



INFORMER

FOLK

Lew Baxter



The Oldham Tinkers (left to right) Gerry Kearns, Larry Kearns, John Howarth. You can see them at the Centre Hotel on November 9.

FOLK CLUB organisers on Merseyside are accusing folk artists who hit the big time of increasing their fees out of all proportion, and claim they could kill off the scene in the area.

Dave Robinson, organiser of the Two-plus-One folk club, one of Merseyside's biggest folk clubs, says that once a folk artist makes a name then his fees go sky high.

"Certain acts are becoming commercially hot property," said Dave, "and whereas they were glad of club bookings in the past, have now upped their fees to ridiculous levels."

With artists such as Jaspar Carrot, his 'Funky Moped' song high in the charts and Mike Harding and his 'Rochdale Cowboy' still fresh in people's memories the folk scene would seem to have been lifted out of its role as the poor man of the music industry.

And yet the great paradox is that folk groups as such are barely making a living. Witness the recent end to what has been described as the finest band in ten years—Planxty.

Despite rising popularity Planxty claim that financial burdens have forced them out of the market. Their last concert tour ends this month.

In similar circumstances the promising Scots group Contraband also abandoned any attempt to make a living off the folk scene and disbanded.

Even the Chieftains, who visited the Liverpool Empire last month, are still cautious about the financial aspect of the folk scene and they have packed to capacity the Albert Hall on two occasions.

Locally the situation is even more dramatic. Apart from established professionals such as the Spinners and Jacqui and Bridie, few folk singers or groups will risk making a living from their music.

But even Jacqui and Bridie, long established as Liverpool folk ambassadors along with the Spinners, say that they could not make a living solely from folk clubs.

"Our feeling is that folk music has always been the cheaper end of the entertainment business, but now people have got to realise that they must be prepared to spend at least 50p for an evening's entertainment," said Jacqui.

Norman Castle, a solo singer and entertainer on the folk club circuit echoes this view closely even though he says that he hasn't felt the pinch as much as a duo or a group.

"I believe that there has to be a realistic door charge for folk clubs," he explained. "This has long been a bug to me. Organisers have always seemed scared to put up the entrance charge for fear of frightening away their audiences."

Brian Jacques, the Liverpool folk poet, wit and singer, with his group Brigantine, incorporates a more wide-reaching appeal in his act than mere folk clubs demand. And he also works at a full-time job to

keep his music and poetry alive. Others can only keep on with their music and work the local circuit building up a reputation as they go along. But audiences are fickle and will not pay to see an act they do not know, so newcomers and new acts stand little chance of securing any bookings.

But once they do get known there is another paradox. Their fees rise as their expenses increase and folk club entrance fees must rise in proportion.

In effect what happens is that the poorer folk clubs stand little or no chance of success. They cannot afford new artists without a name because no-one will come, and they cannot afford the big names with high fees.

Take, for example, Adrian House Folk Club in Sandringham Drive. The club has been in existence for over ten years. Earlier this year it was threatened with closure due to financial pressures. They were not attracting audiences and could not pay for good artists to bring the audiences back. They were booking some big names but stood the loss out of their own pockets.

At the last minute, on the night of closure, nine regular members of the club decided not to let it close and formed a committee to manage the club's affairs.

Now it's on the up and up again with some top names booked as guests. But the financial support still comes basically from the committee.

Committee member Keith Myers explains: "We still find that we are short some weeks and need to cover the expenses ourselves. It's not so bad now but we do need regular good audiences."

There are about 30 folk clubs in the Merseyside area ranging from the small singalong clubs, like Walton Labour Club and the Victoria Hotel on the Dock Road to the bigger, plushier clubs like the Black Horse Music Hall run by the Hooters on the Wirral and the concert-style club at the Centre Hotel.

Many are chugging along nicely but a lot more are finding it difficult to keep going. It would seem that there is a need, now, for a re-appraisal of the financial side of folk music.

For a long time money has been a dirty word on the folk scene. Folk artists have been expected to scratch a living as best they can. Admittedly some have done exceptionally well, but now many are finding that inflation has hit them hard.

Their fees, in some cases understandably, have gone up. Can folk clubs keep pace? There is certainly a demand for the top artists, who ask anything from £30 to £60 a booking, and yet a seeming objection to paying anything above the headline for the privilege.

What do club organisers on Merseyside really think of this situation? In the next issue of the FREE PRESS they will have their say.

WHAT'S ON

MONDAYS

Triton Hotel, Paradise St, Liverpool 1. Spinners and floor singers throughout November.

Cross Keys, Bixteth Street (near Stadium) Nov. 3 Jack Hudson; Nov 10 Silly Wizard; Other nights it's Jacqui and Bridie and floor singers.

TUESDAYS

Adrian House, 15 Sandringham Drive, Liverpool 17. Nov 4 Singers; Nov 11 Gary and Vera; Nov 18 Ian Woods; Nov 25 Jon Raven.

FRIDAYS

Wheelhouse Club, SS Peter and Paul,

Crosby. Nov 7 Tom Tiddlers Ground; Nov 14 Martin Carthy; Nov 21 Singers; Nov 28 Therapy.

Atlantic House, Hardman Street, L'pool 1. Nov 7 Widdershins; Nov 14 Kelly and Walsh; Nov 21 Wesley Park and Smith; Nov 28 The Hooters.

SATURDAYS

Sing around at Oily Joe's, Oil Street (off Dock Road).

SUNDAYS

Centre Hotel, Lord Nelson St, Liverpool 1. Nov 9 Oldham Tinkers; Nov 16 John Renbourne and Jacqui McShee; Nov 23 Jasper Carrott; Nov 30 Cajun Moon.

Wed 26 Nov. POETRY WORKSHOP Jabberwocky. Burton Manor College of Adult Education, Burton, Wirral. Mary Hodson, Alan Gaunt and David Selzer present poems for discussion. 8 p.m. For details contact Gladys Mary Coles, 38 York Ave, West Kirby (625 9128).

POETRY

HENRI'S BISTRO POETS. Everyman Theatre Bistro. 17 Nov. LIZ LOCKHEAD with Spencer Leigh and David Porter. Tickets £1 including meal. From Everyman and MAA Artshop.

THEATRE

EVERYMAN THEATRE 709 4776

Until 15 Nov. ONE FLEW OVER THE CUCKOO'S NEST by Ken Kesey. European premiere of this Everyman dramatisation of the great novel. Designed by cartoonist Ralph Steadman.

19-29 Nov. DEATH IN LEICESTER by Roy Minto. A Friday night when an 8-dog accumulator is looking good...

PLAYHOUSE 709 8363

5-22 Nov. A STREETCAR NAMED DESIRE by Tennessee Williams. The brilliant and controversial Broadway hit. (No perf. 10 Nov.)

26 Nov-13 Dec. WALK ON, WALK ON by Willis Hall. Fascinating glimpse behind the scenes of Association Football. World premiere. (No perf. 1 Dec.)

PLAYHOUSE UPSTAIRS

4-22 Nov. THE PARTY'S OVER by Alan Bleasdale, author of 'Scully'. Penetrating account of life in Liverpool remand home for young women.

25 Nov.-13 Dec. CAN YOU SMELL GAS? Linda Dolan in a one-woman show by Andrew Davies. Music by Tony Hatch.

GATEWAY Chester 40393

12-22 Nov. THE GHOST TRAIN' Arnold Ridley's famous comedy thriller.

25-29 Nov. HABEAS CORPUS. Back again for one week - Alan Bennett's medical comedy.

THEATRE ROYAL St Helens 28467

6-8 Nov. HERE WE COME GATHERING. Newtown Players. [Amateur].

20-22 Nov. QUIET WEEKEND. (The Unnamed Players). [Amateur]

SOUTHPORT ARTS CENTRE (40011)

18-22 Nov. Variety of productions from BALLET RAMBERT. Phone Southport 40011 for details.

NEPTUNE (Amateurs) 709 7844

4-8 Nov. SUDDENLY AT HOME. Green Room Players with a drama by Francis Durbridge.

13-15 Nov. ROOKERY NOOK. Also Drama Group with a comedy by Ben Travers

20-22 Nov. THE FAR-OFF HILLS by Lennox Robinson. (Irish Playgoers).

28 & 29 Nov. LOVE BY APPOINTMENT. By Anthony Lesser. (East Wavertree Players.)

AMATEUR PRODUCTIONS

4-8 Nov. Wallasey Drama Club with GIGI. Memorial Hall, Manor Road, Wallasey. 7.45.

8-15 Nov. Carlton Players with A HUNDRED YEARS OLD. Little Theatre, Grange Road W., Birkenhead. 7.30.

18-22 Nov. The Playmakers with Shakespeare's THE WINTER'S TALE. St Thomas Hall, Stockton Heath, Warrington. 7.45.

19-22 Nov. Stork Dramatic Society with DON'T START WITHOUT ME. Gladstone Hall, Port Sunlight. Charity performance on Wed. Thursday free for pensioners (tickets from local clubs or phone Helen Bright, 334 1787).

25 Nov. Merseyside Unity Theatre with Ibsen's A DOLL'S HOUSE' Less of the Ibsen gloom here - looks like a straight-forward domestic comedy... until the last act. At Crosby Civic Hall, 7.30.

27-29 Nov. Unity Theatre come to Liverpool with their production of Ibsen's A DOLL'S HOUSE (see above). In the university's Eleanor Rathbone Theatre, Myrtle St., 7.30.

Mon 3 Nov. Wirral Choral Society in Concert. 7.45. Hulme Hall, Port Sunlight. 45p and 35p.

Tues 4 Nov. Industrial Concert. 7.45. Philharmonic Hall. Details: 709 2895. Also on Wed and Thurs, 5 & 6 Nov.

Fri 7 Nov. Music of the Masters. 2.15 Sefton Library Services and Crosby Recorded Music Soc. Record recital. Admission free.

Fri 7 Nov. Friday Recital (Schubert). 7.30 Sandon Music Room, Bluecoat Chambers. 50p (students and OAPs 25p)

Fri 7 Nov. Philharmonic Concert. 7.30 Philharmonic Hall. Details: 709 3789.

Fri 7 Nov. Du Bois Trio. 8 p.m. at the Melling Tithebarn.

Sat 8 Nov. Choral and Orchestral Concert. 7.15, Philharmonic Hall. Verdi/Aida. (Liverpool Welsh Choral Union.)

Tues 11 Nov. Mabel Fletcher College Ensemble. 1.10, James Parsons Hall, Polytechnic, Byrom St. Free.

Tues 11 Nov. Philharmonic Concert. 7.30. Philharmonic Hall. Details: 709 3789.

Wed 12 Nov. Organ recital by Terence Duffy. Metropolitan Cathedral, 7.30. 50p (students, OAPs, children 30p)

Wed 12 Nov. Oratorio. William Morris Singers. 7.30, St Anne's Church, Stanley, Liverpool. Handel/Brahms.

FILMS



Scene from The Cannibals (November 21)

What to see . . .

Mon 3 Nov. FEAR EATS THE SOUL. Lethal illustration of the entrenched racial prejudices of the German middle classes. International Critics' Prize, Cannes, 1974. -MFIS.

Tues 4 Nov. FEAR EATS THE SOUL' (see Monday).

Wed 5 Nov. THE LITTLE THEATRE OF JEAN RENOIR. -New Shakespeare.

Thurs 6 Nov. ASHES AND DIAMONDS' Story of the Polish uprising. -Halton.

Thurs 6 Nov. THE GODDESS. Conflict between old and new in India when a man persuades himself that his daughter-in-law is the goddess Kali incarnate. -University Cinema Club.

Thurs 6 Nov. A MAN FOR ALL SEASONS. Inspired performance by Paul Scofield as Sir Thomas More. -Deeside Film Soc.

Thurs 6 Nov. THE HELLSTROM CHRONICLE. Compelling documentary study of the insect world. -Birkenhead F.S.

Fri 7 Nov. Eisenstein's OCTOBER. Leo McGree Centre, 39 Shaw Street, Liverpool 6. 25p.

Fri 7 Nov. A NEW LEAF. First of three films by women directors (this one by Elaine May). Refreshing Thirties fairy-tale. -MFIS.

Mon 10 Nov. WHAT'S UP DOC? Director Peter Bogdanovich. With Barbra Streisand, Ryan O'Neal. -MFIS.

Tues 11 Nov. WHAT'S UP DOC? (See Monday).

Tues 11 Nov. L'INVITATION (Swiss). -Southport Film Guild.

Wed 12 Nov. COLLEGE and THE KISS. Silent films with Buster Keaton and Greta Garbo. -New Shakespeare.

Thurs 13 Nov. TRUE HEART SUZIE. 1919 silent comedy with live accompaniment. -Univ. Cinema Club.

Fri 14 Nov. LION'S LOVE. Penetrating view of Los Angeles scene. Second in series with women directors (this one: Agnes Varda). -MFIS.

Sat 15 Nov. THE LIFE OF O'HARU. (Japanese). Powerful feminist protest. -MFIS. (5.15 and 8 p.m.)

Mon 17 Nov. PAYDAY. Loving document of America on wheels as a country music star breezes through the south. -MFIS.

Tues 18 Nov. PAYDAY (see Monday).

Wed 19 Nov. BLACK HOLIDAY. Italy in the Thirties. -New Shakespeare.

Thurs 20 Nov. BOXCAR BERTHA. Violent, cynical portrayal of trade unions in USA. -Halton Film Soc.

Thurs 20 Nov. TWO OR THREE THINGS I KNOW ABOUT HER. (French with sub-titles). Jean-Luc Godard explores a day in the life of a Parisian housewife who turned part-time prostitute. -University Cinema Club.

Thurs 20 Nov. HIGH SOCIETY. Musical starring Grace Kelly, Frank Sinatra and Bing Crosby. -Birkenhead F.S.

Thurs 20 Nov. THE INVITATION. Excellent Swiss satire on bourgeois society. -Deeside Film Society.

Fri 21 Nov. THE CANNIBALS. (Italian). Modern version of Sophocles' Antigone. -MFIS.

Fri 21 Nov. DAY FOR NIGHT. Truffaut's film about the making of a film. -Heswall F.S.

Mon 24 Nov. MY UNIVERSITIES. 1940 Soviet film directed by Donskoi. Followed by discussion. -Southport Film Guild.

Mon 24 Nov. LA GRANDE BOUFFE (Blow-Out). The film the council banned. No guest tickets for this one! Members advised to bring their cards with them.

Tues 25 Nov. LA GRANDE BOUFFE (Blow-Out) - see Monday.

Wed 26 Nov. THE BELOVED ROGUE. A costume silent with John Barrymore. -New Shakespeare.

Thurs 27 Nov. ALL ABOUT EVE. Story of the rise of an unscrupulous actress. Stars Bette Davis. -Univ Cinema Club.

Fri 28 Nov. COLLEGE and THE GENERAL' Double bill of Buster Keaton silents. -MFIS.

Sat 29 Nov. AVANTI!! Master of graveyard humour Billy Wilder is back on form with this one. -MFIS (5.15 and 8 p.m.)

where to see it

BIRKENHEAD LIBRARY FILM SOC Alternate Thurs, 8 p.m. at Williamson Art Gallery, Slatery Rd, Birkenhead. Membership details: Music Dept, Central Library, Borough Rd, B'head. Tel: 652 6106.

DEESIDE FILM SOCIETY: Alternate Thurs, 8 p.m. at MANWEB Training Hall, Carr Lane, Hoylake (5 mins from Hoylake Station). Membership details: D. Henshall Wood, 130 Frankby Rd, Newton, West Kirby.

HALTON FILM SOCIETY: Irregularly on Thurs at 7.45 p.m. Membership details: Bill Gallan, 4 Tarvin Close, Runcorn. Runcorn 75628.

LIVERPOOL UNIVERSITY CINEMA CLUB: Theme this term: Images of Women. Thursdays 8 p.m. in University Lecture Rooms Building, Crown St (off Brownlow Hill). Membership NOT restricted to people at university. Details: Dr Ann Thompson, English Dept, The University, PO Box 147, Liverpool L69 3BX. Tel: 709 6022.

MERSEYSIDE FILM INSTITUTE SOCIETY: Mon, Tues, Fri and sometimes Sat., in Merseyside Film Theatre, Bluecoat Chambers, School Lane, Liverpool. Showings at 6 p.m. and 8.15 unless otherwise stated. Membership details: Hon. Sec., MFIS, 45 Bluecoat Chambers, School Lane, Liverpool, L1 3BX.

NEW SHAKESPEARE FILM SOCIETY: Weds at 7 p.m. at Royal Institution, Colquitt Street, Liverpool. Films are part of a course run by University Institute of Extension Studies and are followed by discussion. Tickets for individual sessions: 40p (students 20p). Details: Royal Institution, Colquitt Street. Tel: 709 1579.

SOUTHPORT FILM GUILD: Irregularly on Tues at 7.30 p.m., Southport Arts Centre, Lord St. Details: Denis Cheetham, 24a Lulworth Rd, Birkdale. S'port 67162.

Sat 22 Nov. St Cecilia's Day Concert. 7.30, Crypt West Chapel, Metropolitan Cathedral. 60p (pensioners, students and children 30p).

Sat 22 Nov. City of Chester Symphony Orchestra. 7.45, St Mary's College, Wallasey Village.

Sun 23 Nov. Viennese Music. Orchestral concert. 8 p.m. Southport Arts Centre, Lord St. Details: Southport 40011. 60p (children, OAPs 40p).

Tues 25 Nov. Philharmonic Concert. 7.30, Philharmonic Hall. London Philharmonic Orchestra. Details: 709 3789.

Wed 26 Nov. Choral concert. 7.45, Mountford Hall, University Students' Union.

Wed 26 Nov. Yitkin Seow 1975/5 Keyboard board series. 8 p.m. Southport Arts Centre, Lord St.

Thurs 27 Nov. Opera for All. 7.30, Queens Hall, Widnes. Verdi's A Masked Ball in English with sets and costumes.

Fri 28 Nov. Dvorak Quartet. Southport Arts Centre, Lord St. Mozart/Beethoven/Dvorak.

Fri 28 Nov. Recital. St Nicholas' Parish Church, Pier Head. Send £1 and SAE to Rev J. Pollard, 11 Mentmore Rd, Liverpool L18 4PU.

Sat 29 Nov. Philharmonic Concert. 7.30, Philharmonic Hall. 709 3789.

Sun 30 Nov. Liverpool Mozart Orchestra. 8 p.m., Bluecoat Hall. Bartok/Mozart/Beethoven.

CLASSICAL

Fri 14 Nov. Music of the Masters. (Records) Crosby Central Library, 2.15. Free.

Fri 14 Nov. The Eberle Ensemble. 7.45, Bluecoat Hall. In aid of 'Enterprise Neptune', presented by National Trust.

Sat 15 Nov. Philharmonic Concert. 7.30, Philharmonic Hall. Details: 709 3789.

Tues 18 Nov. Dvorak String Quartet. 7.30, Philharmonic Hall. Beethoven/Janacek/Dvorak.

Wed 19 Nov. Oratorio. William Morris Singers. 7.30. Central Hall, Renshaw St. Mendelssohn's Elijah.

Wed 19 Nov. Recital. University Singers, Liverpool Haydn Camerata. 8 p.m., Mossley Hill Parish Church.

Fri 21 Nov. Music of the Masters (Records) Crosby Central Library, 2.15. Free.

Fri 21 Nov. On Wings of Song. 7.45, Bluecoat Hall. Send 50p and SAE to Mrs Dickson, New Hey, Croft Dr West, Caldby, Wirral.

Fri 21 Nov. Orchestral Concert. 7.30, College Hall, Mabel Fletcher College, Sandown Road, Liverpool 15. 50p (students, OAPs 25p).

Sat 22 Nov. Evening of Edwardiana. 7.30, Childwall Valley Girls' School. Including 'Hiawatha's Wedding Feast' with music and readings from the Edwardian era. 50p.