

Nostalgia

PETE CHAMBERS' BACKBEAT – a look at the local music scene of the past.

WHY IT'S HIGH TIME WE CELEBRATE OUR CITY'S GREATEST MUSICAL EXPORT

2009 looks to be an exciting one, not least with the announcement of The Specials reforming for a series of 30th Anniversary shows next spring.

2-Tone was a product of this city, and is its most famous and widespread musical export, if we don't celebrate it, then who will?

It's worth remembering however that next year is the celebration of not just thirty years of The Specials, but of all the 2-Tone bands, including Coventry's Selecter, and the iconic label itself.

As the label was born in Coventry, it's up to us to make certain that this prime local musical export is celebrated in style.

That's where 2-Tone@30 comes in.

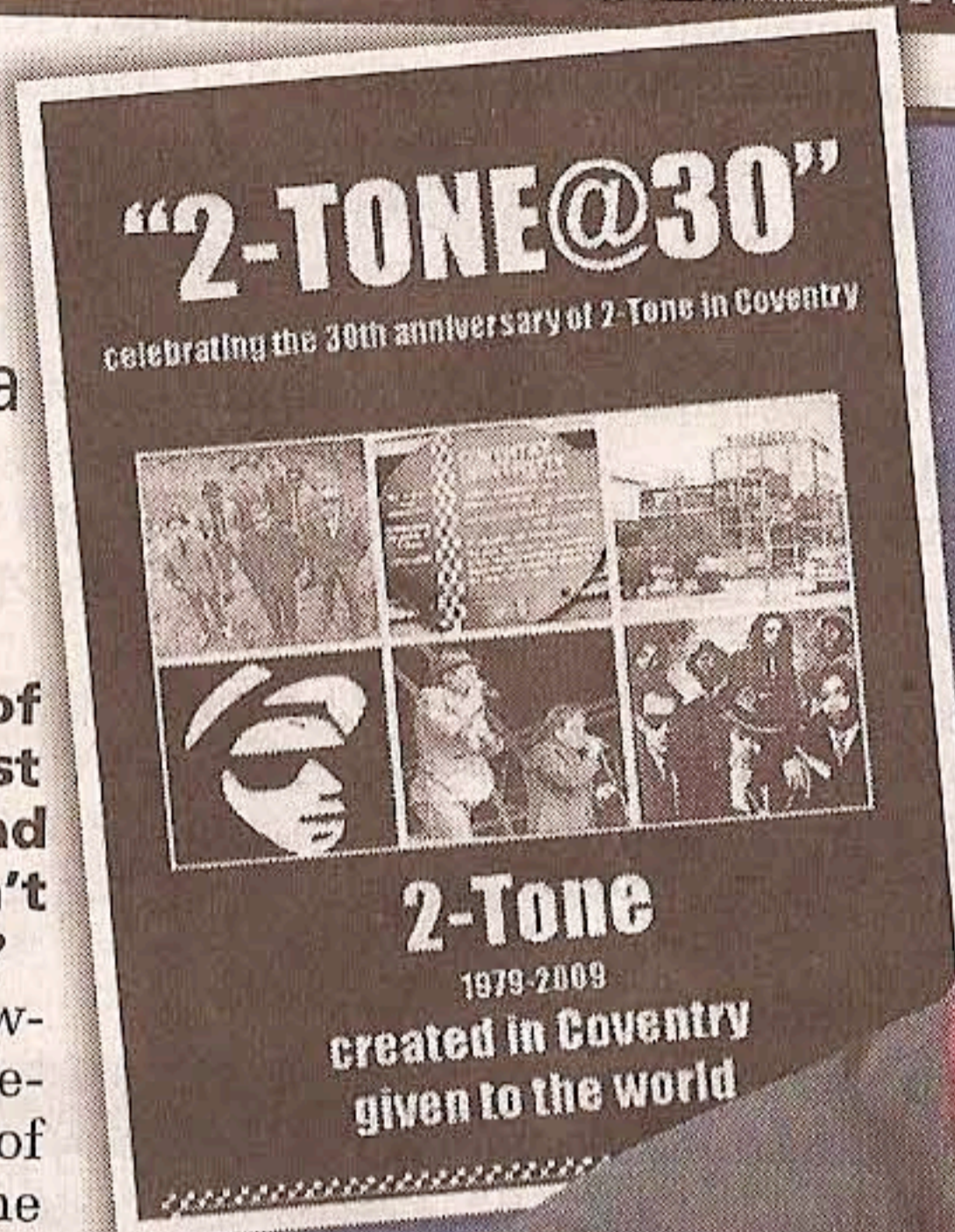
Throughout 2009 there will be eight 2-Tone plaques unveiled at various locations on Coventry's 2-Tone Trail.

Each one will give a glimpse of the fascinating history of bands like The Specials and the Selecter.

As well as the iconic 2-Tone record label itself, a label that helped to launch the careers of other ska-based bands such as Madness and The Beat.

With each unveiling, it is hoped that various other events will combine to create a fitting tribute to this incredibly infectious and extraordinarily socially-aware brand of music that is marking its 30th.

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A SPECIAL CELEBRATION... Pete Chambers, left, with 2-Tone photographer John Coles and Emma O'Brien of the Lock Gallery.

Let's make 2009

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The key to it all is less about funding, more about ideas and realisation and it is important that this opportunity is not missed.

When The Specials' tour dates were announced recently the web was awash with the news not only of the dates, but many asking where the Coventry concert date was. That's how indescribably linked with this city the band is.

The celebration has no fixed structure; instead it will be made-up of various separate events throughout the year, each one celebrating 2-Tone, the bands, the label and the legacy it has created.

I welcome ideas and suggestions on how we can make 2009 'Special' in a 2-Tone kind of a way.

Already we have many ideas, such as film shows, concerts and the plaque unveilings themselves.

Plus less obvious ideas, such as a 2-Tone Improv comedy night, and a 2-Tone Photograph exhibition, and the chance to try your hand at drawing a rude boy!

Other events will include local

musicians covering 2-Tone songs, concerts from ska bands film shows and much more. Already I have had many pledges of support from some of Coventry's most creative people.

If you have any ideas, and want to support the celebrations, then please get in touch.

All ideas are welcome. ■ **Contact Pete Chambers at tencton@hotmail.com or via the Coventry Telegraph.**

The first event takes place at The Canal Basin on January 15

at 3pm where a SPECIAL guest will unveil the Canal Basin plaque. Followed by an invitation-only preview evening hosted by Emma O'Brien at The Lock Gallery featuring the 2-Tone photography exhibition 'Setting The Two Tone'.

This exhibition featured a stunning selection of specially selected iconic black and white photographs taken by lens legend John Coles from the seminal days of the 2-Tone movement in 1979.

On Friday January 16 The Lock Gallery, (Workshop 10, Canal Basin), is open to public viewing until January 31, where we all get a chance to purchase a bit of 2-Tone history.

On January 30, there will be a chance of creating your own art, when you can draw a rude boy complete with scooter as part of a Dr Sketchy 2-Tone special.

■ **For more information go to www.thelockgallery.co.uk**



Let's make 2009 a SPECIAL year

The first plaques will be sited at:

THE CANAL BASIN, where in 1979 photographers Chalkie Davies and Carol Starr took a set of iconic images that graced the cover of The Specials' albums.

Sponsored by Coventry Market.

COVENTRY UNIVERSITY (THE LANCH), Jerry Dammers and Horace Panter of The Specials and Pauline Black of the Selecter attended this university.

Sponsored by Coventry University.

THE HOLYHEAD YOUTH CLUB, (Lower Holyhead Road) it was here that reggae and blues jam sessions took place between musicians that would become members of The Specials and the Selecter.

Sponsored by Harris Sign Group

THE BINLEY OAK, It was in the back room of this public house that The Specials unique ska sound was originated, and where Pauline Black first sang with The Selecter.

Sponsored by The Binley Oak.

MR GEORGE'S site (Lower Precinct), The Specials played a four-month residency here as the Automatics.

Sponsored by Lower Precinct.

DO YOU REMEMBER ANY TOP 50s or 60s LOCAL GROUPS...?

Write to Backbeat at the Telegraph, Corporation Street, Coventry CV1 1FP or e-mail features@coventrytelegraph.net