

# INFORMER

## JAZZ

SADLY, the Banyan Tree has now closed. Its transformation into a casino, which has been projected for a long time, is now under way and its nights of jazz are over. Although most forms of jazz have been presented there (I remember particularly a fine evening with Wild Bill Davison and the Merseissippi Jazz Band), it is the modern fans who will miss the Banyan most, as many top musicians have appeared there in the last four years. Despite the plastic glasses and the ale — the price and quality of which would have CAMRA members weeping into their T-shirts — it will be missed, and we hope the organisers will find alternative premises soon.

Happier news from Southport, in that the Arts Association there are planning concerts in the autumn featuring guitarist Barney Kessel, the Graham Collier Big Band, the John Taylor Octet and the John Warren Band. Details of these from the Merseyside Arts Association (709 0671) or Alan Daiches of the Southport Arts group.

In Hoylake (where, incidentally the local Arts Association is a most thriving concern which regularly features jazz in its programme) Finnegan's Steak Bar in Albert Road now has jazz on Monday nights. Also on the Wirral, the Savoy Jazzmen have started Tuesday night sessions at the Parkgate Hotel, Parkgate.

Regulars at the Coffee House, and many other venues on Merseyside, will be sad to hear of the departure this month of Blue Magnolia banjo/guitar man Phil Probert. He is moving to London and his exciting solos will be sorely missed, as will his ensemble playing. Too often the mindless jazz critics have underrated the role of the banjo as an ensemble instrument (an unhappy memory of the 'Trad boom' days?) and it is to be hoped that Phil Probert's departure will not mark the end of his style of playing on the local scene.

LIVE jazz can be heard at the following places on Merseyside:

**Monday:** Merseyside Big Band, Victoria Hotel, New Brighton. Finnegan's Steak Bar, Albert Road, Hoylake.

**Tuesday:** Blue Magnolia Jazz Orchestra, The Coffee House (pub), Wavertree. Savoy Jazzmen, Parkgate Hotel, Parkgate.

**Wednesday:** Merseyside Jazz Band, The Sportsman, St John's Precinct. Panama Jazz Band, The Black Horse, West Kirby. Mike Jackson Quintet, Gladray Upper Parliament Street. Blue Magnolia Jazz Orchestra, Pickwick's Club, Fraser Street, Liverpool.

**Thursday:** Panama Jazz Band, Victoria Hotel, New Brighton. Phoenix Jazz Band, Westminster Hotel, Chester.

**Friday:** Various bands at the Hawk and Buckle pub in Denbigh.

**Sunday:** (Lunchtime) New Orleans Jazz, Victoria Hotel, New Brighton. (Evening) New Orleans Express, Albion Hotel, Chester.

## FOLK

"SILLY SISTERS" — Maddy Prior and June Tabor. (Chrysalis, 1976)

VOCALLY, "Silly Sisters" lacks depth in terms of tone and musically it lacks the unexpected that makes a record exciting. The result is fairly shallow artistry, smooth in texture but brittle and frail in durability. Of the thirteen songs (twelve traditional, one contemporary) only six escape some form of criticism, either on the grounds of treatment or suitability, after discussion with various people both at home and at the Folk Song Workshop.

Nevertheless it is refreshing to have an album devoted to two female vocalists of some repute. Not since "The Female Frolic" (Argo, 1968) have we had anything similar, but in that instance the record was devoted to essentially feminine songs, giving an essentially feminine outlook on to their world.

"Silly Sisters" is not so hard-line in attitude; neither does it possess the same political undertones that we have come to expect from the Critics Group. The album is obviously intended for a different audience — a more general appeal embracing the whole folk spectrum. It includes *Four Loom Weaver* — about a man on strike circa 1820 — *The Grey Funnel Line* written by Cyril Tawney — about a guy fed up with the Royal Navy — and *Singing the Travels* which is really a dialogue between a serving man and a husbandman extolling the virtues of the latter's life style. All are well sung but how suitable are they to two girls singing in harmony? You can guess at my answer, but it is nice to see the potential of *Grey Funnel Line* realised.

Maddy's solo, *Lass of Loch Royal* is a fine interpretation of an Irish ballad — a perfect example of her polished professional singing with Gabriel McKeon providing tasteful and moody accompaniment on uilleann pipes. Also, it's a fine tune! June's solo, *Geordie*, is a version I have not heard before. More than competently dealt with by June Tabor, it has the added attraction of Martin Carthy, musically philanthropic as ever, providing guitar backing. Only praise.

But the combined efforts of the "Sisters" is varied. "Simply nice" would be a nice way of summing most of it up. Witness *The Seven Joys of Mary*, a pre-Reformation carol, although it is greatly relieved by the multi-musicianship of John Gillaspie with bassoons, soprano and bombard — he's a little medieval band all on his own! It is tempting to conclude that *Dame Durden* is fine to dance to but not very interesting to listen to. Similarly, *The Game of Cards* lacks subtlety and guts. Compare the song with Sam Larner's rendition (Folkways, 1961) called *All Fours* — at least you know he's singing about a sexual encounter and lets you know he's enjoying it.

The highlights for me are *The Seven Wonders, My Husband's Got No Courage in Him* (listen to Maddy Prior's fifth verse), and *Burning of Auchdoon* which I would love to hear Dick Gaughan sing — he knows how to put his rrr's into his 'burns'. *Silver Whistle* is very enjoyable but the "ingenious tune" by John Moy-nihan at the end is boring and repetitious.

Do listen to it before you sign your Co-op Bank cheques, unless you have plenty of cash — in which case spend — I'm overcritical anyway.

— FRANK McCALL



Fire-eater at the Summer in the City festivities.

## EXHIBITIONS

### ACADEMY GALLERY

65 Renshaw St., Liverpool. 709 4088. Tues-Fri 10.30-5.00; Sat 11.30-3.00.

**ANTHONY TAYLOR.** His pictures are strong, poetic, figurative, lyrical. Mostly about the people and town of his native Great Harwood. Tue-Fri, 10.30-5.00; Sat 11.30-3.00. Until July 16

**JOHN MOORES SCHOLARS.** Work produced during the past year by three holders of the John Moores Scholarship. Tue-Sat, 1.00-5.00. July 20-30.

**RHEA BAILEY.** Paintings and etchings. Tue-Fri, 10.30-5.30; Sat 10.30-2.30. Aug 13-31.

### ATKINSON ART GALLERY

Lord Street, Southport. Tel: 33133, ext. 149. Mon-Sat, 10.00-5.00.

**THE FACE OF MERSEYSIDE.** Work by members of the Liverpool Academy of Arts. Until July 24.

**PAINTINGS BY R. WOOD.** July 3-24.

### BLUECOAT GALLERY

School Lane, Liverpool. 709 5689. Tue-Fri, 10.30-5.00; Sat 10.00-2.30.

**MELVYN CHANTREY.** Recent work. Until July 17.

**MICHAEL BENNETT.** Recent drawings and paintings. July 24-Aug 14.

**THURSTON HOPKINS: PHOTO-GRAPHS.** Aug 21-Sept 12.

### BOOTLE ART GALLERY

Oriel Road, Bootle. Mon, Wed, Fri 10.00-7.00; Tues, 10.00-5.00; Thurs, Sat, 10.00-1.00.

**BETWEEN THE TIDES.** A North-West Museum and Art Gallery Service exhibition. July 12-Aug 13.

### CARLTON MASONIC CLUB

18 Eberle Street, Liverpool 2. Mon-Fri, 10.00-5.30.

**MERSEYSIDE ARTISTS' ASSOCIATION.** Annual summer exhibition of traditional painting. Aug 10-19.

### COUNTY MUSEUMS

William Brown St., Liverpool. 207 0001. Mon-Sat, 10.00-5.00. Sun, 2.00-5.00.

**PERUVIAN GROUND DRAWINGS.** Until July 25.

**THE CAMERA AND THE CRAFTSMAN.** Aug 5-30.

**BRITISH BIRDS** by British artists. Until September 26.

And all this year: NEW SHIPPERIES EXHIBITION; NIGERIAN POTTERY; PREHISTORIC METALWORK.

### GROSVENOR MUSEUM

27 Grosvenor Street, Chester. Tel: 21616. Mon-Sat, 10.00-5.00; Sun, 2.00-5.00.

**THE ARDERNES OF UTKINTON** and local family portraits. Arranged in connection with the Chester Festival. June 26-Sept 30.

### HESWALL PARISH HALL

Telegraph Road, Heswall.

**HESWALL ARTISTS' ASSOCIATION** annual exhibition. To include some paintings by founder-member Miss Ethel Harker. July 30-Aug 7. Daily (except Sun and Tue) 10.30-8.30. Adm: 10p.

### MAGAZINE PROMENADE

Railings between New Brighton and Egremont.

**'LEFT BANK' OPEN AIR ART.** Paintings by members of Wallasey Arts Society. A popular annual event. 2.00-5.30, Sundays July 25, Aug 8 and 15, also Bank Holiday Monday Aug 30. (If wet on any day the nearest available fine Sunday will replace cancellation day).

### SOUTHPORT ARTS CENTRE

Lord Street, Southport. Mon-Sat.

### GRAPHIC WORKS BY JOHN ROBERTS.

John Roberts is Principal Lecturer in the Department of Graphic Design at Liverpool Polytechnic. Exhibition arranged by Barbara Wright of the Sefton Group of Artists. July 26-Aug 14.

### UNIVERSITY OF LIVERPOOL

Senate House, Abercromby Square. Mon-Fri, 9.00-5.30; Sat 9.00-12.00

**EXHIBITION OF LANCASHIRE AND CHESHIRE PHOTOGRAPHIC UNION** Until July 17.

### WALKER ART GALLERY

William Brown Street, Liverpool. 227 5234 Ext. 2064. Mon-Sat, 10.00-5.00; Sun, 2.00-5.00.

**JOHN MOORES LIVERPOOL EXHIBITION 10.** Until Aug 8. Biennial show of new British painting. Late opening until 8 p.m. Thurs. Adults 10p, children 5p.

**WATERCOLOUR MASTERPIECES** including works by Turner, Cotman, Sab Sandby and Bonington. Until Oct 3.

## POETRY

July 14. **JABBERWOCKY.** 8 p.m. Overton Hall, Wirral Country Park Centre, Thurston. David Selzer looks at Paradise Lost; some African poetry; poem of the month. Flamenco guitar music from Brian Dickson. Poets: Michael Harrison and Kevin McCann.

July 30. **POETRY READING.** 12.30 to 1.30. Bluecoat Chambers, Garden Courtyard, weather permitting. Free.

Aug 11. **JABBERWOCKY.** 8 p.m. Overton Hall, Wirral Country Park Centre, Thurston. An item on Wilfred Owen; Dean Patey's personal choice; poem of the month. Music: Harp. Poets: Sue Craggs and Olga Bejamin.

## KIDS' STUFF

**FREE FORM TOURING MERSEYSIDE.** Inflatables, drama, craft workshops, video, photography and film making.

16-20 Aug. Grangeway Estate Community Centre, Runcorn.

23-27 Aug. Vauxhall Neighbourhood Council.

30 Aug-3 Sept. Southern Neighbourhood Council.

### RATHBONE PROJECT

The theme is change — kids and adults doing practical things to improve their physical surroundings with music, theatre and painting.

18-31 July. Free Form environmental project.

20 July-5 Aug. Free Form games group. 1-14 Aug. Mural painting.

14-26 Aug and 31 Aug-6 Sept. Magic Lantern.

31 Aug-6 Sept. Pigsty Hill Light Orchestra.

29 Aug-6 Sept. Puppet Tree.

4 and 5 Sept. Final weekend. Free Form roadshow/carnival parade/fireshow/picnic in Princes Park.

Further details: 727 2052.

### SPEKE ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

An international work camp will help with this year's summer activities. Three schemes this year — one in The Nillys (the woods to the uninitiated); an arts and crafts group in the community centre and an Urban Aid adventure playground in Central Avenue. Begins July 27 for six weeks. Further details: 425 4419.

**CANTRIL FARM Festival.** 23-30 Aug. Details: 480 8316.

**TOWER HILL Community Festival.** Details: 546 9575.

**COMMUNITY RELATIONS Council:** Music, dance and drama classes over the summer. Details: 709 0789.

**MERSEYSIDE PLAY ACTION Council** will co-ordinate over 100 play schemes plus poets and music. Details: 708 0468.

**HALEWOOD Community Council:** One day festival. July 24. Other events being planned. Details: 486 2172.

July 13-17. **THE DA SILVA PUPPETS** present Pinocchio by Carlo Collodi. The most famous of all puppet stories specially adapted and recommended for children of all ages. Southport Arts Centre, Lord Street, Southport (tel 400111). Tue and Wed, 10.00, 2.00; Thurs 10.00, 2.00, 7.30; Sat 11.00, 2.30, 7.30. Adults 60p, children 40p, school parties 35p per head.

July 19-Aug 28. **DA SILVA PUPPETS** with two programmes in repertoire. Prog. 1: Jack and the Beanstalk and Circus Caprice; Prog. 2: Hood in the Wood and Funtasia. Also at Southport Arts Centre. 11.00 daily, with afternoon performances in bad weather. Adults 50p, children 25p.

August 2. **CHILDREN'S CONCERT.** 2.00 and 3.30. Bluecoat Hall, Liverpool. Percussion ensemble. Adults 30p, children 25p.

## POLITICS

**RADICAL EDUCATION NETWORK** meets Thursdays, 128c Sheil Road, Liverpool 6. Ring for details — 263 2880.

**MERSEYSIDE People's History.** We're using tapes to record people's memories of experiences in the past. Further information: 25 Tumilty Ave, Bootle (521 5763).

**LITTLE BIRD.** Monthly pack of information from a wide variety of sources. "To be ignorant of Little Bird is to be ignorant of life" (Dr Johnson). By post, 50p for 6 issues. News From Nowhere, 48 Manchester Street, Liverpool 1.

## Video & Film

The Merseyside Visual Communications Unit can offer a wide range of facilities and services. We will hire out equipment at ridiculously non-commercial prices, teach you how to operate portable video, film or video local events, issues etc. We can't promise you a Hollywood film set but we will do our best to give you the media treatment.

MVCU: 83 Seel Street, Liverpool L1 4BB (051-709 9460).

● Our thanks to the Merseyside Arts Association for their help in compiling much of the information on these pages.