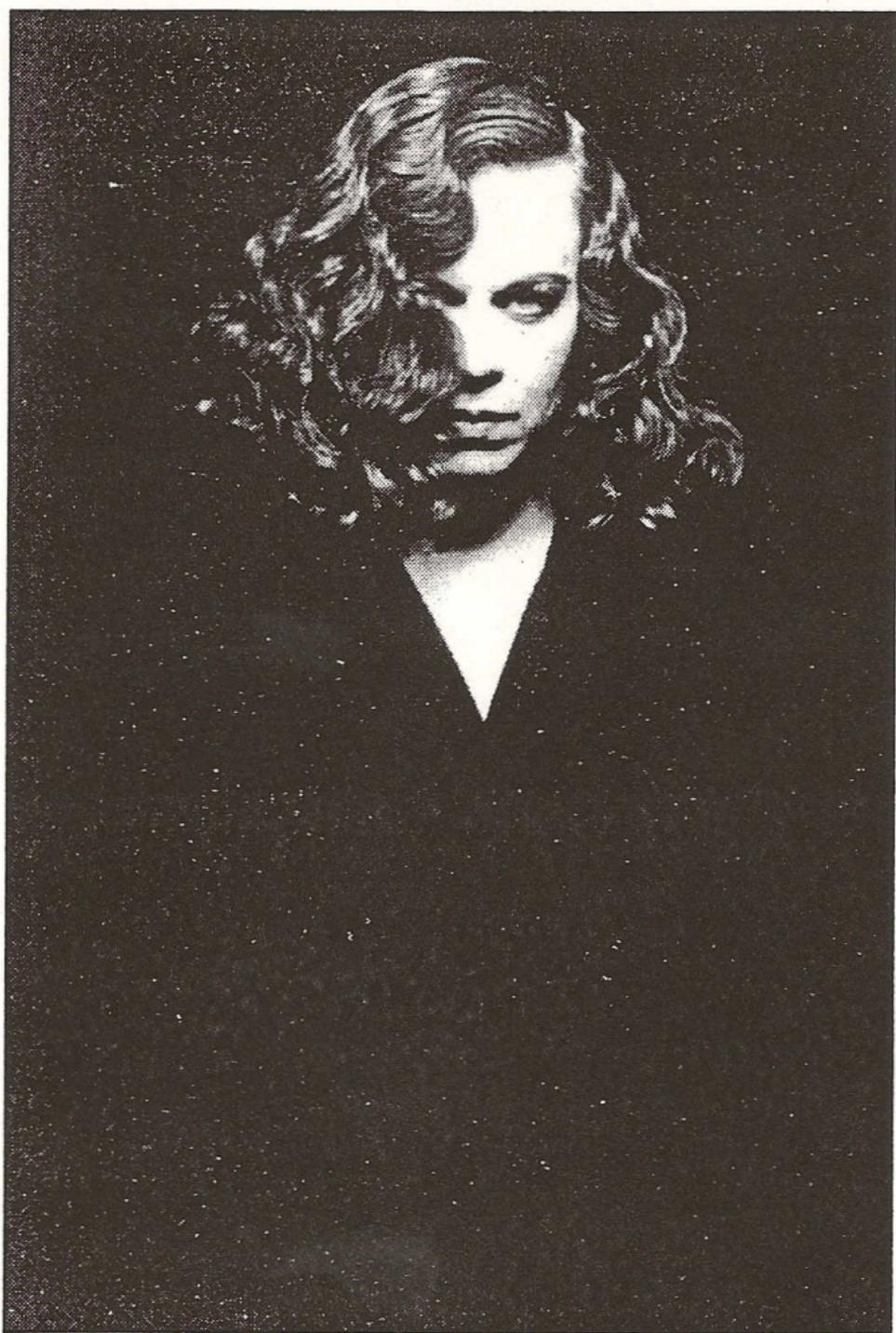


THE BIG ISSUE



Sarah-Jane Morris

Sarah Jane Morris is one of those people who has never really shaken off an association which catapulted her to fame. Almost ten years ago, her stunning voice helped Jimmy Sommerville produce the best selling single of 1986 *Don't Leave Me This Way*, and since then she has had to live with an unfair link. I say 'helped' Jimmy Sommerville as, in hindsight, I do believe it was her who did him the favour and not the other way around.

If this is one reason why she has not enjoyed the phenomenal success in Britain she has received in the rest of Europe then *Blue Valentine*, her superb third solo album, may very well be the ace which allows her the recognition she deserves. Recorded at Ronnie Scott's Jazz Cafe last year, the album is a collection of five of her own compositions plus a selection of classic blues and soul songs from some of the world's greatest song writers. Tracks from Tom Waits, Lenny Kravitz, Sade and Jimmy Hendrix among others are all given an individual touch by Morris.

One of many memorable facets of this album (sexy, sultry, raunchy and great to listen to in the bath being a few others), is the sheer quality of Morris' voice. I first heard her sing live at the Liverpool Everyman Theatre last year and since then I've yearned for more. Her own songs, including *Love Me Like You Used To*, *Sweet Little Sister* and *My Day Will Come* hint at a developing style which, when mature, will place her among the great female vocalists/song-writers of our time – I can't wait

Leaves Around The Door, specially written by Paul Weller is one example of the strong demand for her work, even by other artists. Let's hope Britain hurries up and starts recognising her as the rare, inspiring artist she really is.

BRIAN PARKES