

News Desk

Edited: Derek Johnson

Essex world trek —including Britain

DAVID ESSEX sets out next month on a comprehensive world tour — which opens with concerts in Europe and the Far East in the spring, incorporates a full British tour in the autumn, and concludes with an extensive trek across the United States at the end of the year.

MOTT DOING APRIL TOUR

MOTT are going out on a 20-day British tour in April, incorporating leading universities and major concert venues, and CBS will release the band's new album to coincide with the gigs.

They went into the Manor Studios on Monday to start on the album with engineer and produc-

er Eddie Kramer, who has previously worked with Jimi Hendrix, Led Zeppelin and Bad Company, among others.

The sessions will occupy about four weeks, and they then start rehearsing for the British tour. Mott recently returned from their first American tour with their new line-up, and they are due to go back to the States in mid-May to play another lengthy string of dates.

JOHN MILES GOES OUT ON THE ROAD

JOHN MILES is to undertake his first British concert series, as special guest on the previously-reported Robin Trower tour, which opens this weekend at Manchester Free Trade Hall (Friday and Saturday). Subsequent dates are at Newcastle City Hall (Sunday and Monday), Glasgow Apollo (February 28), Birmingham Odeon (March 2 and 3) and Wembley Empire Pool (5). Thereafter Miles will headline his own extensive tour of clubs and colleges throughout the rest of March and the whole of April, and dates are at present being finalised. His debut album "Rebel" is issued by Decca on February 27, followed on March 5 by a single extracted from it titled "Music". He appears in Radio 1's "In Concert" on March 13, and other TV and radio promotion is being arranged.

TOURS ROUND-UP

BOXER have added the following gigs to their previously-reported tour itinerary: **Aberdeen** Robert Gordon Institute (tomorrow, Friday), **Glasgow** Strathclyde University (Saturday), **Cheltenham** Town Hall (February 26), **Cromer** Links Pavilion (March 13), **Torquay** 400 Club (17), **Truro** Plaza (20), **Stoke** North Staffs Polytechnic (23), **Blackpool** Olympia (26) and **Retford** Porterhouse (31). **Birmingham** Barbarella's is switched from March 2 to 27, and **Bromley** Stockwell College from March 11 to 12.

RICHARD DIGANCE: **Wellingborough** Reform Church (February 25), **Birmingham** Repertory Theatre (27), **Coventry** Warwick Theatre (28), **Canterbury** Kent University (March 3), **London** Regent's Park Bedford College (4), **Ilford** Town Hall (5), **Farnham** The Maltings (6), **Portsmouth** Centre Hotel (7) and **Manchester** University (12).

CHAIRMEN OF THE BOARD have arrived in Britain at short notice and are playing at **Watford** Bailey's (all this week), **Stoke** Bailey's (all next week), **Barnsley** Ba-Ba Club (March 1), **Doncaster**

and **Sheffield** Bailey's (3) and **Whitley Bay** Burgundy Cobbler and **Spennymoor** Top Hat (5 and 6).

STRETCH, who recently had an NME Chart hit with their single "Why Did You Do It?", set out on tour this weekend. They visit **Gloucester** Roundabout (tomorrow, Friday), **Hertford** Balls Park College (Saturday), **Newcastle** Polytechnic (February 27), **Sunderland** Polytechnic (28), **Bath** Viaduct Hotel (March 2), **Ipswich** The Manor (5), **West Runton** Village Inn (6), **St. Ives** Hunts, Recreation Centre (11), **Reading** University (12), **Bognor** College of Education (13). More dates are being set into April. The band's new album "Elastic" is out this weekend.

ANDY FAIRWEATHER-LOW now appears at **Watford** Town Hall next Tuesday (24), as a replacement for his gig at **Hemel Hempstead** Pavilion on February 8, which was cancelled because he had flu. Tickets for the original gig will be valid at Watford and, because it is a larger venue, there will also be tickets available on the door.

He sets out on his travels in Amsterdam on March 19 and — before the end of the month — plays concerts in Denmark, Norway, Sweden and Germany. He also attends the German premiere of his film "Stardust" in Frankfurt on March 26. In early April, he plays a string of gigs in France, where he has previously appeared on 16 TV shows but never before performed live.

Essex then flies to Australia for major engagements in Perth, Adelaide, Melbourne, Sydney and Brisbane, which may be followed by a concert in Tokyo. He has also received offers from South Africa, Israel, Spain, Malta, Finland and Belgium, which are under consideration for the summer.

The full British tour, which is likely to be as extensive as his 1975 schedule, follows in mid-autumn prior to his return to the United States.

The band backing Essex throughout his travels now includes two new members in ex-Jack Bruce keyboards player Ronnie Leahy and former Dog Soldier guitarist Phil Palmer. They join existing members Barry de Souza (drums), Mark Griffiths (lead guitar), Mike Horn (bass) and Alan Wakeman (brass and woodwind). Altogether, there will be a company of 14 involved in the world tour.

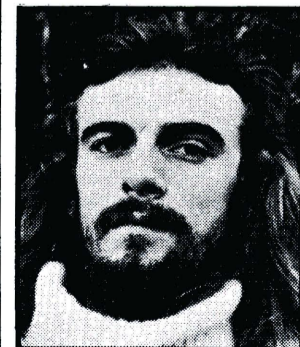
Essex has recently been laying down tracks for a new album and single, using these six musicians. But before the new album is issued, CBS are to release a live double album, which was recorded during his British concert tour last autumn, and this is expected to come out in the early spring.

Naz return soon

NAZARETH are due back in Britain at the beginning of March, following their current six-week U.S. tour. Their new single will be released to coincide with their return, and they will be promoting it on TV and radio. A spokesman for their management said that Naz are hoping to play some British dates during the spring — but this is dependent on whether they are obliged to return to the States, where their single "Love Hurts" is a Top Twenty hit.

Moody Blues mellotron player **Michael Pinder** has his solo album "The Promise" released by Threshold on March 5, thus completing the Moodies' various solo sets. Pinder may be going on the road in the summer with his recording band. No British dates are planned as yet.

ALAN WHITE'S SOLO ALBUM



THE FIRST solo album by Yes drummer **Alan White** is released by Atlantic on February 27, entitled "Ramshackled". Tracks are "Wooch Baby (Going To Pieces)", "One Way Rag", "Avakak", "Spring — Song Of Innocence", "Diddy", "Silly Woman", "Marching Into A Bottle", "Everybody" and "Darkness (Parts 1, 2 and 3)". Backing musicians on the elpee include Jon Anderson and Steve Howe of Yes, Alan Marshall (ex-Zzebra), Colin Gibson (ex-Snafu) and Kenny Craddock.



JONI MITCHELL

JONI, NEIL GIGS ARE CHANGED

DATES have now been confirmed for Joni Mitchell's British visit in late May — and they are different from the tentative dates originally pencilled in. Joni will now definitely appear at London Hammersmith Odeon on May 27, 28 and 29, followed by Glasgow Apollo Centre on May 31. Promoter Barry Dickins told NME this week that these gigs have now been contracted.

Postal bookings for the Hammersmith concerts will be accepted by the MAM Organisation (24/25 New Bond Street, London W.1) on or after March 1. Prices are £4, £3.50, £3, £2 and £1. The vast majority of tickets are held by MAM for postal applicants, but please remember that bookings will not be entertained before

March 1. Ten per cent of the tickets will, however, be available at Hammersmith Odeon for personal callers.

Glasgow tickets are available from the venue priced £3.50, £3, £2.50, £2 and £1. Readers should contact the Apollo for information regarding box-office opening date.

NEIL YOUNG'S itinerary has also undergone a change. His London concerts at Hammersmith Odeon are unaffected (March 29-31), and these are now completely sold out. But the date of his appearance at Glasgow Apollo has been switched from March 28 to April 2.

Young will be featured on stage for the entire show. He will open with an acoustic set, and in the second half will be backed by Crazy Horse — comprising Ralph Molina (drums), Billy Talbot (bass) and Manuel Frank Sampedro (rhythm guitar). A single extracted from his new "Zuma" album is released by Warner Brothers on March 5, titled "Looking For A Love".

Barry Dickins has also announced support acts for two other tours he is promoting. Dark Horse outfit Splinter will guest on the Kinks itinerary, and Aj Webber will appear in Neil Sedaka's spring concerts. Dates for both tours have already been listed.

Fairies final gigs

THE PINK FAIRIES have announced that they are breaking up — yet again! The band originally disintegrated a couple of years ago, but they re-formed for a tour last autumn. Subsequently they have been playing isolated gigs with varying personnel, but now they have decided finally to call it a day. The Fairies are giving two farewell concerts at London Marquee Club on March 8 and 9, and they insist that the split decision is irrevocable this time.

Three big outdoor one-day festivals

SOUTHEND, LUTON & SHEFFIELD

A ONE-DAY open-air festival is to be staged at Southend football ground on Spring Bank Holiday Monday, May 31 — and already the Kursaal Flyers, Eddie & The Hot Rods and Magna Carta have been confirmed for the bill. Attendance will be restricted to 20,000 (including 3,000 seated) and tickets will be priced at £1.50 in advance or £2 on the day. The festival is being arranged by the Southend Charity Committee, who are at present seeking a big-name headline act. A spokesman said that they had already approached Robin Trower, Procol Harum and Rory Gallagher, but all were unavailable on that date. "But we are seeking an act of that calibre," he added.

The NJF/Marquee Organisation, probably Britain's most experienced festival promoters, are to stage a one-day event at Luton Stopsley Common in either late June or early July. It is being presented as part of the town's centennial celebrations, and the exact date will be announced in a week or two, together with some of the bill. It will be the first occasion on which the NJF/Marquee office, who are responsible for the annual Reading Festival, have

gone "on the road" with one of their events. This may set a precedent for the future.

Sheffield Wednesday Football Club are planning a major one-day festival in late June at their Hillsborough ground. It had been planned for Rod Stewart to top the bill during what was to have been his summer tour of Britain. But now that Stewart has postponed his British dates until the autumn, the club are at present seeking another bill-topper.

TOMITA DUE HERE

TOMITA, the Japanese percussionist whose album "Snowflakes Are Dancing" was an NME Chart hit last year, is coming to Britain in the near future to play a string of concert dates. These will be part of a full European tour, opening at the end of this month. Dates are expected to be announced next week. Tomita's new album "Firebird", based upon Stravinsky's "Firebird Suite", is issued by RCA this weekend. He will be featuring it on stage during his tour, as well as excerpts from his previous two albums, "Snowflakes" and "Pictures At An Exhibition".

RECORDING NEWS

Maria's elpee

A new **Maria Muldaur** album "Sweet Harmony" is released this weekend by Reprise. Among the varied titles are Neil Sedaka's "Sad Eyes", the Staple Singers' "As An Eagle Stirrith In Her Nest" and Hoagy Carmichael's "Rockin' Chair" with Hoagy himself singing on the chorus. Also guesting on the elpee are Linda Ronstadt, Willie Weeks, Earl Palmer and the Benny Carter Band.

The all-star "Rhythm And Blues Party" album is reissued on the Philips International mid-price label this week. Among artists featured are **Louis Jordan**, **Ray Charles**, **Little Richard**, **Clyde McPhatter** and **Ruth Brown**.

Status Quo's new album "Blue For You" is to be advertised on hoardings around the pitch at Wembley Stadium, during the League Cup Final on February 28. This will ensure maximum exposure on television, as the match is being covered by TV.

Leslie West's new outfit — featuring **Corky Laing**, **Mick Jones** (ex-Spooky Tooth) and **Don Kretmar** (ex-Sea Train) — have their debut album issued by RCA this weekend under the title of "The Leslie West Band". Other RCA albums issued simultaneously are "Give Us A Wink" by **Sweet**, "Sandman" by **Nilsson** and "The Happiness Of Having You" by **Charley Pride**.

The **Doors** single "Riders On The Storm", coupled with "L.A.

Woman", is being reactivated by the Elektra label this weekend.

The next **Wishbone Ash** album is titled "Locked In." The band have just finished work on the set, and MCA are aiming at a late March or early April release.

Barry Ryan has signed with Bell Records, who this weekend release his first single for two years. It is his tribute to Judy Garland titled "Judy" which is not only his own composition but is also the first song he has even written.

United Artists are rush releasing a new **Maxine Nightingale** single, "Gotta Be The One". Maxine is also featured on backing vocals on "Superman" by Australian singer **Jeff Phillips**, issued by U-A on March 5.

Trevor Brice launches a solo recording career this week, after six years as lead singer with Varsity Fare. His single "Better By

Far", penned by Tony Macaulay, is released on Warner Brothers' subsidiary label Route.

Eddie Howell has his self-penned "Man From Manhattan" released by Warners on March 5. It was produced by **Freddie Mercury**, who also plays piano on the track, with **Brian May** on guitar. It was engineered by Mike Stone, who worked on Queen's "Bohemian Rhapsody".

Jr. Walker and the All Stars have their new album issued by Tamla Motown on March 5, titled "Hot Shot".

Kenny, who were the fourth best-selling singles act in Britain last year, have been snapped up by the Polydor label. Their first single via their new outlet will be out in a fortnight's time, followed by an album in the early spring.

The new **Disco Tex** single, released by Chelsea on February 27, is the double-sided "Hot Lava". Out the same day is the first single on the Polydor label by the **Steve Gibbons Band**, titled "Sweetheart."

Warner, Atlantic merge

THE WARNER Brothers, Atlantic, Elektra and Asylum labels are to be brought together as one company in Britain. Although all four labels come under the aegis of WEA International, they have been operating independently in this country. But now it has been decided to re-unite them under one roof. During this period of reorganisation, WEA president Nesuhi Ertegun will remain in London to act as managing director. It is stressed that the labels concerned will continue to "develop their separate identities". The new policy will not take effect until suitable office space is found, and then the existing Warner and Atlantic offices will be closed. Meanwhile, the labels will continue to operate in their present capacity.

Next Week

Five
K.G.B.
men
named