

The pop pub's final fling . . .

TONIGHT is a big night for Brighton band Venus in Furs. Normally a gig at the Alhambra in King's Road, on Brighton seafront would pass without much comment.

After all, Venus in Furs have played to bigger crowds than the Alhambra could ever cope with — they supported Adam Ant at the Brighton Centre at his 1981 Christmas concert.

But tonight's event is an historic one, for the Alhambra is closing down on Monday and tonight's is the last live gig there.

Paul Martin, bass player with Venus in Furs, pays tribute to the pub that was a centre for young rock'n'roll bands in the 1950's, right through to punk bands of the

late 1970s and new pop bands today.

Says Paul: "Between 1977 and 1980 there was a band on seven nights a week, every week, thanks to local promoter Keith Hurly. In 1977-8, it would have cost on average 30-40p to see one, maybe two, bands on any night of the week at the Alhambra. Monday nights were designated benefit nights when all the profits went to local community groups.

Keyboards

"These were the years of peak musical activity in Brighton, when the town had its own record label, Attrix, in Sydney Street. Bands who played the Alhambra many times included The Chefs, The Depressions, The Piranhas and The Cheesy Bits — whose singer Gary is now in London's King Kurt. Dave Greenfield,



● Paul Martin

of The Stranglers, also played keyboards there in several groups before he found star status.

"The Alhambra, unlike the

Alhambra stages its last live show

Pavilion, Marina or Palace Pier, won't be found in any of the glossy tourist brochures because it's not a tourist attraction. No one will protest at the closure because it's not of the Regency period or a listed building.

"But the Alhambra's closure means there is one fewer place to go for those who aren't inclined towards the ever-present electro-drum drone of disco."

Limited

Paul adds that, with the closure of Xtreams Club — due to bean amusement arcade — in West Street, and the loss of the Resource Centre in North Road a few years ago, places for young bands to play have become even more limited in the town.

To make the most of the last night the three-piece Venus in Furs — who first appeared at the Alhambra in June 1981 supporting Emma Sharpe — are joined by folk-rock-dance band Kalenda Maya from Worthing, who include session musicians who have played with Randy Edelman, Gary Numan and Peter Gabriel.

Sounds like quite a send-off.

Paul Martin:

Evening Argus, 10th December 1983. I was asked to write a short piece on the importance of The Alhambra to local bands. Venus in Furs played the final gig at the Alhambra. We played a good set and really knocked up the volume at the end. Local promoter Keith Hurley had put on bands at the Alhambra almost seven nights a week for years. I do recall him looking high and low for the 'last night of the Alhambra' poster he made afterwards, but, ahem, I had carried that off as a souvenir! The building was then demolished to make way for an 'intercontinental hotel'. Today you would never know The Alhambra or 'The Inn Club' downstairs had ever existed.