

UP D.A.T.E

MELTING POT

◀ EDDIE McILWAINE ▶

Let's have homespun chat

It has got to be said — four television chat shows on the air at the same time, followed immediately by a fifth are too much to bear on a Friday night.

I'm making that my night out at the pictures from now on — and so are a lot of other viewers.

I've had it up to here with Kelly, Gerry Anderson, Gay Byrne and Clive Anderson and then Wogan. I wouldn't mind if there were enough sparkling guests to share around.

But there aren't, although Gay Byrne seems to get more than his fair share.

And the answer for the Beeb at Ormeau Avenue and UTV at Havelock House can't be all those boring imports. If they must continue to rival one another and load viewers with their tedious let's hear it from the homebred celebrities.

There are local heroes out there with something to say — and they don't have to be put up in expensive hotels afterwards either.



Far out: Shaine are touring until Christmas

Debut album

TAKE my tip and pay attention to Shaine from Dublin. Far Out is the name of their debut album from Lime and I can't think why Barry Doyle, Mick McKenna, Eamon Dunne and Karl Doyle didn't release it long ago. After all the band have been together since 1988.

They have put out three singles, but I never got to hear them.

Shaine are touring until Christmas — I hope they turn up somewhere like the Limerick club in Ormeau Avenue.

Lonnie legend

LONNIE Donegan, the first star to win a Gold Disc, is still alive and well and convincing himself he's a living legend. Perhaps he is with 20 Top Twenty hits to his credit which even the Beatles and the Stones couldn't equal.

Anyway, ITC Home Video is celebrating his 40 years in showbusiness by releasing Putting on the Donegan next week. It features highlights of the King of Skiffle in his heyday.

Don't ask me what skiffle is or was. Think of a washboard as a musical instrument and you're getting near. If you don't know about washboards, I give up.

Donegan's commercial television series ran from 1958-'63 and much of the video is clips of the man when he was the biggest star in the UK.

He used to sing one called Does Your Chewing Gum Lose Its Flavour on the Bedpost Overnight. I think it was top of the pops. Honest.

And when Lonnie cut My Old Man's a Dustman his father who was a lawyer or something was quite upset.

Donegan is still touring to this day, never mind his health problems. He isn't coming to Belfast so far as I know.



Lonnie Donegan: Twenty Top 20 hits.

New singalong

HUGO Duncan isn't the only singer from Strabane — along today comes Curtis Spence with a new singalong cassette album on which he performs pub favourites like Candy Store on the Corner, Save the Last Dance for Me, Pack Up Your Trouble and Hello Mary-Lou.

There are 30 Irish and hoedown songs on the tape, released on the TC label.

Man, it's magnificent musicianship

SPIN-OFF

◀ BY NOEL McADAM ▶

NOW that there are five of them, things are finally adding up for The Four of Us. The present press release on Newry's finest, put together by the professionals down at Sony, is written in the present tense.

You see, the band, potentially the province's greatest pop export, is very much an on-going concern — though that's of some concern.

For all the hype, happenstance and hero-grams — named 'Most Promising New Act' in the 1990 Irish Music Awards and given no less than four accolades by 'Hot Press' — the mass success they deserve has proved elusive.

So this year the fivesome (and we've already had all the jokes about the Irish band called Four of Us which had five members, etc, etc) returned to the province to put down their long-awaited second album.

'Man Alive' (Columbia) doesn't disappoint: if anything, it's a more mature, sophisticated achievement than the superb 'Songs for the Tempted' about three years ago. So no flash in the pan band here.

Man, it's alive with invention, verve and sheer

musicianship. Everything's up front and for the taking.

In a statement on the aforementioned press release, the band say: "The great thing about great music is that it makes people aware that they're alive when so much in life can deaden that feeling."

Though I can't quite see the connection with some of the influences they cite — Tom Waits, Lou Reed and Talking Heads — there's no doubting the feel-good factor in almost every track.

Recorded up here at Homestead as well as London, Glasgow and Dublin, the new collection

is a bit of a slow burner; immediately impressive but also growing with successive plays — the depth and range of vocalist Brendan Murphy in particular has come on considerably.

The piano ballad 'Hymn for Her' (not the Pretenders song) is a beautifully crafted piece but it's hard to single out any of the 12 songs. In other words, a must, and not just for the fans.

US ROCKERS Extreme may not be to everyone's taste, but they manage to cram almost 80 minutes of variable material on their new album "Three Sides to Every Story" (A and M).

The band, hoping to follow-up on the huge success of 'Pornograffiti', aren't afraid to experiment this time around — with yet again the abundantly talented guitarist/keyboard player, Nuno Bettencourt, taking the major kudos.

There's plenty of variety — from straight-forward rockers crammed with delightful lead licks to mellow interludes with superb orchestral arrangements.



New album: Extreme aren't afraid to experiment on "Three Sides to Every Story".

Rave up: Hardcore undergrounders manic music at Dundonald

The Prodigy — on ice

ROCK

◀ CLAIRE McGAHAN ▶

HARDCORE undergrounders The Prodigy promise to melt the ice with hip hop beats and manic house music at Dundonald Ice Bowl on Friday November 13.

The main man behind the sound is 20-year-old Essex boy Liam Howlett. Once the DJ for London rap act Cut To Kill, he became disillusioned and turned instead to the love, peace and happiness vibe of the rave scene.

But when, in February 1991, The Prodigy released their first EP, 'What Evil Lurks' no one imagined it would become the regular hardcore anthem.

Their second 'Charly' was massive; the third 'Everybody in the Place' landed them at No. 2 in the charts — only just behind Queen's 'Schizophrenia Rhapsody'.

"In terms of chart success we never really wanted to go that commercial," says Prodigy dancer Leeroy, a former electrician and self-confessed exhibitionist.

"It's because 'Charly' got such a big following on the rave scene. At the moment I'd call our sound noisy, industrial, techno reggae."

Belfast is a new departure for The Prodigy. "The best part of success for me is the buzz we get from playing live — for four normal blokes it's hard to beat. Belfast? Excellent — new ground, fresh beginnings..."

THE PRODIGY — Dundonald Ice Bowl, Friday November 13.

THE Cranberries have reduced the legs of record companies and critics alike to jelly in the past year.

So if you're into something sweet and wholesome on a Sunday night, check out The Cranberries on November 8.

Cute vocalist Dolores O'Riordan came up via the nursery school piano, county singing competitions and the local church choir in Limerick. Meanwhile a bunch of lads also in Limerick had a clutch of material crying out for the feminine touch. Dolores answered their ad and her descent into the pit of rock 'n' roll began.

After an 'Uncertain' start — the EP fell short of expectation and potential — the band teamed up with Stephen Street (of The Queen is Dead infamy) to extract every ounce of nuance from each instrument and Dolores' vulnerable but brave voice on the new LP 'Everyone Else is Doing It, Why Can't We?'



The Prodigy: Manic house music.

And as a sizeable bonus, The Cranberries will be supported by the mighty Peacefrog, still coming on leaps and bounds!

THE CRANBERRIES AND PEACEFROG — Limelight Sunday November 8. Doors open 7pm, tickets £3.

BELFAST-based Alumni Feedback had a good summer, headlining at the Rock Garden and preparing for a new release 'Miserable Me'. So for an alternative night out...

ALUMNI FEEDBACK, plus McBride's Mate Dinger, and Tart, The Rosotta, Friday November 6.

THE musical coupling of Frances Black and Kieran Goss is at last netting the audience it deserves.

Contemporary as well as folk sounds have pushed their inspired, self-titled debut album to a 10,000 seller and the pedigree of Frances, sister of Mary, and Kieran have sold out all three dates at the Folk Club as part of Queens' Festival.

There are follow up shows, however — Guildhall, Derry, Nov 15; Edgewater, Portstewart, Nov 19; Knock na Moe, Omagh, Nov 20.

Roisin's tuneful ramblings a delight

FOLK

◀ NEIL JOHNSTON ▶

ONE of the highlights of the recent Forkhill traditional singing festival was the launch of a new cassette by the singer Roisin White. Roisin, who was born near Killeel and now lives in Co. Armagh, is one of our finest exponents of that exacting art, unaccompanied singing.

And on this collection of songs, recorded fairly informally at various locations by English producer John Howson, she is heard at her best.

Other well known Ulster traditional singers like Len Graham, Paddy Tunney and the late Georgie Hanna and Eddie Butcher are among those who she acknowledges as being her main musical influences.

But she makes every one of the 14 songs on this cassette totally her own, with her strong, natural singing style allied to superbly effective phrasing of the lyrics.

You will go a long way before hearing better versions of ballads like "Courting Is A Pleasure", "Maid Of Mourne Shore" and "Craigie Hill", and, as a patriotic Omagh man, I was captivated by her treatment of one of my all-time favourites, "Sweet Omagh Town".

The album is called "The First Of My Ramblings" and it appears on John Howson's Veteran Tapes label, John himself having come over from England for its launch at Forkhill.

Let's hope Roisin does a lot more tuneful rambling, for this recording is a "must" for all who love the Ulster song tradition in all its moods. Highly recommended.

(The cassette is in some shops but can also be obtained at £6.25 (plus 60p P&P) direct from Veteran Tapes, c/o 44 Old Street, Haughley, Stowmarket, Suffolk IP 14 3 NX).

Now, a couple of forthcoming concerts for your consideration.

First, three different local traditional groups are represented in a trio which has a gig in Belfast this weekend.

The musicians are Brian Finnegan of Upstairs In A Tent, Cara Dillon of Oige and Owen O'Brien of Deanta, who also loiters occasionally in "the Tent".

This gifted young traditional threesome can be heard in the Rotterdam Bar, Pilot Street, tomorrow evening. Well worth checking out.

Country blues fans should also note that on Saturday that fine guitarist Victor McCullough will be doing a solo set at the Rotterdam whilst at Downpatrick folk club on the same night a session of Irish and Scottish music has been lined up.

George's anniversary jazz band ball

JAZZ

◀ SOLLY LIPSITZ ▶

WITH the foresight that has attended his 25 years of success in the local jazz field, George Chambers must have anticipated that his appearance in Cork in 1992 would bring further lustre to his Apex Band. This, it appears to have done and George with the above-mentioned prescience, had already made arrangements to mark that further achievement with his many fans.

The celebration is in the form of a Jazz Band Ball to take place tomorrow night at the Park Avenue Hotel when the Apex will take the stand with one of the great jazz musicians of our time, trombonist Roy Williams.

Roy has been a regular visitor to Belfast over a number of years and, in fact, he has probably appeared here more often than any other jazz musician from outside Ireland, but it is a measure of his quality that he can wear a different jazz hat on each appearance, equally at home in any format,

small group or big band and adhering to only one standard — the best.

The Apex and their guest will be alternating with the always-popular Jim Daly Blues Band, so it will be a night catering for quite a varied spectrum of taste.

A different area of jazz interest is in prospect on Thursday, November 26, when the Arts Council sponsors a workshop devoted to vocal improvisation under the direction of the widely experienced Norma Winstone who will have the backing of pianist John Taylor.

It is an opportune move to take advantage of the appearance of these two musicians at the Festival on the previous night as their careers have always covered teaching in parallel with performance, their

courses at the Guildhall School in London being among the most popular and successful in that renowned institution.

Norma Winstone has a fine jazz pedigree as a vocal performer, having bridged a career from a singer of standards, through experimentation in free improvisation, to a point where she found an equal facility in interpreting contemporary opera. John Dankworth and Mike Westbrook are among the distinguished jazz names with whom she has worked.

Pianist John Taylor, who, by the way, is also Miss Winstone's husband, has made many highly regarded recordings with some of the most prominent British contemporary jazz musicians including Kenny Wheeler, Julian Argüelles and Arild Andersen.

This workshop will be held in the Music Department at Queen's and is open to anyone interested on payment of a modest fee. Full details may be obtained by phoning Brian Carson at the Arts Council on (0232) 381591.

Jane's virtuoso performance on Mulholland organ

CLASSICAL

◀ RATHCOL ▶

WITH the advent of the virtuoso concert organist, recitalists now have a big claim on public interest, as this week's trio of CD's demonstrates. For the first, which is played on our own magnificent Ulster Hall Mulholland organ, I am indebted to Koinonia Records of Pottinger's Entry for the opportunity to include it this week. (Priority Records: Great European Organs No.29)

The recitalist is Jane Watts, a great Belfast favourite who I must commend for presenting an unacknowledged programme, devoted to the French-Belgian school, and splendidly suited to this big Hill instrument.

A Bonnet group includes Caprice Heroique, but the centrepiece in this 68-minute recital, the three Dupre 1940 Opus 36 Preludes and Fugues, more complex and less accessible than the Opus 7 set, are impressive indeed. Flor Peeters is

which the ever-resourceful Graham Barber plays the modern 38 stop classical Collins organ in St.Peter Mancroft, Norwich. (ASV Gaudeamus. Digital Digital.CD GUA 128)

Although Bohm is hardly a Buxtehude, he proves to both an inventive and finely schooled composer as Barber's programme proves. This includes three Praeludiums of considerable substance, eight Chorales, a very attractive Capriccio in D, and a set of Three Chorale Variations on "Christe, der du bist Tag und Licht" which displays considerable inventive powers and ingenuity. Barber's technique, artistry and handling of this fine British instrument is first rate as is the recording.

FEW organists have become legendary performers, but the late Marcel Dupre was certainly one of the elite. He performed Bach from memory at the age of ten, and in 1920 accomplished the astonishing feat of playing the entire organ works of J.S.Bach from memory

during the course of ten recitals at the Paris Conservatoire.

A pupil of Guilmant and Widor, he had a background that made him an authority on French organ music on which he exercised a greater influence than any organist of his day. That being so, a reissue by Philips of performances made on the gigantic Aeolian-Skinner organ in St.Thomas Church, New York, in 1957 are treasurable indeed. (Philips Mercury 434 311-2).

The recording has a remarkable vividness and captures the atmosphere magnificently, while the mastering has been splendidly done. The programme is outstanding, offering the allegro from Widor's sixth symphony and the Salve Regina, while Franck's Piece Heroique and the three Chorales complete a 67 minute recital that is one of the most gripping heard in a long time. The organ sounds superb at this master's hands.