

BRUM BEAT

THE MUSIC MAG OF THE MIDLANDS

FREE!

FEBRUARY 1990

MESSAGE FROM MACCA



● L'KAGE ● SHY
● THE LOST FOREST

★ NEWS ★ REVIEWS ★ VIDEOS
★ DEMOS ★ BOOKS ★ ROOTS
★ SATELLITES ★ HAW HAW & MORE!



WICKED THOUGHTS

◀ ANDY TIPPER MEETS THE
GOOD TIME THINGS!

● CENTRE PAGES

EVERY WHICH WAY BUT ROOTS

The prospects for February 1990 being a classic month for live music of the folk, country and beyond persuasion, seems utterly unlikely as I struggle here from word to word. Remember that old BBC potters wheel. Spinning, spinning, it never stopped. Currently, we seem to have mislaid the clay.

On the big league front, Tanita Trickortreat sets out on her second 1001 date assault of the planet (oh, the toils and tribulations of the long and wounding road), while also promoting her new Warners album, *The Sweet Keeper*. Tikaram wrestles with the cavernous void at the Town Hall, on Thursday 15th. Seems like I've missed the train as far as this particular dusky maiden is concerned. I thought the highlight of her debut album, was the violin break on *Good Tradition*. Now, would I lie to you. Comments about penning doggerel surrounded her debut album. Organs as diverse as the *NME* and *Folk Roots*, seemed to support that view. Having recently gained a front cover shot in *Q*, she is living proof that the whole cycle is a long strange trip. Nuff said.

You can always tell that it's one half of the year or the other, when the Fairports take to the road. And what particular time is that? you may ask with avid interest. Well, it's either Cropredy or Christmas time. And so what, if in this opening year of the new decade, they arrive in the West Mids a little late. Hell,

the Fairports are like Father Time.

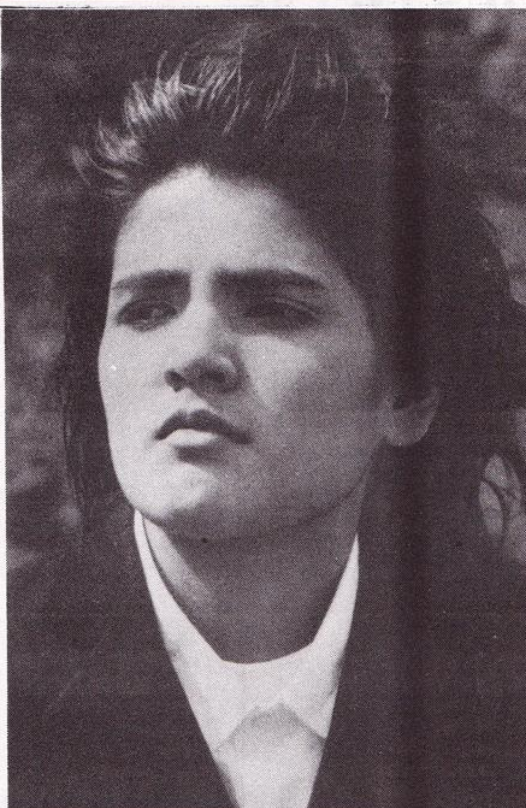
Supported in many ways by folk club, regular Kieron Halpin, the current mutation meet on the stage of our Town Hall on Monday 12th.

By
ARTHUR WOOD

And elsewhere. The Woodman Folk Club in Kingswinford, celebrates its 19th birthday on Friday 23rd, with a solo session from Dubliners front man, Sean Cannon. Following their late January date at the Breedon Bar, Alias Ron Kavana pay a quick return visit to the Cotteridge venue on Friday 24th.

Further afield. If you've got the loot to cover the travel and the tickets, then London's Royal Festival Hall beckons with the promise of solo dates by Daniel Lanois and John Cale on the 8th and 19th respectively. Music on the fringes of somewhere!

Forging ahead, Acoustic Roots rise from their period of winter hibernation, with a Saturday, March 3rd date by guitarist Duck Baker at Trysull Village Hall. I'm unsure whether Hans Thessink (Euro Blues Man, to the initiated) will be accompanying Duck this time around. At the same venue on Friday 9th, you can catch that L.A. British



● TANITA TIKARAM

exile, Ian Matthews. A founder member of Fairport Convention, he left them in the late sixties to form Matthews Southern Comfort. A period with that sadly underrated band Plainsong, was followed in the '70's and '80's by an endless stream of solo albums; on more labels it seemed, than you or I have had

hot dinners. For those completists out there, we mustn't omit Ian's *Hi-Fi Band* album for the First American label. What a history this man could tell and he probably will. Following a period in the A&R Dept of Island Records (Stateside), Ian recently returned to performing, with a Windham Hill solo deal already

under his belt. For certain, this is one March gig not to miss.

And while we're on the subject. Seems that the Californian New Age label is about to hit us with a series of folk orientated releases. A 15 track sampler album titled *Legacy* is already out Stateside, as is the Pierce Pettis album *While The Serpent Lies Sleeping*. Now there's an essential title girls, but I disgress. Just wait patiently for further developments.

And finally, try this one for size. Unfortunately, by the time you come to read about it, it will be too late to partake of the experience. The principle seemed sound to me. Many people suspect Butch Hancock is not of this planet. He probably started that rumour himself. Anyway, his latest escape amounts to five consecutive nights at the Cactus Cafe, Austin, Texas from Wednesday 31st January; the junket being billed as *No Two Alike*. The aim, along with specially invited guests, is not to repeat in performance any of his own songs on any of the five nights. This particular commercial break comes with the recommendation that if you don't already own a copy of Butch's career compilation *Own & Own* on your own Demon label, then cure that omission immediately. You CD buffs will only get a 17 track set, while the double vinyl album comes with a splendid additional 2 tracks. Almost a sin, not to own both versions.

Happy trails.

● Happy First Birthday Sky. The knockers still knock but you're on air and you're doing okay so why worry? At least Sky is here. The much troubled BSB still promises a Spring launch with mid-March a probably start date. I'll still believe it when I see it and even if they do go, expect teething problems of the mega variety. And don't join the BSB Launch Club either, don't pay the £10 fee membership it requires. I've heard a grapevine buzz that BSB might not go at all and with millionaire Aussie Alan Bond withdrawing his money, the fairy godfather figure has flown the BSB nest.

Readers of my column last issue will no doubt be glad that they heeded my warning concerning Dutch 24 hour film channel Filmnet. True to my prediction, they changed their signal slightly and rendered cheaper decoders useless in Britain. At least Satellite TV Europe is

carrying Filmnet's listings again so we can read about what we're missing. Back to Sky. Sky Movies will encrypt on February 5th. I've paid my £15 deposit which entitles me to a decoder and a smart card. I've had a phone call promising delivery but no delivery as yet. I'll be interested to hear if any Brum Beat readers have had a similar experience. If you have, drop me a line and I'll contact Sky on your behalf. True to my prediction in November's issue, Sky have saved their blockbusters for February including *ROBOCOP*, *PLATOON*, *RAMBO III*, *BROADCAST NEWS*, *RADIO DAYS*, *NIGHTMARE ON ELM STREET I* and more. Subscribers will be able to witness the Oscar ceremonies live in March on the channel. Monday, March 26th is the day and throughout the month, Sky Movies will be parading Oscar winning movies such as *Platoon*, *MASH* and *WALL STREET* in celebration!

SPACE JUNK

THE PIE IN THE SKY
SATELLITE COLUMN
BY
KEVIN WILSON

Other Sky news includes the live coverage on Sky One of Test Cricket as England tries to beat the West Indies in the Caribbean. Other sporting highlights include live coverage of the later rounds of the Zenith Data Cup (please note Villa fans) plus live ball by ball coverage of the 1990/91 Ashes series in Australia.

Sky will also be broadcasting cricket's Sunday League in the coming season and not BBC2.

A new independent survey from Continental Research indicates that in the homes of 844 people where normal TV and Satellite TV co-exists, 33.8% of the total time spent watching TV is attributed to Satellite. ITV gets 32.7, BBC1 25.7 and BBC2 and Channel 4 8.5 combined. Of the Sky Channels, Sky Movies is the most watched and Eurosport the least. The most popular Sky programmes are SKY STAR SEARCH (which is

dire), SALE OF THE CENTURY (which is worse) and THE PRICE IS RIGHT (with Central's sickly smooth Bob Warman). ALF and 21 JUMP STREET figure highly too. The survey says what you'd expect it to but it makes interesting reading. With newspapers like 'Today' still pushing out the free equipment for Rupert, Satellite TV will continue to expand. It's a shame that BSB might not be strong enough to be the much needed competition. I hope I'm wrong. Next month's column should be very interesting!

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● WARREN ZEVON

WARREN ZEVON

Transverse City
(Virgin America)

Desparately underrated, Zevon is what Jackson Browne would be if he was angry instead of indignant. One of the more intelligent - if somewhat fractured - of the singer-songwriter school of rockers, Zevon knows a thing or two about obsession, addiction, political and urban insanity and social injustice. And he sings them with a venom. Fear, paranoia, madness and impotence are the keynotes here and if musically it all becomes somewhat relentless ('Nobody's In Love This Year' the only low key offering), there's some viciously good moments along the way. 'Transverse City' is a frightening Blade Runner vision of tomorrow that has a disturbing companion piece in 'Run Straight Down' with its charned background list of fluorocarbons. 'Turbulence' (the album's most immediate track) has its narrative voice as a Russian soldier caught up in Afghanistan while 'Splendid Isolation' is a fine piece of ironic misanthropy. Splendid stuff, sadly destined for far too few collections.

Mike Davies

VARIOUS

Mastercraftsmen
(Nico Polo)

'Mastercraftsmen' is a CD and chrome cassette tribute to Coventry based instrument maker Rob Armstrong. And what better a salute than a pin sharp recording of the man's wares lovingly demonstrated by a selection of the finest pickers around, Armstrong players to a man!

To the fore are Fairport's Martin Allcock, Dave Pegg and Simon Nicol with folk scene stalwarts Gordon Gilttrap and the legendary Bert Jansch putting the instruments through some awe inspiring paces.

Several names are new to me like Vikki Clayton who contributes a crisp and clean reading of Goffin and King's 'Going Back' and Kevin Dempsey who tosses a couple of appearances into the melting pot.

My favourite is Simon Nicols solo, 'End Of A Holiday' short sweet and sentimental. Nicols playing is vastly underrated.

Steve Morris

MARSHALL LAW

Marshall Law

(Heavy Metal Records)

Edwards No. 8 guiding light Dave Juste has done a lot of ear bending on account of this band over the months and finally the proof arrives in the shape of, what hopefully is not, a vinyl pudding.

The five piece Law recorded the eleven track collection in suburban Wolverhampton with Mark Stuart at the controls making it a totally local enterprise. Not that the resulting product sounds 'local' I hasten to add.

The sound of the album is raw, powerful, potent and exciting. Melody and subtlety are not bywords here. Then again M. Law's audience are not looking for that!

On the indications contained in these grooves Marshall Law, with some serious gigging to bolster their fan base, have the makings of something big.

Steve Morris

TIMBUK 3

Edge Of Allegiance
(IRS)

Texas based twosome best known for the mini-hit 'Futures So Bright'.

This is their third album and sees them almost wilfully avoiding another hit. They've added subtle synths and rhythm boxes to folk acoustics and bluesy electrics and recorded direct to DAT.

What recommends them are the songs. 'Waves Of Grain' is a wry look at the (JFK) assassination industry whilst 'B-side Of Life' examines the fickle nature of chart based celebrity.

It's an album that will no doubt be missed by most. Joining the minority would be a good move.

Steve Morris

THE SUNDAYS

Reading, Writing and Arithmetic

(Rough Trade)

After successfully supporting Throwing Muses on their British tour, The Sundays were championed as a band to watch in the 90's and on this their debut album, their brand of guitar based anti pop brilliantly showcased in the soaring vocal style of Harriet Wheeler, The Sundays present themselves as strong contenders. 'Can't Be Sure', a nearly Top 40 sneaker but an indie smash is included as is the ebb and flowing 'Skin And Bones' and the almost catchy 'Here's Where The Story Ends', a certain single success if Rough Trade get round to releasing it. The rest of the tracks are fine too but I did get a little less acute in my concentration towards 'My Finest Hour' and 'Joy' but I was impressed with The Sundays. They've got a long way to go and their sound needs to be more substantial and less fragile before they can be in the next round of 'Who's going to follow The Stone Roses'.

Kevin Wilson

ELLIOTT MURPHY

Live

(New Rose)

Be warned, the past always catches you. Elliot Murphy was a mid seventies "new Dylan" when the pointless quest for such an item was at its height. After a couple of well received and ill bought albums he vanished (as far as I'm concerned anyway). But hark, here he comes, caught in full flight at a Swiss festival backed by a band that includes one time Modern Lover Ernie Brooks on bass and guitar for hire man, Chris Spedding.

Alarming time hasn't changed Murphy. He's still locked into the notion of reproducing 'Blonde on Blonde'. Consequently failure is always close, however that says more of Dylan's stature than Murphy's shortcomings.

'Live' is a listenable album that'll give old hippies cause to check the calendar! Less jaundiced listeners may find something new in its classic folk rock sound.

Steve Morris



● TIMBUK 3



● THE SUNDAYS

FATIMA MANSIONS

Against Nature

(Kitchenware)

Cathal Coughlan rises from the ashes of the late lamented and underrated Microdisney with further examples of intelligent, articulate rock. This mini-album debut maintains his sense of irony, off the wall imagery (Jimmy Tarbuck warning against blasphemy against Santa?) and appropriate unpredictability ranging as it does from folk-country and sophisticated neo-jazz to urgent Morrisseyisms and even with '13th Century Boy' a dash of dance floor pop. Not exactly chartbound, but delir-

iously acceptable for thinking heads.

Mike Davies

PEEL SESSIONS ALBUMS

Undertones/Microdisney/
Only Ones

(Strange Fruit)

Whilst the Peel Sessions EPs are interesting and handy the albums are gems containing a number of sessions from several dates. Thus the acts progressions can be charted. The Undertones, for example, journey from the perfect naive pop of 'Here Comes Summer' to the structured West Coast inflections of 'The Love Parade'. In retrospect, not a well chosen route.

Microdisney's brand of acid Sprout certainly sounds better for session simplicity and The Only Ones are revealed as terribly undervalued, this version of 'Another Girl, Another Planet' blisters whilst the CBS studio simply smouldered.

I hope the series runs and runs,

RECORDED
DELIVERED

KATY MOFFATT

Child Bride

(Heartland)

Recorded during the early summer of 1988 for California's Wrestler Records (who promptly went bust), Heartland's Pete Flanagan is to be warmly congratulated for "staying on the case" and finally getting this fine album into the racks.

Co-produced by Steve Berlin of Los Lobos fame, with the rowdy and rocking opening track 'Child Bride' coming from the pen of Marvin Etzione (last in service with the fledgling Lone Justice), this was long rumoured to be Katy's R&B adventure. Trouble is, you can try to, but you sure as hell ain't going to succeed in taking all of the country out of this Fort Worth girl's vocal chords. OK, on the basis of songs like Arthur Alexander's minor 1962 hit 'You Better Move On', I can see the R&B connection, but that's about as deep as it goes. If you're into hardcore R&B steer clear; if you're meat is high flying country girls, then buy two copies.

Personal favourites (and already 'end of year list' contenders) are Pat McLaughlin's two compositions. Particularly the acoustic 'Playin' Fool', which is joined in no particular order by John Hiatt's 'We Ran' and P J Proby's (yes, the one and only!) 'In A Moment'. It may be an echo from the eighties, but in my filofax this disc bodes well for this already advancing new decade. Recommended - thoroughly.

Arthur Wood

VARIOUS

Antone's Tenth

Anniversary Anthology
(Bedrock)

Now on CD with the obligatory extra cuts 'Antones Tenth' is a celebration of the Austin Texas club bearing that name where blues is the order of any day.

This celebratory album corals Snooky Pryor, Eddie Taylor, Buddy Guy, Albert Collins, Otis Rush and more.

Musically it's an atmospheric treat with the star names fully justifying reputations.

Standouts are hard to pin down as they're largely mood dependent. However Albert Collins and Buddy Guy deliver the guitar work that is my preference so we'll namecheck them.

The only thing lacking here is a return ticket to Austin and you'll be itching for one having listened, I can tell you.

Steve Morris

Mike Davies

RECORD
SPECIAL!
RELIVE**KIMMIE RHODES****Angels Get The Blues**
(Heartland)

The screenplay would have gone something like this. Our heroine and hubby Joe Gracey, visit their old friend Jack Clement at his Cowboy Arms Hotel & Recording Spa in Nashville. The object to renew their friendship and cut some tracks. On their way home to Texas, the couple decide to visit the old Sun Studios in Memphis. They discover that the studios have been reopened, not only as a living museum, but as a recording centre. Can y'all guess what happens next.

Well, the tale ends with the release of a twelve track album titled 'Angels Get The Blues'. Along the way, the lady from Lubbock enlists the help of Joe Ely (on a duet of her song 'Just One Love'), Butch Hancock (harmonica and photography) and Jesse Taylor (guitar). Ain't it great, when you can depend on the boys from back home.

Kimmie is a honky tonk girl at heart, hence the cryptic album title. Country swing, her first love. 'The Broken Spoke' out on South Lamar, Austin her idea of heaven here on earth.

Kimmie's third album is a quantum leap ahead of her previous efforts. If you love honky tonk music, this one's for you.

Arthur Wood



● KIMMIE RHODES

BELINDA BOWLER**Turning Point**
(PT)

Bowler's a talented Idaho folk-roots singer with acoustic guitar whose voice and style recalls the bedsit folkisms of both early Judy Collins and James Taylor. A varied collection of covers includes less familiar offerings from Taylor, Jackson Browne, John Armatrad and even Elton John plus Tom Jan's classic 'Lovin' Arms' and a haunting simple version of the high traditional 'How Can I Keep From Singing'. Easy, simply and from the heart. Recommended.

Mike Davies

DOLORES KEANE**Lion In A Cage**
(Ringsend Road)

Excellent second album by acclaimed Irish contemporary folkster. Moodily effective Gaelic melancholia sweeping up the heart on a fine collection of songs that includes great covers of Chris Rea's 'One Golden Rule' and Paul Brady's reflection on the Irish troubles, 'The Island', alongside material by Van Morrison, KT Oslin, the Mandela themed title track and a couple of gems from ex Moving Hearts man Mick Hanly.

Mike Davies

**SECOND
DELIVERY****THE HOLLIES****The EP Collection**
(See For Miles)**THE SEARCHERS****The EP Collection**
(See For Miles)

EP = Extended Player, a four track 45 rpm disc that was very popular in the mid 60's. Outside of The Beatles, The Hollies and The Searchers were probably the most successful chart groups of the 1964-67 period and these vinyl anthologies are tribute indeed to their respective talents.

The Hollies, with Graham Nash and Tony Hicks providing the harmony to Allan Clarke's melodious lead hit with 'Here I Go Again', 'Look Through Any Window', 'Just One Look' and 'I Can't Let Go' (all on show here) but on EP their ambition took over as they blast out Doris Troy's 'Watcha Gonna Do 'Bout It', give a lick of 60's beat pop to Little Richard's 'Lucille' before latching onto Chuck Berry's 'Memphis Tennessee' and making it sound just fine in true blues fashion. Huge over here, The Hollies never made it big in the States but The Searchers had 14 Top 100 chart entries in America and their lazy American sound was instantly recognisable and oh so catchy. Their classic cuts appear on this LP, 'Sugar and Spice', 'When You Walk In

The Room', 'What Have They Done To The Rain', 'Needles and Pins' but they too score heavily in the ace cover stakes with a truly awesome 'Love Potion Number Nine' and an equally raucous 'Money'. Tony Hatch of the then all embracing Pye label was lucky enough to have signed The Searchers from under Brian Epstein's nose. To his premature death, Epstein publicly regretted losing out and one listen to this collection reveals why.

Kevin Wilson

TOM PAXTON**Storyteller**
(Start)

Selected from Tom's prodigious output and limited to the period '65-75, 'Storyteller' distils the writer's appeal into one indispensable set.

Rather at odds with prevailing fashion the pipe smoking and be-capped and balding Paxton always looked as though he were a generation adrift from peers like Phil Ochs and Dylan. Such fashion considerations overshadowed his considerable talent however. Whether the stately romance of 'Last Thing On My Mind' or the scalpel honed humour of 'Talking Vietnam Pot Luck Blues' he was a man with a rare communicative gift.

His craftsmanship may indeed have relegated him to division two in the face of the rawer talents he journeyed with. Hopefully this set and time will help re-

evaluate that mistake.

Steve Morris

**THE MOODY
BLUES****Greatest Hits****(Threshold/Polydor)****E.L.O.****The Very Best Of**
(Telstar)

Two Brummie supergroups on the T.V. advertised hits means bucks trail.

The Moodies is a desultory third attempt hits set. Poorly packaged and ill chosen its only sales aid is the presence of two re-recordings, 'Question' and 'Isn't Life Strange' neither of which benefit from the replacement of the trademark mellotron sound with a real orchestra.

A quarter of a century on surely the Moodies deserve a quality retrospective set rather than this pot boiler.

E.L.O.'s Best Of is a twenty four track double made for TV set culled from the turn to gold seventies sides made when Jeff Lynne was at his Beatle recreating peak. Indeed Lennon is reputed to have said that had they not split when they did the fab5 would have sounded not unlike E.L.O., praise (of a kind) to be sure.

Unhip they may have been at the time but hindsight is kinder to E.L.O. than may have been expected.

Steve Morris

KING PLEASURE AND THE BISCUIT BOYS**This Is It!****(Big Bear Records)**

Things was better then. Gran could walk the streets at night. Footballers still wore baggy shorts. You could still buy a Lucky Bag for less than a penny. And you could tune into jumpin', steamin' R 'n' B on every Wurlitzer juke, every bakelite radio and in every sweaty dive bar.

You could flip along the K rack in your local record store without a Kylie in sight. And if you got there real early (before the kids snapped up every copy) you could even get your hands on a slab of solid gold like *This Is It!* - the legendary second long-player from those unheeded, jump-jive goofballs King Pleasure and the Biscuit Boys.

Here are twelve pounding R 'n' B classics with enough bomp, stomp, jump and thump to start the feet tapping on a tape measure. Not like the plodding, limp-wristed slush you'll hear from kids today. Kids got no discipline any more - not since matching suits went out of style.

Like the combo's debut record, there are enough rough edges and raw enthusiasm here to bottle up a good live sound - including a full complement of good-time hollers, wisecracks, talkovers and the obligatory fake party background on *House Party*. And of course, there's the unmistakable Pleasure vocal - that unique, goofy, semi-strangled sound that tells you loud and clear that you're havin' a good time.

Signs of progress, too, though. The saxes are sharper (tune into Poppo Martin on the title track, for example), and the horn arrangements are more lively - helped by some lipsmackin' guest trumpet from Hot Lips Burnett. As ever, Piano Man Skan rolls the show along with a rhythm that spreads to your toes like a bad case of impetigo.

Listen out for pure platinum cuts like *Jumpin From 6 To 6*, *This Is It* or *Lovin' Machine*. Biscuitette Lisa 'Sugar' Lee sounds a little polite on *Bongo Boogie* (Big Joe Turner meets Kiri Te Kanawa) but on the classic *Why Don't You Do Right?* she does it just right. There are a few familiar standards - *Wine Spo-Dee-O-Dee*, *Bad Bad Whiskey*, *Mr Blues Is Comin' To Town* - but by and large, collectors and historians will be pleased with the choice of material. On the other hand, anyone who's not an R 'n' B steeped fanatic might find themselves wondering why brainless potboilers like *Bongo Boogie* weren't allowed to rest in well-deserved obscurity.

Who gives a damn? Pound yourself between the ears with a few spins of *This Is It!*, and you'll soon be as fanatic as the rest of 'em. And *Bongo Boogie* will sound like pure poetry. *This Is It*, folks!

Tony Berry

Footnote: the press release that came with the record says that *This Is It!* is also available as a CD. Didja ever hear anything so absurd? It's like buying a colour telly to watch *Casablanca*. Sell the CD player, buy the LP and spend the rest of the money on drink.

