

FREE

# BRUM BEAT

THE MIDLANDS ENTERTAINMENT MONTHLY

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## RADIO MOSCOW



INSIDE:  
**PAVAROTTI**  
**SQUEEZE**  
**WILD FLOWERS**  
**FRANK SKINNER**  
**FELONY**  
**AND MORE . . .**



# ARTHUR WOOD



▲ WEBB WILDER

## WILDER IN THE COUNTRY

NOW somewhere within this unstable mountain of former pulp on my left (you are truly of too delicate a nature, for me to relate what her indoors compares it to), is a missive from the pretender to the acoustic throne of Kingswinford, the estimable John Atkins. It's definitely here somewhere. (As frustration boils, miraculously the page surfaces). Now what's this, large single cream, small bloomer... (turns over the sheet)... Trysull Village Hall on Wednesday May 23rd, is the venue for Andy Irvine's third Acoustic Roots presentation. With a pedigree that has included stints with Sweeney's Men and Planxty, Irvine is currently a member of the Irish music supergroup, Patrick Street. Another opportunity to see this classy Irish musician playing solo. On the final day of the month, Trysull is also the venue for the first ever UK performance by the five piece, Nashville Bluesgrass Band. Although the group features some of the best known Nashville pickers; probably of greatest interest, is the fact that the band currently includes Roland White (mandolin and vocals), brother of the late lamented Clarence. As well as releasing vinyl in their own right, the band have also cut a couple of albums with Peter Rowan. Like the name suggests, high speed licks will be the main fare on the night. **SATURDAY** night at the Red Lion, Kings Heath during May, smacks of a

reborn booking policy. Last month of the season as well, with all to play for. Folk tiptoes into the nineties, huh. On the 5th, it's those five lads who think like heroes, and purvey a virtual rainbow of world rhythm - Alias Ron Kavana. The following week features Rory McLeod, the one time winner of the Kerrville Folk Festival, Great Texas Harmonica Blow job. Now a leading light on that shocking melting

plastic record label, Rory is a man of many parts and talents, many of them musical. All of them working. Hungarian band Vasmalom, on their second UK visit are there on the 19th. Almost an excuse for them to appear on the front cover of our venerable national folk journal. Seems that Canadian, Stephen Fearing played the opening night at the Blushing Cat last autumn. Having gone down a storm, he's back to repeat

(if not surpass) the tumult. Jim McPhee says, "Unless you have a week to spare, don't ever ask Clive Gregson to praise the art of Fearing". Says much.

**DOWN** at my favourite resting, imbibing and listening point in Cotteridge, a passing mention for a few of the months potential highlights. Wes McGhee is back at the Breedon on Friday 18th, for the third time in as many months, with the legendary Texas drummer, Fred Krc - now carving out a career for himself as a down home country singer/songwriter. Wes produced Freddie's 1987 debut album, 'Lucky 7' (Heartland). Currently lurking in some record tycoons vault is Freddie's second Wild Country album, 'Neon Dreams'. The six minute long 'South Carolina Blues' supposedly features one of those classy, steaming John Inmon guitar breaks; and if you don't know what I mean, then tough on you. Our own Terry Clarke also provides backing vocals on a couple of tracks. As far as Krc is concerned, thank the Lord that Friday is the 18th. While we're running with numero trios gig wise; Albert Lee, he of the nimble fingers on the fret, teams up with Gerry Hogan and the boys once more, on Monday 21st May. Parking spaces will probably be at a premium in Cotteridge during the evening hours of eight and twelve. Beware. What I continue to find utterly confusing, is the fact that the Breedon 'house full'

sign will also probably be posted for Lee. Where do those fans go on other nights, when equally great music, performed by artists of a lesser profile are presented by Bob and Anne Moore - it has always been the quandery. Life is ...

**IN** a former life, somewhere in a parallel universe, they reckon that the aforementioned Mr. Moore used to be Leary Lee Jewis. I think that was the name of the claim to fame. Old rockers just keep on ... their beat never dies ... Webb Wilder and his Beatnicks, who toured here recently supporting the Georgia Satellites, return with what seems like the speed of light, for a tour in their own right. When country and rockabilly meets American hard rock, Bob Moore's ears are sure to perk up. In the beginning 'It Came from Nashville' (Special Delivery) and more recently developed into 'Hybrid Vigor' (Island). The prospects. A night of Border Cafe rafter shaking. By the way, Webb plays and you pays on Monday 28th.

**AND** finally. Well first, personal thanks go to Bob and Anne Moore for all their worthy efforts during the first two years at the Breedon Bar. Long may their communal lum reek in Cotteridge. Second. As a taster for June, there are dates from Joe Sun and Tracy 'Mother Earth' Nelson on the horizon. Till next month's gripping episode, when there's little doubt that I'll uncover more ... hi yo Silver.

## DEMO LISTEN

### JOHN SLATER RATES THE TAPES

#### ► THE SLAUGHTERHOUSE OF MUSIC

'Never have I encountered such an appropriately titled pile of garbage in my musical life' is probably the review this lot were expecting. One of those tapes that's sent to try us. It's not crap actually. Boring, unimaginative and dreadfully recorded but at least they have made some sort of attempt at melody even if it does sound like the singer swallowed the mike. No, it

probably is crap after all, and it's not even humorous crap - just drivel.

#### ► THE LAST ASSOCIATION

This lot could use a decent vocalist. Presently they have two who painfully attempt to harmonise. Even the guitars are out of tune and played with all the passion of a Blankety-Blank competitor. Their mates and Mum's think they're great, but that's what friends are for, filling us with false hopes and laughing behind their hands. Almost embarrassing.

#### ► THE DISSENTERS

You have to admire the puerile antics of this lot. The tacky biog with it's fourth form toilet humour and self-congratulatory prose. The songs vary from boringly trite (The Boy Who Couldn't Cry) to an intelli-

gent stab at real Pop. The similarity to Blondie on 'I Remember' is uncanny in it's plagiarism with a guitar solo stolen straight out of 'Freebird'. 'Siren Song' will improve now The Dissenters have a drummer who can play in time, but I doubt if it will mean instant stardom. First of all they need some songs of their own and, more importantly - a style.

#### ► ROSTERVELT

Uninspiring vocals sit astride a fluid river of crossed rhythms and acoustic guitars mate for life in a melodic celebration of country blues. Actually the vocals improve considerably after the first track and the slide guitar playing threatens to make this the top tape of the month (not that the competition was up to much). Simon & Garfunkel, Dylan,

The Eagles and a host of seventies heros (Al Stewart too) are all apparent in one form or another. An acoustic tape this, and the electric versions have yet to grace my deck. So far so good.

#### ► 3 MILE ISLAND

What's a Scouse band doing sending tapes into *Brum Beat*? Search me but it is a demo worth consideration whatever the area.

3MI rely on a build through-

out the songs, a kind of stumbling into which trips and scabbles over a dodgy verse into an angelic chorus complete with harmonies, and shades of Curiosity et al. Almost poppy if Prefab and their contemporaries hadn't beaten them to it. Still, well worth a listen. The songs are pleasant but lacking punch, until 'Riverside'.

● John Slater is talent scout for London Records.



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Cliff Adams

When a guy pauses midway through the first song (and soundcheck) and in a slow deliberate West Texas drawl, asks



▲ ROBERT EARL  
KEEN JNR

the soundman for "a little Elvis on the voice and more talent in the monitors" then one thing is sure. Something quite contrary to ordinary is about to occur. One hundred and fifty minutes and around twenty eight songs later, I'm sure that every member of the sparse Monday night audience went home bearing the knowledge that Robert Earl is not only a fine musician and original tunesmith - hell, in the field of contemporary singer/songwriters, captured live he's that rarely seen species - an entertainer. From the opening chords of the autobiographical 'Front Porch Song' (co-written with Lyle Lovette), Keen in spoken word and through the lyrics of his songs, took us on a colourful voyage around his beloved Texas. Along the way, he distilled scenes which were, at turns intensely emotional ('Mariano' chronicling the desperation of an emigrant forced to leave his family behind in Mexico), tender (a drifter finds more than passion in the arms of 'Mariano') and amusing (the paen to Robert's favourite recreational product 'Copenhagen' chewing tobacco; wherein an affectionate girlfriend surprises him with her tongue, while our hero adds that, "her surprise lay between my cheek and gum").

With the added advantage of film, Peter Bogdanovich captured the passing of a particular era in Texas life. With only

words at his disposal, Keen expertly repeats the prescription through his music. Not content with just performing his own material, Keen mentioned that from an early age he had been an avid fan of "cowboy songs". Blackie Farrell's "Sonora's Death Row" and "Billy Grey" from the pen of Norman Blake, proved that the genre did not start and finish with Marty Robbins (who incidentally, Keen also greatly admires). For me, one song particularly stood out during the two sets which Robert Earl performed. That honour fell to the highly personal 'Leaving Tennessee'. A mellow number which perfectly captures feelings of enduring love and intense dislike. The former for a woman, the latter for Nashville. Earlier in the show, recalling one of his regular gigs at Gruene Hall, New Braunfels, Texas; Keen mentioned being approached on one occasion by a "music business person. I knew he was one of those, because his hands were cold and slimy". Cynicism? Never. More a career truism learned through experience.

The next time Robert Earl Keen Jr plays a solo date in Birmingham, let's try to fill the venue with an audience, the size of which matches his talent. He truly deserves it. Believe me, by the end of the evening the experience will be lastingly imprinted on your memory.

Arthur Wood

## MUSICIANS

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