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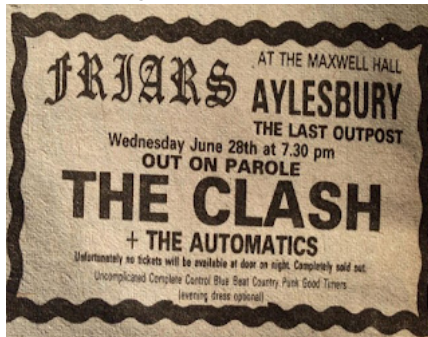
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## Coventry Music 1978

### Coventry Music 1978

by Pete Clemons



On the face of it, 40 years ago seems an awfully long time ago. And of course, it was. But looking back on that particular passage of time, and at some of the moments that took place, it seems like only yesterday. Apart from those directly involved - although even they may not have even realised - we certainly didn't know it at the time. The history has proved that 1978 was one of the most significant years the Coventry music scene has ever known. It preceded and gave rise to one of the most important musical movements which, even today, continues to ripple.

The celebrations that heralded in 1978 had hardly died down when almost immediately The Automatics, who would be known as The Coventry Automatics and namely Jerry Dammers, Horace Panter, Terry Hall, Silverton H and Roddy Radiation and Lynval Golding, began a residency at Mr Georges Club.

These regular Monday night sessions lasted for several months. Almost, in fact, until the club finally closed.

for the last time. It was a period of great change for the band. Those first few months of the year would see the band's name change to The Jaywalkers for a short while.

By the middle of 1978 things would change again. The following extract was written by Gary Bushell and was published in the 5th July 1978 edition of Sounds magazine. It is part of a review he wrote for a gig by The Aylesbury Friars the previous week on June 28th.

'SURPRISE number one last Thursday were support group The Specials (as they'd been known for four weeks. They were formerly the Automatics which was very confusing for the other Automatics, you know, the fan over Poland ones). The Specials are a five piece multi-racial punk reggae group from Coventry, and they don't so much clash as entertainingly intermingle. Whereas Clash play punk songs and reggae songs, The Specials combine elements of the two'.

That tour with The Clash was also significant for other reasons. As bass player Horace Panter remembers started the tour as a 6-piece but ended it as a 7-piece' (Neville Staples had graduated from Roadie to full-time performer).

The final piece of the jigsaw of the classic recording line up of The Specials would drop into place toward the end of 1978 when Transposed Men drummer John Bradbury replaced Silverton Hutchinson. Word has it that Silverton, a reggae drummer, had become disillusioned with the direction the band was taking. Brad's unique drumming style would become integral as firstly, The Special A.K.A, and then The Specials developed their distinctive sound.

But, as important as it was, the birth of The Specials was not the only thing that happened in Coventry during 1978.

Bands such as Ian Dury and the Blockheads, The Jam and The Buzzcocks who, less than a year or so earlier had been playing the nightclubs had found that their fan base had grown significantly. As such they were now in Coventry the city and appearing at the far larger Coventry Theatre.

Also appearing at the theatre were the more established rock acts like Be Bop Deluxe, Wishbone Ash, AC/DC and Rory Gallagher alongside the more soulful sounds of Johnny Mathis, The Stylistics and George Benson.

There were also some notable support bands playing the Theatre as UFO and Van Halen each supported Priest and Black Sabbath respectively.

On the outskirts of the city, at the Warwick University, other memorable gigs were taking place. Those by The Ramones, Third World and a Stiff Records tour that included Stiff recording artists Wreckless Eric, Jona Lewy and Lena Lovich certainly spring to mind. Looking back in hindsight, time has told us that it was an incredible year for Coventry, although I think in this case we all realised it. But it was also one that continues to provide many points of interest.

Posted by [Coventry Music Scene Archive](#) at [4:47 PM](#)



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