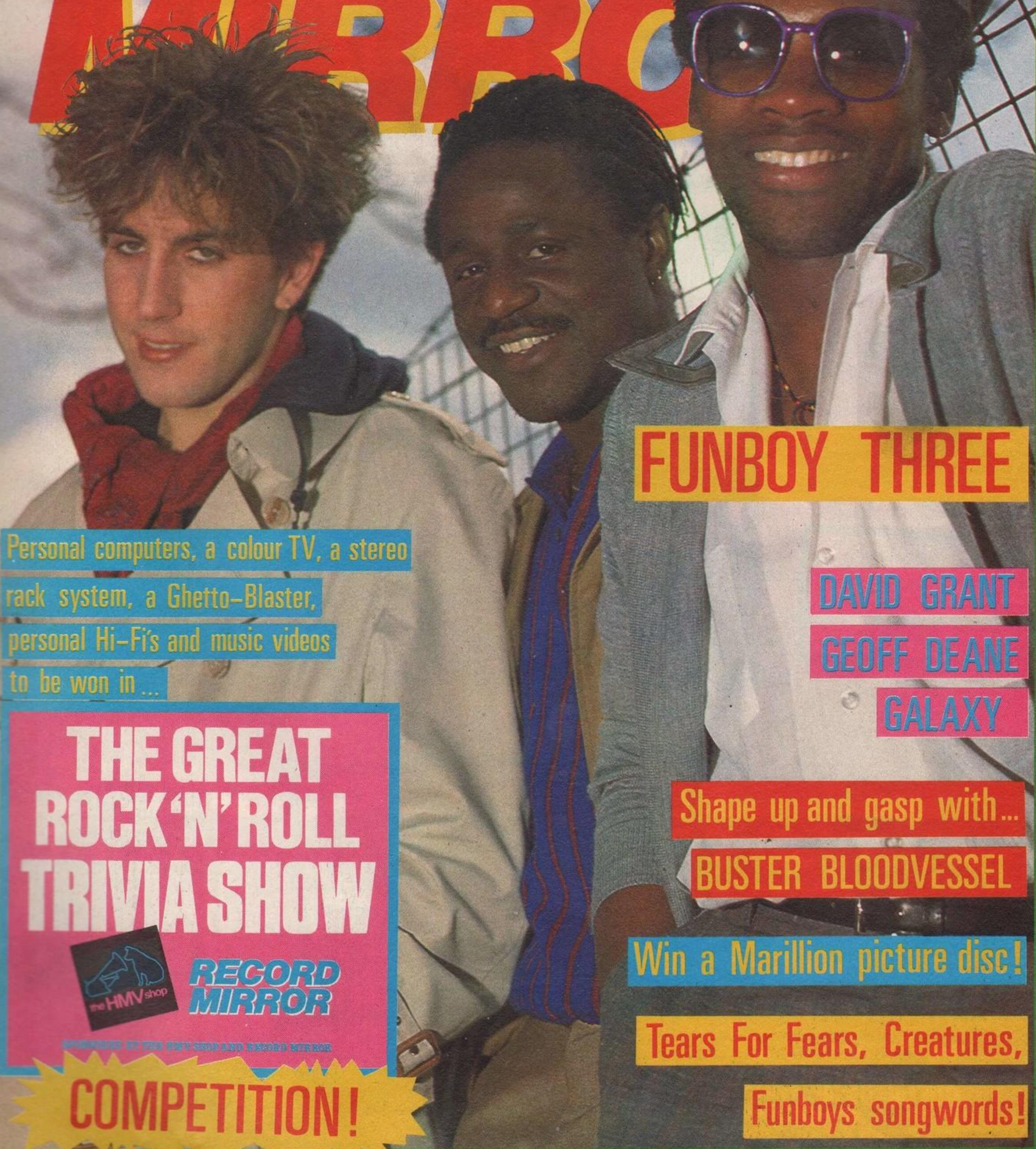


92

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THE GREAT ROCK 'N' ROLL TRIVIA SHOW



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COMPETITION!

ON STAGE

Pic by Jason Pevovar



TRACIE plays her ace (one song, actually)

A FLOCK OF SEAGULLS
Hammersmith Odeon, London
I COULD have yawned all night, and believe me, I wouldn't have asked for more. *Flock Of Seagulls* have hit upon a formula of space droning and a strong beat that works only sporadically. Songs like 'Wishing (I Had A Photograph Of You)' and 'I Ran' show the bright side. Both contain melodies and power to overkill.

The rest of the material shows too few ideas being run into the ground. Songs like 'Transferred Affection' and 'The Traveller' were dirges that had whole sections of the balcony nodding off and yawning like it was the latest craze.

If only their mechanical tendencies could show a little heart, a bit of passion, like they did at the end of their set with 'I Ran', they could be on to a winner.

As it was the only memorable moment was their space city backdrop. Bathed in smoke and ultraviolet lights and giving an effect that wouldn't have been out of place in the film 'Tron', it was breathtaking. Shame about the gig.

Mike Gardner

FORREST
Lyceum, London
WHICHEVER WAY he played it, Forrest was likely to lose. Play the UK early, and have people say that one hit does not a live attraction make, or leave it late and find he's been forgotten altogether. He went for the first option with the inevitable result.

Great toe-tapper and till-ringer as was his reading of 'Rock The Boat', it didn't exactly promise the flow of great creative juices from the bearded bopper. Sure enough the few who came to dance were less than stunned by the very routine, if well-intentioned, brand of f(l)unk on sale. Titles like 'Showdown' and 'It's Alright' may give you a hint; faceless, bloodless, dated bop-pop, some way clear of the Eurodisco thud, but with scant awareness of the current styles, for all Forrest's kindly looks and smiles.

The boat's been rocked, and all Forrest will be shipping now is water.

Paul Sexton

CARMEL
ICA, London
LAST TIME I saw Carmel the poor girl was struggling against the indifference of a cavernous TV studio. That night her voice travelled a lonely journey. Tonight things are a helluva lot busier.

Carmel has always worked within a loose structure, her voice being used to fill the gaps afforded by a very sparse instrumentation. Fine in theory, this has often floundered on the inadequacies of her double bass and drums backing band.

Tonight however, the addition of keyboards, backing vocals and extra percussion has beefed that sound up somewhat. This is a more assured, authoritative Carmel. Consequently that rough hewn torch vocal is used to its full effect.

On this form Carmel is definitely one to watch for . . . now what about releasing a new record?

Jim Reid

FASTWAY
Hammersmith Odeon, London
FASTWAY MIGHT not have the flashy looks of a Ferrari, but on stage they're not just another old banger with a re-spray.

Perhaps they should have toured before releasing an album. There's a huge gulf between their live exploits and duff debut LP, just like *Twisted Sister*. I went along expecting to be bored, but there's something in the enthusiasm of David King, the Irish leprechaun with the size 15 voice, leaping around like a cat on a hot tin roof.

Alfie Agius has made a brilliant transformation from the refined world of *Teardrop Explodes* and he plays bass heavy and dirty, with all the right stances to match. Jerry Shirley's traditional almost Bonham like drumming has a lot of flair and it's all rounded off by Fast Eddie wandering around as ever like a bear with a sore head — but then, I suppose that's all part of his charm.

Not even a 10 minute power cut took much away from the crispness of the show where 'We Become One' and 'Feel Me Touch Me' emerged as the front

Nil respond

THE QUESTIONS/TRACIE
Dingwalls, London

THE RESPOND posse — its quest: to capture true soul wherever it may be. Its fate: to blubber and bumble through a 'show' that is both ill conceived, poorly planned and yep, soulless.

Thus far the whole Respond package has received an unreserved seal of approval from those London journalists and DJs who seem to echo every word that slips out of Paul Weller's mouth.

That's a pity because such sycophancy does neither Weller nor Respond any good. Respond has the potential to do good things. Its assets: Tracie Young's cool blue voice, The Questions' neat song construction.

But potential has to be carefully nurtured and in the clamour to make pearls out of promise the whole set-up might fall apart before it really achieves anything.

Frankly tonight's show was a shambles. It's very cute calling your tour a 'package'. But when your DJ's lousy, and your ace card (Ms Young) is limited to two songs — one of which is simple singing along to a backing tape — then you haven't so much got a package, but an ordinary rock gig by any other name.

And The Questions — I'm afraid they're going to have to sharpen up and take those songs to the edge before they'll get anywhere near that much lauded 'true soul'.

Respond may be derivative, its ideas rooted in the sixties, its promotion in the new pop — very ABC those press releases and record sleeves — but its impetus points in the right direction.

One only hopes that Tracie and The Questions are allowed to grow at their own pace, before that impetus overtakes them and leaves them buried under the piles of 'whitewash' press they have received so far.

Moral: there are disadvantages having a famous mentor.

Jim Reid

runners. Live, Fastway push the peddle right down on the floor.

Robin Smith

MARC AND THE MAMBAS
Duke of York Theatre, London

MARC ALMOND thrashes his way deeper and deeper into the netherworld of pop with every performance he makes, and tonight is no exception.

There's a strange gothic atmosphere around the show. Watching it is halfway between watching a Hammer horror film and being at a play by Brecht. Marc wails like some modern day Baal and the theatrical setting seems so appropriate.

He's got a complete string section (the *Venomettes*) at his back and they whip up a screaming cacophony of sound over a pounding, thudding drum machine. It's excruciatingly intense. Numbers like 'Boss Cat' and 'The Untouchable' batter our senses while Marc whirls himself into a frenzy.

The waywardness of the material has been a bit much for some of the young girls. They laugh with forced levity at his jokes and scream with desperate relief at the songs they know. I wonder how long

he's going to keep this audience.

He careers into a monitor halfway through the set, knocking it crashing into one of the crew. "Sorry Frank," he murmurs. "I get too carried away sometimes." Keep going Marc.

Paul Prayag

JONI MITCHELL
Wembley Arena, London

JONI MITCHELL'S London return after an absence of nine years showed that she'd lost none of her warmth or polish. Her two hour set neatly showed the growth in her confessional style of song writing.

She draw from periods as diverse as her folkie phase with 'Both Sides Now' and 'Big Yellow Taxi' to the jazz stylings of her recent work like 'Amelia' and her Charles Mingus collaboration 'God Must Be A Boogie Man'.

Her voice is still crystal clear and she managed to make the vast Arena seem like a front room with her intimate style. Her music ran from jazz to rock 'n' roll and her four piece band proved to be an able foil for the delicate nuances of her work.

Mike Gardner

RECORD MIRROR — IT'S NO 1 FOR REVIEWS!

No Mode heartache

DEPECHE MODE
Kabuki Nightclub, San Francisco
PUNK NEVER penetrated the American charts, pure pop will (writes our former middle-aged correspondent). Punk stayed in the major cities, an urban cult. Powder puff pop is being beamed all over America by cable TV and radio stations that are playing dance music, calling it urban contemporary. Suddenly America has gone pop.

Pop in the States means British and teenage. The bands are British, the audience is teenage. Adam now gets the same screams here he got in Britain last year, Duran Duran are enormous. The altogether more worthy Depeche Mode are still a cult despite the fact that they are as teenage and suburban as their audience. Are they too ordinary to be pin-ups or will they wind up giving teenage kicks to teenage kids?



Pic by Francesco Mellling

DAVE GAHAN: US and them

Ultimately the Mode offer only a bit of cheek and youth. Their pop is pretty and danceable and frequently intelligent. Like most pop, it's too clean to be a truly exciting live music. Whoever replaced rock and roll with pop, forgot about that.

"Professor" Mark Cooper