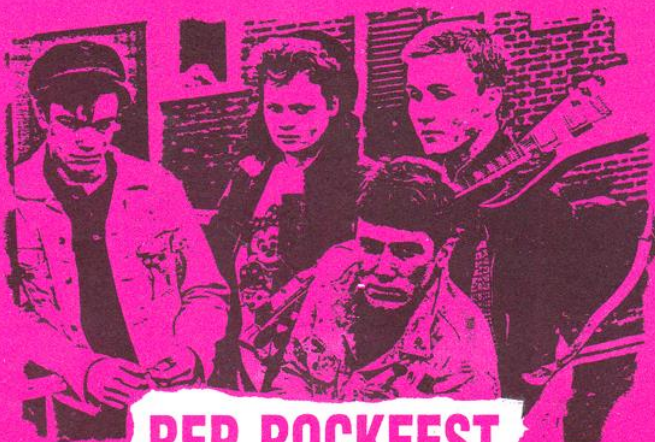


BRUM BEAT

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FREE COUNTRY FESTIVAL



**Texan Hokkanen's
U.K. debut in Brum**

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the section with no name

Well, if the prospect of waiting in an airport lounge during August becomes too daunting a prospect, why don't you pass up on that overnight hotel, and sneak back into town for one of these gigs.

Let's kick off with that local venue, which a couple of recent visitors from Texas wanted to transport back to Austin. In other words, the Breedon Bar and Border Cafe on the Pershore Road. By the way, a big hello to Hank No's 1 and 2 nice to see you lads.

Concurrent with the first Birmingham Country Music Festival, which is being held in the Midlands Arts Centre Courtyard on the afternoon of Sunday, August 7, Bob Moore has come up with a parallel couple of dates, by British country acts. On Saturday 6, Wes McGhee makes a quick return, this time around with his full band. Anyone familiar with Wes's Terrapin albums, will be aware of his penchant for Texas flavoured country music, so you know what to expect. On the day of the Festival, Los Pistoleros are at the Breedon. LP is basically the Hank Wagon Band less "the Doc", and led by fiddler extraordinary, Bobby Valentino.

Florida born, and current Austin Texas resident Eric Hokkanen (and his Offbeats), who makes his UK debut at the Birmingham Country Music Festival, brings his cross pollinated brand of bluegrass, blues, western swing and country to the Breedon on August 11. If you enjoy the gig, check out Eric's self titled debut album, on Heartland Records (HLD 002). The Shropshire based quartet Wrekin Havoc, who draw their material from a vast array of contemporary folk and country writers, support him. Thought they showed promise, when I saw them a few weeks back.

If your tastes run to blues and ragtime music, then the following ten days see Tex Petty and the Windbreakers (12th), Little Green Shed (13th), Hokum Hotshots (14th) and Smokehouse Brown (19th), all hit that groove at the Breedon. P.S. By the way, don't forget that mine host at the Breedon, celebrates yet another of his birthday's, on August 21. This time, he may even better an England Test Match score, all out.

Closing out August at the Breedon, is the Honky Tonk '88 Festival which runs over the August Bank Holiday weekend. Three American country music acts, honky tonk style are featured, although to check the exact running order, you should ring 459 6573, nearer the time. Idaho based, Pinto Bennett and the Famous Motel Cowboys were this side of "the great pond" in May, while Texan, Robert Joe Vandygriff quickly follows up his late July date at the Breedon. Completing the three way bill is Bandera, Texas resident Lore Orion and his Legends.

Look out for a September date at the Breedon, by Earl Epiphone and his band of Tornado Jam watchers. Anyone familiar with the West Texas Waltz and Honky Tonk Masquerades, will know exactly who I mean. No grapes of wrath in Texas, just check at the telephone number in the last paragraph for the exact date, of some good rockin' music.

Over at Mission Control Trysull, those ever faithful West Bromwich supporters, continue the new season of Acoustic Roots Concerts, with that antipodean Scottish exile Eric Bogle, playing there on Saturday, September 10. If folk music tinged with political comment is to your liking, then Eric's the boy. On the previous evening, in a rather hard to find back street in Kingswinford, Clive Gregson and Christine Collister, open the new season at the Woodman Folk Club. Strange to relate, it is even held in the Woodman Pub, Mount Pleasant. Never knew why the coat of arms of the Isle of Man was three shapely legs, till CC came along.

Don't pass up a rare opportunity to see Charlie Louvin of the Louvin Brothers, accompanied by Charles Whitstein, playing at Trysull Village Hall on Saturday 6th August. The Louvin Brothers music has been described as "bluegrass talking gospel". Having said that, the



▲ P.S. Flaco Jimenez and his Tex Mex accordion is back at the Breedon on August 31.

GRAMMY AWARD WINNER

late Gram Parsons, was a great fan and supporter of their music, and recorded a few of their songs before his untimely death. Emmylou Harris, who initially made her name while working with Parsons, has continued that tradition. An acoustic, aural feast in store here.

It's two years since that Dublin based septet, In Tua Nua visited these shores with their oddly listenable mixture of Celtic acoustic folk/electric rock music. Check out what progress they have made in the intervening period, at Burberries on August 16.

Having given so much space, and deservedly so, to the "Da boys from Kingswinford" and "Our man at the Breedon" — are there any other promoters out there, wondering why their gigs aren't on this page? Let's hear from ya'.

ARTHUR WOOD

PRINT OUT extra SWEETIE BABY COOKIE MONEY

It's the same old cliché circle: the rock business is vulgar and depraved but rich, so it's perfect backdrop material (hopefully) to the quick fortune with a product that again typecasts the biz so that in turn it once more provides the stage and so on and so on. The latest contender in the media 'rock for profit' sweepstakes does at least have some knowledge of and a professed affection for the music industry.

Freddie Gershon is a qualified lawyer who got caught up simply by being attorney for a personality. He ended up running The Robert Stigwood Organisation at the time of Saturday Night Fever. So he's been there and he's seen it; he was involved with Eric Clapton at the time of his marriage to ex-Mrs George Harrison for instance. But what of the book? Well, it's compulsive reading if not great literature. It is almost certainly written with TV in mind. The characters are transparent caricatures of the famous. Like there's a rowdy, busty female singer who makes it by singing in gay bath houses (Bette Midler?) She has an accompanist who launches his own career (a Barry Manilow/ Neil Sedaka amalgam?) and so on. Throw in glimpses of Clapton, Streisand et al and you're there. Oh, and the good guy lawyer has got to be our author!

ICEBERG

It's a picture of a rather tasteless but gripping world, you know, like watching accidents. That's true, the business is an iceberg. The public, the kids, see the ice above

ages you and takes advantage of you.

HUSTLER

"With its specialist lawyers it's a healthier business today; it's cleaner and the bands have a better shot at being treated fairly. The down side is that the record companies won't take a chance on a new act."

Gershon is typically American, the hustler in need of the spotlight. One can't help feeling that the book, the mini series, the publicity tour is his

way of exorcising the jealousy he must have felt whilst sitting in chambers looking after clients who got the spotlight he had negotiated. "Why not? It takes two or three years to work on something like this plus 25 years of living. Not to get it exploited is to do myself a disservice."

Sweetie Baby Cookie Honey is published by Grafton and can be bought almost anywhere. It's not art, it's almost trash or shall we say kitsch. It's also addictive. Try it.

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