

ROCKNOTES

Mike Evans

THE HOTTEST and certainly the driest summer in years is over, and once again Liverpool has missed its golden opportunity for outdoor music. On two recent visits to London I've found Sunday afternoon trad on Clapham Common, and lunchtime 'forties swing in a tiny public garden right outside Charing Cross station! The only thing I remember similar in Liverpool city centre was a police band playing in St John's Gardens a few years back.

There have been individual efforts to stage rock and such in the municipal parks, but lack of publicity has often meant one heard about them after the event. An officially sponsored programme of live music could have succeeded where these attempts failed. With sufficient publicity, as the recent Mathew Street Jung Festival proved, trouble-free outdoor music could be a regular feature in the city centre parks and gardens, presenting not just rock groups but jazz, folk and even the odd string quartet.



THE MOST exciting event of the last month has been the release of '2nd Honeymoon', Deaf School's first album. Being more than familiar with the band's music, I was prepared to be disappointed. But not so. The record's a knock-out, and perfectly captures the innocence and skill of the Deafs, the naivety rubbing shoulders with a wry awareness of their many influences.

Some local fans have voiced disappointment that this or that number was not included, but choices have to be made and there will undoubtedly be more albums. As for commercial potential, outside the group's fans a first album is always a difficult proposition, but a single - at the time of writing not yet decided - is a possibility. Betty Bright's 'Final Act' backed by 'Knock Knock Knockin' could

really be a huge seller.

BACK in 1967 when Adrian Henri, Mike Hart and myself formed the Liverpool Scene, we were lucky enough to enlist a mild mannered Welshman on bass guitar, Percy Jones, who turned out to be a unique talent on the instrument. He played a fretless model like a cross between Jack Bruce and Charles Mingus, and his formidable technique in the rhythm section was matched only by totally original phrasing in solos.

After the Scene split Percy and I went on to form a local jazz/rock outfit, Highly Inflammable, that included Bob Robertson on sax, now with Supercharge. But after that band finished, Percy settled in London in self-imposed obscurity, apparently playing the odd sit-in gig while working daytimes for an electronics company.

Then two months ago Brand X emerged, applauded by the music press as a new vital force in jazz/rock. They've an album out, play at Ronnie Scott's Club this month, and their most talked about member is none other than... Percy Jones, who Melody Maker has described as 'one of the world's leading bass players'. Can't wait to hear him play again.



QUICKIES: Roger Eagle starting regular rock night at Gatsby's this month... Sundays at Russells said to be good... the Melody Maker Liverpool special made it sound all a bit too good to be true... Derry Wilkie not exactly pleased by his name-check in same... Picasso Sisters rumoured to have made small fortunes busking in Germany, which they immediately spent on large beers... Thursday rocknight at Digby's booking some ambitious name groups... recent Clapton tour played everywhere (including Pontins) but Liverpool... rock'n'roll convention for October 9th???

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY...

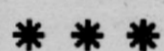
Wed 15 Sept. TED NUGENT - Stadium
Tue 24 Sept. DR. FEELGOOD - Empire
Thur 30 Sept. MARVIN GAYE - Empire

Sat 16 Oct. PINK FAIRIES - Stadium

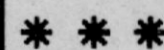
Every Sun: THIRD ORRELL BROWNIES and guests at Russell's Club, Parr St.

FOLK

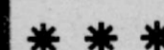
STAN AMBROSE ("Radio Stan") assisted by Geoff Speed will be presenting 'Folk Scene' for another series on Radio Merseyside, starting on Sunday, September 5 at 4 p.m. Each programme will be repeated the following Friday at 8 p.m. Get them lugs listening and tune in!



THE BOTHY Folk Song Club (Established 1965) re-opens on September 5 with a singers' night. It is interesting to note that the Bothy have abandoned their previous policy of overlooking local talent. John Howson and Barbara Bennion make their debut on that famous stage on September 12 and the Flat Country String Band on September 12. Professor Codman's Punch and Judy, residents of Williamson Square, will be playing an away match there on November 14. Well done Bothy! That's the way to do it!



LEON ROSSELSON will be appearing at Oily Joe's, Victoria Hotel, Oil Street on a certain Saturday in September. Without doubt Leon is the foremost of the political/social comment song-writers in Britain and should be seen by all who profess to have a viewpoint on the social structure. Leon Rosselson's discography includes "The Word Is", "Palaces of Gold", and "That's not the Way it's Got to be" with Roy Bailey. Buy them tomorrow! And feel better.



FOLK SONG WORKSHOP should re-commence this month providing there is enough response. Education cuts have made it imperative that the class can not continue unless a minimum of 15 people per session is attainable. If you are interested in

the origins and background of folk music and song, enrolment for the course is between September 6 and 10 at Mount Street Evening Institute. I'm teacher, by the way, but you don't have to call me "Sir". Wednesday evenings, 7-9 p.m.



THE PURPOSE of this column is to supply information as well as comment. It would be of great assistance if folk club organisers could provide Free Press with the details of their club nights or special events for inclusion in next month's column. Write to me care of the Free Press please. -FRANK McCALL

FOLK EVENTS

Fri Sept 17. FOLK FERRY '76. English Folk Dance and Song Society on board the Royal Iris. Ceilidh with M.C. Bernard Chalk, the B's Band, Merseyside Morris Men and local singers. Bar and refreshments. Board at Seacombe 7.15 or Pier Head 7.45. £1.50.

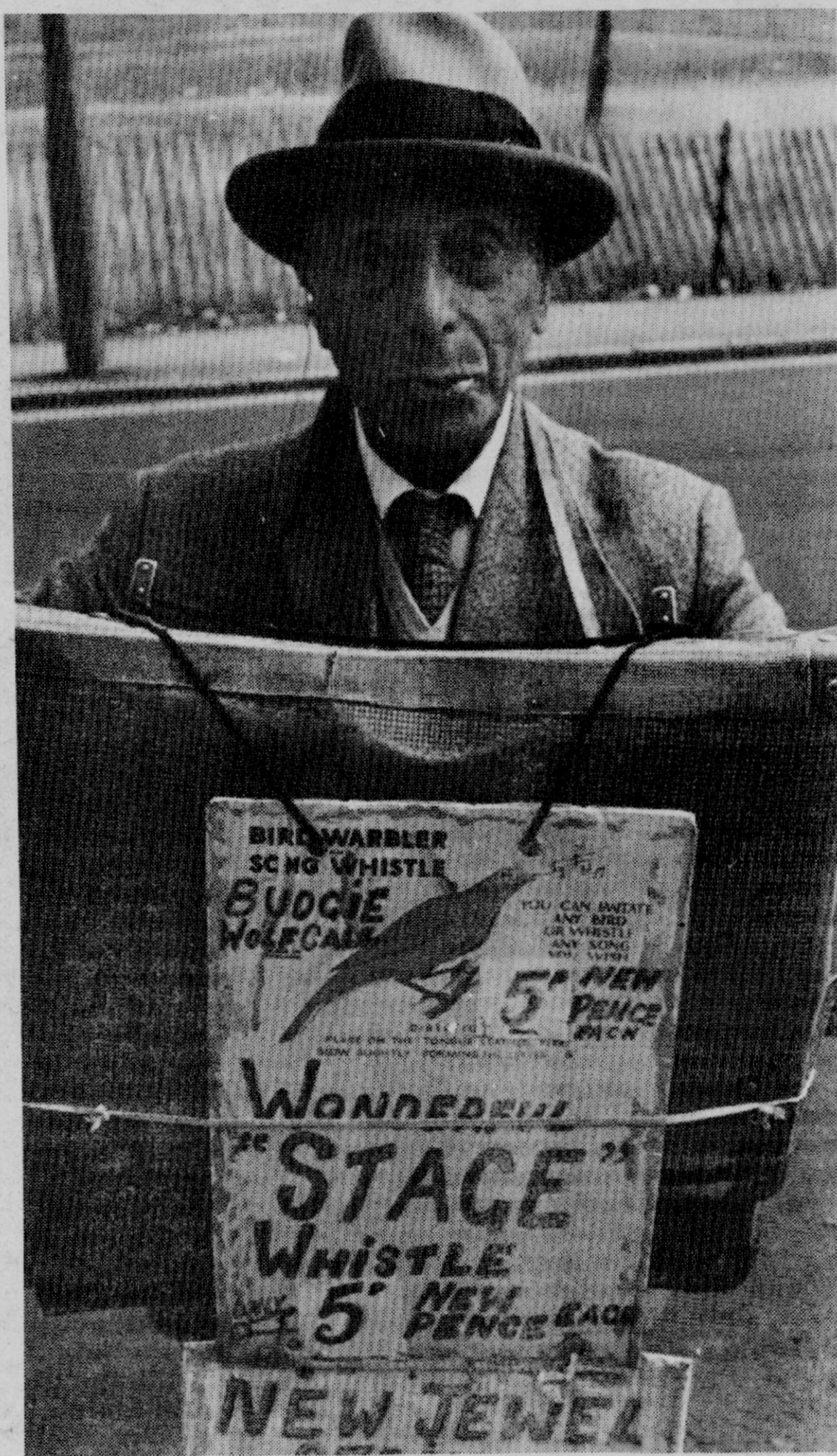
Sat Sept 18. THE HILLSIDERS. Theatre Royal, St Helens. 7.30.

Sat Sept 25. ENGLISH FOLK DANCE and Song Society. YMCA, Mount Pleasant, Liverpool. 2.30-5.30: Music workshop, clog dancing with Lindsay Smith; 7.00-10.30: Dance and clog dancing demonstration with Geoff Hughes and Lindsay Smith.

Liverpool Polytechnic Folk Club starts again in October. Meets every Thurs in the Commerce Bar, Smithfield St (off Tithebarn St), Liverpool at 8.15. Oct 7 - Brian Jacques and Brigantine Oct 14 - Plexus Oct 21 - Tom Tiddlers Ground Oct 28 - Alan Ainsworth.

The Coronation Folk Club starts a new season on Fri 24 Sept at the Coronation Hotel, King St, Southport. They aim to book the best in traditional and contemporary folk music. 50p. Details: Pete Rimmer (Southport 67852).

INFORMER



THE SOUND of the skylark at Paddy's market doesn't mean the air is getting any cleaner - it's more likely to be Professor Vermiglio (Albert the Whistler to his friends) selling one of his "wonderful stage whistles". 81-year-old Albert spends most of the week making his whistles (exactly how is a trade secret) then he packs them up in his suitcase along with his stainless steel razor blades and sells them at 5p each in local markets at weekends. He learnt the tricks of the trade from his father, and entertains pensioners free of charge with his imaginary country walks - complete, of course, with bird calls.

BABYLON, oh yes, you call it what you feel, wobbles. But cut throat or not, it's managed to sell us all back its elastoplast as our progress. So, the Heptones and their mighty single, 'Sufferer's Time', released on Lee Perry's Black Art label. Leroy Sibble sings:

"400 years of colonial teasing, an I an I no get I owe yet, I an I no reach I goal yet, children, fe we time, fe we time, this a sufferer's time..."

*True. For who'll forget the long negotiations here, for who'll pimp the freshest bandages. Contradictions rule, like trannies and toothpaste.

This single is possibly the best reggae tune this year. Sibble's fine voice, driven on by immaculate cymbal work, and a simple, thunderous bass guitar that wades in to crack your gerry-built floorboards. You pray, you do, that Island won't 'confect' this cut when they release it this side in a week or two. Find it people, urgently.



LEE PERRY has been busy. A new LP by the Upsetters, 'Scratch the Super Ape', with lovely cuts of 'One Step Forward' and 'Siddle Out There' both sung by Max Romeo on recent singles. Good old Dada dub. Inside outside music. The bones the basis, the imagination the flow. Perry himself, rather too 'artfully' for me, on 'Roast Fish and Corn Meal', all for Island.

And on that Black Art label Prince Jazzbo, a favoured 'toaster' back to his drifting best, as 'Natty Pass Through Rome', Jazzbo's saunter in the ruins of it all, among the dream tents of the survivors. The flipside, 'Rockstone Dub', is strictly not for Aigburth, or the Wailers fans around Sefton Park. This space does not echo out to Pink Floyd-land, but advances, heavier and heavier. Make sure you can retreat without breaking glass.



PEOPLE still say reggae is chunka chunk gunk. The rubber manacles in my hands, my singles up my shirt, I've wandered the Pool for hostages, their freedom their ears, and played the bewildering variety of reggae now available. It's not the only vital music. That quest to isolate and define, so all sounds are decrees,

REGGAE Ken

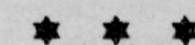
has nothing to do with reggae's vigour.

If you're thinking all reggae singers sound like failed soulsters, catch Johnny Clarke's new LP on Virgin. Rockers Time Now. Johnny proves that with tight production, (Bunny Lee for him), reggae songs need not be Wailers derivations or the blind mimicry of 'rasta' cliché.

Listen to 'Declaration of Rights' as the sci-fi siren whines down Upper Parli, to mash up the children's summer play. Irony? You bet your ass it's irony, and years thieved too.

And just in, my postman as wary as ever, is Johnny Clarke's version of Marley's Crazy Bald Head. Glad to hear that fine bass player Robbie Shakespeare building the platform. If you can conceive of a better version of Marley than Marley, try this single on Justice label.

REGGAE LYRICS are no literary masterpieces. Thank God. A classic emerges usually from a basis of drum and bass, and uses words as carefully as names asked after a riot. Junior Byles, and his current singles, 'Bury O Boy' on Ethnic Fight and 'Pitchy Patchy' on Jahman pre-release; proves this once again. A vision Junior has, a bleak, almost bitter vision, and if Marley is a shepherd, Byles is a gravedigger, yes. It's far from concussion on the big wall, where pain is named as glory, or from the constant strumming to tune in misery, as a reward that makes you favoured, and an expert on oppression. No failed pity here, hope, huddling on the edges, ready to greet friends, to gather with them, and move on, out of this.



A BELATED COMMENT now, on the majestic imp's gig in Belle Vue. Great to see the wee man. The band quiet though, tired out, and hustled through a chain of hits. Isn't it time that a full reggae bill is on in this land? And time too, Family Man, Carly and Tyrone were allowed to play out of the package?

It can't be so hard to fill a gig with reggae bands. There are the excellent Cimarons, Matumbi, and many groups in

SMALL ADS

Rate: 3p per word

RADIO FREEDOM disco like to do work in colleges and youth clubs all over Liverpool. Tel: 498 4248.

LENIN Sweeps the World (V. Denl). Large 3-colour litho. Printed and published by CPB(M-L). Only 30p each from October Books, 4b Temple Court, Liverpool 2.

FREE YOGA classes. Tues: relaxation Yoga postures. Wed: open spiritual conference (introduction to meditation). Thurs: philosophy (theory of Yoga). All at 7.30. Ananda Marga, 8 Ullet Road, Liverpool 8. (708 7335).

THE WORKER. Fortnightly newspaper of CPB(M-L). Obtainable from October Books, 4b Temple Court, Liverpool 2.

ONE-TON van and 11-stone driver for hire. Very reasonable. Distance no object. Andy: 708 0860 or 708 7174.

SILK-SCREEN printing. Pretty cheap. Especially for community and Left groups. Posters, banners, T-shirts, cards. Anything unusual considered. Billy, Andy, Rick 708 7174; 708 0860.

PHOTO-COPYING. A4 and foolscap. 10 copies 30p; 25 copies 75p; 60 copies £1.20; 100 copies £1.60.- Impact Resource Centre, Waterloo Building, Cases Street, Liverpool 1. (051-708 7172)

ARTWORK from China. Posters, book-marks, handcrafts, greetings cards. Obtainable only at October Books, 4b Temple Court, Liverpool 2.

Events are listed free of charge on these pages. Will organisers please send details to Liverpool Free Press, 48 Manchester St, Liverpool 1 or phone 227 2514. Details of community events especially welcome.

OPEN MIND workshops urgently need one person to join the furniture making workshop and another in the silk-screen printshop. Money is as much of a problem as ever.

They also need a group of people to run the coffee bar, which is virtually complete. This group will have to raise a certain amount of capital to complete alterations.

The van is back on the road and the food co-op has resumed after the summer - new members welcome.

Space available for meetings, bands practising, storage, etc. Acres of space for workshops.

Open Mind, 39/41 Manesty's Lane, Liverpool 1. Tel: 708 7174.

JA, hardly known here, who'd maybe even blow the Wailers off a set. Yabby U, the Gladiators, Spear, singers like Leroy Smart, 'toasters' like Jah Stitch or Prince For I. Soul, schmol, needed a hole there in Belle Vue, with the furnace coal. And a bum note reminds us all we're alive, and perfection is not yet, ever.



THE LOVED Ras Michael has two new albums available. 'Sounds of Freedom' on Dynamic I highly recommend. Relax to this with the weed, or some Aussie white, feel your brothers and sisters, and sing along as the gentle brother sings as if you're doing that. Old tunes, like 'I Shall Not Remove', 'Tenoriesstiling' and 'Holy Mount Zion'. Older men calling out from the drumming and chanting, as wise as the rusty nails on a cell door. Great!

The second album, 'Tribute to the Emperor', on Trojan, has faith in the bank balance. Bread locks, the flip side, RIP. Two essential tracks, if you love Ras Michael, but this album padded out by mediocre pap, by one Jazzboe Abubaka. Trojan never learn.



FINALLY, this time, the new album by the Cimarons, an under-rated British-based reggae band. For me the best album this month released in Britain. Lyrically they have expanded what looked like becoming a narrowing range of emotion, and thought. 'Rooting for a Cause' is the best song I've heard anywhere on the state of the UK. And Paul Bogle on the second side brings in a tribute to another kind of hero who did fight, and did die, around Spanish Town. If you've to choose carefully what you buy, try this album.

FOOTNOTE: Good news, down town soon, a new record shop that will stock pre-release from JA. And moves are afoot, inches first, to bring the Cimarons up here for a gig in early autumn. Possibly sharing the bill with some mighty sound system and 'toaster' like Prince Messegan from Brum or Sir Cas from Moss Side. The idea is that a regular reggae gig reaches Liverpool about once a month.