

Indonesia Night



Words and Photo by Kent Rainville

I've had many opportunities to attend cultural nights as a photographer, but never as a reviewer. Fortunately, the Indonesian Students Association has made my first review an easy one.

The evening started off late, despite the tickets having stated "7p.m. Sharp!". While waiting for the meal, the first order of business, a variety of Indonesian music was played for the crowd of over 200 people. In future, however, I'll have to remember not to sit quite so close to the speakers.

The food was sweet, spicy, and very exotic. As I looked about the room, more than just a few people were staring at their plates wondering just what those green balls really were. The meal was followed by introductory speeches, a Balinese Pendet dance, and a colourful demonstration of traditional Javanese wedding customs. The first drawing for door prizes was next, and the last prize was won by the Bruns' illustrious "P.M.T. Guy". Following the drawing was a powerful demonstration of the traditional Indonesian martial art; Pencak Silat. The demonstration involved kicks, punches, and the use of some mean looking curved daggers — you wouldn't want to run into one of these guy's in a dark alley! Groups of children then put on a display of games played by Indonesian school children, and performed a song that they had put together for the event. Next were guest speakers Bev Woznov and Ben Hong, who spoke of multiculturalism and on the industrial state of Indonesia. After the drawing of yet more door prizes, the evening was rounded off with a Pansi Semerang dance and folk songs.

I found the evening to be both informative and entertaining. Congratulations to the Indonesian Students Association for putting on a great show, I look forward to going again next year.

GENRECID

MICHAEL EDWARDS

SHAMROCKS AND SHENANIGANS

It has not escaped my notice that what has been termed (rather affectionately) 'Celtic Music' is more popular than ever. But I'm not going to talk of the rather gentle music typified by the somewhat squeaky Rankin Family. Instead I am talking of the wilder music where every song seems to be about drinking, gambling, love or a bizarre combination of all three. And this music has never been represented by anyone so gloriously as the Pogues.

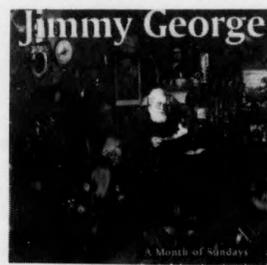
The first time I heard the Pogues was when they debuted on a television programme in the UK (namely *The Tube*; one of the best music programmes ever...), and were still known as Pogue Mahone. It was just before their first album came out, and they sang 'Waxie's Dargle'. It was a magnificent, raucous performance, notable for the percussion section which comprised of Andrew Ranken hitting himself on the head repeatedly with a tin tray. And then there was their 'charismatic' frontman, Shane McGowan with his rough hewn voice, incredible dental record and wonderful songwriting ability. The rest of the band were a pretty talented bunch too, playing traditional Irish instruments which helped to give their music the feeling that it could only really be enjoyed sitting in a pub with a pint of Guinness in your hand.

But it was when the Pogues performed live that they really came alive; as the show continued, the amount of alcohol consumed by the band increased. This meant that Shane's singing became more slurred and impossible to understand while the music became more out of control. Somehow their albums could never quite convey this manic feel, but that didn't stop them from putting out five damned fine albums before Shane finally left the band, only to be replaced by Joe Strummer for the next little while. He didn't stay, but luckily McGowan wasn't the only Pogue who could write songs (or sing for that matter) so the Pogues released *Waiting For Herb* last year which wasn't a bad album at all.

Yet I still can't help but feel that the Pogues without Shane McGowan aren't really the Pogues at all. For the last few years, Shane was down on his luck looking for a new record company, a new band and trying to write some new songs. And last month he appeared with his new band The Popes at

Fleadb 94 in London - hopefully there will be a record from him soon as no-one has managed to take his place in the interim. There are (at least) three bands that do seem to encompass the spirit of the Pogues in both song content and energy that are kicking around these days, and they all rather conveniently have albums out at the moment.

The first of these are Jimmy George who just happen to be coming to town this week (or will have been by the time you read this). They garnered a great deal of acclaim playing weekly gigs in their local Ottawa pub, and finally recorded their debut album, *A Month Of Sundays*, which was released earlier this summer thanks to some help from CBC. Their live show includes a healthy dose of cover versions of songs by bands such as the Waterboys, Spirit Of The West and the Pogues. The album has only one cover, so can their own material shine by itself? Well, they don't do too badly at all,



and on some of the songs they seem to veer towards Spirit Of The West and Junior Gone Wild territory. Maybe that isn't too much of a coincidence seeing all three bands are friends. I expect that this bunch are one of those bands which have to be observed in their native environment to appreciate them fully; playing live in a pub, and that is what I intend to have done on Wednesday night at The Exchange.

A band which very nearly slipped past unnoticed last year when they released their first album *Fire Of Freedom* was New York's Black 47. It was a strange combination which I didn't expect at all; musically they sounded like Dexy's Midnight Runners when they still had their brass section, but still used many traditional instruments combined with all manner of folk and even reggae influences. But the real star of the whole album was Larry Kirwan (whose voice really reminded me of Robert Smith for some inexplicable reason...) who wrote all the

songs. He is also a playwright, and his songs have a real cinematic sense to them; they all have a real story to tell and its one that hooks you from the very beginning. If you ever see this album then you should pick it up very quickly before someone else does. Now they are back with *Home Of The Brave* which isn't a dramatic departure for the band at all. It still works rather well, but after listening to their debut so many times, it becomes too easy to recognise the recycled parts. Even though, there are enough inspired moments on the 70 minute album to make it a worthwhile investment. Songs such as 'Road To Ruin' and 'The Big Fellah' will catch you in their fervour effortlessly; even the updated 'Danny Boy' isn't too horrid. Just make sure that you buy *Fire Of Freedom* first.

I am quite sure that the Mahones would not mind my saying that they have listened to all the Pogues albums at least once. Quite a few times more than that; even their name comes from the bit that the Pogues dropped (and it means 'the Arses' incidentally...) and they succeed in picking up the slack that was left behind by the Pogues - all of their songs manage to mention alcohol consumption in some form. The band even boast that they can match the audience drink for drink too. After all, drinking is such an important part of life, isn't it? They hail from Kingston, and they have also built up quite a reputation thanks to their live shows. Their debut album, *Dragging The Days*, has both variety of Celtic songs; namely the frenetically fast ones and the sadder slow ones. Fintan McConnell writes some wonderful songs in the best McGowan tradition which he grows out in a satisfying fash-



ion. And combined with the tin whistles and mandolins, you have the best replacement for the Pogues which I have heard so far - absolutely essential for all your nights of serious Guinness drinking.

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