

# GROUUPS

## THE STUNNING ROCK OUT!

The Stunning - who are: Steve Wall on vocals, Donal Duggan on Saxophone, Jimmy Higgins on trumpet, Cormac Dunne on drums, Joe Wall on Bass, and Donal Murray on lead guitar - are ending the decade on a roll! They've got a great new single - *Brewin' Up A Storm* - coming out in the New Year, an appearance on The Late, Late Christmas Show on December 22nd, a video planned for early January directed by no less than Druid's Garry Hynes, and they'll also be headlining the great Macnas New Year's Eve Ball. Pretty busy, these guys!



The Stunning — Mad Hatters

And they're finishing off what has been a very successful year. Their third single *Romeo's On Fire* got a lot of air-play, and their stint in Dublin at the SFX as part of the "7 Bands on the Up" (which will be screened in January on RTE) Mega-gig was, by general consent, the show-stealer! They've also built up a big following around the country, having already become Galway's favourite band.

### SUCCESS

The lads have been playing together for about four years, but they made their debut as *The Stunning* in February '87 when they played an amazing gig at The Hilltop in Salthill. Got *To Get Away* was their first single and it was immediately clear that here was a band with an exciting, original sound. The success of the timeless and seductive *Half Past Two* consolidated their early success. And now the band is eager to branch out and start testing their luck on foreign shores. They've already played in London, but so far mainly to Irish crowds who are already among the converted. "What we want to do now", Steve Wall told me, "is break through to the English market."

With their fourth single ready for release, Steve feels they now have to start thinking about an album. "We have a lot of

good material on demo tape and we're hopeful that with media exposure on The Late, Late and the 7 Bands On The Up RTE programme, we'll attract attention from a major label.

### GREAT MUSICIANS

Certainly they deserve it. A 5-track demo was left in earlier this week and I've been playing it ever since. Made at the West One Studio in Ballybane, it is highly accomplished and really highlights the considerable strengths of the band. *Derek Murray*, the lead guitarist, is a very "tasty" player, who brings a kind of fluid jazz sound to the group's music. But the songs - you've probably heard some of them already - are all good, and vocalist Steve Wall has already developed a very distinctive style.

### GARRY HYNES DOING VIDEO

Getting Garry Hynes to direct their first video is quite a coup. Steve used to work with Druid and when they were considering making a video, he approached her. "She was taken by the idea. She's never worked with film before, and certainly not Rock video! I think she sees it as a challenge and a chance to branch out into a new area." Shooting will begin during the se-

cond week of January. "We all sit around and bounce ideas off each other. She doesn't want to impose an idea on it. I think it'll be a real collaboration."

### THE GREAT MACNAS NEW YEAR'S EVE BALL!

Right now, however, The Stunning are really excited about the Macnas New Year's Eve Ball. "I think it'll be a great night", Steve said. "We'll do our own set and then Ollie has planned what he calls 'The Hits of 80's'. We're expecting some friends to drop in - Bruce Springsteen is nearly certain he can make it, and Freddie Mercury is threatening to bring along the rest of Queen. Garry Glitter is coming too, not to mention Paul Brady and Mary Coughlan". Who knows, maybe Paul McCartney might take time out to drop in? Be there, folks! You might never see anything like it again!

Keep your eye on The Stunning in the coming year. They've got a great, original sound, and it looks very much like 1990 could be the year that thrusts them into the big leagues!

## PETER O'HANLON BAND - DEBUT GIG IN GALWAY

Peter O'Hanlon - ex Maura O'Connell band, who's played alongside such greats as Phil Lynott and The Four of Us - played last Sunday night in McSwiggans Bar to a very enthusiastic crowd, with his own band.

Playing a mixture of Blues, Soul and Rock 'n Roll, including many originals, they left the crowd screaming for more.

The band is an excellent blend of 4 very accomplished musicians - Pete himself on lead

and Tony Phillips on drums.

Not only is Pete one of the top guitarists in the country, he is also an excellent song writer and Sunday night's gig featured many of his latest songs. The experience of the band members was typified by the fact that they received a rousing ovation, even though they only joined up 3 days before the gig!

The band went into the



guitar, harmonica, and vocals; Ted Ponsomby on keyboards/vocals; Billy Robinson on bass guitar,

studio to record what should be an exciting new album, overflowing with rhythm and blues and plenty of heart and soul... something to look forward to in the New Year.

Watch out for The Peter O'Hanlon Band, who will be gigging in Galway again in January.

## FLOWERS-MYSTERY GIG

It's a long way from the R.D.S. to the Parish Hall in Kilkerrin, but that's the spot where one of Ireland's top bands - The Hot House Flowers - are playing TONIGHT, December 14th. Apparently Liam O'Maonlai and Fiachna O'Braonain - the two "Heavy" Irish speakers in the band - wanted to do an intimate gig in the heartland of the Irish language. They certainly got it right. Kilkerrin is about 5 miles away from the cottage of Padraic Pearse who headed for this part of Connemara in order to perfect his Irish.

Tickets for this "Mystery Gig" will be available from 4 p.m. Today and at the door. We're sorry we only just heard about all this, but it's not too late to head for the Gaeltacht for a night of what should be great music from a great band! See you there!

# LIVE WIRE



**NEW YORK** - Lou Reed. Sharp, witty lyrics - pared-down instrumentation - this is an extended, integrated report on the collapse of civilization (i.e. New York) as we know it.



**OH MERCY** - Bob Dylan. After nearly a decade "footling" around and going through the motions, Dylan reminds us why he's been called a genius. (Having Lanois as producer certainly helped too!).

**MARIA MCKEE** - Maria McKee. Stunning voice, intelligent lyrics, inspired playing. And if you were lucky enough to see her at The Warwick, you know this lady is no studio product but a great performer on the threshold of fame.

**ACADIE** - Daniel Lanois. Lanois' husky, seductive voice wraps itself around some memorable songs in both French and English. Richly-textured music from the best producer of the late '80's.

**SONGS FOR THE TEMPTED** - The Four of Us. One of the most impressive

## THE FAT LADY SINGS

Up-and-coming Irish band The Fat Lady Sings play The Warwick next Sunday, December 17th. Doors open at 10.30 p.m. and there'll be a late bar. Tickets are available on the door. A new single - "Arclight" - has just been released by the band. It's on the independent label "Fourth Base" and if you want to order it, you'll have to quote the catalogue number - TFLS3 - and U.K. distributor - S.R.D.

## —BAKERS DOZEN—

### BEST OF '89

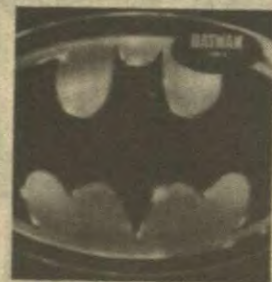
1989 has been a very good year for music. It's also been the year when many an old rocker from an earlier age, after turning out indifferent "product" to honour some contract, finally delivered the goods. Curiously, a lot of the best albums were released in the second half of the year - did the stimulus of the end of the '80's galvanize musicians into finishing things off with a bang? One name which stands out this year is the French Canadian producer Daniel Lanois, who added to his previous credits (Robbie Robertson's solo album and U2's *The Joshua Tree* in '87), three of this year's finest - Dylan's *Oh Mercy*, The Neville Brothers' *Yellow Moon*, and his own haunting *Acadie*. So, without further ado, here's **LIVEWIRE'S "BAKER'S DOZEN"**!

new album disproves this dramatically. Playing with Robert Cray has inspired him to his best album in a decade.



**Freedom** - Neil Young. The last of the hippies checks in with his best album since *Rust Never Sleeps* - a report on the U.S., both personal and public. Young is not a happy man. But an unhappy man is sometimes an inspired musician - like here.

debut albums by an Irish group in years.



**BATMAN** - Prince. So much better than the murky, confused film, they should have let Prince make it instead. Crackles from start to finish.

**FULL MOON FEVER** - Tom Petty. Impossible not to like this infectious, brilliantly-produced solo from the chief Heartbreaker.



**AVALON SUNSET** - Van Morrison. Mellow, slightly-low key music, but touched with the wonderful "Celtic Soul" only Van can deliver. His Leisureland concert was magnificent!

**YELLOW MOON** - The Neville Brothers. Aching beautiful and funky at the same time, this is one of the best albums you're likely to come across in any year!



**STEEL WHEELS** - The Rolling Stones. Another success story from a band that was starting to turn into a parody of itself. Really rocks along.

**JOURNEYMAN** - Eric Clapton. After Michelob commercials, it looked like Eric was coasting into MOR mediocrity. The

**THE STONE ROSES** - The Stones Roses. The ghost of the Beatles meets the ghost of The Byrds in a post-punk Manchester landscape. The wave of the future leads from the past into the brave new '90's. It's good. Get it.

Well, there you have it! I'm sure many will say their "best" has been left out. But these "best of's" are really nothing more than personal preferences. These are mine. Oh, yes. Most Over-rated Album of the Year: **CROSSROADS** - Tracy Chapman - Serious, earnest, and very, very boring.