HIGHLIGHTS OF THE EVENING FOR ME HAD TO BE THE SONG ABOUT PRODTOGY FEMALES: "ANOTHER STITCH IN YOUR PARTY DRESS" AND THE EXTENDED VERSION OF "CUT THROUGH THE GRAVEYARD" ENSURING JON ARIOT BAND MADE MANY NEW FRIENDS TONIGHT IN SWANSEA.

LIZ AILKEN

CELEBRATION CONCERT FOR DAVY GRAHAM
@ Cecil Sharp House
28 November 2009
Davy Graham died in 2009. He was one of the most influential and revered acoustic guitarists to come out of the UK. He invented DADGAD tuning and composed the tune "Anji" made famous by Paul Simon. He was a highly inventive player blending jazz, blues, and world music in a style that was way ahead of its time. For blues aficionados his version of Bill Broonzy's "Hey Bud Blues" on the album "After Hours at Hull University, 4th February 1967" (RCA Records RCC 3021) is a breathtakingly inventive series of variations on Big Bill's original theme. This celebration was organized by lifelong friend Esko Palmer. It was excellently stage managed by Gareth Hedges who has for several years managed several blues luminaries including Fred McDowell. The concert included performances by folkies Martin Carly, Steve Tilson, Bob Davenport, and Wiff Jones and J.C. Carroll. There was plenty of acoustic blues including a name known to blues fans, Tony Reeves who played with John Mayall, John Martyn, Curved Air, Colosseum, Elephant Skin, and others. There was a moving spoken tribute by folk legend Roy Harper. A highlight was Forbes Henderson's renderings of Bach on classical guitar, though the generally reverential audience seemed to delight in bunging the doors during its set. All in all this was a successful event that it is hoped will be repeated. The atmosphere in Cecil Sharp House was generally reverential. One suspects that perhaps, by reputation, Davy Graham would prefer it to be held in a local pub, nonetheless, very satisfying afternoon and evening.

VICKY MARTIN

DAVY KNOWLES & BACK DOOR SLAM
@ The 100 Club, London.
09/02/2010
Knowles has spent the last two years touring the US supporting Jeff Beck and Chickenfoot (Joe Satriani described Knowles as "his new favorite modern day Bluesman"), headlining in his own right and collecting many dedicated fans and media plaudits along the way. This latest 22-year-old Manc is now settling his sights closer to home and this gig, the first of only two public shows on a short visit to the UK principally designed to "do the rounds" of the media, followed Knowles' interview and brief solo performance on BBC Breakfast TV earlier this day. Two critically acclaimed albums, the second co-produced by Peter Frampton, ensured a nearly capacity crowd at this historic venue to witness Knowles' virtuosity first hand. For this visit the band comprised a three piece with drummer, Steven Bardi and bassist Paul Kenmihan, known as "PK", Ty Baillie. Knowles' keyboard player had other commitments in the US. Despite Baillie's absence, the sound was still full and slightly muddy at the start. Using the same PRS guitar throughout the 90 minute set, Knowles played a mix of self-penned rocking and gentle Blues-rock numbers from his two albums plus a few covers. "Riverbed" and " Tear Down The Walls" got the blood pumping with their almost shouted vocals and stinging guitar breaks followed by "You Don't Love Me" (made famous by The Allman Brothers) with its instantly recognizable riff. While it was good to hear Knowles blistering guitar work on "Messin' With The Kid", Dave Crosby's "Almost Cut My Hair" (Knowles' tribute Crosby's note of praise for his version) even "On Well" in honour of the many bands that have played this prestigious venue, it was Knowles' own material that provided light and shade. Each song being a beautifully crafted tale allowing Knowles' slightly husky yet strong voice to shine through. The Blues numbers 'Gotta Leave', the almost folkly 'Roll Away' and 'Country Girl' about his sister, being perhaps the basics examples. But it was Knowles' stunning guitar licks that drew most attention and for those who were at this gig, next visit can't come soon enough.

PHILIP WOODFORD

DEBORAH BONHAM BAND / NAZARETH
@ Rothes Halls Glenrothes
21/02/2010
A little over three years ago I caught Deborah and her band in a tiny, but very special, pub in the back of beyond. That show, whilst musically quite excellent, lacked the polished maturity of being a front person that was very much in evidence from this fine singer tonight. Strutting barefoot around the stage your eyes were constantly focused on her as she ripped into a well-balanced set. From the off 'Shit Happens' through 'I Need Love', 'Grip', 'Lighting Man', 'What We Got Ain't For Sale', 'Duchess And The Shufflemaster', 'No Angel' and others. Firmly rooted in the Blues, Deborah and her band were in great form. Musically tight, well balanced and clear sound was just what was needed in a Sunday night in Fife. The two closing numbers were somewhat emotional experiences for her. The Old Hydes' written about her brother's John, Michael and her father plus the home they shared was stunning. However the cream on the top was the fabulous closer 'Stay With Me Baby' done as a duet with Dan McCafferty. Talk about a vocal marriage made in heaven. Truly fitting an end to the start of the evening. Now Nazareth have been treading the stages of the Blues Matters! 119