesmiths in their own right, they're well able to spot germinating talent. Or maybe it's the undeniable fact that the wheel constantly turns. Like indigestion, history has a habit of repeating itself. The toe tapping *Opportunity Knockin'* and heart tugging ballads *If Ever You Need Me* and *When It Comes To You* can be found on Halley's debut tape; unrecorded gems like *Tonight* remain

a feature of his live shows – right now, it's surely high time for Halley.

And if one lead guitarist weren't enough; on the previous evening (November 23rd), in the heart of downtown Starchley at the Breedon Bar, Albert Lee backed by (Jerry) Hogan's Heroes makes a welcome return to Birmingham. Twelve months ago Bob Moore co-promoted Albert's appearance at the Irish Centre with John Adkins. If hot country guitar pickers are your forte, then miss this gig at your peril.

And finally, a couple of essential slabs of Celtic acoustic delight to look for; that politically forthright Scot, Dick Gaughan (formerly of Five Hand Reel) teams up with Liam O'Flynn (ex Planxty) at Wombourne Civic Centre on Thursday 16th, while Clannad currently riding the crest of Folk album chart success with their retrospective *Past, Present* are at Wolverhampton Civic Hall on the final night of the month.

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