

BRUM BEAT

THE MIDLANDS ENTERTAINMENT MONTHLY

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photo by paul cox

rumblefish

jeremy paige approaches his golden hour

lou dalgliesh: ronnie's big launch

reviews, news and rumour

Paradoxically, this month's best gig happens next month! Well, as it takes place on Wednesday July 1st and no right thinking person should miss it, notice is being served now. The event takes place at The Junction in Harborne's High Street and is a tribute to the good taste of the guys (and gal) from Good Time Productions. And what is it? Only the first ever pairing of two of the US of A's finest songwriting and performing talents, **Tom Pacheco** and **Tom Russell**. Pacheco should be familiar to discerning locals from his string of recent triumphs. His career started in the same Greenwich village haunts as Dylan. His first two solo albums were produced by the legendary Shadow Morton (of Shrangri-Las 'Leader Of The Pack' fame) and featured the best of the country rock session Mafia of the mid seventies such as Andrew Gold. In recent years, signed to Irish label, Round Tower, he has issued two critically acclaimed sets and has a brand new Nashville taped set in the can for autumn release. Cuts will no doubt be previewed on the night. Tom Russell, recently in the UK with a full band will be supporting with only his legendary lead picker, **Andrew Hardin** to lean on this time. Russell is a great story teller in songs and a willing writing accomplice to Nanci Griffith, Dave Alvin, Peter Case and John Prine among others. His recently issued 'Cowboy Real' album gives a tempting taste of his solo style. An unmissable gig in every sense.

Richard Thompson is back at our own beloved Town Hall on Thursday 4th June. Oakengates Theatre, Telford on Tuesday 16th and finally at the University of Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry on Friday 19th June. Hardly seems like yesterday since he was last on a series of one night stands. Billed as The National Tour, my curiosity hinges around the real reason why the sombre one is featured in tour posters

ARTHUR WOOD



TOM PACHECO

flailing a chain saw! Vince Furnier beware? Support act is former Bible leader, **Boo Hewerdine**, he of the recent debut solo set titled "History".

Lyle Lovett and his Big Band are in the UK during the middle of the month, with the nearest concert hall gig being Cambridge Corn Exchange on Wednesday 17th. As part of the Dire Straits, outdoor arena summer tour, Lyle appears at Manchester City's Maine Road stadium on the previous evening. Summer Folk Festivals in and bordering our area during the coming month include, Gloucester Docks Free Festival on Sat. 6th and Sun. 7th (Contact Lesley Prichard (0452 396620), Day of Folk Around The Wrekin on Sat. 13th (Contact Mrs. Chris Wood (0743 354423), Lichfield Folk Festival from Fri. 19th to Sun. 21st (Contact Penny McLennan (0543 424292) and finally the

Four Fools Folk Festival in Redditch from Fri. 26th to Sun. 28th (Contact the person whose telephone number happens to be (0527 545247). The 5th Jackfield & Ironbridge Bluegrass & Roots Festival takes place at the Maws Craft Centre, Jackfield, Ironbridge from Friday 19th to Sunday 21st June and features McCauley, Reed and Vidrine, Too Far Gone, Dan Cray, Cop and Sara Gray plus support (For more details contact Mal Salisbury on (0952 727698).

Acts appearing at local folk clubs during June are Fri. 5th Sean Cannon (Woodman, Kingswinford); Martin Carthy (Old Market Tavern, Moseley Street); Fri. 12th Allan Taylor (Woodman); Singers Night (Old Market Tavern); Fri 19th Janet Russell (Market Tavern); Fri 26th Singers Night (Market Tavern). The Red Lion in Kings Heath is CLOSED for the Summer.

LORD HAW HAW

His Lordship regrets that, despite bowing to criticism and instituting a supplement to their bi-monthly events diary in order to highlight local rock-based music, this is not quite a Road to Damascus experience for Sounds Like Birmingham.

His Lordship hears from impeccable sources, that at a recent SLB meeting, Arts and SLB supremos **Anthony Sargent** and **Richard Russell** agreed that instead of their usual practice of merely lecturing those present on past and future SLB events, they would deign to actually let them contribute to discussions. However, His Lordship is informed, that no sooner was the matter raised about gaining support for the praise-worthy efforts to transform the Town Hall into a popular music venue than Sargent, who has over-all responsibility for the arts in Birmingham, immediately declared that he was terribly sorry but they had run out of time and cut the subject dead.

No doubt Mr Sargent will be in wholehearted sympathy with Symphony Hall's permanent exhibition of portraits. These are designed to celebrate international artists who have appeared at the venue. Yet,

no doubt due to an unfortunate oversight that will be corrected in forthcoming months, His Lordship observes that the portraits are exclusively of classical artists. Perhaps, while happy to earn money from the concerts, they feel the likes of Lou Reed would only lower the tone.

His Lordship confesses that he is much surprised not to have yet heard from BRMB rock arrive, **Bob Lawrence**. Given the hirsute one's propensity for scurrilous gossip about whichever station he happens to be on at the time, nothing has yet been forthcoming.

Meanwhile, Lawrence's previous workplace, toytown radio station Buzz FM, has been totally taken over by Radio Clyde. Assurances have been given that none of the station staff or freelancers will be losing their jobs. A clear sign, His Lordship has always felt, that an enforced exodus looms. Programme controllers can confidently expect to receive telephone calls from the likes of **Freakie D** in the near future. His Lordship trusts they will be otherwise engaged.



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LIVE REVIEWS

DAVID HALLEY/ TERRY CLARKE The Junction Harborne, Birmingham

Match of the year. Match made in heaven. Call it what you will, I can relate with pride that David Halley - singer/songwriter par excellence - made his UK debut in my (adopted) hometown courtesy of tasteful local promoters, Good Time Productions. That one of my favourite homegrown performers completed the bill was the added bonus.

Clarke kicked off the proceedings, flying solo, with a six song set which neatly mixed the old ('The New Camelot' and 'The Stars Of Austin') and the nearly new ('The Edge Of Shamrock City'), with the freshly baked and yet to be committed to recording technology ('Remembering In Rhythm' written in Belfast at the turn of the year, and 'Two Angels' from his latest Texas trip).

Easing in with the Butch Hancock standard 'Ramblin Man', Halley was soon running through his own rich catalogue with 'When It Comes To You' and 'Rain Just Falls'. Any songwriter would count himself lucky to pen such an emotionally perfect song, once in a lifetime. That lightning should strike twice, is something truly special. 'Man Of Steel' being the song in question. A rare, rare gem. If there was the slightest shred of justice that song would be an international success. Now. Elsewhere in his nine song set, Halley delivered the familiar 'Live And Learn' and 'Further', with the yet to be recorded newie's 'Hometown' and 'It's Just As Well'.

Then it was time for the J.D. Foster Soul Brothers to get together onstage to wrap up this evening of Texa-song-ography. Alternating initially with self penned songs, the pair finally ran the gamut of the Buddy Holly/Crickets hits 'Think It Over' and 'Oh! Boy' before encoring with a couple of unofficial Lone Star state anthems, 'Dallas' and 'Bluebird'.

More, More, More and soon.
Arthur Wood

L7 The Institute Birmingham

Awesome! Four diminutive Tank Girls (actually, drummer Demetra turned out to be a bit of a giant when she left the stage, treating us to a dismissive sneer as she went) punching it out like a female version of The Ramones. Come to think of it, maybe L7 haven't taken any male bands as reference points - I remember seeing an all-girl French punk band called The Lous support The Clash in 1978, who very nearly stole the show. And we're talking Punk Rock here, no mistake, no nonsense metal, rock-hard riffs and Billy Idol curled lips.

But don't mess with 'em! Don't you boys come sniffin' round here lookin' for the latest stars in your wet dreams! Head bang, stage dive, pogo anything you like, but none of these puerile requests for breast-bearing please. Guys usually come to gigs like this for all the wrong reasons, which is

why I was pleasantly surprised to note that the jammed ground floor of The Institute included a large proportion of women - not least because a lot of them were small, so I was able to see over the tops of their heads (being a short-ass is No Fun at a gig liberally peppered with lanky giants).

Introducing every song with "One, two, three, four!" (but in German! Don'tcha love it!), vocalist, Suzi Gardner dragged us by the hair through a set (thankfully, mercifully LOUD!) which included the singles, 'Pretend We're Dead' and 'Everglad', as well as 'Wargasm', 'One More Thing', 'This Ain't Pleasure', etc. All dirty, grungy and crackling with crazed energy, threatening to spin off the road at any minute and kill us all. I mean, look at that crazy driver, Jennifer - a veritable Tasmanian She-Devil of a bass player.

We came away pummelled, ears ringing and hair lank with sweat. Ahhh, I love the smell of used leather in the evening....

L7 are brilliant. They are up there with Nirvana and The Smashing Pumpkins, maybe with a tad less finesse, and maybe with a flavour-of-the-year shelf life, but - who gives a damn? Like I said, this is Pure Punk Rock! Screw art, lets pogo an' push each other around an' fall over an' get back up again an'...an'...awww, you know the rest!

Max - x

SHOOT THE MOON/ WORLD SERVICE Pen & Wig Birmingham

Yes, children, its Heaven-Spawn of REM Night at the Pen & Wig (I can't allow 'hell-spawn', because there are none of those really Devilish rhythms in evidence), which is no bad thing, as there are one or two of the catchy little ditties that I heard tonight rattling around my skull even as I write.

For some reason, I have World Service's singer marked as an ex-preacher, there's something religious about him, in a 'Cape Fear' kind of way - why, there's even a song called, 'The Cross'. Weeell... they were ok. I could tap my foot, I could book 'em for relative's wedding without risking offending the parents (although, I dunno about this standing on tables and smashing ashtrays routine), and I could see 'em in the charts. They seemed a friendly bunch inbetween songs, but from what I could make out, the lyrics were a mite adult and serious, y'know? Apart from Dylan's, 'Mozambique', that is...yeah, well...

And here I was tapping my foot again! Lets see, Shoot The Moon seem to incorporate elements of The Only Ones, Edie Brickell, a 'Transformer'y Lou Reed, and 'Mother Nature' sounded like The Violent Femmes. Which is all very well, for these are fine reference points. But it was all a bit laid back, like the evening as a whole. I'm not saying that there should've been some kind of all-out attack, but at times the energy was of the twee variety, and most of the songs were in the same key! But listen, there is nothing intrinsically wrong with STM, I just don't see myself buying their material, that's all. But that won't stop them - like World Service, they could easily feature on 'First Night', and they had no problem getting the architecture-student looking audience on their feet for 'Shoo Be Doo'. Sarah and I had to go. One more Jack Daniels and I would've been up there with 'em (ulpl!).

MAX - x.

THE DOLPHINS Hare and Hounds Birmingham

The Smiths influence is obvious, but whereas Morrissey's idea of a good time would be a fortnight's holiday in a gallows factory, The Dolphins possess a good deal more cheer. Indie-groovesters could do a lot worse than latch onto these laid-back exponents of ironic songwriting. Cruising guitar patterns and delicious rhythms were lifted still further by the engaging lead vocals of the enigmatic Teresa. Local outfits usually suffer at the hands of inferior sound systems but tonight was an exception. Opener 'You Strayed' was an exercise in crystalline perfection - everything falling easily into place. 'Feeling Okay' summed up the mood of the band, who rose above the evening's disappointing turn-out. Indications are, that The Dolphins could make quite a 'splash' on the local scene.

Andy Tipper

CHERRY WEBSTERS Breedon Bar Birmingham

If you were to bung the Wets and Deacon Blue into the same musical mixing bowl together with a liberal sprinkling of Prefab Sprout, you might emerge with something resembling the Cherry Websters. Their guitar-based songs are as strong as any you will find, empowered by the blistering vocals of lead singer/guitarist Dave Kelly. The Cherry Websters started their set with 'Thousand Days', a driving song which should have a few A&R people pinning back their lugholes, as should 'Alone Again' - with it's West-Coast Chris Kimsey feel. Towards the end of the gig, the band slackened a bit, losing the tight groove that they had held down for most of the evening - a momentary lapse. The only improvement I can suggest is that the Cherry W's could do with a few more backing vocals to support their front man. Still this band must be one of Brum's best kept secrets and one well worth checking out.

Dave Massey

LIVE AVLC Birmingham

Live have moments of inventive music, evoking lyrics and a feel of real chemistry. However, from time to time this becomes entangled with some standard ideas, diluted and familiar images and an absence of conviction. Nevertheless there is far more to appreciate than criticism. Ed Kowalczyk at only twenty years old has a gifted voice that already sounds well travelled.

The music is strong and melodic with an array of quirky ideas. This is illustrated well by 'Operation Spirit' from debut album 'Mental Jewelry', a song which deals with all those things you were led to think were right and found to be wrong. 'Pain Lies On The Riverside' shimmers with semi-acoustic guitar whilst building in a manner similar to early Waterboys.

There is a lot to explore within what Live do and you should do so soon, because the future looks very welcoming.

Marcus Sergeant

HAWKWIND The Hummingbird Birmingham.

In the ever-changing, multi-hued world of Alternative Music, there is something intrinsically British about Hawkwind. Not in any kind of patriotic sense, but in the atmosphere of festivals, beat-up buses, credlocked hippypunks and ancient

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mythology they seem to evoke, as evidenced by the collection of slides shown throughout the evening. And they remain there, with new album, 'Electric Tepee' just out, clutched close to the hearts of ageing rockers and teenage travellers alike, virtually unchanged from the early days, the epitome of psychedelic freak-rock. That they never stray too far from their trademarked swirling headiness (imitated, but never topped) is one of their saving graces. We know what we want from Hawkwind, and woe betide the day they fail to deliver the goods.

And of course, apart from the hypnotic otherness of the music, we also attend Hawkwind gigs for the mind-melting light/slide show on offer. In fact, what we're experiencing is the kind of complete audiovisual feast that Ken Kesey's Merry Pranksters must have been chasing in their infamous Acid Tests.

To be honest, the band could have stayed at home, leaving a roadie to flick a switch and set a tape machine rolling, wheeling out timeless classics like 'Hassan I Sabba', whilst we stared in stunned amazement at the kaleidoscopic, multi-dimensional images that were projected onto a near-invisible gauze in front of the stage. Because, we only caught brief, ghostly glimpses of the performers, except when spots exploded behind them, midst writhing streamers dancing in a large fan's small gale, casting huge, eerie, shadows, like the kind of immense, twisted cardboard cut-outs you might see displayed in record shop windows whilst under the influence of powerful hallucinogenic chemicals.

For the last number, 'Master of the Universe', the veil was drawn back, and - GOOD LORD! - there was Hawkwind! The bubble was suddenly burst. So this was just a normal rock gig after all... oh well...

Really, we should have been outside in Centenary Square on this gloriously warm night. The three quarter-full Hummingbird audience could've easily upturned that hideously unfinished excuse for a statue, plonked Hawkwind on a stage in it's place, and the light show would've looked staggering projected onto the night sky. Aliens from far-flung galaxies would've paid good money to watch that one.

MAX-x

k. d. lang Symphony Hall Birmingham

Aweome. Simply staggering. A concert, no, perhaps. THE concert of the year. k.d. made those all important hairs in the nape of the neck stand on end... repeatedly. Her version of Orson's 'Crying', dedicated to him, would have had The Big O weeping and smiling with pride up there in heaven. And that says it all... awesome!

Steve Morris

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