

BRUM BEAT

THE MUSIC MAG OF THE MIDLANDS

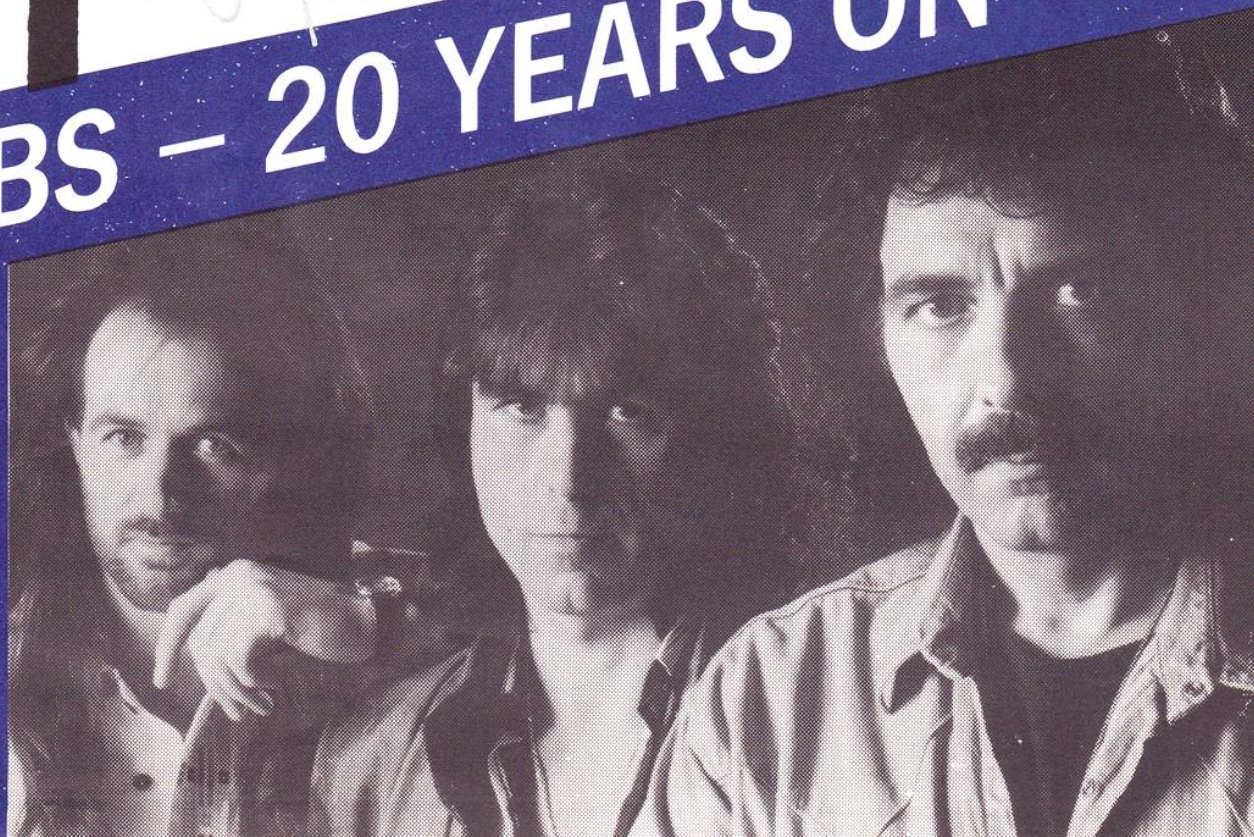
MAY 1989



BLUE
THE BLUES
BROTHERS
BAND HITS
BRUM
BLACK

SABS – 20 YEARS ON

PLUS
JESUS
JONES
GREEN
ON RED
POPPIES &
DROPPIES



EVERY WHICH WAY BUT ROOTS

A couple of anniversaries to mention this month. Twelve months ago, Brum Beat's worthy (or was that "swarthy, hirsute?") Editor, Steve Morris enticed me into becoming a monthly scribe. Well, it was either that, or a visit from da boys. And it's truly amazing how money whippers. Meanwhile, a little south of here, the Moore's (Bob and Ann) departed Oxford, for the joys of cosy Cotteridge - and honky tonk heaven at the Breedon Bar and Border Café. A year of ups and downs, but hell, just think of the musicians who have already passed through those portals. And it only seems like yesterday. Nice one!

On that note, I still cannot (honestly) believe that Rodney Crowell is set to take the Breedon stage on Wednesday, May 10th as part of the Route '89 promotional campaign (this gig is also subtitled, the Border Café's 1st. Birthday Party) With five solo albums to his credit, an armful of record production successes (eg: father-in-law Johnny Cash, wife Rosanne) plus recognition from his peers, that

here walks a quality songwriter; it took his most recent CBS album 'Diamonds And Dirt', for Rodney to finally strike paydirt, as far as major solo chart success was concerned. The latter album yielding two US Country No. 1's to date. One of those, 'She's Crazy For Leaving', was co-written some eight years ago with some guy named Clark. Kind of proves that quality will always win through, eventually.

Speaking of the Route '89 campaign it should have you all running out to your friendly HMV store to buy one full price album from this country music promotion; that way, you'll score a freebie sampler tape of the artists involved. Could be a valuable rarity, in years to come.

Those of you resident in our North Western (Midlands) border areas are in for a solid toe-tappin' weekend, early May. The Cooking Vinyl label's package tour "Treat Your Feet", hits the Wolverhampton Civic Hall on Friday 5th. The Oyster

Band (new CV album, 'Ride') headline, while Edward II & the Red Hot Polkas (another new CV album, 'Two Steps To Heaven') and The Four Brothers support. By the way, lads, that was only CV - not CD - despite the rumours. Not content with that, at the Wulfrun Hall on the following evening, there's The Men They Couldn't Hang. No doubt out to let you hear some tunes, including their latest vinyl pressing, 'Rain, Steam And Speed'. Later on, on the 13th to be exact, the Civic Hall plays host to that Irish institution, Clannad. Their latest single 'The Hunter', is culled from their new RCA album 'Past And Present'.

Meanwhile, back in downtown Cotteridge, another of our Texas cousins is due to pay us a visit on Friday 12th. Gary P. Nunn, late of the Sparkles, The Lavendar Hill Mob, The Lost Gonzo Band and some four subsequent solo discs (elpe-e-e-s) will be out to tell us, what he likes about Texas. On a visit to our capital city many years ago, Gary composed the



● Oyster Band

anthem, 'London Homesick Blues (Home With The Armadillo)'. Somehow, Texas was never the same after that song. Gary showcased his latest album 'For Old Time's Sake', at Raven's Garage, Austin on March 17th. That gig, formed part of the 3rd annual South By South West Music Festival, which saw our own Terry Clarke play The Hole In The Wall Club, on the following evening. Terry slayed 'em.

There's more US country at the Breedon on Thursday 25th, from visitor

Bobby Lee Springfield, while it's Narvel Felts on Sunday 28th.

Sonny Curtis, a true gentleman and fine songwriter, returns for another UK tour in late May. On the 31st, you can catch him at the Breedon. Then it's Trysull Village Hall, and a John Atkins Acoustic Roots Promotion the night after. If you've never seen this former Buddy Holly associate perform live, do yourself a favour.

print out

KEVIN WILSON'S GUIDE TO WHAT'S NEW IN PRINT

► **BEYOND THE VELVET UNDERGROUND** (Omnibus £6.95) recalls the life, times and influence of arguably the world's first truly 'underground' band. There was an aura of mystery pervading the Velvets from day one but with a collection of talent that included Messrs. Cale, Reed and the mercurial Nico, how could it be anything else? Dave Thompson's book homes in on the eccentricity but also the charismatic aspect of the band. Their association with Andy Warhol in the late 60's was a moment in music history when art met art and the world watched with a glazed expression. No-one was quite sure if it was meant to be taken seriously or not. 'White Light White Heat' is still a definitive pop album. Twenty-one years old and still as fresh sounding today as it was then and 'Sister Ray' an even more relevant trailblazer. The Velvets made white noise accessible to the masses and we've never recovered. The schism within the ranks spawned three great solo careers with the birth of 'Walk On The Wild Side', 'The Ocean' and a Nico Beggars Banquet LP called 'Camera Obscura' that is as near to Leonard Cohen in lyrical beauty as dammit. If the Velvet Underground is simply a name that many contemporary stars cite as an influence, or if they're just a memory, do yourself a big favour. Get this book, read up and select one or two things out of the discography. Sit down, shed the lights and listen... it'll be worth it.

► **DIDN'T YOU KILL MY MOTHER-IN-LAW** (Methuen £7.99). must be the comedy book of the year, so far. Roger Wilmut and Peter Rosengard trace the history of alternative comedy in Britain right from the early days of The Comedy Store (that tiny bastion of a club in London that first opened its doors in 1979) through to the anarchic Channel 4 cult show 'Saturday Live', a programme that gave the opportunity to many aspiring laughsmiths and

musical acts. As you'd expect, all the major alternative stars (contradiction?) get a major mention and, as Barry would say, why not? I remember interviewing a nervous Rick Mayall aka Kevin Turvey in 1981, just as a 'Kick Up The Eighties' was breaking and I thought then that here was a comic genius waiting to happen. So it happened, along with Ade Edmonson, Nigel Planer, Chris Ryan (The Young Ones), French and Saunders, master script writer Ben Elton, the very under-rated Peter Richardson and Keith Allen. Others were spawned who had a local connection, notably the wickedly funny John Dowie, Birmingham University student Victoria Wood and sidekick Brummie, Julie Walters. In later years, newer faces appeared, the next generation waiting to happen. For example? The stars of the current Carling Black Label ads, Stephen Frost and Mark Arden, Naked Video's Helen Lederer and gay funnyman Simon Fanshaw (not to mention Fry, Laurie et al). The term "alternative comedy" is probably now old fashioned but the effect on the comic establishment is still being felt. As long as the Bernard Mannings and Jimmy Tarbuck are around, we need a purer brand of political anti-minorities comedy.

Kevin Wilson

► On the shelves in time for Route 89 is **WHO'S WHO IN NEW COUNTRY** (Omnibus £7.95) by Andrew Vaughan. For new converts and the curious it presents a reasonably comprehensive introduction to the genre's dominant personalities. It does however frustrate with its lack of solid detail and annoy greatly due to the almost unforgivable neglect of discography.

The artist portraits are enthusiastic, if uncritical, and at times rely too heavily on record company press info, viz, the claim that The Wagoners are A&M's first country signing, a fact that neglects The Flying Burrito Brothers and Waylon Jennings!

But, if you need a quick sketch before sampling the music, the book serves that purpose excellently and on those non-specialist terms is a success.

Steve Morris

And if you spot any of those big posters on the hoardings around town, then you won't need me to tell you that it's Friday 26th - Every Brothers (NEC), Wednesday 31st - R.E.M. on their "Green World Tour" (NEC), Thursday 1st June - 10,000 Maniacs (Alexandra Theatre) and finally Wednesday 6th June - Robert "Bobby" Zimmerman from Duluth, Minnesota (NEC). And a megabucks entry fee to one and all.

Elsewhere in the nooks and crannies of the West Midlands, the diary for the next few weeks shapes up a little like this: 11th - Keith Hancock (Junction); 12th - Martin Carthy and Les Barker (Long Boat) & Singers Night (Woodman); 18th Pete Cow with songs from his new Backshift album 'A Right Song And Dance' (Junction); 19th - Singers Night (Long Boat) & Tom McConville (Woodman). 25th - Whipper-snapper (Junction); 26th - Singers Night + free cheese and pickles (Long Boat) & Closed (Woodman).

Into June and it's: 1st Melanie Harrold and Ollie Blanchflower; 2nd - Closed (Woodman); 8th - Elaine Morgan (Junction); 15th - Isaac Guillory Band (Junction).

And after that lot? Well, you should be plain tuckered out... or broke!

Arthur Wood