

SLAP

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MAGAZINE



Skambambo



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Hello and thanks for taking a peak at this issue of Slap Magazine. As we deadline it's the hottest day of year so far, lets hope it continues into April so we can join you in the beer garden as usual. Fingers crossed then for a long hot festival friendly summer!

In this issue we preview our next Slap night at the Arts Workshop in Worcester with the return of Poland's finest Skambomambo. We look at the local arts scene at the Workshop, the Boars Head Gallery open day and some local Theatre too. We have a mini fest at the Hive to look forward too as well as reviewing some great gigs involving some breaking local acts.

We take a look at the revitalised music scene in Malvern as well as Herefordshire through the eyes of Circuit Sweet.

We meet Jimmy Carr at Artrix and take a look at the thriving cinema there too. If you didn't witness the return of the mighty Dreadzone last month then you can catch up with us. So with art, theatre, comedy and cinema covered, as well as all genres on music, is there anything we've missed? What about dance & sport? We have that too with Capoeira - the national sport of Brazil. Who am I kidding? I'm bound to have missed something out!

So enjoy the read, see you in a venue soon, I'm of for a pint in the sunshine...

Ed



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**LISTINGS IN
CONJUNCTION WITH:**





The future's looking promising for **Harry, Sam, Dom and Doug aka Peace** - who previously went under the moniker **November And The Criminal**. They were named among the NME's top 100 acts to look out for this year, are currently in the middle of a nationwide tour and release their first 'proper' single **Follow Baby** on April 22nd - don't forget your roots lads...

The **Proclaimers** have been named as headliners for this year's **Nozstock Festival** at Rowden Paddocks near Bromyard - taking place from July 27-29. Nozstock is always near the top of the favourite rural/festivals rankings - despite having a bit of a struggle in recent years due to some appalling weather. But credit to the sheer bloody-mindedness of organisers Pete and Ella Nozworthy for toughing it out - because when it's reasonably fine (as last year) Nozstock really is one of our local gems!! Your SLAP team will be there of course...

They don't write songs like that any more - well they still do actually... Status Quo will bring their trademark heads-down no-nonsense boogie to **Eastnor Park** on Saturday July 28. The Quo are veterans of more than 5500 live performances and have been seen by an estimated 24 million fans - and amazingly still have the same frontmen - Francis Rossi and Rick Parfitt - when they launched their first single **Pictures Of Matchstick Men** in 1968. Support come, from another classic band of the 70's in the form of 10cc...

If you watch the London Marathon on April 22 - be sure to keep an eye out for local singer/songwriter **Jamie Knight** - running the event in aid of St Richard's Hospice, and in memory of his sister, who sadly died from breast cancer age just 42. Jamie also plays regularly with folk/blues duo **Wooden Horse** and fronts up 11-piece outfit **Jamie Knight And The Big Swing** - best of luck mate...

Kidderminster outfit **The One Twos** are headlining the **O2 Academy 3** which sold out a month before the gig, it's the release show for their debut single '*I don't claim benefits*'



Metal punk outfit **Dogs of Santorini** have been in the studio recording their first EP. To be released soon, the five tracks will include *Never Let Me Down*, *We've Got Something Now* and *Doggie Style*. A video is to follow.

It's that time of year again when the mad folks of Malvern dress up in silly clothes and head to the Winter Gardens. Yes it's **Malvern Fringe's May Day**.

With two stages, loads of performers, music, entertainment and muddled merriment! The theme this year was to be **The End of the World** with it being 2012 and all but with some feeling that there may be some truth to that, it got diluted to just **The World!** Rendezvous in Priory Park on Saturday May 5th where the band line-up is **Sam Eden**, **Hullabaloo**, **Mr Phil 'Aytch' Howard** and the **Treefrogs**..



The rise and rise of the **Hullabaloo**. New soul outfit with Malvern connections Hullabaloo have made it through to the next round of Live and Unsigned. Having won the heat in Cardiff Bay last weekend the seven-piece are off to Reading for the semi-

finals. That puts them one gig away from playing the **O2 Arena**! Having been spotted at the event in Cardiff, Hullabaloo have been offered a slot at this Summer's **Boomtown Fair** at an unspecified location somewhere down South. And to cap it all they have been nominated to represent Cardiff in *Rock the House*, a live music competition that could see them play the House of Commons! The band's five track EP is in its final stages of production and will be released at a launch party in Cardiff in April. A video for their single *Landslide* will also be ready at the launch event. For more info find them on Facebook.

Applications are flying in for **Malvern Rocks**, the three day music festival

being held the first weekend of August. The organisers have posted a video on Facebook and YouTube which they say is the first of several. The festival still needs helpers, volunteers and performers. If you want to get involved, get in touch.



For more details visit www.malvernrocks.com

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Worcester Music Festival

BUZZING LINE-UP CONFIRMED FOR MINI FEST AT THE HIVE

Saturday, April 28th

Everyone from contagious noise monsters Das Sexy Clap to the heavenly Paula Evans Youth Choir is lined up to play at Worcester Music Festival's event to launch The Hive this month.



The free entry mini-fest at the all-singing, all-dancing new library and history centre in The Butts – scheduled to open in July – takes place on Saturday, April 28 and will feature a super eclectic mix of local acts, including selected buskers to add a bohemian flavour to proceedings.

As with Worcester Music Festival itself, which is set to hit the city over the August Bank Holiday weekend, the explosion of music between midday and 7pm will also be a chance for budding musicians to attend an inspirational workshop, catering for all skill levels and age groups.

Brian Hoggard, Worcester Music Festival at The Hive co-ordinator, said this was an unmissable event for anyone who loved music and a sneak peek of this year's four-day festival in August.

"Whether you are fan of one of the acts lined-up or are out in town and fancy an entertaining reprieve from shopping, our event at The Hive is going to be awesome, with a diverse selection of amazing acts performing in the atrium, the sound-proofed lecture theatre and in the landscaped gardens. It is also a chance to check out this much-talked about gold-roofed building prior to its official opening in July – we've already had a tour and it, truly, is quite impressive."

The Hive in Sawmill Walk, The Butts, will house a quarter of a million books and over 26,000 records of historic monuments and buildings.



Chris Wemyss – Das Sexy Clap

Photography by Sarah Colquhitt

Worcester Music Festival at The Hive line-up (workshops to be confirmed)

12.15pm	Paula Evans Youth Choir	Atrium
1.00pm	Snoezelen Rock School	Lecture theatre
1.45pm	Marie-Claire Berreen	Atrium
2.30pm	Theo	Lecture theatre
3.15pm	Das Sexy Clap	Atrium
4.00pm	Kings & Folk	Lecture theatre
4.45pm	Johnny Kowalski & the Sexy WeirDOS	Atrium
5.30pm	Richard Clarke & The Rafterz	Lecture theatre
6.15pm	Best of Young Jazz	Atrium

For more on Worcester Music Festival at The Hive, visit www.worcestermusicfestival.co.uk, where you can also find out about this year's summer festival. You can also sign up to follow the festival on Facebook and Twitter. For more on The Hive, visit www.wlhc.org.uk.

LAST CHANCE TO APPLY FOR WORCESTER MUSIC FESTIVAL

Only one month to go before applications close for this year's Worcester Music Festival, an explosion of live, original music taking place across the city this August Bank Holiday weekend.

With the number of bands and artists who have already applied almost hitting 700, there's still time to apply – you just need to perform your own material and be able to excite or inspire a crowd at one of our fantastic venues. Oh, and be happy to play for free!

To apply for Worcester Music Festival 2012, visit www.worcestermusicfestival.co.uk. The deadline for applications is Tuesday, May 1. Follow us on Facebook and Twitter.

by Mel Hall

REVIEW

Virgil & The Accelerators

The Marris Bar, Worcester

Friday 16th March

A solid start to the gig with some fine tunage from yours truly on the decks of steel (well, the laptop of slowness ..)

Support band, Quinn, with front man Pete Mann on guitar kick off their set with Purple Haze with a passion and skill of someone twice their age. The duo of drums and guitar held the sound together and the crowd gripped right to the end. Frontman Pete Mann has talent, and doubled with the power house of Jack Looker on drums they are a force to be reckoned with.

From the first intense wail of guitar you knew you were in for something special. And the standing room only venue knew it too. Virgil had arrived, and he had bought the ghost love child of Stevie Ray Vaughan and Gary Moore with him in his soul. Their critically acclaimed album 'The Radium' has been recognized in Classic Rocks 'Best Of 2011' and the coveted USA magazine Blues Rock Review in 'Best Albums of 2011'.

Virgil & The Accelerators have toured with and won the recognition of big name bands such as Uriah Heep, Robin Trower, Blackfoot, Southside Johnny, Oli Brown, and Joanne Shaw Taylor. With Joanne they opened for the super group Black Country Communion at their two sold out shows at Wolverhampton Civic Hall and Shepherds Bush Empire.

This truly awe inspiring threesome do not have a bad beat or bum note in their bodies. Highly professional sound, attitude and great stage presence from the Bromsgrove three. You will be hard pushed to find a tighter, more talented bunch of musicians this side of ... well, anywhere..



I have to admit that blues influenced rock is not my usual tipple. What makes this band so special is the almost telepathic connection they have on stage. You go to see 'a band' and not just a talented front man. These guys perform as one, a rarity these days. With enviable looks across the board these guys really look like a band as well! You can check out videos and tracks on their web site... www.vataband.com.

by Chris Bennion



Woo hoo its April.....The trees are budding, the rabbits are hopping, the sun is warming our cockles and Spring is upon us! This means exciting things here at the workshop with two major events re-launched this month.

We give you the fabulous free acoustic **Lazy Sunday** on the 15th April from 1pm with The Players, Dryftwood, Claire Boswell & Jez King. Let's get back out into the yard for cider and local sounds!

Also we have the brilliant **SLAP** magazine night beginning with 'Skambomambo', a seven piece Polish Ska band on Saturday the 21st April. Come and check out these guys, they will get you movin' and groovin' for sure. £5 on the door.



On your starting blocks! We welcome back, after the success of 'Nursing Lives', the very special 'Vamos Theatre'. In association with The Everyman Theatre in Cheltenham, 'Vamos' presents its new production, 'Much Ado About Wenlock', a play about health, sports, a reforming doctor, and a runaway chicken!

A glorious full mask show, led by Rachel Savage with original music, physicality, and choreography, 'Much Ado About Wenlock' is an adventure for audiences from 8 to 108! "A theatrical tale of Olympian feats...it's a winner!"



Tuesday 24th April from 7pm. With an exciting pre performance menu from Cafe Bliss and our special volunteers dressed for the occasion!

We are pausing the popular term time Saturday kids club for the Easter Hols and will re start on the 21st. The price will change to £5 per child. (12.30pm til 2.30pm.) In the meantime we are offering a variety of fun filled activities for the holidays.



Crafty Easter Hunt (10am til 11.30am £3) and **Pottery Egg Painting** (12pm til 1pm £4.50) Thursday 5th and 12th. Come paint The Giant Egg and other Easter themed canvasses (10am til 12pm £3). Wed 11th April.

We also have a wide range of courses for adults including ceramics, painting and drawing, watercolour, life drawing, guitar, yoga and dance. All starting the new term this month. For details please contact us, pop in or check out our facebook page until our new website is completed.

<http://www.facebook.com/WorcesterArtsWorkshop>

Remember to check out the two brand spanking new exhibitions which grace us this month, with Cos Ryan's **Dead Ends** graphic novel on display plus Peter Goggins canvasses downstairs in the Cellar gallery. (See opposite page) 1st til 27th April.

Sunday 22nd April, Splendid cinema presents: 'The Mill and the Cross' (Lech Majewski, 2011, Sweden/Poland).

Polish-born director Majewski's latest film explores the creation of Pieter Bruegel's famous "Procession to Calvary" (1564); an art-film about the artistic process. Starring an impressive cast including Rutger Hauer, Charlotte Rampling and Michael York! £5. 7.30pm.

And we are looking for dancers and performers to take part in a dance platform event in June which is open to all forms with ten min slots available. For details contact: kirstyadele@gmail.com

.....as well as seeking interest for a playwrights group we would like to start up.....anyone out there who may be interested in being part of this or to tutor, please contact: kateworchesterartsworkshop@gmail.com

Thanks for your support as ever, we need you to help us make the Workshop wonderful! Anyone interested in volunteering a little bit of time and being part of the crazy gang, please contact us or pop down.

Dead Ends - Cos Ryan

Dead Ends is an online graphic novel series based in Worcester by **Cos Ryan**. Taking a lot of pride in bringing the venues, the cafés and the streets to life, this exhibition showcases some of Cos' work as he tries to demonstrate what happens between the hand drawn page and the final work.

"My main inspiration is the story itself. I just felt that in comics, on the rare occasion that a story is set in England, it's always the big cities especially London, which gets all the focus. I wanted to write something personal to my situation and thought the idea of setting a comic in a city that a) no one's ever heard of and b) I have a real love/hate relationship with was a lot of fun. I've taken real time and effort making sure that any landmarks and venues are drawn so they at least resemble their real life counterparts."

Cos' love of doodling and drawing became a firm part of his work during University when he used them to take his mind away from things he found hard to deal with. At the same time he got into reading webcomics and immediately wanted to give it a go.



"I've always been a writer. I find there's nothing on Earth that can match the emotional high of creating universes, giving literary birth to characters and seeing what they do. Not always successful mind, **Dead Ends** is the first project I've done that I can look at with some degree of pride."

Some of Cos' influences come from **Jeph Jacques'** online graphic novel '**Questionable Content**'. "The realistic characters, the humour and the art style are just superb, and made me want my own online comic. It was reading the **Scott Pilgrim** books by **Bryan Lee O'Malley** that made me want to do a multi volume story. The depth of character and simplistic, playful art helped me come up with some of my characters. **Dead Ends** wouldn't exist if not for these guys."

"I want to make my comic real. Really portray what it's actually like to live in this modern age of global economic screw ups and deep unease. And where better than Worcester?"

You can follow **Dead ends** at www.deadendscomic.net.

The exhibition runs in **Cafe Bliss** at the **Worcester Arts Workshop** until 27th April. Wed to Sat 10am-5pm.

Into the Void - Peter Goggins

Showing a mix of paintings from both the popular '**collaborators**' series and more recent landscape work, **Peter Goggins** grew up in the northwest in a small former mining and textiles town on the edge of the Pennines which was bleak, with little employment and a history of social problems. He studied at **Burnley college of Art and Design** developing an interest in Neolithic landscapes such as **Stonehenge** and **Avebury** whilst drawing and painting birds and animals. He went on to study **Art and Design** at the **University of Worcester** in 2006 where, while working on his dissertation, he began looking into the use of **Christian iconography** in the work of **Germanic painters** such as **Max Beckmann** and **Emil Nolde**.

"The '**Collaborators**' series is a look at the figure itself as a means of pathos where the narrative theme is reminiscent of the many crucifixion paintings of northern Europe".

In 2009 Peter went on to do an MA in fine art where his dissertation, and indeed, recent work, has been a close study of what makes up landscape.

"A quest for the 'truth' in this question has been a long standing fault line in landscape depiction. Does the landscape



come from inside or out? My paintings take a slanted look at the mechanism of figure and ground, with the viewers themselves sometimes becoming the 'figure'. Entering the world of the paintings can be an uncompromisingly bleak one with no way out except the artificial light sources."

Goggins' paintings have a reputation for being edgy and uncompromising yet still maintaining a visual 'kick'.

Come and take a look into his world.

Cellar Gallery. Worcester Arts Workshop. 1st to 27th April. Wed-Sat. 10am-5pm.

<http://www.contemporarypaint.co.uk/>

WORCESTER ARTS WORKSHOP

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by Kate Cox



REVIEW

The Barflys at The Great Malvern Hotel 17th March 2012

The Great Malvern Hotel booked The Barflys to play on St Paddy's night and wow what a good choice of band they got for this night. The hotel was packed, all enjoying a superb evenings entertainment from this great band. They consist of **Andy Hiseman** on lead vocals & rhythm guitar & **Pat Allen** on lead guitar and vocal harmonies, playing a mixture of rock, jazz and country blues much of which is their own self-penned material. With Andy's unique rhythm playing and powerful vocals and Pat's outstanding lead guitar work and excellent harmonies.

For this gig they were also joined by the awesome **Spike Barker** on double bass unfortunately his sister **Joelle** who plays drums and percussion could not be there. They began the set by playing a song entitled "All of me" and followed this up with another Jazz number "Red Hot" which was extremely well received by the attentive audience. The evening only got better with better with The Barflys playing both covers and original self penned material.

Reading through their list of songs that they do you are really getting a vast mix of superb harmonies and

finger licking good guitar techniques. Taking a break from a 45 minute set we were entertained by Pat's niece **Jess Allen** who is a seriously talented 21 year old, a definite one to look out for. Jess is influenced by such people as Bob Dylan, Damien Rice amongst others.

Finishing off the second set, The Barflys continued to enthrall and please a very attentive audience with tunes such as "Dirty Old Town" very apt for the evening and "Driving me Crazy". Finishing off the set with a medley consisting of "Standing on a Rock", "Flip Flop and Fly" and "Movin on Over". I for one will be seeing them again and if you to want to check them and find out more then check out their website www.barflys.co.uk for information and upcoming gigs.



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PREVIEW Sell Out Evening with Curtis Stigers

Huntingdon Hall Tuesday 3rd April @ 8pm

Curtis Stigers, one of the world's leading jazz singers comes to Huntingdon Hall on Tuesday, to the delight of his Worcestershire fans. With one of the most distinctive voices in music, critics have said that the singer/saxophonist/songwriter pushes the boundaries of conventional jazz performers and expands the jazz repertoire creating modern jazz standards.

Throughout his career, Curtis Stigers has been celebrated for a surprisingly wide variety of impressive accomplishments—from his early pop chart success with several self-penned, top-ten singles and hit albums to being named as BBC Radio 2 Jazz Artist of the Year. Curtis returns to the UK with his American band and will showcase his new CD *Let's Go Out Tonight* as well as performing his well known hit songs.

Stigers has received rave reviews from national papers such as "this is vocal jazz as smart and knowing as the best American TV" (The Guardian) and "of all the singers jostling for attention at the moment, Curtis Stigers possesses by far the most winning stage manner" (The Times).



When speaking about his career, Curtis has said "what I like about what I do for a living is that it's never boring...it's always changing – from song to song, from gig to gig, from album to album. It's always a surprise – not just to the audiences and the critics and the record company and the publicist, but to me too. Every time I sing a song, something in it surprises me. There's always something I hear that's new."

For more information please contact Marketing Manager Lorna Phillips on 01905 726969 or email marketing@worcesterlive.co.uk. Tickets £22.50 Box Office 01905 611427 www.huntingdonhall.co.uk

PREVIEW Maddy Prior at Huntingdon Hall Friday 6th April @ 8pm

Folk music legend Maddy Prior will be in concert at Huntingdon Hall this Friday. Maddy has a history of collaborating with unexpected musicians looking to approach traditional and written material from interesting and varied perspectives.

Maddy first came to fame as a duo with singer/ guitarist Tim Hart, building a reputation around the folk clubs and releasing two albums. She later took on solo projects with the cream of traditional musicians including Martin Carthy, Nic Jones, Danny Thompson and John Kirkpatrick.

One of her most abiding projects came in 1987 with the release of *A Tapestry of Carols* with The Carnival Band. This part-time collaboration has lasted for 22 years and created several albums. Their Christmas tours have become something of legend, as documented on the 1998 *Carols At Christmas* live album.

In 2000 it was announced that Maddy's longstanding contribution to folk music was to be recognised with the award of an MBE in the New Year's honours list. Since then, Maddy has thrown herself in to more work including her most ambitious song-cycle *Arthur The King*, an album about the facts and fictions of England's legendary King.

On this tour she teams up with Giles Lewin, a multi-talented instrumentalist and singer with a classical background diluted by some years in the band *After Hours*. He is a stalwart of the Carnival Band, another long-time collaboration of Maddy's. Hannah James, who is now a part of *Lady Maisry*, and has been in the *Demon Barbers* and *Kerfuffle*, will join them. She promises to bring singing, accordion, clog dancing and youth!

Tickets £16 (Concessions £15) Box Office 01905 611427 For more information please contact Marketing Manager Lorna Phillips on 01905 726969 or email marketing@worcesterlive.co.uk



PREVIEW

SLAP NIGHT with SKAMBOMAMBO with support from STIFF JOINTS and DJs Ital Sounds

Skambomambo Kicks out in 2012. The Band has released its 'Made To Specification' album on the 17th of March with a bang. Hailed as Szczecin's Ambassadors of Culture, Skambomambo celebrated in style carousing through the town in the SkamboLimo for a press conference at the Town Council Hall, followed by a mini unplugged performance during the official launch at Empik Music Store and radio interviews. The SkamboLimo took the band over to Jazz Cafe Brama for a wine fest and then over to Free Blues Club where the band performed all the tracks from the new album. Then ambled over to Longplay club, Kafe Jerzy and Rocker Club for the band to promote the cd and wash it all up with an afterparty at City Hall Club. This was hailed as the largest event in Szczecin this year.



Skambomambo has a extensive tour programme bent on blessing the fans with a Skalleluia all around Poland till the end of March. Then they arrive in the UK for their second British invasion, dates as follows with more to be confirmed.

- 13th Fri: Dublin Castle London
- 14th Sat: Garden of Evil, Birmingham
- 18th Wed: Katie Fitzgeralds, Stourbridge
- 21st Sat: Slap Night - Ats Workshop, Worcester
- 25th Wed: Moseley, Bulls Head
- 26th Thurs: Swan, Kidderminster
- 27th Fri: Mr Wolff's, Bristol

They caused a buzz last April when they played Keystones in Worcester as well as Cardiff, London and Birmingham, during their first tour of the UK. Skambomambo's brand of 'Pol-Ska' is an eclectic interpretation of a midlands scene - returning to the source as it were. Lead singer, Mario, is

not Polish but Maltese and he had the audience gripped from the moment he graced the stage. The band have all the attributes of Coventry's finest Two-Tone - tight rhythm section, understated yet insistent guitar and marvelush brass section.

Support comes from Kidderminster in the shape of Stiff Joints. Far from being stiff they were formed in 2009 as a one-off for a Christmas Eve show at their local pub, now two and a half years and around 50 shows later the Joints are a skanking force to be reckoned with. The boys are one of the favourites of local promoters 'Barnboppers' and have supported the likes of The Beat, Dreadzone, Sicknote and Gaz Mayell's Trojans, all to a very warm reception from their audiences. They will also be supporting King Hammond & the Rude Boy Mafia at the Wagon & Horses in Digbeth, also under Barnboppers. Having started out as a straight ska covers band, the group have now extended their repertoire to not only original material, but also invented ska-takes on classics such as 'Back in Black' and 'Folsom Prison Blues' and are constantly updating their set lists for fear of boring their committed following. With hugely energetic shows and melodies you'll be humming for weeks to come, The Stiff Joint's are not one to be missed.

If all this skanking vibe isn't enough then DJs on the night will be Steve and Pat from Ital Sounds. Slap nights are proving to be quite the event and this one should be a date for the diary.



REVIEW

Crooked Empire, SJS, The Passengers
The Pig & Drum, Worcester
Friday 16th March

The Crooked Empire - A Double Take

Seeing The Crooked Empire at the Velvet Lounge in early March, I was too busy dancing and enjoying the vibe to write a review. So it was fortuitous that the (recently expanded) four piece played the (newly refocussed) Pig and Drum later in the month and I could stay sober to take in the performance.



Support came from The Passengers who I know very little about and as it's deadline here at Slap I haven't got the time to research them. So suffice to say they kept me entertained for the duration of the set with their good old fashioned high energy indie, shoe gazing style. I will catch them again if they let me know what they're doing - please! - Ed



On came SJS band who after spending longer than I'd hoped getting the sound right, it was just that, right! This young trio, far too talented for their years delivered a powerful mix of self penned and well chosen covers and kept the massing crowd at bay. They're gaining a lot of vital experience supporting bands like the Empire and improve every time I see them.

The Crooked Empire



Enter The Crooked Empire - as the band crack into the intro of opener 'Run Run', the packed crowd knew it would be on its collective feet for the rest of the night. Sean Sheldon (vocals / guitar), Chris Gibbs (bass), Matt Stafford (drums / vocals) and Jamie Dudley (guitar / vocals) delivered a blistering set and I managed to take some notes!

Cow bell is heard throughout and I love this sound as it goes perfectly well with most of the songs (you want to put a banging 'donk' on that!) but especially 'Emily'. Bass was spot on and lead guitar was superb on 'Asking For It', which shows off each individual talent.

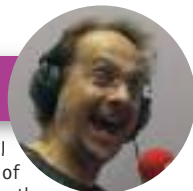
Every tune gets better and better and by the time they hit 'Bruises' well, we made bruises in the floor to this foot-stomping punk rock anthem - being swiftly followed by the title track from album, 'Jagged Souls', with the rhythm section ruling.

I don't know whether they know it (they will now!) but there's a new form of 'pogoing' at their gigs. Punk is back and the twist that The Crooked Empire put on it works - the performance is raw, fast and lively; the songs well written and polished.

Finishing the night with 'Days Like These' keeps the crowd bouncing and leaves them wanting more. What a brilliant night - the venue, the crowd and, most of all, The Crooked Empire who are talented musicians that I'm looking forward to seeing again.

Words: Jamie Savage

Maximum Exposure? WITH ANDY O'HARE



I read the 'Worcester News' today - oh boy - another local act had 'made it through to the next stage' of an 'unsigned competition'. This got me wondering - were there any acts who didn't actually make it?

So I did a little looking around some of these organisations websites and while it's nearly impossible to find actual facts and statistics on some I was a little surprised to see that there were odd occasions when acts had actually fallen at the first hurdle - I noted one band had gained a handful of text votes but apart from that had been zero-rated by the audience and judges - obviously an act of some quality! However there were plenty of instances where every act entered 'won' through to the next stage of the competition.

It's understandable that musicians want their songs to be heard - but in recent years this has been tied in to the wannabe-a-celebrity culture - and naturally individuals and organisations have seen the opportunity to cash in on this demand.

Let's begin with Battles Of The Bands - now I've got to declare an interest here and mention that I've actually been a judge at a number of these events - and at every single one, while there's been celebration by the winning act and their followers - it's been tempered by frustration, anger and resentment by the 'losers'. I always make a point of saying myself that 'all the acts were great but there can only be one winner and it is...' I attended a BoB a couple of years ago where the announcing judge went through every one of the acts in detail - listing their good points and also where they'd fallen short in the judges' viewpoint - not surprisingly he was nearly lynched afterwards...

So why do bands keep on entering these events - and thereby keep them going? Well in the end I suppose because it's a playing gig with the chance of a bonus if they win a prize. But hold on a moment, bands can do this anyway with a little effort on their own part - negotiating a flat fee, share of the bar takings or selling tickets on the door. It's just easier to 'enter' one of these events and take pot luck at getting anything in return - all the promotion and publicity is already done for you - except of course if a condition of entry is that you sell a number of tickets yourself... But one thing for sure - the main beneficiary of BoB's will be the organiser - who'll have carefully costed the cash value of the final prizes against the expected income over the course of the event.

A little bit more subtle in the ways of exploiting bands is the 'pay-to-play' gig - these take place at seemingly prestigious venues - often with a famous history such as in London. But those glory days are long gone and those venues now only trade on their past. Bands are invited to play on the same stage that once hosted acts like the Ramones, Eurythmics etc - irrespective of their music but only provided can they sell 25 tickets... Naturally the A&R people know all about these venues and are nowhere to be seen. Everytime I get told 'Hey Andy we're playing at the 'XYZ' in Birmingham next month! I'm yet again filled with a sense of despair - ok it'll look fine on your band's CV, just don't expect that anything more will come from it.

While the above are fairly low-level ways of making money out of musicians' efforts and aspirations - the proliferation of the various national 'unsigned competitions' has taken this exploitation to an entirely new level - the largest ones charge 'deposits' of £10-50 just to enter and attract 10-15,000 entrants each year with promises of substantial prizes and 'music industry exposure' for the eventual winners. Of course the big prizes can only be won by less than a handful of acts (and there are several instances of these not living up to what had been initially promised) but what is designed to appeal to musicians is the carrot of perhaps being noticed by 'the industry'. Well despite their claims - not one act has achieved fame and chart success from any of these events and many previous winners have now realised that the promises were at best optimistic and at worst misleading and untruthful...

While the publicity for these events is designed to suggest that they offer an opportunity for bands and acts and somehow 'open a door' to being noticed - don't be fooled - their main purpose is to make money for the organisations themselves. The promise to acts is 'jam tomorrow' at the next stage of the competition - which is variously billed as a 'semi-final' or 'regional heat' - but in fact is just another hoop for artists to jump through - while selling as many tickets to their friends, family and followers as possible.

During these early heats of the competition some of the organisers will offer a rebate on the initial 'deposit' for ticket sales in excess of a certain amount (typically £1 per ticket sold) - but there's also an extra bonus available in the form of additional prizes - which as you might have already guessed also has absolutely nothing to do with the music - they're called 'exposure awards'...

When an act enters one of these competitions they sign an agreement to promote the event and to obtain as much publicity as possible - which of course saves the organisers themselves this inconvenient expense. Acts can at any stage win a (sponsored) 'exposure award' by getting articles in their local press, hits on websites and mentions on their local radio (and if possible TV) stations - plus any other 'high-profile' publicity and/or stunts... In order to make a claim for one of these 'awards' - bands have to supply press cuttings, screen shots and recordings of radio interviews and mentions - and guess what scores highest in their ratings? An appearance or interview on 'a large or high-profile organisation' - I wonder who they had in mind?

And that's what really stuck in my mind after I looked further into this whole area - it wasn't about the music at all - but getting musicians to pester as many media outlets as possible and then to spend their time clipping articles from newspapers and making recordings of radio mentions - and that's what I found most creepy and depressing!!

There's so many sorry tales of these events doing the rounds that I simply haven't got the time to list them.

If you want to find out more or you're even thinking of entering one - just Google the 'festival' name followed by 'scam' - all will become clear...

AOH



PREVIEW

Come Up & See Me, East of the Sun & Red Divide – The Marris Bar, Worcs Sat 7th April £3 Entry

Come Up and See Me host 'Saturday Night Live' at The Marris Bar Worcester on Saturday 7th April 2012. The event is to support our BBC Radio 2 Chris Evans 'August Bank Holiday Festival Opportunity' CarFest in line with Children in Need. The Marris Bar event will feature live performances from Come Up and See Me, East of the Sun and Red Divide plus special guest performances from Needle Poppets.

Worcester brothers Jamie & Jeremy May of 'Come Up and See Me' host 'Saturday Night Live' in The Marris Bar Worcester to celebrate the pinnacle of musical talent in the city, and supporting their chances to play on BBC Radio 2 DJ 'Chris Evans' Annual Summer Car & Music Festival 'CarFest' on August Bank Holiday for Children in Need.

'Come Up and See Me' describe themselves as "Not just any Covers Band!" "We really turn it up a notch and give an energetic and electric performance". A full bodied four piece of talent, that pull from musical inspirations such as Jimi Hendrix, Kasabian, Led Zeppelin, Beatles, Killers, Oasis, Kings of Leon, T-Rex.

EAST OF THE SUN



Also on the bill are 2011 Marris Bar Battle of the Bands Runners Up and Radio Wyvern 'Three Counties Show' winners 'East of the Sun', a hard working bluesy rock band from the Worcester featuring May Brother Jamie on Drums, Russell Underwood (Lead Guitar/Vocals), Matt Wallis (Lead Guitar/Backing Vocals) and Alec Bond (Bass) who describe their sound as 'classic whilst being alive and fresh', powerful riffage, wandering bass lines, huge Bonham-esque drums and the occasional touch of melancholic and melodic serenity.

Third on the bill are Worcester Indie band 'Red Divide' featuring May Brother 'Jeremy' on Lead Guitar who draw on influences from 60's Cool, 70's Rock, 80's New Wave, 90's Brit Pop and even Classic Film Scores. The sound has been described by contemporaries and friends as "retro indie", "60's throw back rock" and "tracks you would imagine on a Tarantino soundtrack". With the line up set, lots of hard work, innuendo, dark humour and team work, Red Divide produce a sound that is darkly unique and anthemic.

Visit the bands at:

www.comeupandseeme.co.uk,

www.notjustsauc.com/bands/red-divide/

www.notjustsauc.com/bands/east-of-the-sun/

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The PJ Proby Affair - April 2012

Have you noticed at work that when a new line manager is appointed - you can be pretty sure that change is on the way? It may not necessarily serve any purpose - but there's a reason for it - because when that manager goes for his/her next six-monthly/yearly evaluation or next job interview, they'll be asked 'What have you achieved in the last year?' Somehow a reply of 'Oh everything was working just fine so I didn't feel that there was any need to change things' isn't going to cut the mustard. So change-for-change's sake it is then...

And I guess it was that mentality that was in the mind of the DWP investigators and CPS officials when they decided to prosecute 60's singer PJ Proby from Twyford near Evesham for benefit fraud - involvement in a high-profile case like this would really stand out on their CV's...

However in a dramatic twist, after 9 days of a trial estimated to last three weeks - PJ Proby was ordered to be acquitted of an alleged £47,000 benefit fraud after the prosecution said that the discovery of new evidence at a DWP office in Doncaster meant that the case could not continue.

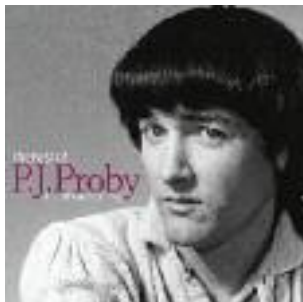
DWP - but there appeared to be some confusion at the DWP about this - and Proby's own personal finances were conceded to be a 'complete mess'.

The DWP investigation into Proby began in 2006 and has cost an estimated half-million pounds to bring to trial - and the exact nature of the 'Doncaster documents' which led to his acquittal has yet to be disclosed - deepening the mystery as how this case came to court even further...

In a statement read by his solicitor Proby said 'For the last four years, I have lived in fear of becoming homeless, because my housing benefit was cut off, and of being wrongly sent to prison for a crime I never committed. In 1786 another American, John Adams, who became a president of the United States, said that Worcester was the ground where liberty was fought for. He said that this was holy ground - and in 2012 it still is.' Strong words indeed...



AOH



PJ Proby had a short rise to stardom as a teenage rock'n'roll idol in the early 60's - however in January 1965 there were two well-publicised incidents of his trousers splitting on stage. The incidents were given massive

publicity by a then-emerging self-appointed guardian of the nation's morals - Mary Whitehouse claimed that she had 'seen something' when Proby's trousers split - nobody else had incidentally...

This whole episode would be considered laughable today but at the time it led to a flood of self-righteous anger - Proby was banned from theatres and TV - and eventually carved out a career of sorts as a nightclub crooner... He drifted later into a cycle of alcoholism and depression - living near Huddersfield before moving to Twyford - as the Vale of Evesham reminded him of his Texas homeland.

In recent years Proby lived on benefits - while intermittently performing on 60's-retro shows with outfits like The Searchers and Herman's Hermits - which he saw as a form of occupational therapy. He stated that he had declared all his earnings from these tours to the



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REVIEW

THE BHG OPEN DAY & SPRING FAYRE @ THE BOARS HEAD, KIDDERMINSTER.

Saturday 17th March saw the BHG (Boars Head Gallery) in Kidderminster open its doors to the public in the guise of an open day and spring fayre. This was also a great opportunity for people to get to see what goes on in the weird world of the BHG.

With an afternoon to spare and a drink in hand I happily got to wander round The Boars Head courtyard which was home to a range of stalls for the day selling hand made custom t-shirts from artists **Cozza** and **Melo**, jewellery and accessories from **Pyra's Pandermonium** and **Paragon Jewellery**. **Skanking Dub Beats** selling all your musical needs and what can only be described as an emporium of knick knacks from **Love Life** and of course, no open day is complete without face painting and hair wrapping & dreading!



A short walk through the market upstairs into the gallery space, where workshops were being held throughout the day, and it's clear to see the BHG has been busy over the past few months. The walls are covered with art and sculpture and Lee the clown is busy keeping the kids entertained.



Since SLAP attended its official opening back in November, co-ordinator **Corrina Harper** and a whole host of other helpers have been busy turning the BHG into an



imaginative and creative space. We've been treated to exhibitions such as 'This Modern Love' and 'Literate Illustrate'. A solo exhibition from artist **Steve Sinner** and workshops from artist in residence **Jim Bond**, life drawing, clay casting and sculpture classes, not to mention the gallery's regular events 'Pencil And Pint' and acoustic spoken word and music night 'Mouth And Music'.



Artists, graphic designers and anyone familiar with Upfest's 'Secret Walls' concept keep your diaries free for 14th April for the free event 'Doodle Bombin'. Artist **Melo** invites teams to come along to 'battle it out' on white walls with black pens, all taking place from noon in the gallery.



With so much going on it's nice to see the BHG fast becoming a creative space for all ages with a great atmosphere to match. Roll on the summer fayre!

by Toni Charles

PREVIEW

Hamlet – Melting Pot Theatre Company

Wednesday 18th April, Friday 20th April
and Sunday 22nd April

Seven actors, one iconic play, no problem! In April, in Worcester, at the ArtHouse Café, Hamlet will be getting the Melting Pot treatment. Brace yourselves for a pacy intense and moving drama that's funny and dark in equal measure.

There's definitely no doublets! but there's doubling and coupling and couplets aplenty, swordplay and wordplay, love and death – what else is there? All the essential ingredients have once again been thrown in the Melting Pot. Cut to fit the ArtHouse and the time, this is Hamlet Unwrapped!

Melting Pot was founded in 2001 and since then has proved itself Worcester's foremost independent theatre company, performing Shakespeare at the Commandery (Midsummers Night's Dream), Greyfriars (The Tempest, Twelfth Night, A Winters Tale) and Worcester Arts Workshop (Macbeth) as well as a variety of plays by contemporary playwrights (Betrayal by Harold Pinter, Valued Friends by Stephen Jeffery, Bloody Poetry by Howard Brenton, Memory of Water by Shelagh Stephenson.



Copyright The Photographic Light Studio

Let's consider the cast who are taking on all these parts...How did we all get here? Melting Pot's first production was *The Herbal Bed* by Peter Whelan in 2001. Phil Ward and Amanda Bonnick both acted in this play and clearly something worked because they went on to act together in many productions, most memorably as *Macbeth and his Lady*. This production also brought Matthew Brockington into the fold and, unbeknownst to him at the time, he was to act in, direct and stage several later plays, including *A Midsummers Night's Dream*, *Betrayal*, *Macbeth*, *Valued Friends*, *The Memory of Water*, and *Bloody Poetry*. Janet Bright has been involved from early on, helping direct *Valued Friends* (and also acting in it!), and she was a memorable weird sister and Lady Macduff in *Macbeth*. What is great about Hamlet is the fact we have attracted some valuable new members. Sue Davidson, a talented actor, has joined the fold and we welcome her versatility with open arms. Similarly, Holly Jeffery, a local singer and Jenny Stokes, an actor from Birmingham with a distinctive stand up act, have slotted into the line-up beautifully, both contributing their own unique gifts and energy. So this is us and We Are Hamlet!

Tickets are £8 and £5 and are available at the Worcester Tourist Information Centre (01905 726311), the ArtHouse (01905 617161), The Oxfam Bookshop and on the door. It starts at 7.30pm. Food is available from 6pm (reservation recommended on 01905 617161- if you order food your ticket price will be at the concessionary rate of £5!)

There will be additional dates in Worcester and in Birmingham/the Midlands as we take the production on tour. See you there!

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Music On The Radio: The Running Order

This month's SLAP article is written in ENPS - Electronic News Production System - which is what we use in the BBC for all of our scripted content. Any time you switch on the 10 O'Clock News, listen to Newsbeat or hear a competition on local radio - the chances are, it's been written in this software. You can literally write a script and drop it into the time you want to broadcast it - and voila!



Anyway, this month I'm going to talk about how the music is selected for BBC Introducing in Hereford & Worcester. Many people think it's entirely my decision - the real answer is - it's not! I'd go as far as saying almost every track you hear on-air has been determined by the running order, as described above.

I do a huge amount of listening in the car to new music - and during my drive, I grade tracks from 1-5 stars. 1 means the lyrical content is completely unbroadcastable (actually 1 in 5 tracks!), 2 stars means it's "weak" and very poor - so play it only on exceptional merit (they were to gain a number one, for instance), 3 stars means it's an instrumental, 4 means it's perfectly acceptable for broadcast and 5 really is the golden nugget - the show openers - the tracks we pass on to national radio and the festival organisers.

So - we open the show with something that's got some punch - which could include an editorial reason - new album, new EP etc. We get tonnes of requests every week along the lines of "will you interview us as we've got a new single out this week?". So have 400 other local artists. If we interviewed everyone, we'd end up with 400 x 5 second interviews and not play a single track! So we let the music do the talking...

The second track we try to contrast. If you didn't like the first number, hopefully you'll like the second. We try to alternate counties, too. Then we head into the first feature.

People send us their news from all directions. Whether it's exceptional gigs we pick up from their listings, to stories broken by the BBC's huge team (if it involves Herefordshire and Worcestershire anywhere in the world - we'll get to hear of it), we'll also see what the local papers are doing then there's simple things like emails, texts, Tweets, Facebook messages or good old fashioned journalism - word on the street. The two tracks that surround this first big story tend to lend themselves to the story itself - so a music decision based on news!



Next up is Andy O'Hare. We like to keep the music scene alive. He goes to more gigs than anyone else we know - so the two tracks that fit either side of this are based on what he - or any listener - has been to see.

We then move to the gig guide. It's all very well talking about stuff that's already taken place - but what about future events? Again, anything gig related surrounds this feature.

We then move onto the toughest decision of the lot - who to feature live in session. We record 4 tracks and break them across two hours. The reason for this is two fold: If you really like the band, you'll listen for another hour. If you really hate the band, you're only one track away from a song which you'll like.

This takes us to news item 2. So, same rules as above apply.

Then to our second reviews slot. Ideally each slot will be different. Worcestershire in the one, Herefordshire in the other.

Next, we move onto our paper review. We try to identify tracks that relate to stories picked up elsewhere in the news.

That takes us back to our live session.

Then - if there's time - we get the chance to choose two tracks to play the show out with - and these will tend to balance what we've already played. So, if the show's been full of dubstep, then we'll drop in some acoustic tracks. So, all in all, the running order only allows us to choose a maximum of 4 "free" tracks a week. Everything else is based upon editorial content. So, if you really want some airplay, either be very very good (show opener quality, for instance) or make sure you have a gig coming up, the gig creates enough of a buzz to get a review and a subsequent booking for one of our prestigious live sessions, and ultimately lands you in the news! Because, even without a 5 star track - I hear more people saying "hey - that was really interesting what you were talking about on Friday night" as opposed to "I love that track"! And a surprising number say "I really love the show - but I'm not so keen on the music!". Bizarre!

Andrew Marston presents BBC Introducing in Hereford & Worcester every Friday from 7pm on 94.7, 104, 104.4, 104.6FM and 738, 1584AM. Listen online and upload your music - bbc.co.uk/herefordandworcester/introducing

REVIEW

THE RAGGED TROUSERED PHILANTHROPISTS

BY ROBERT TRESSSELL

Director: Louise Townsend

Cast: Rodney Matthew and Neil Gore

SWAN THEATRE WORCESTER 22 FEB.

The advertising for this play: *"Musical Comedy fun night out"* could give the impression of a frivolous adaptation of this acclaimed 1910 novel about poverty, once described as the working class bible.

However these two masterful performers delivered a superb show putting across the book's message, including an entire building site, with energy and sincerity.

Tressell is celebrated for his witty observation of human behaviour. The actors revel in this, cackling and grimacing their way through the plot. Musical instruments appear, a banjo, melodeon, and trombone enhancing a sense of the period using a selection of classic music hall songs.

They weave around a minimal stage-set emerging as the various characters using a different voice or stance, a change of hat. The foreman, Bob Crass, carries a red handkerchief to emerge growling and bullying in his bowler hat. At one point, they take turns to play him.

It is about a group of hungry tradesmen in broken boots working on the big house of Councillor Sweater, businessman and mayor. A 'Sweater' was an employer who extracted maximum work for minimum pay, sacking men for convenience.

Back then this could mean the pawnshop, debt, then malnutrition.

Tressell is the nom-de-plume of Robert Noonan, painter and signwriter who, in 1914, died of tuberculosis – the scourge of the hungry. He'd been there. Descriptions of the period appear in polemic works like Orwell's 'Down and out in Paris and London', 'Anne Veronica' by HG Wells, and Jack London's 'People of The Abyss'.

The central character, a decorator called Owen, tries, amidst derision, to persuade his colleagues that they were cheerfully giving their lives and their children's health to enrich others – hence 'Philanthropists'. They maintain that the bosses know best, despite the wealth gap – with them at the bottom no matter how hard they worked.



In a splendid scene *"The Great Money Trick"* Owen illustrates his point with a game using bread and a knife. He plays the part of a boss paying his workers a pittance for producing bread. He divides it into tiny portions to sell back to them keeping the lion's share as his rightful profit. When they protest they are hungry, he shrugs that he's given them work – what else can he do?

It is surely their own fault! Sound familiar?

by Barrie Scott



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REVIEW

BOWLD OVER BY THE POPPIES!

Friday 16 March saw the (Pride of the Black Country) Wolves Civic present **Pop Will Eat Itself**. I had spent the morning buzzing in anticipation for the evening's excitement and the chance to relive my youth, especially as I knew the set list and that my most fav song ever (yes, I know that I sound like a teenager!) was three songs in - *Dance of the Mad B**tards*. The room was charged with energy, elation and expectation as the rumbling of the call up track, *Moral Majority*, began. The Incredible P.W.E.I. seized the stage with a New Noise, a new album and a new line up.

To my amazement, the drum stool was occupied by Worcestershire's Jason Bowld, who delivered an energetic display despite the cascade of (hopefully cold, refreshing) beverage from the mosh pit below. Jason has not only played with the likes of Killing Joke, Bullet for my Valentine, Bill Bailey and many others but has also wowed us at his drum clinics at our very own Worcester Music Festival in recent years. Midlander (there can be only one!) Graham (Crabbi) Crabb, the only original remaining P.W.E.I. member, says of Bowld, "I always admired Jason's drumming in Pitchshifter and jumped at the chance of using him on the new P.W.E.I. record".

Pop Will Eat Itself are now Back to Business with a New Noise Designed By A Sadist - Crabbi's mission was not to Get the Girl and Kill the Baddies this time but to

"create a classic P.W.E.I. album a full 25 years after the first EP release, that sounds more exciting and relevant than most of what is being produced in 2012". He has gathered a 'super group' of musicians not solely to take the place of former members but as a progressive intention to create a heavier sound. Co-vocalist **Mary Mary** of Gaye Bykers on Acid fills the great grebo hole left by Clint (Hollywood) Mansell. Tim Muddiman (Gary Numan and Sulpher) on guitar and the deadlocked bassist **Davey Bennett** (*This Burning Age*) completing the combo.

I bounced throughout the evening to both the 'Oldskool' and the seemingly steroid enhanced New Noise numbers. My return to the mosh pit after 20 years was definitely worth the soaking and the bruises.

I refuse to go all purist and start preaching that this isn't 'proper' Poppies from the old days. This is a rebirth, a reincarnation, an 'evolution' for a new P.W.E.I. generation!

Words: Nikki B



Jason Bowld

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PREVIEW

STATE OF THE UNION

MARRS BAR, WORCESTER Sat 14th Apr

STATE OF THE UNION

In the grand tradition of 'The Special Relationship', *State Of The Union* combines the talents of American Blues guitarist Brooks Williams and cult English songwriting legend Boo Hewerdine.



Boo Hewerdine

Hewerdine is an artist with a musical CV of international collaborations and hit songs that stretch over two decades and many genres. In the 80s and 90s he fronted cult group The Bible (Honey Be Good, Graceland) and then went on to write and work with a wide range of artists including Eddi Reader, KD Lang, Natalie Imbruglia, Chris Difford

(Squeeze), Justin Currie (Del Amitri), Heidi Talbot, John McCusker, Kris Drever, Brian Kennedy and The Corrs. As well as producing excellent albums including 'Eddi Reader Sings The Songs Of Robert Burns', Chris Difford's 'The Last Temptation Of Chris' and Heidi Talbot's 'In Love And Light', Boo's solo live shows are a magical mix of fantastic music, great stories and beautiful lyrics.

Williams is a slide guitar wizard from Statsboro, Georgia, USA. Their plan was to record an album using vintage mics and equipment live in just 5 days. After a day and a half they realised they had finished. Recorded in the order you hear on the record, the aim was to capture the sound of two guitarists and singers from completely different backgrounds working together in harmony. The result was even better than they had hoped for. Over the course of 17 albums Williams has secured a peerless reputation as a songwriter as well as being recognised as one of the

world's best guitarists. Listen to their cover of Petshop Boys *Rent* and you will hear perfectly what an exciting mix raw American acoustic slide guitar and English literate pop can achieve.

Tapping into a multitude of influences, from Willie Nelson and Johnny Cash to Blind Lemon Jefferson, the wide open Fenlands and the frenetic buzz of London, *State Of The Union* is a masterclass in songwriting and understated production.

When Williams was called in at the eleventh hour to replace the billed Special Guests at Boo's annual Ely Christmas charity concert due to the bad weather of 2010, the seeds for *State Of The Union* were sown. The chemistry between the duo was undeniable as a torrent of creativity was unleashed over the summer in Boo's living room. Making rough demos on their iPhones, the decision was made to record the songs proper at the 3Kyoti Studio in Glasgow with Mark Freegard (Pete Townshend, Eddi Reader, Del Amitri). This debut recording is intimate and captivating, like a concert delivered in your living room, just two talented friends, two guitars and a handful of great songs.

Opening track *Darkness*, a slice of dusty Americana, sees Williams' smooth vocals riding on top of his slick, slide guitar playing. Conjuring images of a battered frontiersman returning home, the song is a masterpiece

Brooks Williams



of concise story telling. *23 Skidoo* by Hewerdine is a wryly humorous look at the bittersweet nature of life, no sooner have you got a grip on things and you're forced to move on. Whether it's authentic Americana, delicate ballads, reimagining modern pop or a new take on the classic standard *Peg and Awl* the union of Williams and Hewerdine is in a wildly creative state, producing one of the New Year's must-have albums.

So if on a Saturday night in Worcester, given the chance to see two great songwriters jamming together on an intimate stage like the Marris Bar appeals to you, I'll see you there...

Ed

FILM



Bromsgrove's Cinema at Not a lot of people know that... *by Peter Blandamer*

"Not a lot of people know that" is a quote attributed to Michael Caine. It was actually Peter Sellers who said it whilst doing an impression of Caine on the Michael Parkinson Show in the 70s. (Sellers later had it as an answerphone message). Caine has always been annoyed by this misquote although did use it as a send-up of himself in the 1983 Film Educating Rita.

Whatever the rights and wrongs of this, it does seem appropriate to use this spat between two of the most revered of English screen actors to highlight cinema at Artrix in Bromsgrove.

This magazine has reviewed many fine productions at Artrix, from bands such as Dodgy and Toploader, through to topline comedians such as Lee Evans and Jimmy Carr and Ballet, Theatre, Orchestra etc. However in its 6 year life, a mainstay of Artrix has been its Cinema.

It averages over 200 screenings a year, with afternoon and evening performances, including special needs and mother/baby showings (softer lighting and slightly quieter). It shows blockbusters, childrens, foreign language, "arthouse" and classic films. This month, "The

Artist", "War Horse", "The Muppets", "A Monster in Paris", "Best Exotic Marigold Hotel" and "Coriolanus" are being screened. There is also the recently introduced Film Cafe where, once a month, students can see an interesting/challenging film and chat about it afterwards over a coffee. (This is free for April and May)

Occasionally special events are organised and two of the most successful events in Artrix history have been the "Quadrophenia" nights, when the classic Who film was followed by a "The Who" tribute band. Lambrettas and Parkas were much in evidence.

It is a fantastic facility for Bromsgrove. It obviously has all the Artrix advantages – free, well lit carparking, a comfortable auditorium where you can take a drink in to the film with you and an absence of the less attractive aspects of a multiplex visit – overpriced buckets of popcorn and buckets of Coke, and the constant ring of mobiles.

I suspect that, as Artrix draws more and more publicity for the other productions it stages, Cinema may get forgotten. And whilst audiences are growing for Cinema, I am sure there are many people in Bromsgrove and North Worcestershire who may be put off from visiting the multiplexes in Rubery or Redditch and yet don't realise that they have an alternative Cinema on their doorstep.

See www.artrix.co.uk for latest details or contact the box office on 01527 577330

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REVIEW

Jimmy Carr – Bromsgrove Artrix

24th March 2012

I was lucky enough to get brilliant seats for Jimmy Carr at the Bromsgrove Artrix on 11th March 2012 (thanks Nick @ Artrix). When I say brilliant, I also mean unnervingly close to the front!



This was a warm up gig for Jimmy's up and coming tour which is called 'Gagging Order'. Everyone who knows me will tell you I am Jimmy's biggest fan, and can reel off any joke from any tour! However, this show for me just blew me away, it is the best I have ever seen

him at. Although he paused occasionally to tick his jokes off (the joys of a warm up gig) I didn't stop laughing from start to finish.

At times he threw the odd recycled joke in, I don't think anyone else noticed but being the Carr geek I am, I did notice. Contrary to this I didn't mind because his continuous brand new jokes were relentless the whole way through. He does a brilliant part in the set where he asks two members of the audience to join him on stage for a role play, I'm not going to tell you too much about this because I want you to be totally shocked for yourselves when you find out what these poor unsuspecting audience members have to say.

I wanted to put a few of his new jokes in, but as SLAP MAG is a family friendly magazine I cannot come up with one appropriate joke. Just believe me over 18 year olds that if you think he's good on TV, his new stand up show will make you pee your pants!

His jokes are wrong on the surface but when you come away and think about it, he is a very clever man. Carr takes you on a rollercoaster of emotions through particular jokes in order to get the shock factor with his punch line.

The best part of this show for me personally was that he was out after the show within ten minutes to meet and greet, and we here at SLAP got the only picture of him on the night! I finally met my hero and he was all too pleased to speak to us for a few minutes even though he had a queue of people waiting.

His tour kicks off in Worthing on the 5th of April 2012 and seems to have gigs booked up until September 2013!! You can get tickets from www.jimmycarr.com

This is not one to take your nan to, but otherwise I urge you to get your tickets!!

by Little Charley

PREVIEW

Three musical shows with differences visit Artrix in April

On Wednesday, April 11th at 8.00.p.m, the internationally



acclaimed musical comedy duo "Wobey and Farrel" take a hilarious look at the piano's most famous pieces and players, with a

display of gymnastic piano playing talent - all with four hands on one grand piano.



Then on Sunday April 15th at 7.30.p.m, "The Magnets" brings its show that will

change the way that you think about vocal harmony. Interpretations of songs by Lady Gaga, Lenny Kravitz and Blur et al, all delivered via a multiplicity of styles and vocal stunts, cool moves and superb theatrics, but with no musical instruments.

And on Thursday, April 19th at 8.00.p.m, Broadway based quartet "Gipsy Fire" play a show combining beautiful melodies with fiery hard edged gypsy swing rhythms and which is crammed full of musical nods to Django Reinhardt, Lennon and McCartney, Vivaldi, Rodrigues and The Who.

Tickets are available from the Box Office on: 01527-577330 or online at www.artrix.co.uk



REVIEW

Jamie Knight and the Big Swing 16th March The Guild Hall, Worcester

I had a cracking idea to take my lovely Mum to see Jamie Knight and his big swing band on 16th March 2012 at the Guild Hall in Worcester. This was probably the best idea I've ever had!

Jamie and his band of 11 musicians were there for the big swing night and prior to this I had only heard Jamie acoustically, but I have been told by a lot of people I had to catch him with his full band. I was not disappointed in the slightest.

The singer was doing this in aid of St Richards Hospice in aid of Breast Cancer and hoped to raise £2,000 for the charity. In 2000, Jamie's sister sadly passed away from the illness at the very early age of 42. This encouraged the fund raising as he hopes to help people who suffer from the disease in the future.

Although he is a professional and successful singer, it shocked me how down to earth and kind the man is. From the moment we walked in he realised that there were no seats or tables for us so was moving and shifting chairs before he went on stage to ensure that we had a brilliant big swing experience. (I think my little Mum fell in love! She will kill me for writing this!).

Knight impressed us with some excellent covers of Frank Sinatra, Dean Martin, Bobby Darin, and even more recent covers by Michael Buble! But apparently, I was the only person in the room who hadn't seen him before. The couples had come in their dozens to do proper swing dancing at the front, and there was one 'mature' couple who really caught my eye. I felt like I was actually living the 50s, it was truly an experience.

My dancing skills were not half as impressive, and verged on an embarrassment especially after a few glasses of wine but the atmosphere was genuinely accepting and cheerful! I honestly thought I would never feel like that on a Friday night out in Worcester.

Jamie ended up smashing his original target by raising a whopping £2,400 on the night for St Richards Hospice which is a really great achievement for a single person to arrange and raise.

SLAP and I would like to wish Jamie the best of luck for the second part of his mission which is the London 2012 marathon. The event takes place on 22nd April 2012 and we would urge you to sponsor Jamie for his marathon as he has worked extremely hard so far. Now we have a new target of another £2,000 for this run, please help him reach his final goal by sponsoring him at:

justgiving.com/jamieknightrun

Thank you Jamie for making this a really great night for myself, my Mum and SLAP!

by Little Charley

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ARTS FEATURE

Boat Art by Sarah Ganderton



How often do you get to see a boat that is even more picturesque than the background it is moored in? When these photographs were taken this particular boat was moored at Worcester's recently renovated Diglis Basin, and looking splendid in the winter sunshine. This boat is far removed from the folkie decor of sign writing and roses that usually adorn canal boats. Instead it brings in a whole new era of boat painting showing a real work of art created across the side of the boat. It really is a beautiful scene, of a local waterway complete with plenty of wildlife and every moment you look at the boat you notice a new level of detail. The idea was the

brainchild of Kennet and Avon boater Clive Hammond, who bought the boat with inheritance money and splashed out what was left on this original design. The mural-style paint job was intended to make his boat blend in with its environment but he has discovered it actually stands out

everywhere he goes, which must please artists Jim McCarthy and Ruta who painted the design in acrylic



then covered it with yacht varnish to protect it from the British elements. Further details about the company who designed this can be found online at:

www.canalboatart.com

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REVIEW

DREADZONE 12th MAR – MARRS BAR

The good ship Dreadzone sailed back into town on a chilly night in early March. Despite it being an unfashionable Sunday slot, the Marrs Bar was packed to the rafters with happy revellers and from the moment Dreadzone hit the stage the bouncing crew were having it large; thoroughly absorbed in the infectiously joyous atmosphere that accompanies every performance by this legendary bunch of dance-dub pioneers.



The Dreads have a lot to shout about at the moment with the recent release of a 'best of' compilation, *The Good, the Bad and the Dread*, and the re-release this month of their seminal second album, *Second Light*. For those of you who are not familiar with this 1995 masterpiece, it perhaps needs no better recommendation than to say that it was one of the late, great John Peel's favourite records, and appropriately the re-release includes Peel Sessions tracks and a previously unreleased live recording of the Zone rocking it on the NME Stage at Glastonbury.

From the off, Worcester was treated to a string of dread classics moving seamlessly from the mellow magic of the dub-licious *Mean Old World* into the up-tempo foot-

tapping territory of the majestic *Gangster* and the Dread's classic reworking of Public Enemy's *Fight the Power*. By the time MC Spee launches into the awesome *Digital Mastermind*, the crowd are totally lost in a happy haze of dance-induced euphoria.

The Dread's crank it up another gear with *For a Reason* and *Changes* from their last studio album, *Eye on the Horizon*, before bringing the main event to

a fabulously frenzied conclusion with a medley of Second Light tracks. The laid back loveliness of *Life, Love and Unity* melds seamlessly into every pirate's favourite stomper *Captain Dread* (Ahoy!), and before *Zion Youth* and *Little Britain* are masterfully mashed into a finale that builds and builds in intensity. At this point in the proceedings the only adjective that does the crowd any justice is 'bonkers' and by the time the encores arrive, *Iron Shirt* and *American Dread*, the dancing has reached warp speed.



Hopefully Worcester has now become a firm fixture on the Dread's tour itinerary, but if you can't wait for next year, you can catch up with the magical world of Dreadzone this summer at Nozstock near Bromyard (27th July) and again at Farmer Phil's bash in Shropshire (11th August).

See you there 'me heartees'! Ahoy!

Words: Dicky Fisk

Pics: Toni Charles



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PREVIEW

Capoeira - national sport of Brazil, a combination of dance/fight/game, is coming to Worcester - in style!

Developed by the slaves of Brazil to disguise learning to fight in the form of a dance from their slave masters, Capoeira is a word that is starting to become more recognised in countries around the world. Yet it is much more than a dance and is as broad as it is deep - encompassing and celebrating many aspects of Brazilian life, from the stick-dancing Maculele displays used to celebrate the movements of the slaves cutting sugar cane, to Samba dances and regular parties full of Brazilian spirit.



The concept sounds a simple recipe yet there is more going on within a Capoeira 'roda' - a circle of friends, clapping and singing to the hypnotic rhythms of drums and stringed instruments - than meets the eye. The circle includes several people playing traditional, earthy, yet vibrant Brazilian instruments, as two players enter the circle to dance, move and turn to the songs of those looking on.

The songs are not without meaning - they tell stories of the victories of Brazil and the emancipation of slavery - whilst other songs signal players to slow down, speed up or to return the entrance of the circle to play again.



Mestrando Primo - trained Capoeirista and teacher - is coming to Worcester with his group, offering classes aimed at getting young people involved in order to take a look at the rich and varied experience that Capoeira and Brazilian culture has to offer. Further information can be found at www.odacapoeira.com.

Whether you like dance, performance, singing or just rubbing shoulders with those wanting to keep fit while having a great time - Capoeira is for everyone. Don't hold back - come try it and see for yourself!

- Zendog

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REVIEW

BLUES NIGHT AT THE CELLAR BAR, WORCESTER, TUE 20th MARCH

Held on the 3rd Tuesday each month, this was probably the best lineup we've had for a year, though audience numbers were a little down on the previous 4 months.

Perry Foster was on superb form. His booming 12-string and growling vocals showed why we call him the boss. Songs from Blind Willie McTell, Leadbelly, Big Bill Broonzy etc. showed everyone who didn't already know

how a master deals with the oldest and most influential musical genre of all.

Jack Blackman celebrated his 18th birthday in a venue he last played at only 15 (to the horror of our then manageress). His picking was dazzling and his singing never better. He's grown in stature and confidence with his radio broadcast

and his EP release last year. His self-penned ragtime instrumentals made seasoned pickers scratch our heads in wonder; and his finale with Perry Foster on harmonica, 'Dust My broom' was excellent, you don't often hear anyone attempting the Robert Johnson version of this, it's damned difficult, but Jack nailed it securely.

Dave Bristow brought a curious little 4-string guitar and proceeded to demonstrate how, in the hands of the maestro, something that looks suspiciously like a toy can be teased into greatness, with a medley of rags and blues, originals and standards.

Sarah Warren was majestic, alternately teasing and snarling her impeccable vocals on an acoustic selection from her latest cd

'Temper & Tantrums.' Backed by bassist and composer Nick Lyndon, from the Sarah Warren Band, on guitars and vocals, she tore her way through her set, until she, and we, were limp.

Next Blues Night is April 17, with Blueswamp Southern, Matt Wooser, & Juke Joint John. Form an orderly line, kids.

by Bob Jones



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NIGHT ON EARTH

In the very first edition of Slap magazine I wrote a piece about Malvern and how, despite its rich musical heritage, there were fewer and fewer places for bands and performers to play. My how things have changed! There has been somewhat of a musical renaissance in the town over the last couple of years with a wealth of performers and plenty of venues in which to set out their wares. It seems that landlords and pub owners have finally realised that music actually brings the punters in. Who knew? Now in any one week you can attend open mic nights, see regular performers and listen to local and out-of-town acts play almost every night. In days gone by (when all this were fields), we were lucky to have maybe one gig in a month but on the first Saturday in March there was not one but two musical soirées going on in Great Malvern. Here were *Highway 5* rocking it at the Great Malvern Hotel while up the hill a little ways, newly-formed *Freaky Trigger* were debuting their latest baggy dance numbers at the Unicorn. Both gigs were well attended and both gigs rocked! Modesty forbids me from declaring which was best (being ever so slightly responsible for the FT gig) though I have it on good authority that individually either would have been a great night out, but two on the same night, in sleepy old Malvern! But there's more.



Last weekend the GMH offered up *Old Hollow* in the upstairs bar. This trio is headed up by Nick Wilcox, formerly lead singer with *Bad Habits* with Colin Bentley on bass and Tyler Massey on guitar. Their curious blend of English folk, indie rock and laid back Americana works remarkably well. The songs, mostly written by Wilcox and played with consummate skill by Bentley and Massey, display a depth of feeling and emotion that, when missing, can leave such performances soulless and perfunctory. This was anything but. In total contrast of style, the Unicorn had *Trio Rosbifs* who, despite their name, are actually a five piece. The Unicorn is not a big pub so it was a cosy occasion with the Django Reinhardt inspired gypsy revellers playing their hearts out in a foot-stomping inspirational fashion. The guitar player's fingers scorched the fret board in a near supernatural way. His resemblance to Gomez Addams couldn't detract from the adroit skill with which he formed those impossible jazz chords! The cheeky-faced fiddle player, taking the role of Stefan Grappelli, had some scorching of his own to do. Using his instrument as if it





Adji, has decided it for me. His solid backing to Matt's sliding and picking benefited greatly from the deep growl that only a five string bass can deliver. I haven't heard Matt play anything other than solo, but having a bass accompaniment really adds something to his music. The punters thought so too. Copies of his latest CD were flying into the expectant hands of the gathered hordes along with one or two copies of his DVD which chronicles some of his adventures performing a gig virtually every night of the year. Meanwhile, at the Unicorn, *Flat Stanley*, the psycho-folk outfit from Stourbridge were giving it large. Don't mention they look like the *Levellers* and don't ask for *The Devil Went Down to Georgia* because

were some kind of weapon; a weapon of dance instruction. With a second, equally talented guitarist and an accordion player adding colour and texture, the music from the *Rosbifs* swirled magnificently above the solid foundation of the upright bass. No toe was left untapped. Then it was back to the GMH for the *Babajack* album launch after-party. Becky and Trevor had also been playing in Malvern, at the Coach House theatre. I missed that one. Maybe there was just *too much* on . . . Nah! And so it continued . . . this Friday it was the *All-Stars Dub Band* who filled the room to the rafters at the GMH with their dublicious reggae rock fusion (sadly I missed that one too). On Saturday night the ever dependable Matt Woosey was at the same venue. Matt was playing some of his gutsy, bluesy tunes along with some newly written songs that fitted his rocking repertoire perfectly. Now I've been in a bit of a quandary recently; I can't decide whether my new bass guitar should have five strings or four. Thankfully, Matt's bass player,



these boys will give you short shrift. They will also give you one hell of a good night out with energetic, danceable, amphetamine inspired rollicking. To produce such energy from acoustic instruments is something to behold. *Flat Stanley* are a great live band, they grab the audience and get them worked up into a frenzy of folksy excitement and dreadlocked bliss. With two guitars, a fiddle, bass and a beat up old drum kit they produce a sound so large it could fill a cavern. And so it continues. Next week *Akahum* will make like sardines at the Unicorn while the mighty Toad will lead *Slack Granny* in a slaughter fest at the GMH with the *Dogs of Santorini* in support. And then into April!

RT





ready for a big relaunch in April. With that we are also launching a new shop- Our next step to promote, introduce and provide talent to more- A home for hardworking musicians' efforts. "Releases. EPs. Albums. Singles. Rarity's. Merchandise. Media Packages. Photography and More."

More importantly our partnership with Hereford Music Studios KJM has become official as we've had the delightful pleasure to relocate our offices into the studio's premises. Our new office in the newly designed and built studio is situated right in the heart of local music and it's community. KJM Studios is a professional recording and rehearsal studio complex located five minutes from the centre of



A couple of month's since Worcester's Slap and Hereford's Circuit Sweet joined forces- the response has been overwhelming. We are still being inundated with positive views. As more venues in both Ross-On-Wye and Hereford have requested to provide the publication within their property and show their support. You can now pick the magazine up in Herefordshire each month; In Ross-On-Wye visit The Ross Gazette Offices in Broad Street, Rossiter Books and The Eagle Inn. In Hereford you can pick up your free copy at The Jailhouse, KJM Studios, tReds, Hereford Bazaar, Jingo, Watercress Harry's. The Buttermarket- Benjamin's Fishmongers, The Imperial, Lichfield Vaults, The Outback, Nilam Music, Oxfam, The Spread Eagle, Diegos Cafe, The Black Lion and TGS Bowling.

We love hearing from new people and new bands. Our facebook page is their for any local bands to leave their event details of which to be featured in Slap's gig listings and a platform for you to send your music. Visit www.facebook.com/circuitsweet for more information. We get hundred's of music submissions weekly but we do get round to featuring them. If you'd like to know more on us and ways to connect with-head over to Worcester's Rise Records and pick up one of our cards which can be found at the tills.

March has been a very busy time for us as we've travelled nationwide to cover several live performances. Our site has been re-designed and

Hereford. This studio is a must see for any local band offering such a great space to record or rehearse. Our working days are going to be thoroughly enjoyable with local talent passing in and out of the studio daily. With such passionate staff and a welcoming atmosphere there's nowhere else we'd like to be situated.

As previously mentioned we covered several live performances nationwide. One of which a very special gig for us. As we travelled to Bristol to meet The Cast of Cheers. Back in January we announced on the site and promoted that The Cast Of Cheers were heading out on a co-headline UK tour with Theme Park at the end of February. Since then we've featured the new single 'Family' and followed the band's efforts throughout their tour.

Cast Of Cheers



On Monday 5th March, we had the delight in meeting Dublin 4 Piece The Cast Of Cheers at The Louisiana, Bristol. Already 7 dates into their Nationwide tour; we met the 4 on their one date without the London based trio Theme Park when they headlined the venue joined with Casino Trap. Following a heavy night before- the Dublin

quartet, who have just been confirmed to support Blood Red Shoes on tour- hardly let the whiskyrumms effect them when they took to their stage. On top form, an excited crowd gathered and welcomed the lads who abruptly started their set; engaging the audience with their enthusiasm, passion and strong deliverance. A melodic showcase of new and promising compositions filled with those more recognisable taken from their 2010 debut 'Chariot'.

Cast Of Cheers



We have already featured the live review and gig photography of the evening but we are excited to share our first filmed interview.

An exclusive filmed interview with ourselves and Cast Of Cheers will be featured shortly on the site and we cannot wait to share our time with the band. The interview will be hitting the site at some point in April so keep checking back to circuitsweet.co.uk to see the film.

Another dramatic feature to hit the site was the respectful goodbye to Worcester's legendary trio Zebedy Rays. Any Circuit Sweet followers would have gathered by now just how much we adore local band Zebedy Rays. Since first meeting the three in Hereford over 3 years ago playing with a band formally managed by half of Circuit Sweet- found in Jive Stick- we were instantly blown away. From the frontman running around the venue aggressively shouting his way through the crowd outside beating a snare drum finding his way to the stage joined with buoyant bass lines and filling drum beats.

Since then we have had the privilege in watching this band phenomenally grow, gain a solid fan base nationwide and achieve such great accomplishments.

Our time with Circuit Sweet has religiously promoted the trios efforts. We have kept you closer to Zebedy Rays. Featured their tours, festival appearances, BBC sessions, releases and competitions. Their single release found in 'John Esli Davies' was our very own Single of the Year throughout our Rad Releases in 2010. We've travelled afar to surprise the three and show our support with them on the road. Head over to the site to see the past 3 years we've known them in our gig photography journal. We wish the best to Danny, Josh and Adam and would like to thank the three personally for three years of excellent live performances, memories and favourite releases.

Zebedy Rays



We have the privilege in covering Sleep Party People, Blood Red Shoes and Tera Melos in the forthcoming month's and with this more big news from us which ties into our partnership with KJM studios. Until then we are focusing on our relaunch. April seems to be a great month for Live music in Hereford and for Herefordian bands. More events are happening throughout the city which can be found in the gig listings, and we are looking forward to Worcester's Tallulah Fix and Hereford's Aulos joining forces for an unstoppable night at Bristol's Croft at the very beginning of the month

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CD REVIEW

THE SARAH WARREN BAND, 'TEMPERS & TANTRUMS'

This latest production from SWB is a belter. Excellent production by SWB and Dave Draper (FFHG Studios, Bredon).

They've been one of the biggest attractions in the county for some 5 years. This cd will open up the rest of the country, and high time, too.

Sarah sings, and bassist Nick Lyndon wrote 11 of the 13 tracks. Guitar, Stuart Field ; drums, Richard Shelton; and Simon Picken, keyboard, with help on sax by Hugh Thomas, Hanah Dallas and Ben Wilson, vocals, Caitlin Barratt, fiddle, Maurice Hipkiss, pedal steel, and Alex Stevens, keys.

'*Mojo Hannah*', explodes thunderously, with snarling, raucous vocals from Sarah, followed by another killer, '*Roadhouse*'. The funky, sax-drenched '*Hurts*' shows



Sarah's softer side. '*Bad News*' is a bit Nashville but with added attitude (Gnashville?)

She gets emotional on the yearning '*Tempers & Tantrums*', '*The Loveless Side*', and particularly '*Coming Home To You*' featuring super lap-steel.

Then back to the boogie: '*Stronger*' screams like a banshee, and for good measure, her only cover is a fine, pleading version of Aretha Franklin's '*Do Right Woman*'.

Musicianship, production, and lead/backing vocals are unimpeachable throughout. They've arrived, no doubt. This cd will do the job.

by Bob Jones

CD REVIEW

STOMPING ON SPIDERS 'NOTHING TO DECLARE'

I wonder if the title is a reference to Oscar Wilde? It would be no idle boast: this Worcestershire duo is very good.

Noor Ali plays lead guitar, banjo, bass and percussion; Garrington (Tolley) Jones plays acoustic guitars and harp. Darren Mather guests on harp; Leslie Wilson supplies vocals.

Ali & GT composed all 9 selections. The writing is of high quality, culled from the boys' own experiences. '*Night On The Tiles*' details Noor's (and hints at his father's) experiences with booze, humorous but with a faint taint of menace given the family is Muslim.

'*Sawmill Blues*' is a belter, based on an overheard conversation on a train.

Track 3 is the highlight. '*Brasshouse Lane*' uses the collapse of Birmid Foundaries, in the Black Country to nail the enormities of 1980s Thatcherism. Noor sings this in a deceptively delicate, almost vulnerable voice, expressing bewilderment rather than the passionate anger expressed in the lyrics. This is the best original composition I've heard in years.

'*For The Little One*' is GT's sweet tribute to his granddaughter, a solo acoustic piece picked with delicacy, and wistfully sung.

'*Hell-Bound Train*' describes Noor's experiences running the 2011

Paris marathon. The train encompasses disaster, riot, earthquake, famine..... whilst LHR Blues is a zip-file of Noor's commercial life, relentlessly travelling throughout Europe and Mid-East. He seems to love the life of a commercial Marco Polo ; and if this song's an accurate recapitulation he can keep it! BVs here are credited mysteriously to an 'Airport Mob' choir.

The other big tour de force is GT's Kuranda Brake, a railway song celebrating G's many visits to his beloved Australia, rich in beguiling imagery and evocative lyrics.

Most readers will have seen this excellent local band live, playing Worcester and Malvern venues. This cd will remind you why you did so!

And you'll be glad the lyrics are printed on the wrapper, they're worth reading in their own right.

by Bob Jones



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REVIEW

Saturday 17th March – Jak Raven @ The Eagle Vaults, Worcester

St Patricks Day always brings out the plastic paddys in stupid hats who consume a gutfull of Guinness, so Slap, not wishing to miss all the fun, went on an all dayer around Worcester. It turned into a very late night watching the Jak Raven band at the newly refurbished Eagle Vaults in Worcester. This historic venue is a cracking boozer with good ales and a decent pint of the black stuff.

Jak turned up on time and as he stumbled through the doors with his blonde hair, a few of the locals starting



singing Billy Idol's White Wedding!! He wasted no time setting up in the lounge area and immediately got to work with his band of merry men. Violins, bodhrans and drums were soon making a wonderful sound and everyone was having the Craic and got everyone on their feet dancing. Even Anton the landlord was trying some sort of jig by the bar. Jak's Folky music was a treat for

all and must have played for well over 2 and a half hours. The night did develop into somewhat of a blur but luckily Hogey turned up with the camera to take a few shots to jog the memory.



Stowford Press Battle of the Fans 2012

Semi Final Nights 8th, 13th & 4th April Grand final 27th April

Stowford Press £2.00 a pint all night during event.

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Guns and Roses Tribute 28th April - £5

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Opposite Evesham train station. Last train to Worcester 11:58pm.

CD REVIEW

George Barnett - 17 Days

My early notes for this marvellous release say:- George is 18 (17 when he wrote the album) and is prodigiously talented.

The boy plays drums, bass, guitars, piano, trumpets, harmonica, keyboards and sings like a friggin' angel. I hate him I hate I hate him!!!

Once the medication had kicked in, bitterness in it's box, I retired to my velveteen day bed, quill poised, for a hopefully somewhat more measured response.

I needn't have worried for as soon as stylus touched vinyl, the truly wondrous musical emanations of Mr B lit the sepulchral drawing room with it's life-affirming properties and my fevered brow was becalmed.

George not only plays the vast majority of sounds within (hello to strings, extra brass and backing vox) but also mind-bogglingly writes and produces every note. If that wasn't enough I believe this collection of songs spans and includes almost every music genre ever.

And so to jaunty opener 'Apocolade' which sets itself in the grand English tradition of the almost music hall, with excellent strings and brass parts and a line from The Kinks through XTC to now.

Second song 'Lone Rose' takes us on a trip to Paul Simon hi-life territory with such inventive instrumentation including a chugging ska organ and vibes. This really is the perfect soundtrack to our early summer weather (as I write).

It also exemplifies the positivity throughout this album and although one should hope for as much in an eighteen year old, this is no happy-clappy fest and there are plenty of life scars and deep experience herein.

The genre-hopping continues on 'Superhero In A Bowl' but this is no dilettantism in the way say Elvis Costello can be, there is real love for the styles on show here not to mention the uniformly excellent playing.

So 'Superhero' sounds like a zydeco boogie band covering George Michael's Faith and this is all good to me. 'Cassie' continues the invigorating vibe whilst 'The Other Girl' has Prince meeting Beck at a Swingers Club and everyone ends up watching an unrated version of Boogie Nights ie it's DURTAY! I need a shower.

'Make Me Smile' reminded me of Blur's Tender but from Beck's Mellow Gold era and on 'Abraham' you get to hear again what a great voice George has, but this time in case you're bored, accompanied in a jazz-rock hip hop style.

Now let's stop a moment and consider George Barnett - the name George Barnett.

I do yearn for the days of Larry Parnes and his ilk who would never allow one of their many wannabees to tread the boards with such a name. Then you had to be called Lance Fortune, Johnny Gentle or Duffy Power. Those were real rock star names.

OK so they never really made it, but that's just a minor detail.

Anyway I propose Horace Hydrogen for young G.B.

I do hope that along with using his real name he doesn't wear jeans and a t-shirt on stage, that really would be too dreary altogether.

Sermon over, back to the tunes and to prove that not all is sweetness and light in Horace's I mean George's world, 'Light A Fire' is an incendiary (sorry) song about the riots and musically comes over all Prince Glam-Slam stadium rocker complete with Kiss-cop guitar lick.

'Moonlight' then takes us into Fleet Foxes territory for a while before deciding to rock out.

Occasionally the breathtaking breadth of musicality does get exhausting and this can be the curse of the obscenely talented. I can do it so I will. I say this only as a minor criticism and one Mr B may well grow out of.

My favourite track because of this is probably 'Bewitched' which rocks from start to finish in fine melodic style.

One day George will focus on a genre or ten but this album is all about life poised on the precipice of manhood, celebrating the Everything Picture (look it up) of 17 days to go. He sums it up wonderfully well on the eponymous song thus:-

"Oh yeah I love knowing that the best is yet to come
Yeah I'm so happy that I'm who I should be
And the world is spinning to the rhythm of me."

In a couple of album's time the kaleidoscopic talent shown in abundance here will transmogrify into a holy whole and George's masterpiece will be born.

This isn't quite it which thankfully means he has something musically to look forward to, but it's a helluva start.

This is an album created by a man who utterly loves and breathes music, so if you do too I urge you to buy it and help George fund his future masterpiece.

17 Days is available from iTunes, Amazon and Bandcamp.

See George and band on April 26 at The Rainbow in Brum or a headlining London date on July 13 at The Clapham Grand.

For much more musical fun and info go to www.georgebarnett.co.uk

Words by B L Zebub



Sunday 1 April 2012

Edwina Hayes
The Marris Bar, Worcester

Irish Session
Katie Fitzgeralds, Stourbridge

Monday 2 April 2012

The Tap Jam (Open Mic / Jam)
The Brewery Tap, Worcester

Judie Tzuke
Huntington Hall, Worcester

Open Mic with Dave Small & Dave Onions
Cock & Magpie, Bewdley

Tuesday 3 April 2012

Open Mic Night
The Great Malvern Hotel, Malvern

Curtis Stigers
Huntington Hall, Worcester

Wednesday 4 April 2012

Marzys Jam Night
The Marris Bar, Worcester

Music @ The Morgan
The Morgan, Great Malvern

Worcester Rock City Battle of The Bands
Velvet Lounge, Worcester

Esther
Katie Fitzgeralds, Stourbridge

Thursday 5 April 2012

Jules Benjamin and Friends
Keystones Cafe Bar, Worcester

Miss Pearl and the Rough Diamonds
The Star, Upton Upon Severn

Open Mic
West Malvern Social Club, Malvern

Mike Mann & Friends
The Great Malvern Hotel, Malvern

Massive Head Trauma, Fortress
The Brewery Tap, Worcester

Martin Taylor
Huntington Hall, Worcester

Bling shakes the foundation night
Priors Croft, Malvern

Friday 6 April 2012

Tallulah Fix
The Railway, Evesham

Madi Stimpson Trio
The Great Malvern Hotel, Malvern

Reinforced, Calm Like a Riot, Das Sexy Clap, Black Russian
Velvet Lounge, Worcester

Bling tidy good Friday night at 360 degrees bar
Worcester

Rubery Rockers
The Artrix, Bromsgrove

Maddy Prior
Huntington Hall, Worcester

DJ Magistrate, DJ Alpha, DJ Fat Kat, DJ Warner, DJ Frenzy,
DJ Waxman, DJ Mr E, MC Sonny Flyboi
Priors Croft, Malvern

Skanking Sids Ska Night
Boars Head, Kidderminster

The UK Cult, Dark Retreat
The Marris Bar, Worcester

Saxon Axe
The Swan, Bengeworth, Evesham

Gunrunner
Katie Fitzgeralds, Stourbridge

This Wicked Tongue
The Flapper, Birmingham

Saturday 7 April 2012

Bluestack
Bell Inn, high Street, Colehill, b26

Inside Job
The Railway, Evesham

Live@The Bunker - Night Movers
Keystones, Worcester

Come Up and See Me, East of the Sun, Red Divide
The Marris Bar, Worcester

The Delray Rockets
Callow End Social Club, Worcester

Bootleg Sixties
The Artrix, Bromsgrove

The Vault of Eagles
Sunflower Lounge, Birmingham

Mood Elevators
The Swan, Bengeworth, Evesham

Mumbo Jumbo
Katie Fitzgeralds, Stourbridge

Becky
Kings Head, Upton

Ital Sounds
Unicorn, Malvern

Sunday 8 April 2012

The Sage Trio
The Great Malvern Hotel, Malvern

Northern Soul All Nighter
The Marris Bar, Worcester

Stowford Battle of the Bands 1st Semi Final
Crooked Empire vs Man Made Fire
The Railway, Evesham

NOW WE ARE Weekender Including Beck Rose, Evilwitch,
Mansize, Richard Clarke & the Rafterers, The Vault of Eagles
The Public, West Bromwich

Northern Soul all nighter
Marris bar, Worcester

Nigel Miles
The Swan, Bengeworth, Evesham

Delray Rockets
Rout 69 Bar, Kings Norton, Birmingham

Monday 9 April 2012

Phetus Christ, Plane Crasher, Meapacker, Weathered Hands
Mam Jammass, Hereford

The Tap Jam (Open Mic / Jam)
The Brewery Tap, Worcester

Open Mic with Dave Small & Dave Onions
Cock & Magpie, Bewdley

Tuesday 10 April 2012

Open Mic Night
The Great Malvern Hotel, Malvern

Mouth and Music
Boars Head, Kidderminster

Wednesday 11 April 2012

Marzys Jam Night
The Marrs Bar, Worcester

Worcester Rock City Battle of The Bands
Velvet Lounge, Worcester

Music @ The Morgan
The Morgan, Great Malvern

Worbey and Farrell
Artrix, Bromsgrove

Grumpy Old Guitarists
The Cock and Magpie, Bewdley

Thursday 12 April 2012

Jules Benjamin and Friends
Keystones Cafe Bar, Worcester

West Malvern Open Mic
West Malvern Social Club, Malvern

Tasha, Lee 'Libertine' Smith, Sally Haines
The Brewery Tap, Worcester

Gwyn Ashton
Katie Fitzgeralds, Stourbridge

Mike Mann
The Great Malvern Hotel, Malvern

Friday 13 April 2012

Bluestack
The Hop Pole Inn, Bromsgrove

Sam Eden
The Great Malvern Hotel, Malvern

Feast Of Fiddles
Huntington Hall, Worcester

Bo Pilar & the Mountain Valley Boys & Humdrum
Boars Head, Kidderminster

The Lights
Katie Fitzgeralds, Stourbridge

Delray Rockets
The Roadhouse, Kings Norton, Birmingham

Stowford Battle of the Bands 2nd Semi Final
Grizzle Roots vs In2stella Overdrive or Baron Green Back
The Railway, Evesham

Hancocks
Kings Head, Upton

Adam John
Cap 'n' Gown, Worcester

Saturday 14 April 2012

Live@The Bunker - Mother Popcorn
Keystones, Worcester

Rachel Stone
The Great Malvern Hotel, Malvern

Naked Remedy
Wishing Well, Bromsgrove

Black Cat Bone
Beauchamp Arms, Malvern

Sax Appeal
Callow End Social Club, Worcester

King Hammond & The Rude Boy Mafia, Stiff Joints,
Sugarlumo, Skambomambo, The Heels & DJs
The Wagon & Horses, Digbeth, Birmingham

Brink 182
Boars Head, Kidderminster

Mood Elevators
The Cock and Magpie, Bewdley

Verden Allen
Huntington Hall, Worcester

State of the Union
Marrs Bar, Worcester

Metal Fatigue
The Swan, Bengeworth, Evesham

Stowford Battle of the Bands 3rd Semi Final
Fury vd Captain Horizon or Vaudeville Tramps
The Railway, Evesham

Three Blind Mice
Katie Fitzgeralds, Stourbridge

Scambomambo
Garden of Evil, Birmingham

The Delray Rockets
The Unicorn, Malvern

Sunday 15 April 2012

Acoustic Jam Night
Callow End Social Club, Worcester

The Magnets
The Artrix, Bromsgrove

Monday 16 April 2012

The Tap Jam (Open Mic / Jam)
The Brewery Tap, Worcester

Open Mic with Dave Small & Dave Onions
Cock & Magpie, Bewdley

Tuesday 17 April 2012

Open Mic Night
The Great Malvern Hotel, Malvern

Mouth and Music
Boars Head, Kidderminster

Naked Remedy
The Roadhouse, Stirchley, Birmingham

Blues Night with Blueswamp Southern, Matt Woosey, &
Juke Joint John

Wednesday 18 April 2012

Kathleen Jones & Nigel McLoughlin
Lamb and Flag, Worcester

Marzys Jam Night
The Marris Bar, Worcester

Worcester Rock City Battle of The Bands - The Final
Velvet Lounge, Worcester

Music @ The Morgan
The Morgan, Great Malvern

Scambomambo, The Eccles Breed, Mr Shankly &
Lobster
Katie Fitzgeralds, Stourbridge

Thursday 19 April 2012

Jules Benjamin and Friends
Keystones Cafe Bar, Worcester

West Malvern Open Mic
West Malvern Social Club, Malvern

Retinal Circus, Rusty Knives, Sick Boys Club
The Brewery Tap, Worcester

Mike Mann & Friends
The Great Malvern Hotel, Malvern

Naked Remedy
The Talbot, Bewdley

Gypsy Fire
The Artrix, Bromsgrove

Eddy Morton
Katie Fitzgeralds

Buddy Whittington
Huntington Hall, Worcester

The Vault of Eagles
The Boars Head, Kidderminster

Friday 20 April 2012

The Reflections
The Wishing Well, Bromsgrove

Naked Remedy "St.Georges Beer Festival Weekend"
The Bridge, Stanford Bridge, nr Gt.Witley:

Come Up and See Me
Cap 'n' Gown, Worcester

Theo, Vault of Eagles, This Wicked Tongue, Mansize,
The Captains of Industry, Quinn
The Marris Bar, Worcester

ELCO!, Beth & Clarissa, Vicky & Paige, Alice McMahon,
Jade Wright
Keystones Cafe Bar, Worcester

The May Dolls, Thistle & Thorn
The Morgan, Great Malvern

Rattlesnake Kiss
Katie Fitzgeralds, Stourbridge

Obsidian Rain
The Railway, Evesham

Michael Buble Tribute With Big Band
Huntington Hall, Worcester

Jagged Hands
The Swan, Bengeworth, Evesham

Partners in Crime
Kings Head, Upton

Night Blade & Four Flights Up
Boars Head, Kidderminster

Saturday 21 April 2012

Usual Suspects, Cop on Fire, Generic Eric & Chtis Bowsher
Boars Head, Kidderminster

SLAP NIGHT Skambomambo, Stiff Joints
Arts Workshop, Worcester

The Ex Presidents
O'Neills, Worcester

Naked Remedy (acoustic)
The Beacon, Gloucester

Skint
Pillar of Salt, Droitwich

Live@The Bunker - Matchless
Keystones, Worcester

Subsorcery Discowrekaz meets Ital Sounds
Unicorn, Malvern

Stompin' on Spiders, Stripped Down Blues Band
The Great Malvern Hotel, Malvern

Fifteen English Pounds
The Railway, Evesham

The Matchless
Keystones Cafe Bar, Worcester

Stripped Down Blues, Stompin' on Spiders
The Great Malvern Hotel, Malvern

Stunt Roxx
The Swan, Bengeworth, Evesham

Sax Appeal
The Great Malvern Hotel, Malvern

Liquor and Poker Band
Katie Fitzgeralds, Stourbridge

Stomping Spiders
The Great Malvern Hotel, Malvern

The Pewke Band
Callow End Social Club, Worcester

Michael Buble Tribute With Big Band
Huntington Hall, Worcester

Sunday 22 April 2012

Acoustic Jam Night
Callow End Social Club, Worcester

Mumbo Jumbo
The Marris Bar, Worcester

Monday 23 April 2012

The Tap Jam (Open Mic / Jam)
The Brewery Tap, Worcester

John Banner Charity Promotions presents - Let's Rock'n'Roll,
The Man In Black, The King & The Killer
Huntington Hall, Worcester

Open Mic with Dave Small & Dave Onions
Cock & Magpie, Bewdley

Tuesday 24 April 2012

Stompin' on Spiders, Stripped Down Blues Band
The Cellar Bar, Foregate Street, Worcester, WR1 1XX

Open Mic Night
The Great Malvern Hotel, Malvern

Wednesday 25 April 2012

Marzys Jam Night
The Marris Bar, Worcester

Music @ The Morgan
The Morgan, Great Malvern

Skambomambo
Bulls Head, Moseley

Thursday 26 April 2012

Jules Benjamin and Friends
Keystones Cafe Bar, Worcester

West Malvern Open Mic
West Malvern Social Club, Malvern

Mike Mann
The Great Malvern Hotel, Malvern

Nine Days Lane, The Pargeters, Liam Molesworth
The Artrix, Bromsgrove

Worcestershire Young Musicians Showcase
Huntington Hall, Worcester

The Counterfeit Stones
The Swan Theatre, Worcester

George Barnett and The Ninth Wave
The Rainbow, Birmingham

Matt Woosey
Katie Fitzgeralds, Stourbridge

Trio Rosbifs
The Lamb and Flag, Worcester

Skambomambo, The Eccles Breed, Mr Shankly
The Swan, Kidderminster

Friday 27 April 2012

The Matchless
The Garibaldi Inn, Worcestre

The Reflections
The White Hart, Headless Cross, Redditch

Fallen Angel
Boars Head, Kidderminster

Bluestack
Hanbury Turn, Bromsgrove

Tallavera Ray
The Swan, Bengeworth, Evesham

Inca Hoots, Arp Attack, Shatter Effect
The Marris Bar, Worcester

Vo & Tyler
The Wellington Inn, Colwall

The Delray Rockets
Kings Head, Upton

The Rock Hobbits
The Great Malvern Hotel, Malvern

Abba - The Show
The Swan Theatre, Worcester

Stowford Battle of the Bands Grand Final
The Railway, Evesham

The Astaria String Quartet
Huntington Hall, Worcester

Inca Hoots, Shatter Effect , Arp Attack
The Marris Bar, Worcester

Saturday 28 April 2012

Vaudeville Tramp Band
Unicorn, Malvern

Delray Rockets
Drakes Broughton Village Hall

Bunter & The Vibes
Boars Head, Kidderminster

Live@The Bunker - Sugar Mama
Keystones, Worcester

Skint
The Woodland Cottage, Redditch

The Matchless
The Old Beams, Stourport On Severn

Black Cat Bone
The Great Malvern Hotel, Malvern

Junction 7
Swan Inn, Port Street, Evesham

Otis Mack and the Tubby Bluesters
Callow End Social Club, Worcester

Bleeding Hearts
Katie Fitzgeralds

The Vault of Eagles
The Public, West Bromwich

The Barflys
The Lamb and Flag, Worcester

Old Hollow, Tres Primos
West Malvern Social Club, Malvern

Robinson, Texas Radio
The Marris Bar, Worcester

Guns and Roses Tribute
The Railway, Evesham

Sunday 29 April 2012

Acoustic Lunch with Stompin' on Spiders & friends, BabaJack
and more TBC
The Old Rectifying House, Worcester

Acoustic Jam Night
Callow End Social Club, Worcester

BabaJack , Stompin' On Spiders, Tim Kirby, David Young
The Old Rectifying House, Worcester

Monday 30 April 2012

The Tap Jam (Open Mic / Jam)
The Brewery Tap, Worcester

Open Mic with Dave Small & Dave Onions
Cock & Magpie, Bewdley

Listings in conjunction with:



THE MARR'S BAR

APR 2012



State of the Union
Sat 14th April

Sunday 1st

Edwina Hayes

£8 ticket £10 on door

Thursday 5th

Comedy Zone Presents – Adam Bloom, Jonathon Elston plus guest

£10 ticket £12 on door

Friday 6th

UK Cult with support from Dark Retreat

£4 ticket £6 on door

Saturday 7th

Come Up And See Me with support from East Of The Sun & Red Devide

£3 admission

Sunday 8th

Northern Soul all nighter

£10 ticket

Friday 13th

Slack Granny

Saturday 14th

State Of The Union

£12 ticket

Friday 20th

Blue Radio Birthday Bash - Theo, Vault of Eagles, This Wicked Tongue, Mansize, The Captains of Industry, Quinn - £3 admission

Sunday 22nd

Mumbo Jumbo

Friday 27th

Inca Hoots, Shatter Effect, Arp Attack

£4 ticket £5 on door

Saturday 28th

Robinson & Texas Radio

£4 ticket £5 on door

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