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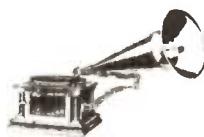
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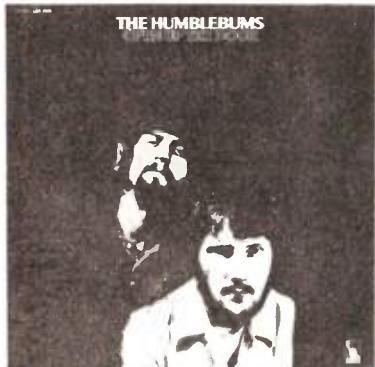
Cat Stevens



Elton John



Ike & Tina Turner



Humblebums



David Bowie



Nitty Gritty Dirt Band

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Bee Gees



The Heep



FAN MAIL

Ordinarily, if there is a negative "review" on The Jaggerz, I will, if I respect the critic and he has the background and credentials, take heed of it and sometimes thank him for pointing out flaws that I had missed.

However, when a semi-literate, misinformed ass such as your Penpal '33204 can have tripe like his interpretation of The Jaggerz appearance at Lewisburg Penitentiary printed on your Performance page of the February issue, then I must respond.

No wonder this clown is in the cooler! If he remembered his alibi with the same accuracy that he remembered the show, he was a loser from the start.

I am glad that he pointed out that we started out with an Elton John tune... "the new one" ... how he recalled it vividly enough to report it is beyond me, seeing as how we do absolutely no material by Elton John. Then again, he also had memories of Brooklyn when he heard *Runaway* because we didn't do that oldie either. It was difficult to get much more out of his vintage, Greenwich Village type of copy-cat pseudo-hip, "heavy" review other than the fact that he didn't enjoy the group. Sorry 'bout that.

The Jaggerz appeared at Lewisburg at the request of an inmate who happened to dig them. (Also inaccurately reported by the unconscious con.) They got standing ovations and built up a great rapport with the men because they rapped and stayed around and became friends. The show was taped and broadcast several times over the prison radio, and even then 33204 couldn't get it straight.

Because of the tremendous reaction to the group, the prisoners, the administrators, the chaplain and the *Holy Name Society* asked us to come back soon. We decided to do it again as near to Christmas week as possible in order to help make the season a little better. It is a 500-mile round trip to Lewisburg from our homebase. Five Jaggerz, three equipment men and myself made that trip twice... both times at the request of those inside. Of course it was entirely gratis, but the reaction in this and other prisons have made it worthwhile. In spite of this jack-off's stupidity, we will continue to appear at any institution that invites us.

The prison paper said it was one of the best, if not the best show ever to play there. On our second appearance, the inmates presented The Jaggerz with a beautiful plaque which they had designed and manufactured themselves. Some of them had gone without cigarette rations, etc. in order to obtain the materials and help in making this plaque. It was not from the institution... it was directly from "the men of Lewisburg". I guess that 33204 is not a man? Perhaps he is bugged because since the concert was SRO (voluntary attendance), this meant the dorms and showers were empty and his friend wouldn't leave the concert to take advantage of this situation when they could be alone. I am only guessin', but the review does sound a little bitchy. And, no one is compelled to either attend or to remain in the auditorium.

I don't have to defend The Jaggerz. We have never claimed to be Jefferson Airplane. All I do know is that we have had hit records, we work all the time, we make a lot of money, we do all the charity and benefit work we can squeeze in, from the kidney foundation to orphanages, from cancer society to library funds, from political rallies to prisons and we have lasted over seven years. I don't have many complaints, but I do object to stupidity and doubtful credibility. I guess I could put it all in a capsule by just saying what I really want to say... Eat it, 33204!

Joe Rock,
Manager
THE JAGGERZ
Pittsburgh, PA.



"Would you put us in your magazine if we wore dresses?" That was the question and we rose to the challenge. A free subscription will be awarded to all who correctly guess the identity of this famous group. Send your entries to The Name Game, Box Z, 8824 Betty Way, W. Hollywood, CA. 90069. Void where prohibited by law or religion.

Dear PRM:

THAT DOES IT!! If I read one more "Mike Saunders is an asshole" letter, heads will definitely fly. It just so happens that Mike Saunders is one of the best (along with Lester Bangs and Greg Shaw) rocks writers existent. Sure he's not perfect (the Stones are still great, Mike) but I don't expect that from a writer. And I will defend him to the end.

I don't know if this constitutes Mike Saunders' first fan letter or not but I think he's real neat. Long live Black Sabbath, Grand Funk, and the Raspberries, right, Mike? And to those creeps who are ready to cut Mike-remember this - we'll have the metal brigade knocking down your door in less time than America takes to make you puke. So think twice!

Sincerely,

Jim Bemis
San Francisco, California

P.S. You're okay, too, Marty.

Hi Guys:

When I first became aware of the moniker Mike Saunders, it was tagged to articles and reviews that I liked. But for a long time now Saunders has done nothing but chew on his foot. He seems to have nothing to say except, "I masturbate a lot." All he does is tell readers about his own miserable, distorted opinion.

What did those pseudo-reviews of Budgie and Bang mean? He goes through the whole thing talking about *Good* and *Bad* but never tells anyone what their music sounds like. Paraphrased, his six paragraphs amount to: BUDGIE Ick, II ick, BANG Ick, II ok.

Well I got an opinion, too. Bang has eight songs; five stink, they don't exist. The other three are all on Side One and the last one, *Come With Me*, ends with one of the all-time spine-tingling, consciousness-freezing displays on record. I'll also agree with Metal Head Saunders that II has more good material than I, the cover is atrocious. Yes, bandwagon metal punks. There are four good ones, the none approach *Come With Me* or are as catchy as *Lions Christians*.

As for Metal Skull Saunders on Budgie, I'll just quote him: "the absolute worst heavy metal album ever recorded. It's not even heavy, and there is no metal anywhere." So why does the fool pretend it is heavy metal? 'Cos he masturbates, that's why: he pretends a lot.

The final straw for Saunders was comparing Savage Rose to String Driven Thing. Hey, Jerk! I've lived where of Savage Rose speaks. And I've gone all the way with Anisette and it is a personal insult to mention Savage Rose in connection with such a monotonous non-entity as S.D.T. When Lester Bangs comes to break your geek of a neck, I want to be there and get two assholes with one puck. Yes, I hereby join the ranks of those publicly commented to the extermination of such know-nothing, egocentric, fools as M.M.M. Saunders.

I also wanted to compliment

you on the more than satisfactory review of ROXY MUSIC by Alan Niester. At least there were some images, tho I didn't agree with them 100%, it was pretty good. It was kind of your fashion editor, Lisa Rococo to plug them as well.

Another bit of info for Metal Brain Saunders. William Burroughs preceded Hapsahash by 13 years with the phrase "heavy metal" in NAKED LUNCH. Tough luck, chum; but I do rate HAPSASHASH AND THE COLOURED COAT FEATURING THE HUMAN HOST and THE HEAVY METAL KID as one of my All-time Top Dozen.

Condolences to Ms. Lady Bang-La-Boom for being dumped by L. Bangs in preference of Len K. But once a groupie, always a groupie.

Piss-off, I love you, or something.

Jim Schafer
San Antonio, Texas

Dear PRM:

Lisa Rococo's "Hollywood" article in the Feb. issue was an exercise in self indulgence. Between talk of little white pills, multiple color sets, Flashing Limos (Rented, yet. Utter class.) and nonsensical biggerish about parades, Lovely Lisa does manage to project an image, all right. An image of what she'd like the public to know about her Fabulous Hollywood Life. For some obscure reason, Lisa thinks that her hobnobbing with Stars and lesser-known, local Rock Babes is in some way unique.

Listen, dear, we may not all live in that City of Sparkling Delights, nor do all of us want to, but what you've got to understand is that other cities do have their own The Club: that veritable magnet for the Glitter Gang and Babes thereof. I'm referring particularly to my own Rock Dominion: Cleveland. (eh, wot??). Where did Dear David and his cohort bop to during their several visits here? Where did the Hoople go to socialize? Where do all other Stars, local or otherwise, always go? Why, The Mistake, of course. That is absolutely the place to be seen in Cleveland!! And it's usually a pulsating mass of satin, lame, sequins, rhinestones and occasional Bowied manes of crimson hair riding on shiny, tight-panted legs.

Viewed as the Plastic Punks in the eyes of the unfortunate Bluejean Dudes, we (and that includes you, Lovely Lisa) have the privilege of belonging to the upper echelon of the Rock Society. But, dear, if you're going to belong, you've got to do it with Style. If you must advertise, do it with finesse. Flagrant self-hypes are in bad taste, dontcha know? You're not unique in our world. (By the way, those of us that follow The Fashion know where to look, thank you.) Just want you to save that precious breath for longer sips of champagne. Maybe if the article hadn't turned into a self-centered advertisement for Lisa's Sparkling Star-Studded World...

Lisa, dear, you've got to learn to handle what's been handed to you, (unless you just grabbed it.) You

seem like a newcomer in the Gang. You can get back to the parade, but don't try to be the leader, eh???

Love,

Infra Red
Cleveland, Ohio

P.S. By the way, Lisa, have you a book I could borrow?

Dear PRM:

We (*The Marquis de Sade*) caught Lisa's fashion in your article called, "Hollywood."

There were a few errors in the notes. First; the predictions were not from the *Hollywood Star* they were from the *L.A. Star* - Top of the Pop Polls. Second; *The Marquis de Sade* will not be the "trend setters for 1973" because we were the trend setters for 1972, and shall continue to be so.

To our knowledge Shady Lady was not mentioned in the *L.A. Star's Top of the Pop Polls*.

Remember: "THE MARQUIS DE SADE IS MORE THAN JUST A WET DREAM."

Yours Truly,

Donald "Bleeden" - Simons
Keyboards and Sword Swallower
The Marquis de Sade
Burbank, California

Dear PRM:

Bravo for Mr. Bickhart's fabulous article on the world's finest group, The Move. It may take balls to say this, but Roy Wood beats the pants off Lennon & McCartney as far as carefully constructed music is concerned.

And a hearty "Kick in the ass" to all those dildoes who called King Bowie a fag in your strange "Advise, Love, Praise, and Hate" feature. What a way to talk about one of the last few hopes for excellent music.

Do the brontosaurus!

Alex Po-Poo
Charleston, S.C.

PRM:

What's the deal? I was just relaxing with the new issue of your magazine, when I turned to page 27 and discovered a mighty familiar-looking picture. (But it must be someone that looks like him, I thought). PETER HAMMIL it was, however, and not only that, but a review of his FOOL'S MATE LP.

I'm not exactly sure if I understand, because I was turned on to Peter Hammill when I bought FOOL'S MATE in the fall of 1971. And the review implies that the album is new. Well, it may be a new American release (that is frequent cause for confusion), but it by no means is a new recording. PAWN HEARTS, for example is later than FOOL'S MATE. And I hope that Mr. Ross is also misinformed about the break-up of Van der Graaf Generator. They, to me, have been one of the most musically exciting groups ever.

Regardless, I do want to thank you for recognizing Peter and his album. It is the first mention I've seen of him in any American publication, and it is a direction I hope you will follow.

Jan Sickbert
Overland Park, Kansas

P.S. What do you know? I go on to read the rest of the reviews and find another Charisma-Buddah artist (group) given space. String Driven Thing are worthwhile, for sure. (Will it be Genesis in the next issue?)

Dear Quivering Creepo:

Recently I had the misfortune to leaf through your whatever you call it! Who the hell does Martin Cerf think he is? Or Alan Niester? The bullshit printed there was complete waste.

You have absolutely no taste in music and you both suck!

Russell Hull
Rison, Arkansas

P.S. An addition to this decade's worst mags (joining ranks with such greats as *Tiger Beat Mag* and *True Confessions*) is unquestionably *Phonograph Record Magazine*!

Dear PRM:

...Let me say this, all those people who write you nasty letters are one of two things: either sadists or masochists. Why don't people write when they like something... we always hear from the naughty ones or do you only print the snide stuff?... Well, PRM, we here in the Mid-West are not so depraved, and as long as there is a Lester Bangs, Mike Saunders or Greg Shaw we trust rock and roll recordings will still be with us. Please thank the boys for us. They are darlings, you know?

Mary Dievers
Toledo, Ohio

Dear PRM:

I just picked up my first copy of PRM today and it flopped me out.

And WOW! Did I ever FREAK to see the Beach Boys new HOLLAND album at the head of *February's Best Albums*. I thought it was another variation of my recurring dream of my favorite rock group being back in top again where it belongs.

I have heard the Beach Boys live 25 times and they put on a show that is not to be believed. Two or three hours of pure music.

So I am really happy to see that people are finally coming around again.

Alice Lillie
Chicago, Illinois

Hey Fellas:

I don't know who the hell wrote that article on the Rolling Stones in your Feb. '73 issue, but it was a piece of shit! The shithead that wrote it was more interested in how the place smelled than the Stones. If the guy thinks he know so much about farts why doesn't he just fart his way to another magazine and mess it up. Without that shitty article your magazine is the best.

Mark Hans

Chicago, Illinois

Marty, honny:

A new one fer ya (I know we'll getcha on this); why not do one of your cute 'li'l interviews (or get one of yer boys, like Mike Saunders - who I'd love to sit down with and find out where this dude's head is really at!! - Anyone who grinds an America album should be castorated!) on Bruce Haackit? It might do somethin' fer your magazine! Or for you. And it might increase yer circulation to 99 million...

All my love to yer boys and Mikey (kissee-kissee!).

A Dedicated Reader from Bedford, Ohio who is afraid to reveal her name for fear of public incrimination!

CORRECTION

In our Rolling Stones story in the February issue it was stated that Frank Zappa refused the Stones permission to use his recording studio because Mick Jagger had refused to appear in 200 MOTELS. We were wrong. In actual fact, Zappa offered to let the Stones use his studio, but because of some unremoved debris in the studio, the Stones declined. We apologize to Mr. Zappa for any misunderstanding which may have resulted from the story.

PERFORMANCES

THE BEATLES

Sunset Sound Studio

Hollywood, California

...And it ain't no retrospective either, my lovelies. Even though I couldn't barter my way in the control room for love or money, rest assured I spent a great deal of time with my ears glued to what is supposed to be a sound-proof studio door. And when Klaus Voormann asked Yoko to leave the studio, I picked up goobs of details on this new Beatles album which should be out in June.

At the sessions were John, George, Ringo and Nilsson...and Klaus and Billy Preston. (The LP is produced by the exalted Richard Perry — he has, however, the good graces of Phil). I don't think Nilsson is actually supposed to take the place of Paul on the LP, one of the Yoko zombies whispered to me that "Paul will over dub his parts in the UK, since he ain't allowed in the States"....It seems the dear was growing all sorts of contraband in what proved to be quite literally a hot house.

After hours of muffled hearings of many of the tracks, I was finally turned onto the fact there exists a phoney brick, plastic, which can be removed from the side alley wall of the studio — and ya can actually hear as good as if inside...Unfortunately I found out in time to really hear only the last two days recording — And golly, standin' there between buildings off the Sunset Strip at 4 A.M. ain't the best way to move these anglophilic corpuscles. Anyway, let me tell you that the tracks bear absolute resemblance to those Beatle recordings of the latter part of '66...Ya know, Buddy Holly taken to the extreme, with the finesse that only Badfinger, The Raspberries and Stories have shown in recent history. I don't think any compositions are actually written by the Lennon-McCartney team...and we'll probably never know for sure 'cause we're told the record will not actually list "The Beatles" as the artists — Rather it's been democratically decided the honors will read "Ringo Starr"...But whatever the type says on the LP, *DON'T BE FOOLED!* This be THE BEATLES...But if names really don't matter to you, then upon purchasing the Ringo LP, you should be required to buy the entire Raspberries catalog...Lisa will have more delicious news on the Beatles LP soon, maybe next issue if you treat her right, hon.

Lisa "Fairweather" Rococo

CAPTAIN BEEFHART AND HIS MAGIC BAND

SAILCAT
TRAPEZE

Aragon Ballroom
Chicago, Illinois

Friday the thirteenth, indeed it was. It was clearly a Beefhartian crowd but for a few Trapeze fans. Trapeze's sole claim to fame was a tour with the Moody Blues in 1970, where they knocked everybody on the head with plodding waves of thunder rock in preparation for the easy-listening symphonic mush of the melletronic times.

Though greatly appreciated by a vocal and visual number of downer gulpers and speedfreaks, they were generally despised. Halfway through their set, they were booed. Manipulating the jeers to their benefit they were booed back for an encore.

Compared to Sailcat, Trapeze was a hit. Surprisingly, these guys were all electric — and get this — not a pedal steel in sight! Must be the new wave in folk country rockers. Comprised of two lead guitars, one rhythm, bass and drums, they sounded like the New Riders imitating the Beau Brummels, circa 1965. Virtually no applause greeted the conclusion of



Richard Cremer

The Whiskey makes bowlegged clothes-horses of us all. Latest to grace its sequined stage is Silverhead. They look and sound like the real thing, though under all the tinsel and glitter are just more feathers and make up. Still, at least they don't need Leon Russell and Klaus Voormann.

each tune, only derisive laughter at their stoned out lead singer — rhythm guitarist who fell over backwards twice and managed to sing everywhere but into the microphone. On one of those rare occasions when he did find it, his exclamations were most welcome: "that's enough of this laid back shit, let's boogie woogie!"

As we all know, Chicago is renowned for having its roots firmly planted in the blues. That, of course, makes it fertile territory for Captain Beefhart, who unmistakably got his start with the idiom (listen to his Buddah LP *SAFE AS MILK* or an obscure A&M single from the mid-sixties *Fryin' Pan*). No matter how far from its standards he journeyed in his avant garde jazz — verbal imagery period well expressed on *TROUT MASK REPLICA* and *LIK MY DECALS OFF BABY*, he never really lost touch with it, he just used it as a launching pad for widely unexplored musical regions. Now, he's returned to his original foundation, albeit more freely and loosely structured than the norm, thanks to the wildly imaginative rhythms concocted by Drumbo.

Drumbo's incredible technique shatters the boundaries of

predictability abetted by the highly individualistic polyrhythmic bass and steel appendage guitar, put together as one instrument, played by the invincible Rockette Morton. The unique sounds that emanate from the glass finger slide guitar of virtuoso Zoot Horn Rollo along with the marvelous bass runs of newcomer ex-Mother Roy Estrada rounded out the current roster of the always brilliant Magic Band.

The Captain no longer blows a frenzied sax or clarinet, concentrating instead on harmonica and his Grandmamish singing voice. He and the Magic men performed the title track from *CLEAR SPOT*, as well as what's sure to become a new dance craze, *The Yo Yo*. Also the surreal *Big Eyed Beans From Venus* and several other new things never done before. Unaccompanied save by harp, he impressed with John Lee Hooker's *Black Snake Blues*. Zoot was allowed to exhibit his melodic charm on the only cut still done live from *DECALS*, the exquisite *One Red Rose That I Mean*. The band minus the Captain demonstrated their commensurate ability on *Alice In Blunderland*.

Unfortunately, the rare appearance of probably the most underrated band in the states was

cut short by Zoot seriously cutting his slide propelling finger. But Don Van Vliet promised they'd be back so until next time there'll be plenty to remember.

Hot Scott Fisher

SILVERHEAD

Whisky a Go Go

Hollywood, California

If you haven't seen them, you might feel like cramming Silverhead into the flash-in-the-pan bin. Their albums haven't been monumentally impressive, and their publicity veers toward making them look like glitter as if it's Tinkerbell's fairy dust that will send them flying to the top.

But that's if you haven't seen them.

If you caught them on their recent tour with Uriah Heep or at their end-of-the-road week at the Whisky in LA, you know better. Silverhead's one fine British rock 'n' roll band, you see, one with enough spontaneity and unflagging energy and animal magnetism to make you forget the little inconsistencies, the occasional lack of balance between the musicians and lead singer Michael Des Barres.

Sometimes, in fact, you might find yourself wishing that Silverhead weren't such a fundamental rock 'n' roll band and that Des Barres, a mime and an actor as well as a rocker, were in a situation in which his fascinating and compelling presence could do more things, could develop a deeper, more theatrical persona.

But that's only sometimes, and it's a pretty abstract and theoretical problem anyway. In practice, Silverhead's rock 'n' roll sweeps aside that reservation the way a Mississippi flood would handle a toothpick lying in the middle of Main Street.

There's not a slow song in their set, thank God; it's an unrelenting blast of high energy music that condenses above the stage and floats down as a mist of delicious rock 'n' roll sweat. Sometimes it churns and slides like Faces, sometimes it rasps and attacks like Alice Cooper, it's invariably as catchy as Slade. It's pretty derivative and always distinctive. Best of all, it's happy music.

Des Barres is going to be a big star one day. He's a small, lithe figure in perpetual motion, given to striking outlandish double-jointed stances that, in combination with some of the most ambitious lighting work ever seen at the Whisky, comprise an imaginative and effective panorama of gripping visual effects. He loves to pose for the cameras, and like the best rock 'n' rollers he feeds off the energy that comes from the crowd in front of the stage. That exchange is one of the essential ingredients of good rock, and Des Barres is a budding master of the craft.

He has a marvelous face as well, with sunken eyes and hollow cheeks that he uses to project a demonic, stylized sexuality that isn't quite forbidding but does get a little scary at times. None of this really complements or illustrates the music that's going down, nor does it distract. It all fits together in some crazy way, the flurries of energy spinning the disparate elements together in a coherent, homogeneous tornado of blasting sound and vision.

On top of all that, Des Barres proves to be one of the few rockers who can talk to his audience without sounding like a complete numbskull. His remarks are intelligent, witty, and to the point, and are delivered with a style and enthusiasm that prevents the energy level from dipping. It's a nice finishing touch.

The most important thing about Silverhead — and about any worthwhile band — is that they make you feel their love of performing, their total involvement in and enthusiasm for what they're doing. The band's been together less than a year, and there's still some ironing out to be done, but at a time when most groups around are downright lazy, Silverhead's arrival is a true blessing. They should do alright.

Richard Cromelin

ALICE COOPER

The Spectrum

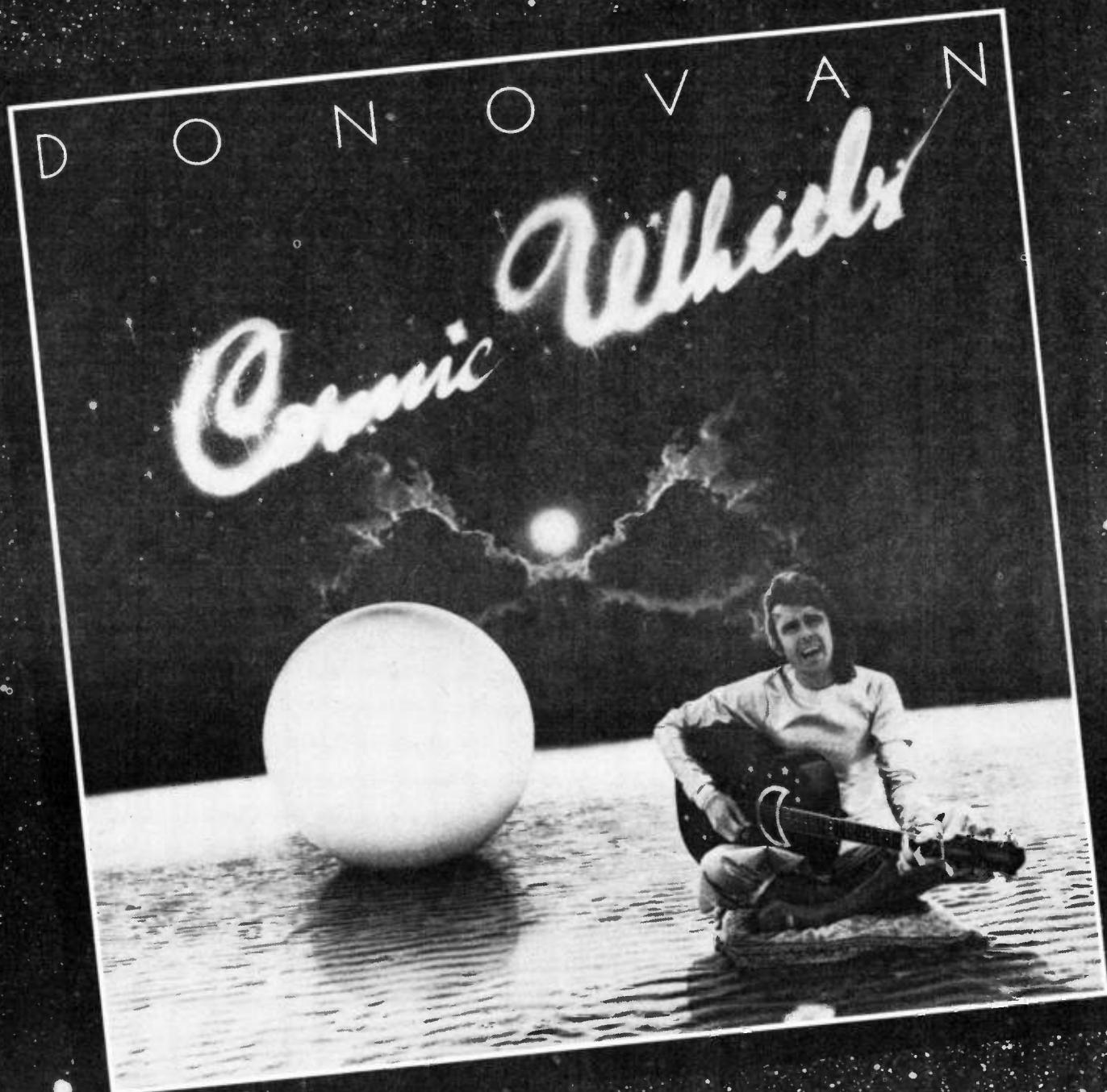
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Didn't it strike you as strange, even back then before Peter and Gordon or the color series of Beatle cards, that they could call a monstrously ubiquitous single, *Can't Buy Me Love*? I mean, did you really think that there was anything the Beatles couldn't buy? And didn't strike you odd that Rod Stewart, after he became the biggest thing since white bread, had the balls to begin an album "Never been a millionaire"?

So **BILLION DOLLAR BABIES**, a new album and stage show by Alice Cooper, is notable if for no other reason than it is the first time a group has congratulated themselves on their own stardom and affluence, taking a great deal of

(Continued on Page 6)

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alice, e.l.o. & spirit



Performances

He's got the whole world in his hands, does Alice Cooper. Maybe it's all just trash, but he's got the market cornered, and it's paid off in nothin' but cash.

trouble to initiate along the way as many press people as possible in the joys of rock and roll lubrication, a fine technique greased by champagne, roast beef, half hour rides on private planes, Billion Dollar Baby pillow cases, and press kits in the shape of a wallet. Bring together *Stereo Review*, *Rolling Stone*, *16, Creem*, *the New Yorker*, and a number of freelancers, Tosches and Meltzer among them, for twenty-four hours of what is supposed to be living up to the rock and roll lifestyle, make the venue Philadelphia's Spectrum, gutted of orchestra seats and filled with thousands of Alice's constituents who have come to see what is not only the biggest show in town, but the only one, and what you have is an American microcosm every bit as relevant as "Let's Make a Deal" or Gleam II.

In a period in which both Marc Bolan and reggae are happening trends, Alice Cooper, no wimpy bleeding heart singer-songwriter, says proudly "America First," cutting through dollar devaluations and presidential campaign funding scandals, to a basic truth: this is the only country in the world that could support hula hoops, Davy Crockett, Disneyland, and Alice Cooper, all of them in their time, mints, ya know. After toothpaste and toilet paper, pop's what we seem to gotta have next, and Alice isn't about to stress the sociological implications of necking a snake, when the financial, sexual, and aesthetic rewards are so self-evident.

In fact, all that freakiness was kinda getting in the way, keeping the Cooper's singles off a "good music" stations and even preventing them from playing Broadway, so the new Alice is more showbiz than killer, and the new stage show is a tri-color presentation of his greatest hits that is more like a television Spectacular than anything else. Joe Gannon, who designed Neil Diamond's Broadway debut, has put the band behind a blinking proscenium with go-go boy cages for Michael Bruce and Dennis Dunaway, with Neal Smith up and above them, and Alice in front on his own show-girl altar that leads

down on either side via flashing stair-cases to a space completely removed from the band and roughly head-level with respect to the people. This gives Alice his best vantage point for throwing posters at the crowd or being raped by a glittery super-phallic dentist's drill during *Unfinished Sweet*, while James Bond moozie honks in the background.

The show features three costume changes from a white ensemble that places Alice as a pop star imagist somewhere between Tom Jones and Al Green, a black shroud that gives Alice plenty of elbow room to crawl through and molest a forest of doll's arms, heads, and legs, while singing *I Love the Dead*, and a finale in which the Coopers return to a mod red, perform their next single, *No More Mr. Nice Guy*, and salute the largest American flag since "Patton" while a tape of Kate Smith singing *God Bless America* sends the soporific masses back home better for the experience.

The only thing missing was Bob Hope as MC, and as it was, they had Kal Rudman, mysteriously omnipotent record tipster, on hand in a gear vest as the sixth Cooper. If rock and roll had gone to Viet Nam, this show despite *Dead Babies* (or maybe because of it) would have passed inspection. It may be the first rock show to go to Red China, and the ping pong matches Alice has staged against Santa Claus and other celebrities would indicate that he is planning to meet the Chinks on their own ground. They probably eat snakes and never saw Lawrence Welk, so there'll be some changes made.

I miss the bubbles at the end during *Elected*, the garbage can knife fight, and the gallows, although a guillotine stunt is provided courtesy of the Amazing Randy, and Dali has executed a hologram of Alice's brain for his New York show. With all the guys generally behind Alice instead of around him, there is a bizarre contrast between the abstract mechanical televised staginess of the act and the milling shoving kids beneath. Alice is physically closer to the audience than the Stones, for instance, would allow, but he seems

somewhat even more abstracted and invulnerable. Except for certain musical highlights like *School's Out* and *Elected*, there is more circus going on than rock and roll, yet such bits as Alice falling to the floor and slipping down the flight of stairs with Iggyish rubberiness during *Eighteen* demonstrate that he's still got his Detroit together.

Flo and Eddie will cover the nation with Alice, and they are real interesting for two reasons. First they are not Slade or any of the other almost there groups that Alice could have put over the top with this tour, and second, they are as fluently eclectic a band as any English group going. They rock harder than the Mothers ever dreamed of, with Aynsley Dunbar on drums and Gary Rowles from Love on guitar, their Turtles' hits sound as sunny as ever, and they are funnier than the Faces and as obsequious to an audience as Grand Funk. All this makes them very commercial, and between their first single being the Small Faces' *Afterglow* and Mark Volman's guitar moves resembling Marc Bolan interpreted by a cartoon hippo, they may be the first thing from America to approach the multi-musicality and ironic humanism of the Bonzos.

A dada evening all in all, and one that promoted Alice Cooper as slickly and absurdly as a made-for-television movie. The Coopers are everything that makes rock attractive with all but that one intangible aspect of excitement that makes for what we might blush to consider "Great Music." In a musical environment that makes tours and flash more newsworthy than records and music itself, Alice has got his game down. All three Philadelphia papers ran intelligent and accurate stories on the Cooper show before the New York music press even got into town, and with that kind of coverage in fifty-six cities, Alice Cooper could become as much a household phrase as Gardol or yo-yo. There's a sign outside of Philly that advertises Taystee-Cakes with the slogan "All the good things in one." I pretty much took that one for what it was worth.

Ron Ross

**PAUL BUTTERFIELD
MIKE BLOOMFIELD
ELVIN BISHOP
Winterland
San Francisco, California**

A rainy Friday evening...up to the city in the backseat jammed tight, looking for a rainbow...to hear Paul Butterfield, Elvin Bishop and Mike Bloomfield (who finished off the long evening with a long, surreal mandalike guitar solo or soli) separately, with current bands, and together...Word being received through my feeble grapevine about the recording of an elpee that particular Friday evening...yes, it takes an event that memory-laden to get me off my ass on a rainy night and out of the house...Winterland jampacked,

stoned and receptive...entered after distracting ticket hassle to the lyrics of Bloomfield and friends...Gravenites I think, even...who promptly put me in the same place that John McLaughlin might have...with Bloomfield as precisely intricate as possible, nearly continually...applause and enter Elvin Bishop and company that still possess all the pazzazz and zing that their last two albums have been full of, plus you get to view Elvin's antics yanking at the ripcord of a parachuting audience...skydiving, whatever...the same magic that Pinebluff Pete doing *Uncle Sam Blues* exudes, available on a current specialty album called *DARK MUDDY BOTTOM BLUES*...believe it or not...More applause and enter Butterfield with his current, cooking band...the best unit since his original one, the core of which was waiting in the wings...Check out his new Bearsville album entitled *BETTER DAYS*...the one with the foldout harp on the cover, ma...a gritty, urban blues resounding band including the likes of Ronnie Barron, Amos Garrett, Geoff Muldaur (he of old folkie, sleepy man blues fame) and Christopher Parker and Billy Rich...I recall a vibrant *Walkin' Blues* and a sensual *Please Send Me Someone To Love* and maybe *Nobody's Fault But Mine* from the disc...led by a bearded, relaxed Woodstock refugee named Paul Butterfield, who, no matter what he has to go through to do it, still blows one of the meanest (yet subtlest) harmonicas around and sings better than ever...due to Michael Pollard's influence?...Abrasive applause and fade into a marvelous cartoon (also courtesy of Warner 'that's all folks' Brothers) with Porky Pig meeting Uncle Sam meeting the pledge of allegiance and Americana...followed by a lesser effort entitled *Sheep Ahoy* which had to be followed by the sight and sounds of the 3 B's of the Blues on stage together again...along with various stimulants and depressants...tearing into *Shake Your Moneymaker* beginning with a rouse...closely followed by other tunes from that vintage 1965 Elektra elpee...like *Last Night* (eerily evoking the ghost of mighty Little Walter Jacobs) plus the song I wanted most to hear them re-do...*Born In Chicago*...plus 45 minutes or so of others, originals and borrowed, mostly the latter...with Elvin ever the catalyst, causer and blues pixie magician he so incontrovertibly is...dancing, drinking and hijinking all over the stage...with Bloomfield calmly perched and just oozing, pushing out the blues...with Butterfield nervously pacing all over the place, then singing, then blowing, then pacing, then sailing the blues, then pacing...but, they did pull it off...working surprisingly fluidly as a 'band' once again...all these many years and hallucinations from those heralded, halcyon gestation period in Chicago in the early sixties...Elvin broke things off about one-fifteen or one...leaving Bloomfield to pour out a crowd-entrancing nitecap, that I hope is on the eventual album...at

which point this 'concert review' will evolve into a, definitely more coherent, album review.

Gary von Tersch

SPIRIT
(Featuring The Staehely Bros.)
Andrews Outdoor Amphitheater
Honolulu, Hawaii



This gig marked Spirit's return to the United States from a tour of Australia cut short due to money problems brought on by a front man who mysteriously disappeared when the group arrived down there. Despite the difficulties, Spirit apparently won the Aussies over with their hard driving electric nature...the tastes down under lean toward the little Richard rockers of old (witness Daddy Cool and the like). Slade was on tour at the same time and were selling out all the same halls. Reports from the Australian dailies gave Spirit top honors at the *Sunbury Rock Festival* (their equivalent of Woodstock-without drugs). (Did ya know that when the Aussies are displeased with a group the act is showered with the sacramental emptied Foster Beer containers which always are in great abundance at your average hippie get together down there).

About this gig itself: A clear cool Manoa Valley evening set the stage in Honolulu as Al Staehely came on swinging a Bud over his head in salute to the crowd...he plugged in and introduced his "little brother," John, (supporting a fashionable 1971 silver lame jumpsuit) followed by drummer Stu Perry. The first set began with the rocker tracks off *FEEDBACK*. I was surprised Spirit actually came off as good as they did frankly - especially on three *FEEDBACK* cuts which upon first hearing I presumed dull at best...Little brother's affection for his instrument and stage is apparent. He just reeks with them Alvin Lee/BC vibes. Like for twenty minutes his body gyrated aligning itself to his lead - and with a noise level that could make Con Edison shudder; even from here.

After John's fretting solo greatness, Al jumped back in and hit us with some of their hot-boogie tunes from their new album. Some chicks jumped on

(Continued on Page 30)

**ELECTRIC LIGHT ORCHESTRA
Town Hall, Birmingham (England)**



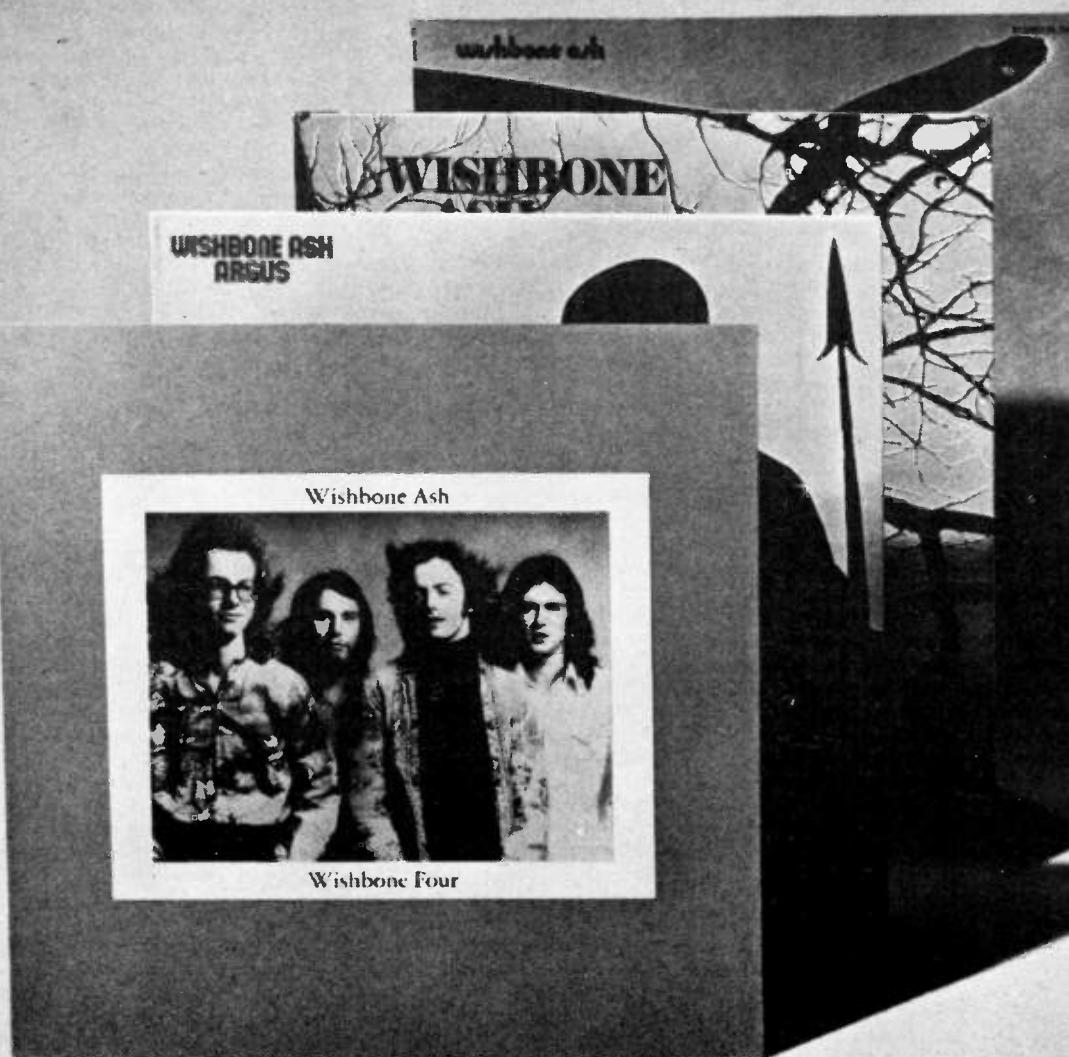
The tone of the evening was set when I spotted Jeff Lynne's electric guitar in the dressing room, leaning up against a sheaf of music paper labelled "Paganini." This is the ELO's territory - fusing

unpretentiously the form of classical music to that of modern rock, and as their recent top ten hit *Roll Over Beethoven* has proven, the public is willing to accept the fact that, strange as it may sound,

'cellos can rock! And with ELO II blasting the album charts it appears the ELO formula is going to produce a firm foothold in popular sound.

From the first number, *Boogie Number One*, it was evident that all the sections of the ELO, from string section to rock nucleus to synthesizer, have been integrated perfectly into an overall sound. Bev Bevan is surely one of the world's most powerful drummers - he reminds me of the technique used in karate board-breaking. One aims at a spot beyond the board. It appears that Bevan's broad-shouldered ferocity is directed at the floor; he threatens to smash the drumheads with each blow. Richard Tandy's control of the keyboards has grown far beyond the Keith Emerson doodling stage as favored by current bands. As his electronic lines fit into the stratosphere the dual 'cellos can be heard rumbling

- please turn to page thirty, Iuv....



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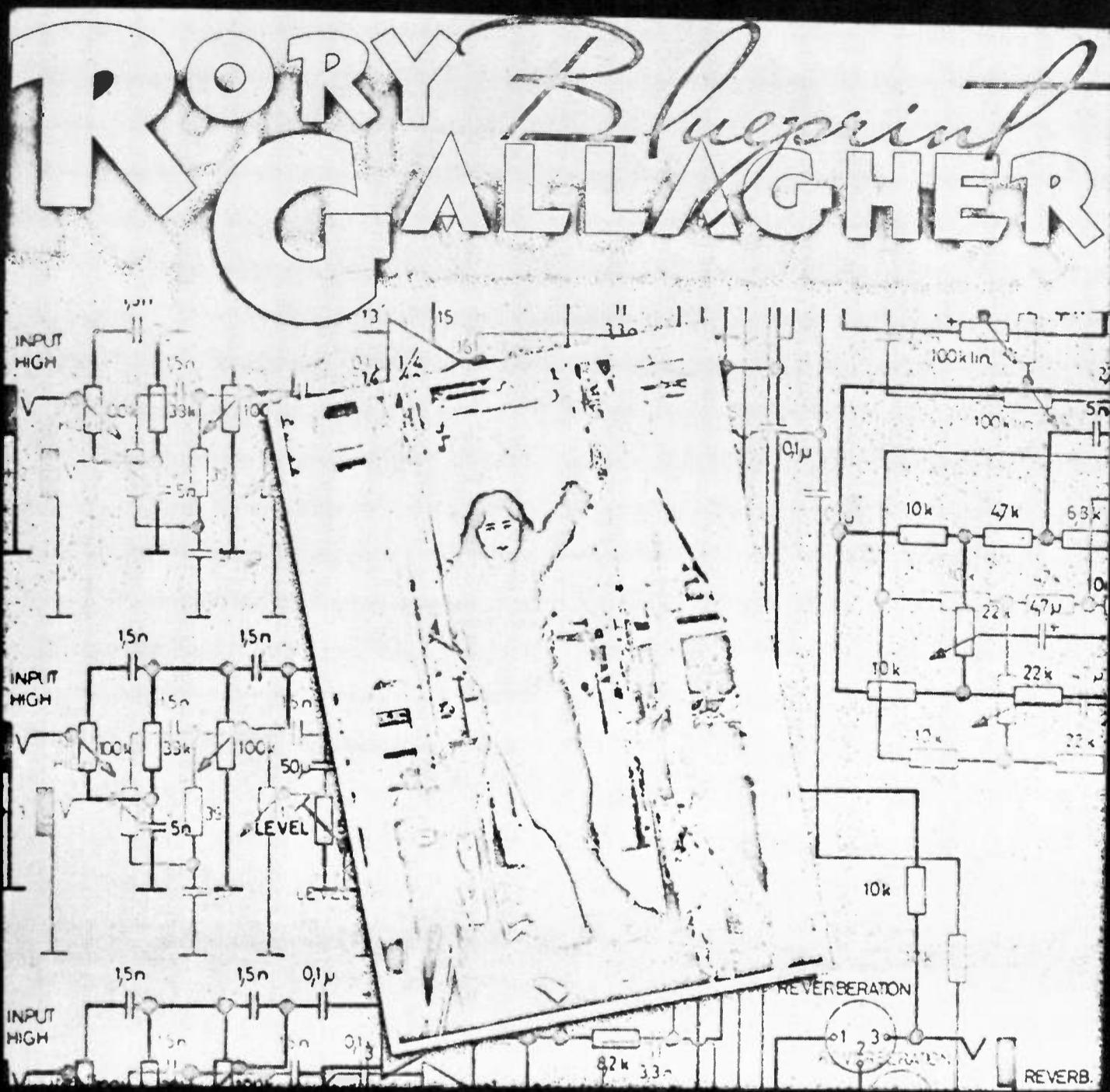
March 29 Massey Hall, Toronto, Canada
 30 Civic Center, Ottawa, Canada
 31 U. of Waterloo, Kitchener, Canada
 April 1 Centennial Hall, London, Canada
 3 Agora Theatre, Columbus, O.
 4 Palace Theatre, Dayton, O.
 5 Music Hall, Cincinnati, O.
 6 Ford Theatre, Detroit, Mich.
 7 Morris Civic Center, South Bend, Ind.
 8 Melody Skateland, Indianapolis, Ind.
 10 Wisconsin State U., La Crosse, Wis.
 11 Minneapolis Civic Arena, Minn., Minn.

12 Municipal Aud., Des Moines, Ia.
 13 Cowtown Ballroom, Kansas City, Kans.
 14 Kinetic Playground, Chicago, Ill.
 15 Kinetic Playground, Chicago, Ill.
 17 Performing Arts Center, Milwaukee, Wis.
 18 Convention Center, Louisville, Ky.
 19 Little Rock Aud., Little Rock, Ark.
 20 Municipal Aud., Shreveport, La.
 21 Independence Hall, Baton Rouge, La.
 22 Warehouse, New Orleans, La.
 26 Municipal Aud., Atlanta, Ga.
 27 Ellis Aud., Memphis, Tenn.
 28 Municipal Aud. Annex, Mobile, Ala.

29 Municipal Aud., Birmingham, Ala.
 May 10 Fairgrounds Bldg., Rochester, N.Y.
 11 Tower Theatre, Philadelphia, Pa.
 12 Academy of Music, N.Y.C., N.Y.
 13 Century Theatre, Buffalo, N.Y.
 16 Kiel Aud., St. Louis, Mo.
 18 Pirate's World, Miami, Fla.
 19 Municipal Aud., Jacksonville, Fla.
 20 Armory, Tampa, Fla.
 22 Albuquerque,
 23 Colorado Springs, Colo.
 26 Portland, Oregon

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CUM ON FEEL THE NOIZE
(Lea-Holder)
SLADE
Produced by Chas Chandler
Polydor-UK 2058-339
Flip — I'm Mee, I'm Now, An'
That's Orl

Just when you were getting used to *Gudbuy T'Jane*, which really is old news, still Slade come up with something much more potent. They really don't know any better.

What *Wild Thing* was to the Troggs, *My Generation* to the Who, *Satisfaction* to the Stones, *I Wanna Hold Your Hand* to the Beatles and *American Pie* was to Don McLean, *Cum On Feel The Noize* is to Slade; hereafter dubbed this act's theme song. When you heard the Move perform the classic *Do Ya*, did ya wanna scream out loud that such a recording shouldn't exist 'cause its brilliance is all too overcoming? Such recordings we are fortunate enuf to come across once a year at best. But lately there have been rash of selected recordings that fill a bill all too empty these last four years! Indeed, The Raspberries, Pagliaro, The Move, Mott the Hoople, Rick Nelson, The Hollies, The Hans Staymer Band and David Bowie have played no little part in the singles world. But Slade's new single, well now that's a subject out of the question all together.

Now if you remember your early *Boss Radio* sound from 1964, you'll recall similarities within all anglo-products topping the charts at that stage in time. 1) They were all a lot of fun. 2) You could dance and or sing along to the tracks and lyric. 3) Most of the tunes told of teenage supremacy (Witness: "Wild Thing/You Make My Heart Sing", "People try to put us down" "I can go anyway", "It's the time of the season" etc.), and 5) All middle sixties hits didn't require you assuming yoga position and falling into deep trance. Slade have taken all the mid-sixties concepts, applied them to 1973's demand and have the ode to noize, the epistle to static, the anthem of garble...

"So you think I've got an evil mind, well I'll tell you honey

And I don't know why, and I don't know why

So you think that my singin's out of time, well it makes me money

And I don't know why, and I don't know why, anymore

So come feel the noize, go grab a boy

We can wah wah wah, we can wah wah wah

So come feel the noize, go grab a boy

We can wah wah wah, we can wah wah*

Do you realize what Noddy and the boys have copped to here? Can you grasp the significance? Like they've just admitted they can't sing a stark note, their tunes eat it, and it makes 'em a fine living and gets 'em laid too! They know the stuff is crap 'cause they write it that way, but that's what the people want. And if they want decadent shit, then shit it'll be. But we've heard the shit so much, wallowed in the farts too long, so much so that the shit is desirable and now we can admit it. And what's the difference if it sells a million each time out. Noddy just shrugs his shoulders to the fact this single debuted on the UK charts at No. 1 and has remained there for over four weeks now and he says "I don't know why, I don't know why" ... But even though we've owned up to our mediocre existence, and the fact that bull like this gets us off, that shouldn't stop us... "So come feel the noize", and while yer at it, girls, "go grab a boy".

The track starts with the live belch ya heard in *Get Down And Get With It...Baby, Baby, Baby...* After which Slade give us something they've never before; a meaningful melody... The feeling notes linked together the way they are here imply like those in *As Tears Go By, He Ain't Heavy, and Yellow River* a passing of time... It's a moody attitude, with electro-zap lead bullets bouncin' off of a *I Don't Wanna Spoil The Party* delivery, the way that the Guess Who did with *Shakin' All Over*.

SINGLES



by Martin Robert Cerf



Wot, not Slade agen? Yeh Noddy Dave Jimmy 'n Don standin on topova wolda wiva nu singl skreemin ip the charz and hu noze wye, anymore.

Tward the end, the reprise where Noddy, Dave, and the guys all join together, and the hands begin to clap, we are caught in a chant that could replace "Nam Yoho Renge Kyo"...

"So Come feel the noize, lets grab the boys

We can wah wah wah, we can wah wah

So cum feel the boys, we can just rock the boys

We can wah wah, we can wah wah

So cum feel the noize, go grab the boys

We can wah wah, wah, we can wah wah wah*

And it goes on for about 40 seconds more but it's suggested that as soon as you've secured this single from the import store at \$1.49, you tape these last forty seconds and join them on a continuous tape loop, play it while injecting a number of various stimuli to help you cum, feel the noize, and any other area which could prove affective.

Some have accused Slade of sounding as repetitious as Al Greene or Yes. And if you're not rabid about the band, perhaps this is a logical deduction. But this repetition is out of necessity, not excess. The echo, the noize the surface scratches it's all part of the mush that your mind will soon be. So why delay fate? Really, there's no need to stall your cerebellum's inevitable outcome any longer, let's get them metaphysical juices boilin'

and that aura ODded quickly — you mustn't wait any longer... Like gettin' satisfaction in 1965, stoned in '66, loved in '67, educated in '68, brought together in '69, bayoued in '70, american pied in '71, and revived in '72; you'll have to cum, feel the noize in '73...

* © 1973 Polydor Int.

IF I NEEDED YOU
(Townes Van Zandt)
DOC AND MERLE WATSON
Produced by Jack Clement
Poppy XW-169 Time 2:03
Flip — Bonaparte's Retreat

Does anyone need a history lesson? Perhaps sometimes. For instance, even though the latter day Gene Vincent albums were not

Doc Watson, king of the oldtimey pickers and still a triple-threat contender on any wavelength you can find.



Watson's contribution to *Circle* is absolutely essential. The point is, we need no longer "act" like this guy is a star, he is.

Doc's singles this past year have succeeded on a commercial, AM level, where even Richard Perry has failed. Popular music has caught up to, or is ready for traditional, bluegrass, country-swing. But we're not lookin' for another John Fogerty to play-act Doc Watson. Not when we can get this stuff first hand.

Now on musician's terms, Doc Watson is, well, shall we say, at least phenomenal... While I'd like to assume my tastes wide-ranged, up until 1969 I was in great violation on traditional grounds. But when it comes to hits, pop hits, ya know WABC/KFRC type-stuff, well that's what this section is all about. Watson's first single from ELEMENTARY DOCTOR WATSON (his last LP), was the standard *Freight Train Boogie* done up in the finest form ever. At worst this should have been a top country hit. It wasn't. Then Gershwin's *Summertime* was yanked to seven inches last October. This was the obvious hit from the LP I thought. Which either goes to show you what I know about hits, or points up the lack of intelligence on the part of the programmers nationally. How dare anyone ignore a single of this magnitude.

Then Doc recorded a Christmas single (which is available on no LP) titled *New Born King* (Poppy 90110). Now if it hadn't been released around December 20th, this may have replaced the Mormon Tabernacle Choir and the Harry Simeone Chorale as the all-time classic seasonal smash. It's required listening year-round though. Vocally, Doc might be compared to Burl Ives. If you challenge that, go back and listen to *Funny Way of Laughin'* or *Mother Wouldn't Do That*. I think you'll be surprised. I'm not implying Ives retains a similar place or stature. Like Gilbert O'Sullivan sounds like Paul McCartney and so does Gerry Rafferty. So what. It's not the same thing. Doc is capable of actually recording hit singles.

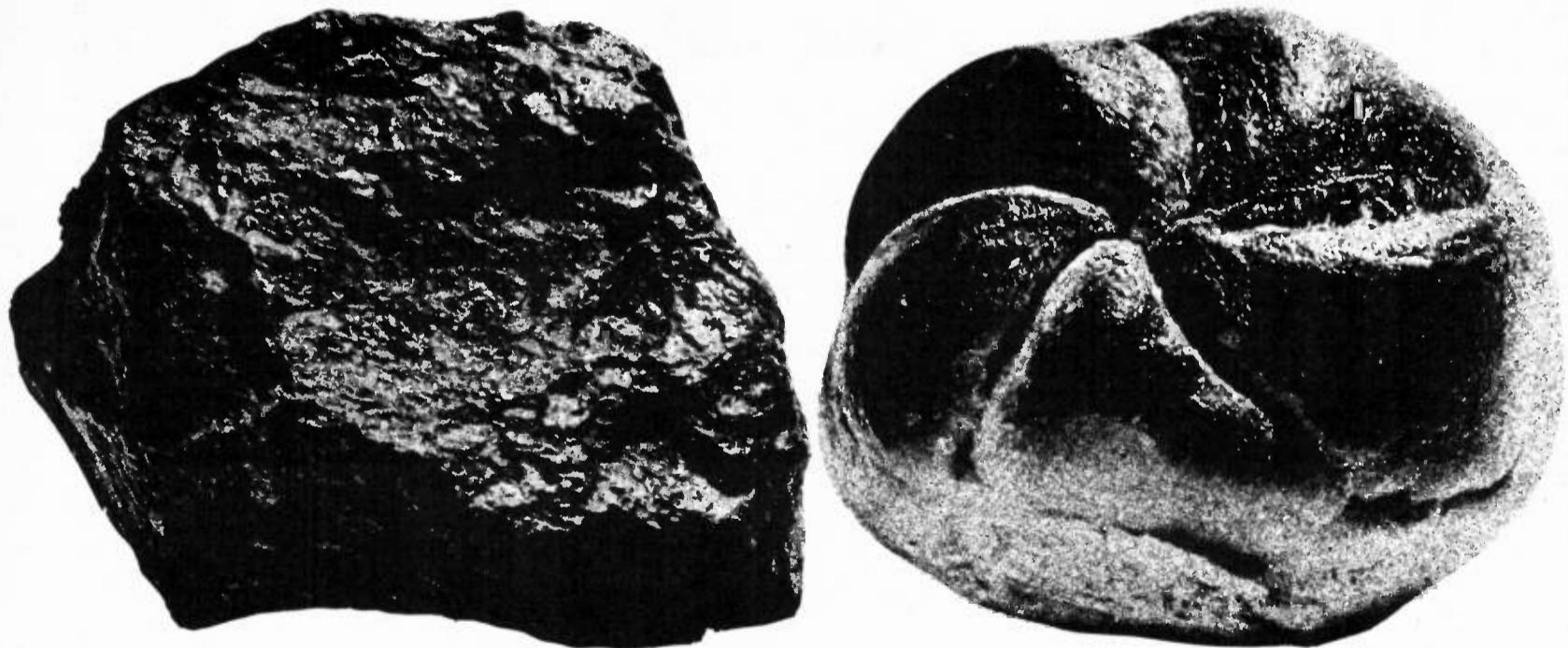
The possibilities range from The Village Stompers to James Taylor acceptance in the AM world.

The combination which has manifested itself for years and years now culminates on this, Doc's fourth single in a year. There was a time when I'm certain we never suspected Doc could be right up there, above Carly, Bread and the rest. But he can. How? *Here's how*: Not withstanding what is unquestionably his most aggressive and delightful LP ever, THEN AND NOW... Townes Van Zandt is sequenced with *Milkcow Blues* and *Bonaparte's Retreat*... Merle Travis and Tom Paxton share compositions on the LP too. What Doc does with Van Zandt's *If I Needed You* in conjunction with Merle, his son, is ruefully glorious. And a tune with greater pop potential Clement hasn't dreamed of since the days when Johnny Tillotson, Patsy Cline, Floyd Kramer, Don Gibson and Bobby Bare topped pop charts. The track is just barely over two minutes but the sincerity and thought in that 120 seconds is pure white light. Simple, but the most complicated lines are here: "You will miss the sunrise if you close your eyes and that will break my heart in two/ Oh she's with me now since love showed her how, to lay her lilly-hand in mine/Surely you will agree, she's a pretty sight to see and a treat indeed for a man to find/ If I needed you, would you come to me, would you come to me and ease my pain/ If you needed me I'd swim the seas, I'd swim the seas for ta ease your pain" ... It's primal-therapy... Janov has competition; free too.

Quite honestly you'll really enjoy this. It's not Alice, true. There are no magical, mythical god-like rawhide, boot-strapped teenage cowboys to throng to on the cover. Not even any burlap. Surely no match for HARVEST, but how much you wanna bet Neil Young would quit making records if he could merely play on the same stage as Watson. Don't be left out either.

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FOGHAT



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THE THIRD IN A SERIES OF ROCK RETROSPECTIVES

THE IAN WHITCOMB STORY

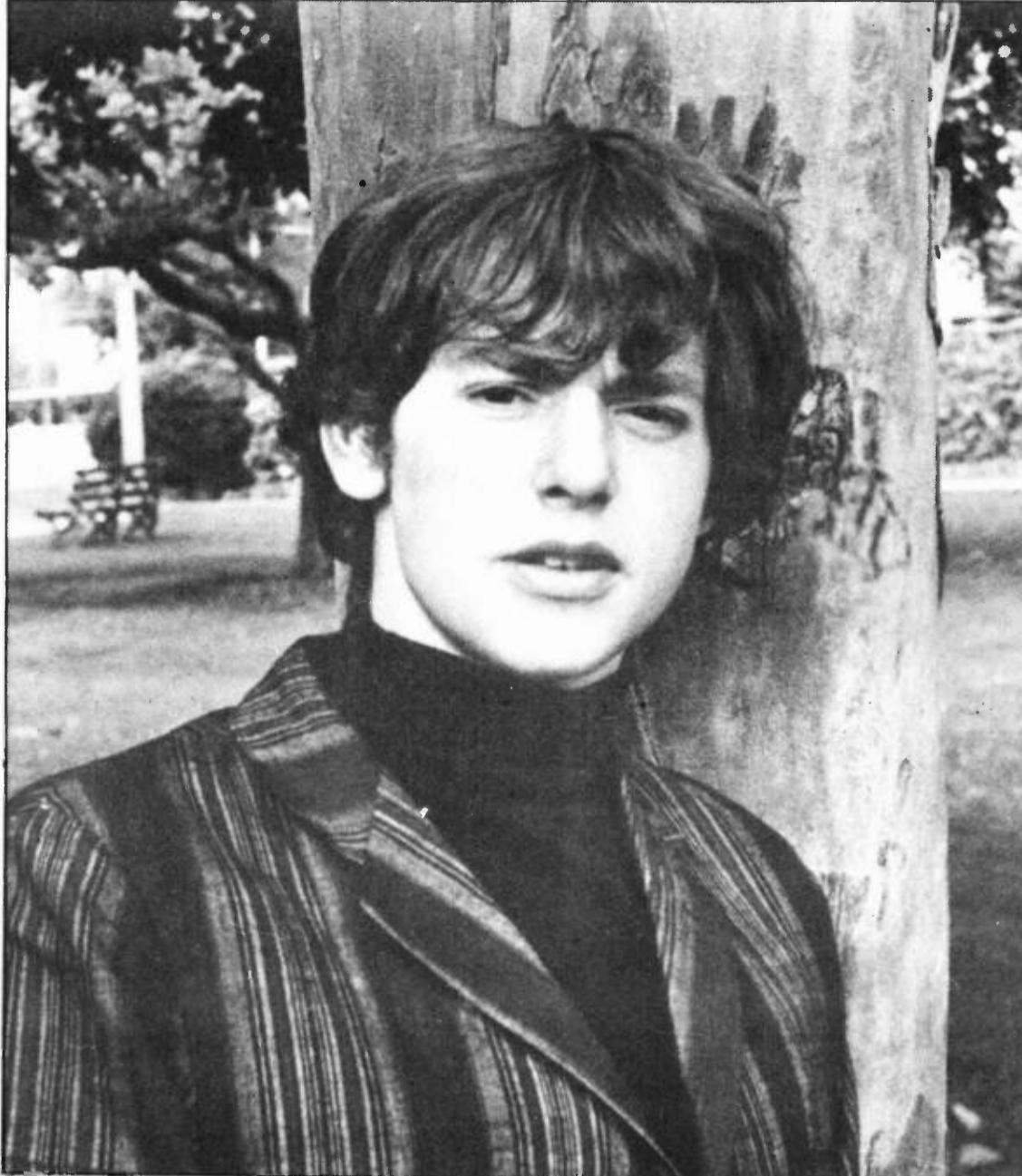
by Ken Barnes

Ian Whitcomb was certainly one of the more obscure figures of that gloriously mythologized pop explosion known as the British Invasion. With only one quasi-novelty hit (*You Turn Me On* in June 1965) to his credit and no memorable career attributes aside from a flitting image of high-pitched lust, he would seem a likely candidate for the International Memorial Flash-In-The-Pantheon Of One-Hit Wonders, along with such notable compatriots as the Silkie, the Hullabaloo, and Ian & The Zodiacs (no relation). But commercially unassimilable as such a conclusion might be, there is much more to Ian Whitcomb than one camp paean to giggling lust. He had four albums released in the U.S. from 1965 to 1968, and now has a new one, *UNDER THE RAGTIME MOON*, which in conjunction with a remarkable pop music history, *After The Ball*, written by Ian over the last few years, serves to place him back in the spotlight, just in time for a re-evaluation of his past contributions.

Ian, a native Briton attending Trinity College in Dublin, launched his musical career by forming a band called Bluesville in 1964 with friend Barry Richardson (now part of highly touted British country band Bees Make Honey). They became the local rage (with teen hysteria and all the trimmings), taped a few songs; and when Ian, who had visited and liked Seattle, Washington, on a Greyhound tour in '63, returned there for the summer, he brought along the tapes. Famed Northwest entrepreneur Jerry Dennon (previously involved with the fledgling careers of the Raiders and Kingsmen) liked them, and released a couple singles (*Soho* and *Fizz*) on local labels, with minor success. Ian, back in Dublin, then came up with a skiffle tune called *This Sporting Life*, and recorded it with Bluesville in an unusual organ-cum-piano arrangement in a style similar to the Animals' reworking of *House Of The Rising Sun*. He took it back to Seattle, where Dennon, dissatisfied with the organ on the dub, had (to divulge a momentous scoop previously in the exclusive possessions of *Who Put The Bomp*) a local organist, who in all likelihood was Gerry Roslie of the soon-to-be-immortalized Sonics, overdub a track. With such a charismatic addition, the tune was bound to be a hit, and early reports (especially in L.A., where it was a reasonable-sized airplay item) encouraged Capitol's new subsidiary Tower to believe they had a smash on their hands. As it turned out, however, the disc peaked at No. 100 in March '65 (however, Dylan's onetime producer Tom Wilson was said to have been impressed by the organ/piano combination utilized on the record, and went on to employ it on *Like A Rolling Stone*).

In their initial burst of enthusiasm, Tower had given Ian and Bluesville the go-ahead to cut some LP tracks. Near the end of the sessions, the band happened to slide into a riff used in their live performances for an odd, grunted number titled after a catchy phrase Ian had heard from a girl in Seattle. No one was overly serious about it, and after Ian knocked an ashtray off the piano he decided to play it for laughs, singing in a high panting voice inspired, as he says, "by the Supremes' *Where Did Our Love Go*." Everyone, including producer Dennon, thought it was dreadful; but while the LP tape was playing at Tower, promotion man George Sherlock (later to be immortalized as the "Under Assistant West Coast Promotion Man" of the Stones' song) burst in and proclaimed it a surefire hit.

You Turn Me On did become a bona fide smash (after the ashtray was edited out on later pressings), reaching No. 8 nationally. Later, Ian learned that the record had become sort of a primordial gay anthem, and that William Burroughs played it for purposes of literary inspiration. Deejays had a ball with the implications, Ian came over and performed the tune quite coyly on a



Not just another one-hit wonder, Ian Whitcomb was kinky before the Kinks, went to Mars before Bowie, and was always mistaken for Mick Jagger at the wrong times. But he got closer to Mae West than Jagger ever will, even if he was thirty years late.

number of TV shows (sporting a checked deerstalker cap), and went on to do a few grueling package tours with some of the legendary punk-rock groups (one of his more harrowing experiences was riding through the rural South in a car with the highly acclaimed Barbarians — not to be confused with the widely revered Raiders — who had just purchased some new guns and were testing their acquisitions by firing them into the tumbledown shacks along the highway). He was mobbed at some of his concert appearances, made the pages of all the fab teen mags, and, with the advantage of his naughty-but-nice midly-Jaggeresque aura, appeared set for pop stardom.

But bad luck plagued him thereafter, as Tower turned down his suggestion for a follow-up single (a lengthy spoken monologue comprising the memoirs of a colonial-era British soldier — later to surface on his *YELLOW UNDERGROUND* LP); and worse yet, he antagonized the important program director of a Southern California Bill Drake station by naively introducing onstage, as requested by an anonymous hanger-on, the notorious deejay Lord Tim Hudson, who was working for a competing station (this tale was concealed by clever pseudonymous techniques in Ian's book, but our dedicated PRM research staff, ever on the alert for novel anecdotal material re the fabulous L.T., managed to ferret out the true fact) — thus getting *Nervous*, the eventual follow-up record, blacklisted on the influential chain.

Nervous, described by Ian as a "stuttering blues", and a relative failure (although it did reach No. 59 nationally), was represented on the first album, *YOU TURN ME ON*, along with the title track, *Fizz* (subsequently

called *Where Did Robinson Crusoe Go With Friday On Saturday Night*), it was very vaudevillian, a combination of English music hall ditties and American ragtime — not your usual British Invasion '66-vintage fare (well before the Kinks, Bonzos, etc., began to

call *Where Did Robinson Crusoe Go With Friday On Saturday Night*); it was very vaudevillian, a combination of English music hall ditties and American ragtime — not your usual British Invasion '66-vintage fare (well before the Kinks, Bonzos, etc., began to

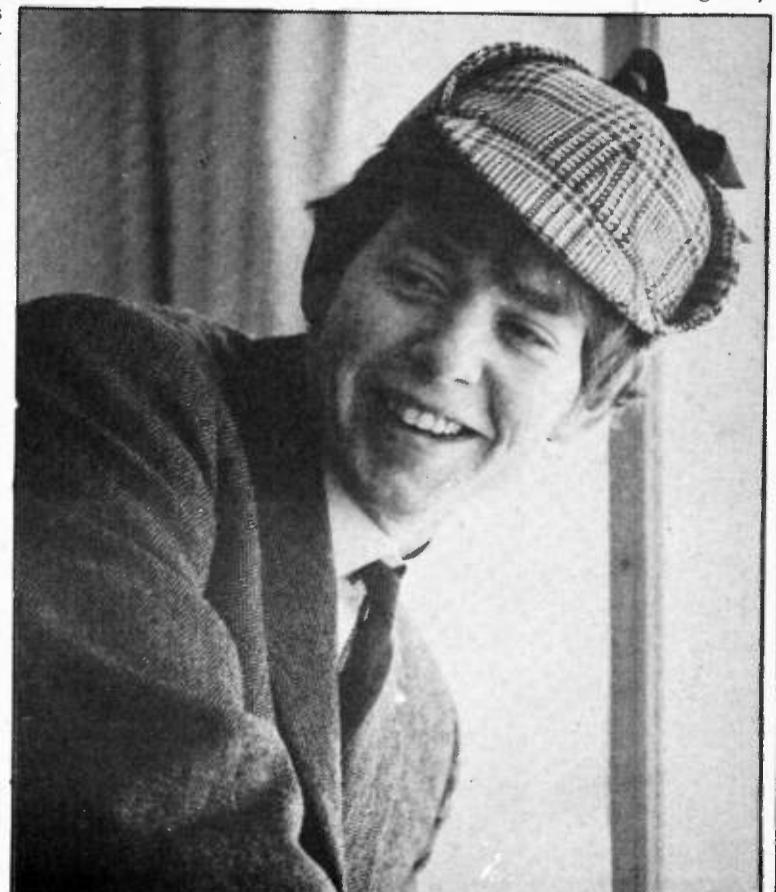
explore the form). Ian was deeply interested and appreciative of the authentic early 20th century compositions, and he conveyed their genteel and elegantly amusing appeal in sprightly fashion; but it was not the sort of material to storm the charts.

The following LP, released in '67 and entitled *YELLOW UNDERGROUND*, was notable for liner notes by British expatriate writer Christopher Isherwood; a strange hillbilly/music hall hybrid performance of the 1912 hit *They Gotta Quit Kicking My Dawg Around*; two songs by a noted British popular composer named Art Nouveau (well, F. Arthur Nouveau); and the absolutely numbing avant-garde 12:25 *Memoirs Of An Old Soldier*, the suggested monologistic single mentioned above. *Memories* was a humorously rambling account of the jingoistic exploits of Colonel Alexander Weston-Jarvis, possessing the power to paralyze the unwary listener with shock, frustrated rage, or sheer tedium, depending on existing circumstances and attitudes. Extreme caution is advised in audition here.

Ian's last Tower LP was to be a conceptually-linked project called *IAN WHITCOMB'S TRAIN TRIP*, a generally rocking tour through the English countryside. Tower execs were not enthralled by the idea, so Ian suggested they salvage some of the TRAIN tracks and put out a rock revival package. A strange rock 'n' roll album it turned out to be, however, with camped-up versions of *Hound Dog* and two Huey "Piano" Smith numbers (including the *Rocking Pneumonia* etc.) and a funk-filled version of *Louie Louie* complete with rather lengthy drum solo. The remaining six tracks were originals, some quite vaudevillian (*Notable Yacht Club Of Staines*, very nihilistic), others amusing quasi-rockers like the barbed *Heroes Of The Rocker Pack* and *Naked Ape* (wherein Marxian dialectic succumbs to the savage beast within). A pleasant album, withal.

This LP, however, marked an end to Ian's initial American assault. He began researching his book, wrote occasional music articles (some for the *L.A. Times*), worked on various British TV music documentaries, and had an English LP released (12 songs from *MOD MOD MUSIC HALL* and *YELLOW UNDERGROUND* plus four unreleased tracks in a ragtime vein); but he was not heard from again here until the turn of '72-'73. Then in short order he introduced his book, his new ragtime album, and production projects with Goldie Hawn and Mae West. The Goldie Hawn record, a single called *Pitta Patta*,

(Continued on Page 30)



MOM'S APPLE PIE

2

music
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BROWN
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THIS IS ONLY THE COVER.



Making Up Is Hard To Do LINK WRAY & DOBIE GRAY

By Patrick Wm. Salvo &
Barbara Appelbaum:

Every red blooded hard rocker knows Link Wray's moniker. Link Wray is the veritable *missing link*. He's been missing for two years and for 12 years before that. Ask Keith Moon who Link Wray is and he'll announce that Wray was one of the first to open his instrument to distortion. (Moon might then freak out and strip on the spot which he has done at the mere mention of Link's name.) John Lennon will wink and tell how they haphazardly met in an elevator at the Apple offices two years ago, embraced and autographed their respective albums. Peter Townshend claims Link Wray is his roots. Bob Dylan certainly knows who he is and so does Keith Richards. Bill Haley used to be his musical roommate as well as Bill Doggett. Duane Eddy was his competition and so it goes. In fact, every axe player worth his weight in guitar strings has once been affected by Link's violent dirged chords. From Clapton to Simmonds, from Beck to both Lees, even Leslie West thinks Link Wray is no small potato. Consensus has it that "He's what they call an influence."

Wray was born around 44 years ago in Ft. Bragg, North Carolina to a back porch preacher mother and Pop Wray who had shoulder length white sideburns and played poker with Charles DeGaulle and checkers with Dwight D. Ike. The Part Shawnee showed his heritage proudly, especially when he opened his mouth. "A natural musical cry from date of conception," admitted Link. In the summer of '42, he started his own band and drove a cab to make some bread. His repertoire included songs like *Stardust* and *Deep Purple* and he was thrown out of a lot of clubs for unconventional dress and behavior. Whether it was carnivalizing with his theatrical folks in the sawdust or simply strumming, Link's playing was reminiscent of the old black blues master Hambone who taught Link when he was only eight using opened chord tuned with fingers and a knife. After a stint in the army, some U.S.O. shows with Bob Hope, circa 1952 and a bout with pneumonia, Link returned home to a year's stay in a hospital bed with the eventual removal of a lung. He had T.B. and "the doctors said I'd never sing again." As the story goes, Link had a recurring dream to the exact effect of his hospitalization years before the incident occurred. Because of this and other spiritual predictions, Wray is noted to be one of the only clairvoyant Indian guitar players still in existence.

In 1954 Andy Williams had *Are You Sincere* and Link Wray was about to hit with one of the rockin'ist sounds of the decade. *Rumble* was the name of his first million seller and it caused a real stir in the music concern. It was strictly rebel rouser, free form gut, spaghetti string, death dirge music. You know, the kind your brother would listen to on American

Bandstand before he went out to play in the gang war. Simple clean fun with a kick in the balls music. Yea, and it didn't have no words either...so it was real simple to listen to. The same kind that Duane Eddy used to play but with more class and Link's was louder so you could turn it up and almost not hear your father cursing you for using his Ace rubber comb on your greasy hair. As mentioned, it was about '54 and the Giants had just swept the Indians in the series. John Lennon was about 13. Pete of the Who was even younger. Someone in the Yardbirds, across the Atlantic, immediately picked up on it too because one of his B sides called *Ace Of Spades* is simply the forerunner to *Train Kept A Rollin'*. Hard to say which one is best, since most mods are just older long haired rockers anyway.

After *Rumble*, Link began his vanishing act, until January '59 when he made the colossal *Rawhide* for Epic. It had nothing to do with the Friday night cattle herding show, you can bet. "It was more a stampede than roundup number." Industry strife as always perpetuated another disappearance. This time Link's desert vigil lasted 12 years and he wasn't in jail either. Some of the time the Linkmen would be in Wray's Shaq Three Track in Accokeek, Maryland. Can't hardly blame the less pioneering corporate boys for shrinking at the sight of the converted chicken coop recording studio the Wray "family" worked in "at their own pace." The man was the first to use a wah wah effect and the tremolo; the former self styles from a rubber hose that went from the speaker to his mouth and the latter, well...The unorthodox use of an abandoned telephone for microphone head and stomping on the floor for bass drum and rattling a can of nails for the snare sent the company Joe's running. Link was let loose from another contract. Any man who would bore pincer holes in his speakers to produce a fuzz tone couldn't be all sane. Not by their standards anyway. In 1971, someone smart at Polydor got hip to Link and signed him up. According to the adverts in that year, Link Wray "packed his guitar and took a twelve-year walk". The only evident walk he had taken was away from the public's eye because on every road he crossed in that span of time he "carried his guitars, his 1910 dobro and his common denominator Jesus." Songs from his first LP, including *Take Me Home Jesus* and *God Out West* affirmed his spirituality though the man was vehemently against organized religion. The primitive gospely Rockabilly LP, aimed at Juke box mammas and sly pimps was an underground phenomenon. Hotshot reviewers had a field day: "His roots sink deep right into the guts of this country." "Can a 1954 flash in the pan be a trend setter in 1971?" "Best pop album of 1971 to date and I'll wager it will hold

that designation for the duration of the year." "Surprise LP of the year." "Wray has captured everything from the early days of Dylan to the latest Elton John. In between is a lot that gives you a warm glow for the mid 60's when everything seemed simple." "It's informal, happy rusty, raw authentic kink of backwoods rockability. It's more alive than are most of the \$150 per hour production jobs and it is much to be recommended."

Recommended it was, bought it wasn't. Wray did a mini-tour — obscure folk clubs, upstairs at Max's Kansas City billed with some Egyptian folksingers, perfumed cocaine sniffers and cosmetized cheese cake eaters and went back to

(Continued on Page 29)



Dobie Grey Returns



By Bob Chorush

"It feels real this time," says Dobie Gray, who's been out of the in-crowd long enough to find some personal perspective beyond some two minutes and thirty-eight seconds or so of rock and roll history. Dobie Gray, one-time teeny star riding on the crest of *Look at Me and I'm In With the In-Crowd*, has passed ten years singing, writing, acting and learning how to be a hit singer without suffering the artistic bruises

historically associated with Sixties chart hits.

With few exceptions the stars of the Fifties and Sixties have become the memorabilia of the Seventies. The lucky and talented ones, the Ricky Nelsons or Dion Dimuccis, come up with a hit now and again to lend credence to their legends. The others, the ones who sign with companies like Buddah, keep plugging, keep playing oldies dances and clubs, keep trying and must soon become contemporary music's geriatric set. How old are the Juniors now? And where is Danny?

The "stars" of the Fifties and Sixties, or more accurately meteorites since they seem to have shone so brightly and quickly burned out, suffered a unique fate for contemporary artists. Vaughan Meader survived the death of President Kennedy much better than a lot of the moldie oldie stars who never survived the day the music died.

Dobie Gray is back on the charts. For a number of reasons even apart from talent, which he obviously has — despite whatever ringing echoes of *In Crowd* might remain. For Dobie, the road back from certain obscurity involved a remarkable combination of the right song, the right song writer, the right studio, the right recording talent, the right feeling and probably even the right moment.

Dobie's current success is a nationally charted recording of *Drift Away*, a tune by Mentor Williams, Dobie's producer and long-time friend. Also Paul Williams' brother. Fortunately for everyone involved, with the exception of Paul Williams fans, Mentor's writing is somewhat more lively than the MOR Carpenters-type tripe of his brother, despite Paul's charming hobbit-like demeanor.

Day after day I'm more confused

Yet I look for the light through the pourin' rain

You know that's a game I hate to lose

And feeling the strain, ain't it a shame...

...Give me the beat boys and free my soul

I want to get lost in your rock and roll, and *Drift Away*...

The friendly feeling of the recording, done at Quadraphonic studios in Nashville, gives it its strength as a hit. The same song released as a single two months before by John Kurtz fell on its ass like a tap dancer on Quaaludes, just because it lacked the warm tone of Dobie's recording.

"I didn't expect people to remember *In Crowd*" said Dobie recently. "I thought that there would have been a whole turnover of people in radio and newspapers, but there hasn't been. What everybody asks is what have you

what I was recording when I did *In Crowd*, mainly because I wasn't the type of person who is aggressive enough to say I think you're wrong. I used to just accept what the people at the record companies told me. Now I intend to stand up for my values even if people might think that they're weird. Even if things don't turn out right I can say that I feel them and I think that that's very important. In the days of the *In Crowd* you'd get stuck with one thing and that's it. I was the *In Crowd*. It happened and it was a big hit and as soon as it happened I wanted to get out of it, but I had an image. The songs that came to me after the *In Crowd* were unbelievable. There was one called *The Out Crowd* and another called *Hip Street*. I had better ideas."

In the Sixties if you had a hit song that wasn't too loud and that didn't advocate premarital sex, drugs or communism, your next stop after the Top 40 was Las Vegas, where a fallen star can earn the nation's per capita income nightly for performing to a seemingly endless collection of Allstate insurance salesmen and their wives and weekend women. So stopped Dobie Gray.

Las Vegas interested Dobie Gray about as much as it would've appealed to the Grateful Dead. "I did it for a while," said Dobie. "But I didn't like it. It's hard to live in a straight world like that when you're not straight. I was working in Las Vegas when *Hair* happened. *Hair* was one of the turning points in my life."

Dobie flew to Los Angeles from Las Vegas three times to audition for *Hair*. Getting a part in the Los Angeles production of *Hair* was enough of a change to make the night spots and slots of Vegas distant past while making *In Crowd* a long time gone fuzzy dream. The Age of Aquarius had arrived. Attorneys and stock brokers grew sideburns and business went on as usual.

After three years *Hair* closed despite Dobie's sarcastic remark that "I would have been perfectly happy to sing Aquarius forever." Without *Hair* and several years out of the in-crowd, Dobie found himself as a semi-employed former celebrity, an impossible profession to explain to the unemployment people and not much to relate to anyhow.

For the last three years, Dobie has been making the rounds of record companies toting untried material that various shortsighted executives insisted should remain untried only to later find the songs done by someone else topping the charts. Dobie had the Hollywood syndrome of Image Problem — It's not YOU kid. It doesn't fit your image.

Mentor Williams wasn't particularly worried about Dobie's image. As a staff writer for Almo Music, Mentor used Dobie to cut \$25 session demos of his songs. The relationship seemed to work and some of Dobie's demos impressed Mentor, as holding the promise of hits. Mentor began to make the same rounds, but this time offering a packaged item. MCA Records took the bait and it doesn't look like they regret it.

Meanwhile, the Dobie Gray package continues to snowball. Dobie apparently continues to be a contented easy going type guy. He works on his diary which he has kept for ten years and which he hopes will someday be published in either book or diary form. Something like *Diary of a Rock Star* perhaps. Dobie has kept his writings and reminiscences and drunken self-mumbleings for all these years despite his admissions that he's not a writer nor a story teller nor a story book writer but that "when I sit down to write I just say it." It would be interesting to see what Dobie might have been saying in the interim between *In Crowd* and *Drift Away*, including his short stint with the seemingly ill-fated group *Pollution*.

Somewhere between the meanings and the margaritas is the entertainer Dobie Gray, nee Leonard Victor Ainsworth, Jr. Smiling, gratified at his current success, contented at his feeling of

been doing for ten years."

What has anybody been doing for the last ten years? The easiest thing to say that you've been doing for ten years is living. In Dobie Gray's case living has meant striving, writing and in a certain nonexpectant way, waiting. Not so much waiting for another *In Crowd* as waiting to find out how to clearly present Dobie Gray 1973 in music, which is definitely how Dobie Gray wants to present himself.

"I never had much choice in

(Continued on Page 29)

* c 1973 Almo Music

HEAVY METAL

by
mike
saunders

**A BRIEF SURVEY
OF THE STATE
OF METAL MUSIC
TODAY**



When you get right down to it, the story of heavy metal rock has been the tale of Led Zeppelin. As indicated by its name, Heavy Metal has been an evolution of heavy rock — you know, the stuff that emerged back in 1967. Heavily revved-up bass, long guitar solos, deluges of fuzzbox and wah-wah. From Cream to Blue Cheer; Jimi Hendrix to the Hook; Jeff Beck to Ten Years After...

The ground work for this stuff had previously been laid by stunning 1965 second-wave English groups like the Yardbirds and The Who. Pete Townshend and Jeff Beck had been the first guitarists to achieve idol stature in Sixties white rock 'n' roll. But somehow, in the interim, the idea of hard, heavy rock had disintegrated into amphetamine blues technology and the wounded elephant guitar shrieks of Iron Butterfly. Worse yet, 1967-8 was the year of Cream.

Cream were monstrously popular among both critics and their myriad of fans. I even remember reading praises of their monochordic, so-called improvisations in Downbeat, the rationale I guess being that rock had grown up, become serious music. My most indelible memory of 1968 is that of being exposed to Wheels Of Fire some 300 times, which would have been enough to send one running for Blue Cheer except for the fact that early Blue Cheer were really just about as bad in their own inimitable way.

What I'm getting at is that Led Zeppelin did not meet with the same sort of audience/critic response as Cream. Led Zeppelin were absolutely slagged by the press. For the first time, a visible chasm had opened in the previously monolithic rock audience (a chasm that was to continue to deepen with Grand Funk, Black Sabbath, and to a lesser extent, Alice Cooper); a gap between, if you will, what was Good Music and what the kids were actually listening to.

THE ANTHROPOLOGICAL CHARACTERISTICS OF HEAVY METAL

It's easy to note the changes in rock structure that heavy metal groups have employed: increased song length, for one. Five minutes has been about the average metal song duration, often even without any extended solos. Some stompers, like Dust's *From A Dry Camel* and Led Zep's *When The Levee Breaks*, run upwards of seven minutes, and none the worse for it.

Another metal innovation, perhaps the most obvious, would be the overwhelming emphasis on instrumental work rather than vocals. Save Uriah Heep, there have hardly been any groups in heavy metal with elaborate group vocals. You just stick a guy up before the mike, preferably the member of the band that can bop around the best, and let him go. As a result there have been some strange vocal styles, from Mark Farner's quavering shriek to Ozzy Osbourne's atonal yelp. The general attitude seems to be, what the hell... Robert Plant is about as technically adept as you get among metal vocalists, and the mere mention of Bobby's name has been known to cause people to break out laughing. Ian Gillan of Deep Purple does have quite a technically impressive voice, but he blows it by acting like an absolute narcissistic idiot on stage.

That the remaining field of heavy metal exploration has been technology — well, that goes without saying. Some of heavy metal rock has simply resembled nothing previously known to man nor beast — mainly the more extreme moments of Led Zep, Black Sabbath, Grand Funk, and Blue Oyster Cult — with the main mutation from traditional hard rock being in the rhythm section. A standout metal rhythm section really does resemble a steam press, belching along like a manic bulldozer flattening everything in its way. Sort of like a bass-drums equivalent of all that guitar noise on *KICK OUT THE JAMS*. I had been disappointed in how few metal groups have gotten into the esthetic of a really technocratic rhythm section on record, until I heard Blue Oyster Cult's recent promo LP, recorded live. The only description of Albert Bouchard's electrified, heavily miked drum kit would be that of a runaway locomotive at 250 MPH, and the Cult themselves play like Zeus unleashed. Closest thing to an ultimate heavy metal sound I've yet heard.

One other footnote: heavy metal has coincided with a real trend back to rhythm guitar. Power chording is the term coined for the ideal metal rhythm guitar style (Tony Iommi of Black Sabbath was the runaway champion of this art for a while) and when you think about it, the technique dates back to *All Day And All Of The Night* and all those other early Kinks singles. On which all rhythm guitar parts (the leads are still in dispute) were played by... Jimmy Page. The structure of most metal songwriting focuses around riffs and heavy chording, so the emphasis on rhythm guitar makes sense.

In all truth, Ritchie Blackmore and Buck Dharma are just about the only distinctive lead guitarists in heavy metal, the only ones whose major role is on lead guitar rather than rhythm. The rest are chord bashing crambos, in some ways a tribute to R&B band teamwork, and we're all better off for it. Unless, that is, you prefer endless lead guitar solos, in which case we would've recommended Mountain in concert had they not broken up and joined the world's greatest white blues (nope, it wasn't Mark Farner after all, nor Sky Saxon or Captain Beefheart) singer: Jack Bruce. (Anyone disagreeing should be immediately referred to Jack's interpretations of Howlin' Wolf, Eddie Boyd, and Albert King, after which the

winner of this whole tag-team match will receive a free copy of *SUPERSESSION* featuring Mike Bloomfield and Al Kooper).

Now where was I. Why the Raspberries are heavier than Grand Funk. No, that's not it. Why *DANCE OF THE LEMMINGS* by Amon Duul II is the greatest album in the history of the universe (at least one certain rock critic by the initials HSF thinks so). No, that's not it either. I don't know much about Amon Duul. But I do know about Hawkwind. Hawkwind: aluminum: post-metal. Metal! It all eventually leads back to that catch-all of the rock and roll spectrum, heavy metal. If Led Zep would just record *Walk Don't Run* or *Pipeline*, the whole convolution would be complete.

But back to the subject at hand. What's the difference between Deep Purple and Uriah Heep anyway? Or between a varrooommm and a blast furnace? In order to help answer such disturbing questions, we've enlisted the help of some of rockdom's foremost sages in order to compile summaries on heavy metal's most important groups. These summaries do reflect a bias, admittedly. While one segment of metal fandom has long looked down its nose at the Sabbath/GFRR vein, yours truly has more democratic leanings: I like 'em all.

In order to correct for this tendency, PRM has copped a real first: polled a portion of these same sages concerning their favorite metal LPs. Yes, the heaviest albums as chosen by the heaviest critics... wotta exercise in redundancy. Without any further ado, may we present the Heavy Metal Sports Report:

ALICE COOPER

Pretties For You,
Easy Action, Love It To Death,
Killer, School's Out
Billion Dollar Babies

As perfect as their image is, a lot of people I know have had trouble with Alice Cooper's music. They've never been more than only marginally a heavy metal band, and it's been a rare occasion when anyone I know (myself included) has played an AC album all the way through, from beginning to end.

Still, the five or so great cuts on each of *Love It To Death* and *Killer* make them essential albums. *School's Out* complicates the Alice Cooper dilemma by being a real stinko of an effort, that is, if they were even trying at all. What

BLUE OYSTER CULT

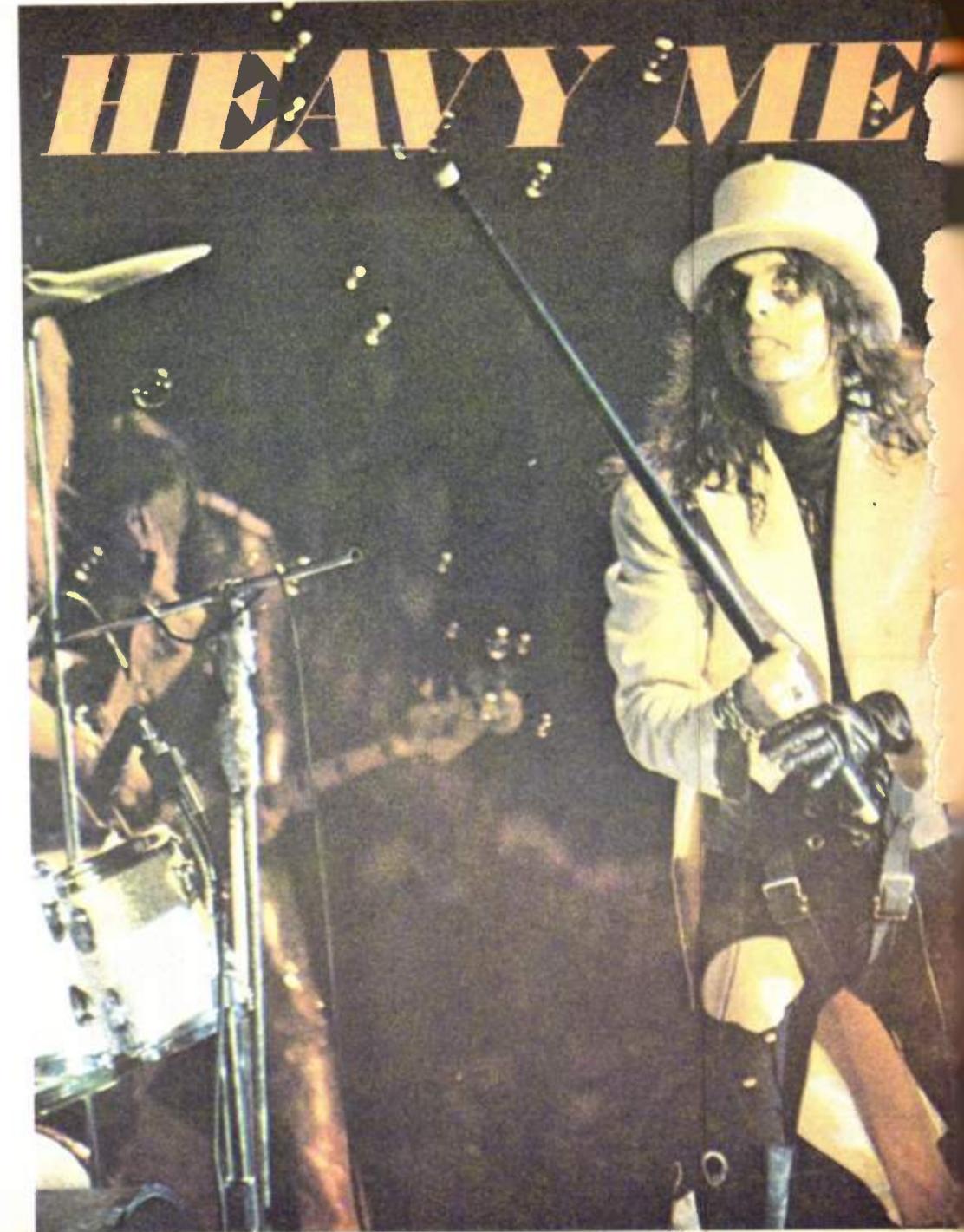
Blue Oyster Cult *Tyranny and Mutation*
Blue Oyster Cult's debut album was



Will Alice Cooper blow their chance to be the most tasteless group since Count Five?

saves Alice Cooper, even today when their singles have become completely jive, is their incredible cockiness. You

great, no doubt about that. It lacked mania, though. Those doubts were totally erased by a recent Columbia



Not exactly what Elvis Presley had in mind when he i Alice Cooper's 1973 show certainly represents i

promotional album (Col. AS-40), a four-cut LP consisting of twenty minutes of the Cult live in concert. The most powerful live recording ever, its impact is as crazed as the studio album was calculated; a full studio set of its quality might relegate all previous hard rock, from the Stones to Led Zep, forever to the ranks of the also-rans.

If they blow it, as it appears they will, what we should remember and hold against Alice Cooper above all — forget manipulation, nihilism, and increasing musical ennui, that's all trivial stuff compared to this — is that they blew the chance to be the most tasteless group since Count Five.

BLUE OYSTER CULT

Blue Oyster Cult *Tyranny and Mutation*
Blue Oyster Cult's debut album was

guitar riffs as they of evil, war pigs, The feel permeatin, 4 is that of numbin pleasant. The stup liners and lyrics se Vol. 4 was a real cc the music def numbed-out, desen that characterizes From *Hand Of Blind*. is the wron I'm concerned. Get boys .

So the strengths of Blue Oyster Cult are obvious: strong songwriting chops, great lyrics by Sandy Pearlman and R. Meltzer, a fine stage act, and an ugly pug-faced kid Don Roeter who changed his marquee name to Buck Dharma to complement his ability as one of the most authoritatively facile and powerful lead guitarists R&B has ever seen. A copy of the Cult's new album arrived just in time for one quick listen before our deadline, and it sounds far beyond the first studio LP, more on the level of that monstrous promo effort. Check the

issue of PRM for details. If any group has the potential to match the recorded work of Led Zep and Black Sabbath — and much more importantly, to possibly transcend the whole heavy metal field — Blue Oyster Cult should be it.

BLACK SABBATH

Black Sabbath, *Paranoid*,
Master of Reality,
Black Sabbath Vol. 4

Bet you thought for sure I'd say a thousand words about what used to be my favorite group. I'm not. *Paranoid* and *Master Of Reality* are the ones that matter, and even their debut album had a roaring first side (if sludge can roar). *Black Sabbath Vol. 4* is very strange, however, and not in the good sense. For a month or so *Vol. 4* sounded okay, but after that it just became more and more depressing to listen to.

Sabbath's biggest strength for so long was the whooping vengeance of their music, drilling out manic two-chord

DEEP PURPLE

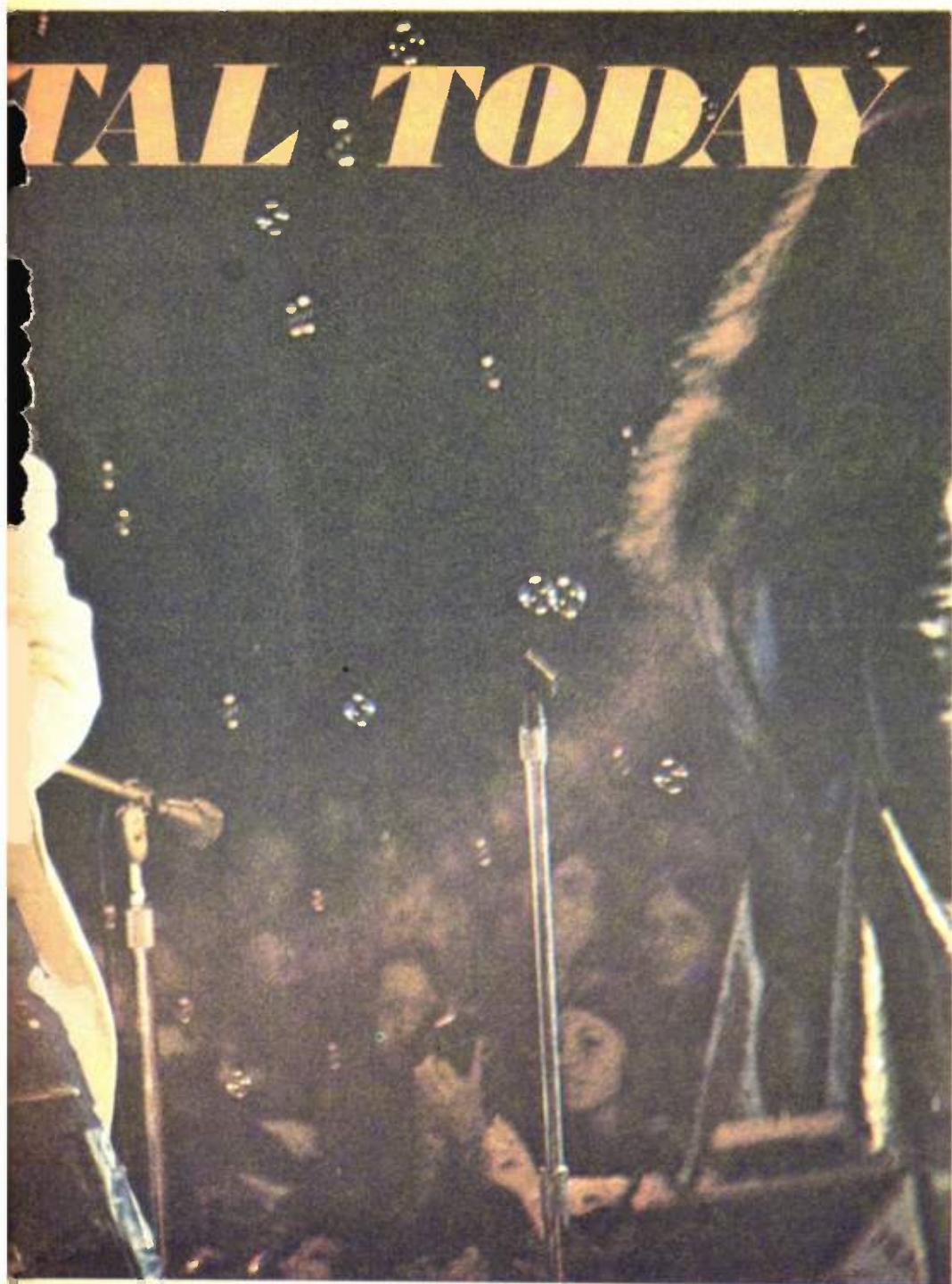
Deep Purple In Machine
Who Do We T

The consensus vie is that *In Rock* and their best, with *Fire* dud. I've been lister lately, and would lik against that apprai albums improved up *Head*, and that *Fire* most powerful cuts years old now, *In* dated — the album recorded, with aimle cluttering up songs *Rat*, *Into The Fire*, *Man*.

Still, *In Rock* d value: it made European stars, and honors with *Led Ze*, heavy metal album. parts of it do scor places even soundin MCS.

But *Fireball* is entirely. It's the recorded album f title cut is supersc

PHOTO BY NEAL PRESTON



invented rock theatre by shaking his hips on stage, the ultimate in something, maybe everything.

sent after the forces and what have you. the music of VOL. defeat, and it's not little jokes in the em to indicate that ke album. Could be; nately has that tized state of mind most coke music. Doom to Snow direction, as far as back to your roots,

on this LP, I think, have to be the best in all of recorded metal rock...arrogant, petulant, and sneering. *Strange Kind Of Woman* is Deep Purple's all-time most arrogant cut, *Fools* their closest to punk rock, and so on. *Fireball*'s weakness, and the cause for its bad reputation, was its two or three very bad cuts. *Machine Head* remedied this by being their best album overall, having only one bum cut. The less said about *Who Do We Think We Are*, the better. It's atrocious.

Deep Purple fans generally regard all the group's LPs through *Machine Head* as indispensable; those not enamored of the group, vice versa. For the record, Lester Bangs mercilessly bombed *In Rock* in Rolling Stone when it came out in 1970...he loves the group now. Hi Lester!

GRAND FUNK

On Time, Grand Funk, Closer To Home, Live Album, Survival, E Pluribus Funk, Phoenix

Yours truly droveled on for 5,000 words about Grand Funk in *Fusion*. What it all reduced to was this: *Live Album* is 50% rocking-50% awful, *E Pluribus Funk* is a killer if you can stand Mark Farmer's voice, and *Phoenix* is largely good mainstream rock but it ain't the same.

DUST

Dust's debut album was beyond fault, save for one snag: they had the same problem any group using a relatively trebley heavy metal sound runs into. Namely, how to compensate for the lack of a sheet metal bass-drums sound. Dust haven't solved the problem yet; their rhythm section just doesn't have the punch of some metal groups. At that, Dust's first album is a

raucous stomper, one of the finest Seventies hard rock LPs to date. Unfortunately, *Hard Attack* is not nearly as good. The rockers are fine, but there are a couple of terrible ballads, and the album lacks coherency altogether. Coming from Dust, *Hard Attack* as a whole seems pretentious, the last thing you would've expected from such a group. Hope they loosen up and get back into the crass New York streetclatter they're so capable of.

LED ZEPPELIN



Led Zep I, II, III, IV V

Sure enough, these limeys were the fathers of it all, with *Led Zeppelin II* — that crucial first step away from blues and excess jerkoff solos, and towards the sheet metal noise we all know and love today. It sold some umpteen million copies as well, making it a crucial trendsetter in heavy metal development.

Still, *Led Zep II* had three real bummers — *Lemon Song*, *Ramble On*, and *Moby Dick* — and comparison with the Zep's fourth album *+\$%* is interesting. *+\$%* demonstrates how

far Seventies rock has evolved in the last couple years: incredible as it may seem, *+\$%* has twice as much pure sound as *Led Zeppelin II*. And *Four Sticks* is the only mediocre cut. *Black Dog*, *Rock And Roll*, *Misty Mountain Hop*, *Stairway To Heaven*, and *When The Levee Breaks* are as powerful as rock and roll ever gets. When these guys try, they've got it (*Led Zep I* and *III* are for fanatics only).

MC5 STOOGES

All Albums

De boogie was invented a long time ago, way back in Mississippi by the famous Blind Lester Crawdad...Actually, that's bullshit. As anyone knows, Heavy Metal came out of the automobile factories where the MC5 and Stooges toiled by day, only to go home at night and struggle to duplicate the whine of the pressing plants with their primitive Marshall amplifiers. The roots. Iggy Pop, the Robert Johnson of metal music. A group called The Who (not to be confused with the current group of the same name), back in the Dark Ages, had a bit to do with it too.

TEN YEARS AFTER

Watt

All I want to say here: this was ace! I'm not that keen on Alvin Lee's other efforts, but half of *Watt* sounds just like the Stooges — Alvin even gets off a great dog bark on *I'm Coming On*. The second side of *Watt* is dull jazz-oriented jamming, but who cares. The simplistic, rocking half makes up for it, and TYA's version of *Sweet Little Sixteen* is precisely the way Chuck Berry ought to be played: with no reverence whatsoever! Fine stuff. One of the most meaningless albums ever conceived.

UFO

UFO 1, Flying, Live In Japan

If you think *Dust* or the Stooges were simplistic, you never heard UFO's first album. The Stooges were TIGHT compared to these guys! Bedrock sludgy bass, guitar work that would make Ron Asheton blanch; the whole works. There're eight fine three-minute hard rock cuts, plus two other vagaries (a good ballad and a galling 7:43 *Who Do You Love*) — sort of the English heavy metal version of the Frut. To top it all off, 3/4ths of UFO were still in their teens at the time of the album.

Yes, this was the group that sent British trade papers into a panic, shrieking that if UFO became stars it would set rock back ten years. Unfortunately, UFO must have let that sort of praise go to their heads, because their second LP (released only in England) is one of the worst sets I've ever heard. Having only five cuts, *Flying* consists almost entirely of soporific off-key jamming, the lead singer only coming in around every seventh minute. Their third album, a live LP recorded in Japan, is even worse. For the time being, another potentially brilliant group down the tube.

URIAH HEEP

Uriah Heep, Salisbury, Look At Yourself, Demons And Wizards, The Magician's Birthday

In five tries, these guys have come up with two good albums. Does that say something or does it? *Look At Yourself* and *Demons And Wizards* were Uriah Heep's two good ones, both with excellent first sides. Their new one, *The Magician's Birthday*, is partially similar to *Demons And Wizards*, and partially the most pretentious dud since the Moody Blues' most recent opus.

Live, Uriah Heep have been much closer visually to faceless punkoids like Black Sabbath than to the Led Zep/Deep Purple theatrical end of the spectrum — self-effacing, but they still move around and put on a fine show. Six months ago it could've been speculated that the whole key to heavy

metal's future would be whether enough solid, above-average groups (like Heep at the time) could emerge to make the field a lasting phenomenon...and not to make Heep scapegoats or anything, but therein lies the rub. Those two good albums are essential though.

VELVET UNDERGROUND

Nothing metallic about the Velvets' first album; recorded in early and mid-1966 at Scepter/Wand studios, it still sounds today like a brash New York punk rock item. *White Light/White Heat* was indeed a metal roots LP, however. Sterling Morrison's bass throughout has a heavy, clanking tone, and *Sister Ray* may have been the first combination of heavy rhythm and pure noise. The Velvets' influence has shown up in the Stooges, David Bowie, and Alice Cooper, in decreasing order of magnitude. Maybe they'll keep the torch going now that Lou Reed sounds fit for embalming.

YARDBIRDS

Well, yeah. If the Stones were the mainstream of 1965 rock, the Who and Yardbirds were the avant garde. The Stones were good, but it was the latter two that were really exciting. The Who are a tough band to figure out. *THE WHO SINGS MY GENERATION* was a bizarre combination of Beach Boys, James Brown, and primordial metallic noise. When released in Spring 1966, it was the farthest-out hard rock album extent on the planet; ask anyone who was around then. For some reason the Who completely steered away from this style starting with *I'm A Boy*, never to return to it.

The Yardbirds' recording career was mostly a muddle. Their most consistent work, hence arguably the best I suppose, was with Eric Clapton as a solid R&B band. Save for scattered things like *Jeff's Boogie*, the Yardbirds era with Jeff Beck never got captured quite right on vinyl. Beck had flashes of brilliance, no doubt, and the idea seemed to be that of attaining the ultimate kineticism via virtuosity — you had better believe that guy was one — but I dunno. There honestly just isn't a single cut I could play today that would overwhelmingly convince you why all us pubes back then were so hot over the Yardbirds.

With Beck, I didn't mention Beck and Page. *Stroll On* (i.e. *Train Kept A Rollin'*) from *Blow-Up* was the only recorded legacy of the Yardbirds with both Beck and Page in the group, and it just happens to be the earliest recorded instance of a clear-cut heavy metal style. Jimmy Page plays heavy, fuzzbox bass riffs on his guitar, drowning out Dreja's bass in the process, then joins Beck during the bridge for a great twin lead guitar rave up.

What the Yardbirds with Jeff Beck were groping for was heavy metal; whether sheer intuition or otherwise, Page had the idea of metal visualized much clearer than anyone else. Or it might've just been the right place at the right time brilliance that lands a guy on *You Really Got Me*, *I Can't Explain*, and *Mystic Eyes*. *Live Yardbirds* with Page was pretty much a mess, but the whole setup turned into Led Zep and eventually came through with the goods. If you wanna talk about unsung rock wizards, just consider a guy who was rocking out in 1965, still is in 1973, and if anyone invented heavy metal, he did: Jimmy Page.

They Also Served: Bang, Budgie, Cactus, Head Over Heels (*Roadrunner* on their one LP was a metal classic), Highway Robbery, Bull Angus, Nitzinger, R.E.O. Speedwagon, Sir Lord Baltimore, Atomic Rooster...

Now for some generalizations concerning the last couple years of heavy metal.

1971, at the time, seemed to mark the emergency of heavy metal as a

(Continued on Page 30)

NOT JUST A SINGER IN A ROCK AND ROLL BAND

STEVIE WINWOOD

by Ben Edmonds & Ken Barnes

I made initial contact with Stevie Winwood in March of 1966, a weekend rebel still in the high school clutches of suburban Boston. As was my nature at that time, I'd slipped out to the parking lot between classes to catch a smoke and a few minutes of rock and roll in the front seat of a friend's car. I cruised the dial, passing quickly through the likes of Nancy Sinatra and the Vogues, desperately searching for something a little more substantial. And then it happened.

I had tuned in too late to get the announcer's full introduction, but when he snarled out the song title (in the best tradition of bubble-gum sexuality) I knew I'd come to the right place. *Gimme Some Lovin'* — no pretty-please or coy avoidance of the question — the command was direct and unavoidable, and it just had to be great rock and roll. It was: a bassline that pounded primitive and didn't stop, organ chording that was nothing short of overpowering, and a singer so strong that it didn't matter that I couldn't understand all the words (and this, remember, was in the heyday of the all-important *lyric*). The words were clearly of secondary importance; the message was the emotion, and it was transmitted perfectly in *Gimme Some Lovin'*.

My flash impression was that the singer had to be black, and that the band was probably some sweaty bar aggregation which, after suffering through a thousand variations on the *Peppermint Twist* just to get by, had somehow managed to stumble upon the secret of the Rolling Stones' success with the white middle-class audience. Apparently somebody with a certain amount of power agreed, because the next time I heard *Gimme Some Lovin'* it was a pallid cover version by a group of distinctly white nobodys (their name escapes me) who almost immediately dematerialized into a much-deserved oblivion.

Boston radio having cowardly chosen to play the watered-down version, I became reconciled to getting the real thing only when I could pick up a stray station in New York or sometimes Chicago, but it was worth every inch of the effort. In the years since, that kid who was singing has made his presence unavoidable to anyone with even a passing interest in the music of the counter-culture.

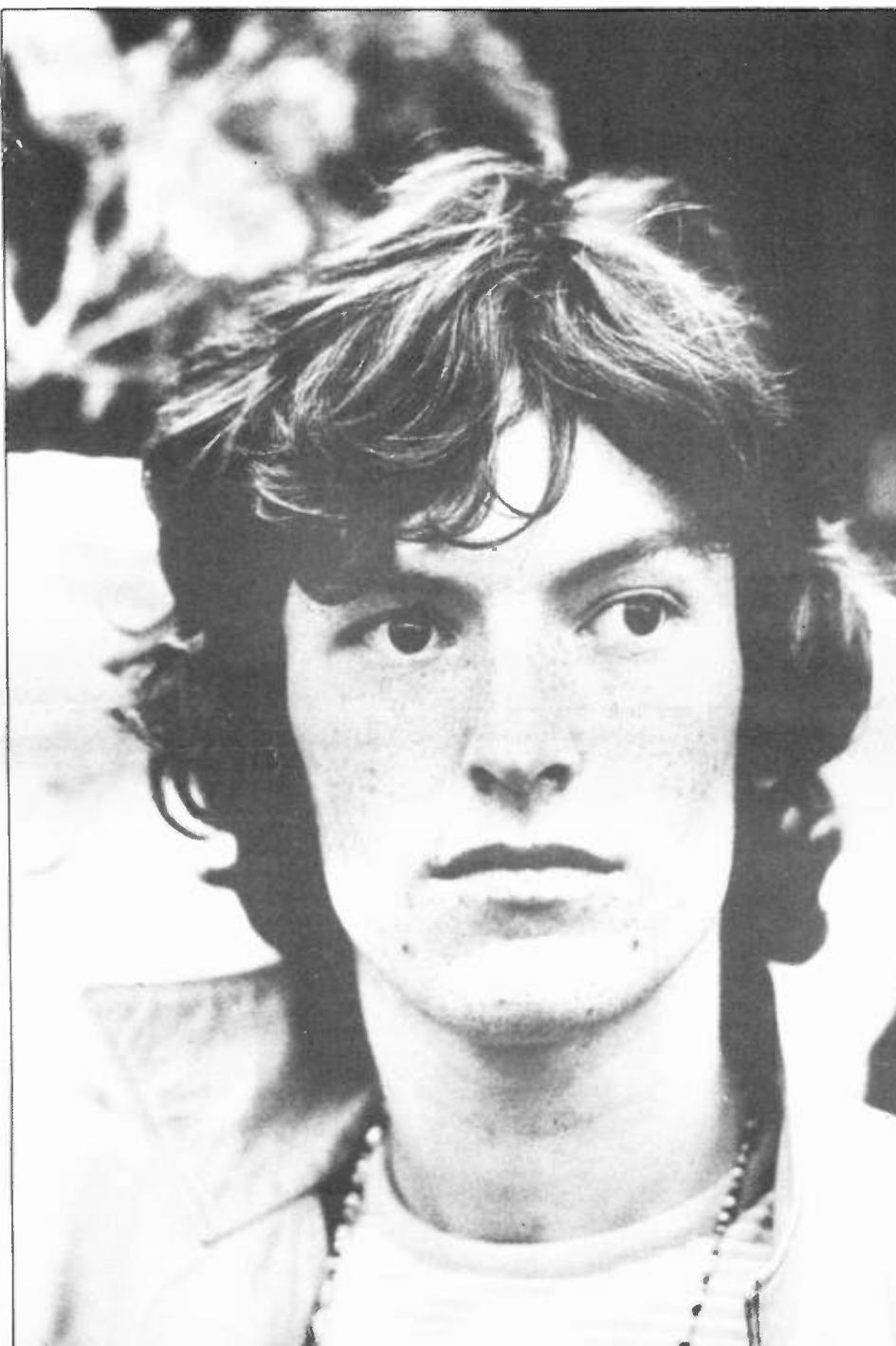
The Young Stevie

Birmingham lies in what is referred to as the Black Country, and the rustic working-class people of this area are purported to have served as the raw material from which Tolkien fashioned his Hobbits. If London was Carnaby Street, then Birmingham was any one of a thousand faceless factories: it was one of those cities whose birth was necessitated by the grim demands of the Industrial Age. Writing on the Move in the July '70 issue of *Creem*, I stated that Birmingham is "roughly England's equivalent of Detroit," and that analogy rings most true.

In Birmingham as in Detroit the diversionary power of music is intensified simply because the need for diversion is that much stronger; the measure of music becomes its ability to carry the listener beyond whatever reality is grating a little too harshly. Music had power — a power which was central to everyone's lives — and its importance was past the point of question. It was in this environment that Stevie Winwood developed.

Stevie was born in Birmingham on May 12 of 1948, the son of a man who worked long hours in a chromium plant to support his family. Those long hours, however, didn't preclude his after-hours duty blowing sax with a local danceband, moonlight he no doubt grabbed as much for the release as for the money. (It is interesting to note here that the father of Jim Capaldi participated in many such ventures with the older Mr. Winwood.)

The young Stevie industriously constructed a crystal radio with the aid of a helpful uncle, and the influences he absorbed through that box (probably when he should have been tending to homework and other



Now there's an innocent face. Love beads, too. Those were the days..

related drudgery) were to have a profound effect on the developmental stages of his career. His scope of influence was considerably wider than that of your average rock and roll kid. He was touched almost immediately by jazz, the smooth restraint of the Oscar Peterson Trio giving way to the challenge and romance of bassist Charles Mingus. His fascination with the blues struck through the southside elegance of Muddy Waters and the polished agony of Ray Charles. (Charles, whose inspiration is carved most deeply into the Winwood consciousness, has influenced at least ten times as many people as have ever heard him.) In many respects, the versatility which marks his musicianship may be traced to the open embrace of his early musical hunger.

Winwood's insatiable love for music drove him to pick up the instruments for himself, and he was keeping after-hours company with his father by the time he was nine. Apparently music was a staple of the Winwood household, because when Stevie joined up with his father's outfit, he found himself playing alongside his older brother Muff. But the excitement of playing Dad's music was only momentary, and it seemed

inevitable that Stevie and Muff should form a band. Which, in 1963 with the help of a friend named Peter York who played drums, is exactly what they did.

Not much is known about this band, except that they played your usual succession of school gigs, teen dances and bars; but it is thoroughly conceivable that the trio format was an adequate enough excuse for Stevie to throw in some tasty Oscar Peterson licks between the dance jams and standards which any small-time band is expected to render. It is also possible that whatever measure of success they enjoyed may have been partly due to the amazement which proceeded from seeing this fragile kid, not yet old enough to frequent the pubs they played in, playing so many instruments and styles and playing them all so well.

Enter Spencer Davis

It is known, however, that this band was playing an engagement at a place called the Ale House on one fateful day in late 1963. In the audience that night was one Spencer Davis, a professor of German from the

University of Birmingham and a part-time folksinger with higher aspirations, and he heard in that band the means by which he could structure some ideas which extended considerably beyond the unamplified limitations of folk music. His ambition must have been right in step with that of the three, because soon thereafter the trio was rounded out to four and saw in 1964 as the Spencer Davis Group.

The situation within the music industry was not at all then as it is now. Generous contracts and monstrous amounts of front money were not awarded to any self-styled musician who walked through the door wearing velvet and talking a great album; bands in those faraway days were expected to have achieved at least workable maturity before they were ever allowed to see the inside of a recording studio or their name on a contract. So the Spencer Davis Group initially followed the earlier path of Winwood's trio — playing assorted jobs for assorted sums of money — getting along financially (the band still being at this time somewhat of a sidelight engagement) and getting themselves together musically.

By the time 1965 was preparing to close its doors, the Spencer Davis Group and the music industry were ready to make acquaintance. They ventured into the studio that first time with Chris Blackwell (who was their manager) and a dude fresh from the States who was looking for his first big production break. The dude was Jimmy Miller, and his name and production brilliance have accompanied the upward spiral of Stevie Winwood's career. Out of that session came two important introductory sides.

Keep On Running was an elementary lesson in the best rock and roll being produced at that time: simple to the point of being skeletal, direct to the point of dancing, and with any serious ego subservient to the beat. In the standard two guitar-bass-drum mold, it did its best to maintain a smoothly driving surface. There was nothing particularly spectacular about the band's execution or Stevie's vocal, and it almost seemed as though they (and especially Stevie) were holding back, making sure that everything was perfectly created toward hit parade acceptance. Nevertheless, without really trying hard, the song managed to be really rock and roll than was being offered by many of England's more experienced and prestigious groups.

Somebody Help Me was essentially the same song, just one short step away from the original formula. It featured Stevie on guitar, but one is constantly confronted by the impression that many of his guitar lines were actually directed more toward the keyboards. He was afforded slightly more vocal latitude because the pace of the song wasn't quite as forced, revealing just enough of that Winwood trademark of emotional release needed to bring the song off.

These two songs are not even as interesting in terms of Winwood as they are with regard to the rest of the Spencer Davis Group. The roles which the bass, drums and rhythm guitar establish here define their contribution to the band, roles which will remain static while the development of the band becomes almost entirely the development of Stevie Winwood. And this was precisely the source of a tension within the group which increased each time another record was sold.

The Big Time

The single pushed steadily toward the top of the British charts but, for reasons still beyond my feeble comprehension, it never made very much noise here in the States. When later singles imprinted their name on nearly everyone's tongue, those two sides were always among the favorite album tracks at the summer parties I attended; second only, in fact to the indispensable bottle of Jack Daniels procured when the right people had their backs turned. And the two inevitably went so well together that it hardly mattered anyway.

Following the success of the single, some

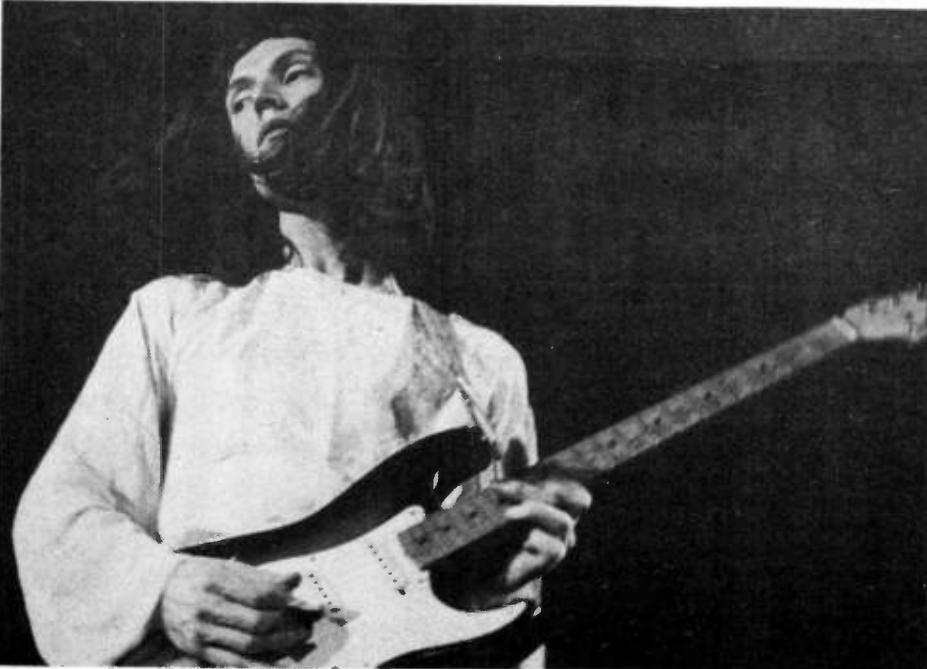
muddy contractual hocus-pocus left the group without a recording company. While waiting for that little matter to be resolved, the group utilized the time to strengthen and develop their sound, capitalizing on their hit to get them more bookings and the consequent strength of exposure. When a new contract was secured, and the group entered the studio for a second time, they were far more assured and prepared to deliver something which would get a lot further in explaining what the Spencer Davis Group was.

The result was *Gimme Some Lovin'*, and it was not only the record which liberated the Spencer Davis Group internationally, but was a breakout in the truest musical sense as well. Where the sound of the previous single had been calculation and restraint, this one leveled the walls of limitation with tidal-wave intensity. The major alteration found Stevie behind a Hammond B-3 organ, and the authority he channeled through that instrument was topped only by the strength of purpose in his vocal performance. The

which threatened to leave the rest of the band far behind. (Spencer Davis, having been a folksinger, was more into tradition, while Stevie was beginning to sense the possibilities of extension.)

Once again an album was hastily assembled to score on the power of a hit single and once again it was revealed as a random collection whose several ups weren't quite enough to counteract the down of its opportunistic echo. Included in this set were *Can't Get Enough Of It* and *Stevie's Blues*, the former is great rock and roll and has implications which Winwood further explored with Traffic, and the latter evidences Stevie's emerging lyricism (seen even more clearly when stacked up against the earlier *Goodbye Stevie*). It was obvious by this time, however, that the Spencer Davis Group had run its limited gamut, and that Stevie Winwood's artistic hunger could only be accommodated in different surroundings.

He packed his bags and headed for London, leaving the Spencer Davis Group to



point was, however, that *everybody* was involved in the process; and this feeling of communal frenzy was what carried the excitement. This time, they were playing like they meant it.

The production seems almost to border on the crude, but this is not without explanation. In the first place, nearly all available space was filled with sound, with a fullness which sidestepped excess by directing all its energy toward *thrust*. And the song's reliance on thrust dictated that it be recorded live; overdubbing could never have captured that unification of power. In the end, the rough edges of the production may have worked in the song's favor, reinforcing the earthy nature of its principal command. The single was a resounding smash on both sides of the Atlantic and several places in-between.

An album with the same title appeared almost immediately, but it told us nothing about the Spencer Davis Group which we hadn't already surmised from their singles. Not faced with forced concentration on each song's chart potential, the band could afford to just lay back and play their favorite music; hence the album is a conglomeration of singles, traditional material and off-hand statements of influence. *Goodbye Stevie* for instance is an uncomplicated jam on some blues fundamentals, written by the entire band and featuring Stevie on piano and lead guitar. The song is particularly luminous in the view it affords of how easily Stevie was able to combine aspects of tradition (the New Orleans-style piano) with trend (the lead guitar which could have been copped from the Yardbirds) into a uniquely distinctive amalgam.

The Spencer Davis Group Must Die

In those days, tampering with the machinery of your success could usually be equated with attempted suicide, and far too many one-hit casualties dotted a landscape which offered little security. It was almost to be expected, then, that their next release after *Gimme Some Lovin'* would recognize the formula and adhere to it; and that's precisely what *I'm A Man* was all about. A few of the rough edges were smoothed out and the percussion was beefed up a bit, but the impressive list of cover versions and interpretations which the song has seen in the last six years only testifies that they actually succeeded in outdoing the original theme. The song rose to the uppermost reaches of the charts even more speedily, and it seemed to have more than adequate insurance on the future of the Spencer Davis group.

Just when stardom seemed consolidated, however, the group succumbed to tensions of an internal and external nature. On the other hand, Stevie's musical ambition was beginning to fight the formula of commercial application, and he was growing at a rate

pick up the pieces and re-assemble them in a new order. (The group did manage to hit the charts with a song called *Time Seller*, but that was still largely due to lingering Winwood associations.) The first person he looked up was Eric Clapton, an ex-Yardbird who was just getting off a hot streak which would take him to height perhaps rivaled only by Winwood. (Clapton was fresh from a stint with John Mayall's Blues-breakers and an album which many still contend is the finest white blues record ever to be produced.) The two had jammed together on previous occasion, and they had once even joined forces in a loose alignment called Powerhouse.

From all indications, Powerhouse was just a name used to identify some friends jamming on their mutual affection for the blues sometime in late 1965. The group might never have come to light were it not for the release of an Elektra sampler called *What's Shakin'* some years back. (Released in late 1966, this legendary collection also includes performances by Al Kooper, the Lovin' Spoonful, Tom Rush and the Butterfield Blues Band.) Listed as Steve Anglo for contractual reasons, he was unmistakable as Stevie Winwood by his contribution. As evidenced by *Crossroads*, these sides opted more for tradition than polish, but they reflected a power of commitment, which would lead both Clapton and Winwood into areas of music which these songs don't even hint at.

Emerging Traffic

Stevie's own ideas ruled out the possibility of traditional anything, but he needed the support of other energies to bring life to his embryonic concepts. And he had a pretty good idea where to begin the search.

Jim Capaldi, whose father had been teamed with Stevie's on several occasions, was performing with a Birmingham band known as Deep Feeling. The group did a lot of original material and was greatly influenced by blues guitarist Davy Graham (and particularly the cultural exchange which he carried back from a visit to Tangiers), and Dave Mason was also with this group for awhile. Chris Wood had been part of Locomotive, a group that did its best to sneak in some elementary jazz between the foxtrots and waltzes. During the final days of the Spencer Davis Group, Stevie could often be found at the pub where Jim's band played; and more often than not up on stage, the willing victim of his passion for music. In playing with these musicians, certain mutual gears locked into place and the idea of something a little more permanent was just part of the flow.

The Berkshire countryside is only a bit more than an hour in driving time from London, and the ghost of history still breathes heavy in its hills and hollows. The

roots of English culture were driven deep into this soil as far back as the Stone Age, yet the nature of the country has remained remarkably unchanged in the 8,000 years since. It was in this countryside, in a rented cottage just outside the minuscule village of Aston Tirrold, that Stevie Winwood, Jim Capaldi, Chris Wood and Dave Mason got down to the business of finding out what they could become as Traffic.

There was another reason why Traffic should have settled down in such a locale. Each of the members had left "commercial" ventures of various sorts for the promise of something more. They were attempting to build a music which they had felt but never heard, a coming together of our personalities and distinct colors into a sound which had to be new. They needed an atmosphere where they could explore themselves, each other, and all which both implied. They traded the pace of man for freedom and mobility of development, drawn by the opportunity to devote more care to their music than had ever been previously possible.

The first things Traffic recorded were some tracks to score the film *Here We Go Round The Mulberry Bush* (a score which they ironically shared with the remains of the Spencer Davis Group), but these didn't reach the public until a full four months after the release of their first single. That single was *Paper Sun*, and for the English public it was a matter of love at first glance.

I was studying art in Paris at the time that single was making its way up the charts, and the British pop weeklies (*Melody Maker*, *Disc*) which served as my liaison to the outside world were filled with pages of information and praise of Traffic. Travellers from London regularly brought shreds of news, and talk among those who knew in late night cafes would make the rounds of Hendrix and Cream, but somehow usually ended in high expectations for Traffic. I traded one such traveller my copy of *Jefferson Airplane Takes Off* (not having been released in Great Britain, it was as much an item of expectant curiosity to an Englishman as Traffic was to me) for a battered copy of *Paper Sun*. I have never regretted the exchange, though I must admit to at least small surprise the first time I layed it on the turntable of the battery-operated phonograph which was the most important item in my European survival kit.

I was expecting something with rock and roll power cast in the mold of *Gimme Some Lovin'*, but *Paper Sun* was thinking along different lines. Dave Mason's conspicuous sitar set the pace on Eastern roads, while Jim Capaldi seemed to be concentrating more on percussion than standard drums. The sound was heavily textured, but each part (Wood's flute, for example, which was relatively buried) melted into a strikingly evocative totality. Winwood's voice was up front, underscored by some dense harmonies, and his most vital instrumental contribution to the song was made through the pushing power of his basslines. The total picture was certainly mysterious (if not impressionistic) and its particular brand of drive demanded some time for familiarity.

Mr. Fantasy Comes To America

At the conclusion of that summer, I returned to the States to find that people's expectations and general knowledge regarding

Traffic matched my own. FM radio stations (a force which had blossomed in the months I had been away) were playing the singles and anxiously awaiting the release of the album. The album finally arrived just as signs of Spring were beginning to assert themselves, and nobody was disappointed.

The cover of *MR. FANTASY* pictured only Winwood, Capaldi and Wood, establishing an irregularity which became all too familiar in the emerging Traffic pattern. Dave Mason, although represented by songs and performances, was nowhere to be found in either picture or instrumental credit. Nobody gave this oversight much of a notice in the rush to get the album, because what mattered was the music in the grooves. And it was all there.

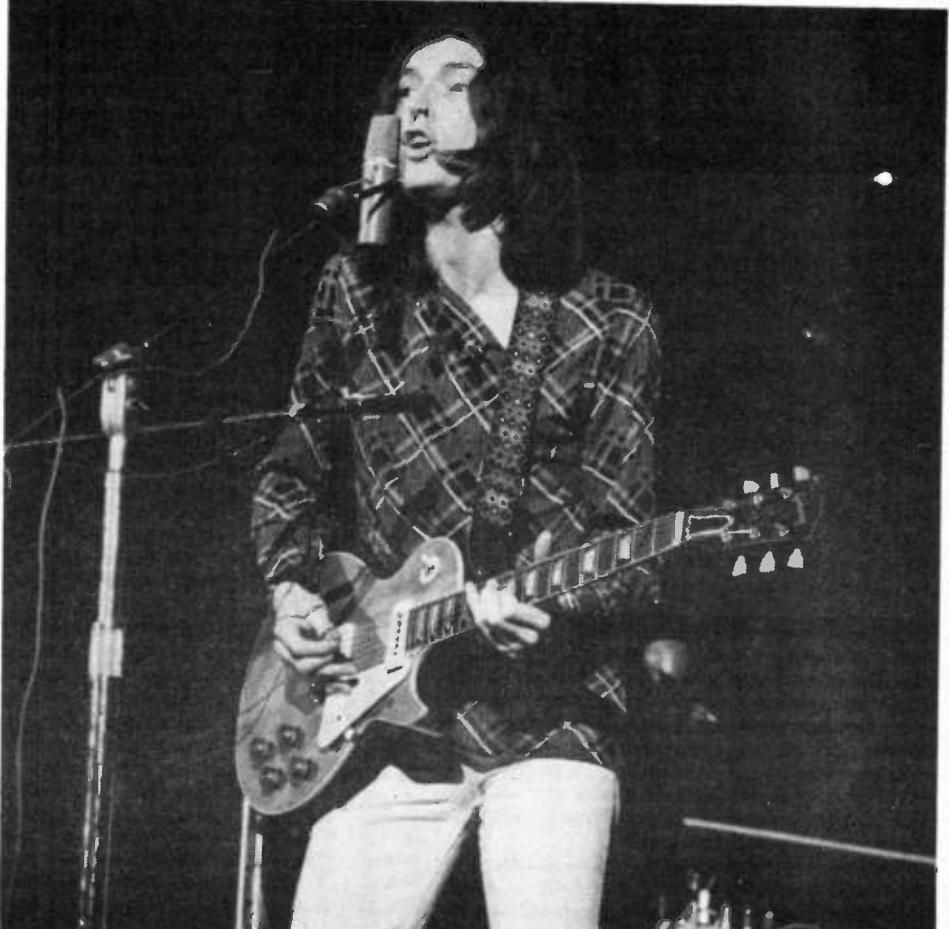
Paper Sun proved only one part of the question posed by Traffic and versatility was the key. The sweeping aptitude which each conspirator exhibited made the musical possibilities mathematically endless, and every instrument functioned, as a vehicle toward creating a self-explanatory mood. Coming precisely at the time when most of us were more than willing to venture a look beyond our accepted horizons — providing, of course, that we were furnished with experienced guides — Traffic was an instrumental tool in the expansion of our mass consciousness. *MR. FANTASY* was the first journey away from home for a lot of people.

MR. FANTASY seemed to dominate from the first punch, and its arrival commanded considerably more attention than was accorded the appearance of either the Jimi Hendrix Experience or Cream in the previous year. You could hear it all over Cambridge — blasting from the yards of Harvard or mingling with the noise of the street from an open window somewhere just off the Square — and Boston's fine FM outlet WBCN counted it a programming staple for at least two months afterward. Traffic's debut American performance was given at the Boston Tea Party, sans Dave Mason, and the reception given them, was a mixture of loud excitement and quiet awe. They did a lot of exploratory jamming that night, much of it probably due to the fact that they hadn't really re-defined themselves as a trio. When they arrived in New York, however, they found Dave Mason waiting for them with a smile on his face, and it appeared as though their first major crisis had left them with no scars that wouldn't heal.

Santa carried the second Traffic album in his 1968 bag, and it could only confirm the contention of many observers that Traffic would emerge a considerably stronger unit. It was called simply *TRAFFIC*, and it was a clarification of all the points made on *MR. FANTASY*, heightened by cleaner production and a more pervasive aura of unity. Notable cuts include *Vagabond Virgin* (a kissing cousin to *FANTASY*'s *Dealer* stylistically) and *40,000 Headmen* (which evidenced an increasing concern for their English folk heritage, which would become unavoidable on the later *JOHN BARLEYCORN* album). That the album effectively carried out its mission may be seen in the fact that it remains probably their most universally loved work.

Slow Death

And then, as an almost cruel introduction to their third album, Traffic announced that



Stevie Winwood as he appeared on Traffic's 1973 tour, looking 'rather peaked' indeed.

Traffic in 1968:
Jim Capaldi, Chris Wood,
Stevie Winwood



STEVIE WINWOOD

they were parting company. Dave Mason had already left (again), but the basic division in his case, had been obvious for some time. Where Dave Mason presented songs for recitation, the rest of the group worked out their compositions as a body, and the difference between a Mason song and a non-Mason song was unmistakable. This time, however, it wasn't merely one member creating a situation for adjustment; it was the collapse of a frame work and it sounded awfully final. They gave up the cottage and one couldn't ignore that persistent feeling that a vision had been choked off before it had found its consummate expression.

The inevitability of the parting was manifested artistically on the live side of LAST EXIT. Their performance as a trio seemed to say that they had given in to their jazz tendencies; group structure was abandoned for an open jam format, and the name Traffic ceased to have meaning as an organizing device. They had gone as far as they cared to under that particular banner, and the only solution appeared to be surrender to different directions and a change of scenery. The studio side of LAST EXIT was decidedly uneven, but at least one track, *Medicated Goo*, ranks among their finest songs. It's a bit of great nonsensical funk, the most direct piece of rock and roll from Stevie since his Spencer Davis days. Great as it was, though it couldn't conceal the fact that it was good-bye.

Seeking a fresh source of inspiration, Stevie began to hang out with Eric Clapton once again. The cottage shook off the mothballs, and Ginger Baker was not long in joining Clapton (his albums from Cream) and Winwood in Berkshire. Three weeks later,

new group was called — quite appropriately, given the situation — Blind Faith.

On paper it looked to be nothing short of spectacular, but something was amiss from the very beginning: when people talked about Blind Faith they invariably talked in numbers and percentages, hardly the common vocabulary of rock and roll. They gave a free recital (or was it rehearsal?) in Hyde Park, and drew over 150,000 people on word-of-mouth assurance. An American tour was hastily arranged, and an album recorded. Excitement was pushed to the top of the thermometer, but the venture was not fated to last very long.

The Blind Faith album disqualified itself on the grounds of self-incrimination, solidifying the evidence of Stevie's strategical error. Stevie had ostensibly left Traffic because its structure had ceased to mean anything, but he had put himself in a position where the structure of this band was being sung to the skies before they could even define their music. The album was rushed, and was exactly what Stevie feared most in the restrictions of a group: form without inspiration. The majority of the good moments were Winwood's (*Sea Of Joy* for instance) but the prematurity which hung over the project drowned out any sunshine. Soon everything, right down to the reaction of the audience, was tinged with artificial color and an excitement which was forced. It left only one way out.

Blind Faith died to a gasp of relief, leaving Stevie wiser but not much farther down the road. He played a lot of session work to keep his fingers loose, turning in fine performances for such as Joe Cocker and Leon Russell. He was briefly a member of Ginger Baker's Air Force, but the brevity of his tenure says that he

the album progressed like cold syrup, leading Stevie to two important realizations. The first was simply that music is an artform which is nourished by contact with people, and the second was the value of working with people who know and understand the terms of your vision. These realizations found their best examples in two particular people who are already familiar to this story.

Jim Capaldi came first, helping out with the percussion on a couple of tracks. (In the interim, Capaldi had supported Dave Mason on his solo album and had worked with a group called Heavy Jelly.) Chris Wood was not far behind. He'd spent his time working mostly with Doctor John and then Air Force, but his ears were open when the call went out. What was begun as Stevie's MAD SHADOWS was completed as a Traffic reunion called JOHN BARLEYCORN MUST DIE.

Traffic Reborn

Despite the fact that JOHN BARLEYCORN traveled much of the same road that was set for MAD SHADOWS, the spirit of the new album was what defined it best. The record was aggressive from start to finish, and even those songs which struck the low-key registers were distinguished by the energy of re-affirmation. The first cut was *Glad*, and that about summed up the situation.

The public took Traffic back without a second thought. JOHN BARLEYCORN was lauded by consumer and critic alike, and the band was soon off on a reacquaintance tour which met with equal success. Traffic had returned, and the question most often asked

people, Dave Mason again. Mason spearheaded a pair of solid performances of his year-old solo LP material, while Winwood and the group were in good form on *Medicated Goo* and *40,000 Headmen* to round out Side One. The other side was quite a disappointment, however, with a thin, overextended 10½-minute *Mr. Fantasy* and a new, funkified version of *Gimme Some Lovin'* which at times threatened to give Santana a run for their money. The album was released to fulfill a contractual obligation, and viewed as a stopgap of sorts it is actually pleasant enough.

Shortly afterward, the new Traffic (once again sans Mason but retaining Grech, Gordon, and Reebop) undertook an extensive U.S. tour. While Reebop's influence and Capaldi's switch from drums had wrought a change in the group's overall sound, Winwood's new material was enthralling. Subsequently it formed the core of the *LOW SPARKS OF HIGH HEELED BOYS* LP, with *Hidden Treasure* and *Many A Mile To Freedom* in particular as haunting a pair of tracks as Traffic had ever laid down. *Rainmaker* was an obvious attempt to recreate the traditional-folk aura of *John Barleycorn* (the song), but exclusive of the jarringly superfluous closing jazz bit, it worked quite nicely; while the ambitious title track, although a trifle lengthy at 12:10 and rather wearing after multitudinous FM plays, nonetheless possessed potent mesmeric qualities and was an impressive achievement. The album, despite two lackluster Capaldi-sung numbers, was an artistic success — not exactly galvanic in terms of energy levels, but melodically enchanting and quite enjoyable.

After the SPARK came another year of near-total silence, punctuated by a February American tour (inexplicably hard on the heels of the autumn junket), but exhaustive Jamaican sessions (with former Muscle Shoals session men David Hood and Roger Waykins replacing Grech and Gordon) eventually produced a new LP, *SHOOT OUT AT THE FANTASY FACTORY*. It was a disheartening comedown, completely subdued in mood yet melodically barren as well. The most successful number, *Roll Right Stones*, was basically comprised of 13:40 of rather aimless instrumental meandering on a skeletal melodic framework of reasonable attractiveness; everything else lacked even those halfhearted considerations in their favor, culminating in an insidiously doze-inducing Chris Wood instrumental, *Tragic Magic*. Winwood's singing was a bit tepid-sounding, and the material was suitable for little more than nodding out half-pleasantly. In short, Traffic left themselves wide open by closing the album with a tune entitled (*Sometimes I Feel So*) *Uninspired*; quantitatively the LP features too few songs at inordinate lengths, and qualitatively it is a disturbingly somnolent record indeed. On the accompanying tour, Winwood looked rather peaked, while Reebop collected the audience's impassioned plaudits (involving multiple encores, despite a hyperpercussive, dragged-out set well below past standards).

The future of Steve Winwood and Traffic, then, is shadowed in doubts at the present time. Still, Traffic continues to see changes for every day of its growth, and it seems that every corner they turn only leads them to a larger sphere of appreciation. Hopefully, Stevie Winwood's best days are still spread out ahead of him, and although tomorrow will undoubtedly see him in a different sunrise, he has already presented us with more debts than we could ever hope to pay back.



Hold on! We don't want to be rock 'n roll stars. We're just waiting for a bus!!

fourth member joined and it suddenly became a band. They had a recording contract before they could turn around, and a reputation to

Blind Faith

live up to before they had ever played so much as one note together in public. The fourth member was bassist Rick Grech, recruited from a band called Family; and this

was wise to that one from the start. He seemed to be holding back, perhaps at this point by conditioned reflex, and this period is measured by his level of non-assertion. When he finally went back into the studio, he went alone.

The original plan called for Stevie to record a solo album titled MAD SHADOWS, on which he could be held responsible for every sound. The ultimate escape; not so much an ego fulfillment as a retreat. Work on

was how we could possibly have let them go in the first place.

* * * *

A period of silence ensued, finally broken by a live concert album recorded in July 1971, featuring a radically revamped group line-up of Winwood, Wood, Capaldi (on vocals and percussion now); plus old Blind Faithful Rick Grech on bass, session drummer Jim Gordon, one "Reebop" Kwaku Baah on congas, timbales and bongos — and, of all

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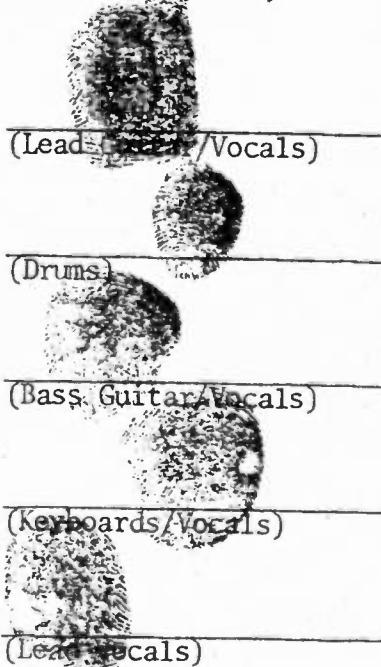
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Phonograph Record Reviews

THE HARDER THEY COME

Jimmy Cliff & Various Artists

Mango/Capitol

It's reggae, mon, sweet as cola wine and *m'bopo supremo*. No lectures, no history lessons, if ya don't know about that sound from Jamaica by now it's clear that boogaloo is foreign to your feet and you probably listen to Batdorf & Rodney at dinner. It's a different world, down at the mobile disco, 2000 watts and moving bodies glued together by sweat in a dark garage.

You don't have to go to England or any other island to know that something enormous is happening, in terms of importance if not yet bigtime dollars at this point. It's like if you took Billy Paul back to 1965 and put him on the stage with Smokey Robinson at the TAMI Show...deficiency is the word that comes to mind and once you've gotten into reggae it'll pop up again whenever you hear something less.

One reason not to date on the incredible musical and cultural conditions of which reggae is as natural bone-marrow irresistible an outgrowth as the blues was of Chicago and the Delta, is that there exists a film that says it all, using no professional actors but various reggae groups featuring Jimmy Cliff in cameo and leading roles respectively. It's a must-see; on the same level as *Rock Around the Clock* in 1955.

Until it comes to your town there's the consolation of the soundtrack album, which is the outstanding reggae compilation available in the States at this time, as pure and slick but vastly more earthy and real than Johnny Nash's admittedly fine latest album. On this album you get to the source of what Nash was trying to duplicate.

It's the only way you're gonna hear the Maytals, who are to reggae what the Clovers were to R&B. They're smooth, utterly confident, boisterously rich in tone, and endlessly enjoyable. They have been doing this since the very beginning, a decade or more back, and everybody has done their songs. They even invented the word "reggae", and it shows on *Pressure Drop* and *Sweet and Dandy*, their two numbers here and the best stuff on the album next to Cliff's theme songs.

Also present are Desmond Dekker & the Aces, first thing they've had out here since *The Israelites* and about time, too, plus lesser-known acts like Scotty, the Melodians, and the Slickers who illuminate aspects of reggae not heard in the more commercial productions our ears are used to.

It's a delight all the way through, but spotlight honors must go to Jimmy Cliff, the R&B voice of the '70s for my money, proven by *Many Rivers to Cross* as a gospel/soul talent on a par with Sam Cooke, and this ain't no Proctor & Gamble manufactured soul neither, it's the real thing. *Many Rivers* was out in 1968 on Jimmy's first American album, we've been blind for that long.

But if anything will open the eyes of anyone whose ears aren't terminally plugged, it's Jimmy's two theme numbers, *You Can Get It if You Really Want* and *The Harder They Come*. Talk about inspiring: "You can get it if you really want, but you must try, try and try, try and try..."* Driven home by that pulse-like backbeat, it puts determination in your step and clears the clouds from the sky. *The Harder They Come* complements the same message, refining it to a hard core of proud resistance and indomitable spirit.

It makes you feel good, that's what it comes down to. The music itself works on you the way R&B at its most basic only can, and the message here is relentless...it won't leave your system — and believe me, you'll wonder how you managed to live so long without it.

Greg Shaw

* © 1972, Irving Music Inc.



It's Johnny Too Bad, aka Jimmy Cliff, the hands-down best R&B voice of the seventies, the man who gave reggae its middle name, and the star of the most important rock 'n' roll movie since *Rock Around the Clock*. What's that you ask, what is "reggae"? Why it's our music, mon...

THE NEW AGE

Canned Heat

United Artists

Hot Damn! It sure is nice to have Canned Heat back again, salty as hell and playing that funky, funky boogie music as only the Heat have ever been able to do.

For a while it looked like this group might go right down the tube — and that was enough to make a grown man cry. To a lot of people, Canned Heat were the best thing at Woodstock. (Their cuts are about the only ones I still play on my old Woodstock Festival pancakes.)

After hitting that peak in 1969, Canned Heat started having problems and started to sink into a sea of refried boogie. Then came the death of Al Wilson in September, 1970 — a musical loss equal to the demise of any five Detroit bands I ever heard.

When their last album, *ANCIENT HEADS AND HISTORICAL FIGURES* finally came out last summer (after two years without any new material, except for a brilliant joint album with John Lee Hooker) it left a lot of us hard core Heat fans a little nervous. It was alright, but it just wasn't the Canned Heat we knew and loved. (Little Richard was problem enough — but Charles Lloyd trying to boogie on the flute?)

NEW AGE changes all that. One play of this dynamite disc and you'll know that Canned Heat are

back with a vengeance, as clean and tight as any boogie maniac could ever hope for.

A slimmed-down Bob Hite is still up front — but now the Bear claims to weigh an almost slender 255. Henry Vestine is back with his killer guitar, and Fito de la Parra, Mexico's gift to the blues, is still there, wailing on drums.

Added to this are three new members: brother Richard Hite on bass; James Shane on guitar and sax; Ed Byer on piano.

The result is a record with eight new songs and one old R&B goodie,

delivered in stunning style, and it all adds up to one thing: here come the Heat, and they are hot to trot baby, ready to boogie in a brand-new way.

Side one starts with a Hite original called *Rock and Roll Music* that sounds quite a bit like *Lawdy Miss Clawdy*. Byer shows his value to the group with those first rolling piano riffs — but it's more a tribute than a cop. (Those piano lines go back a lot farther than Lloyd Price, ya know — ask Professor Longhair about that.)



The new Canned Heat, on the road again, and they'll probably go a lot further than this truck looks like it'll take 'em.

Next comes *Framed*, an ancient Lieber & Stoller comedy number, originally done by the Robins before they became the Coasters and got famous. Hite's updated lyrics are just right, a grainy, hammed-up monologue laid over some of those ringing and raunchy patented Vestine guitar riffs.

Election Blues, a Byer tune, is a slow blues with a funky bottom highlighted by some slide guitar work that has to be heard to be believed. And Byer's keyboard work on this number is so tasty that it's clear the Heat will never have to borrow Dr. John for a studio session again.

Side two is just as rewarding, with five fresh samples of the new/old Heat sound. *Keep it Clean* is a Hite ecology ditty with some tight piano and refreshing harmonies, while *Harley Davidson Blues* is another Shane composition, written with motorcycle nut Henry Vestine in mind.

Don't Deceive Me is a Hite tune with some rather surprising country-sounding harmonies (blended with nifty blues guitar riffs), while *You Can Run But You Sure Can't Hide* reveals that Ed Byer (who wrote this too) has filled a big hole in the band. (But I'd rather hear him play than sing.)

The last track, *Looking For My Rainbow* is an absolute knockout, that starts off with just a touch of tinkly piano, then builds to a duet with the Clara Ward Singers, which injects a fresh gospel tone into the black-bottom music the Heat have always been famous for.

There isn't a single throwaway track here, and even the weaker numbers have musical strengths that most bands who've been at it since the days of Lyndon Johnson have left along the way.

It's a new age for Canned Heat and the Bear is on the move again, with a group that really knows what it takes to make a comeback work. Thanks fellas.

Dave Hill

COSMIC WHEELS

Donovan

Epic

Donovan is back! He got a new gig so I guess it's okay to blow the lid on how he got to the top of the pop once before. Even his mom didn't tell you but I will: he treated rock and roll like a babysitting job. How do I know? Old Uncle Donny used to sit with me and my sister Mugsy. He was the only sitter who could ever make us mind good. And that was only because he was such a weirdo. Remember how he used to float on stage wearing a long white robe looking like he escaped from the last supper? He used to mesmerize audiences that way. Even those stoned acid heads just itching for Hendrix licks would shut up and listen to him. They said it was his good karma and pure vibes. Shit, that was just Hollywood. He'd do the same thing for Mugsy and me. Dress up in clever celestial costumes so that we

thought that he was a messenger of God almighty. And you don't mess around with the divine, see. Then he'd tell us weird stories about Fat Angels and Electric Bananas. Before we knew it we forgot all about watching Shock Theatre.

He'd do the same number at the concerts. Old Donovan knew all those kids were deprived in the nursery rhyme department. That was because their mom was so busy squeezing them into training bras that they plumb forgot about Cinderella so Donovan spoon fed them fantasy. He cooled out a lot of neurotic kids in his time.

But don't get me wrong — Donovan was a good guy. Why when he was on *Ready Steady Go* he even smiled at slutty Kathy McGowan, super groupie hostess. Geez, only the week before John Lennon made fun of her and Jagger ignored her but our guy smiled.

But pretty soon he became a Biggie. He started buying his clothes in Chelsea. Spent money on fast cars and fast women. Drugs, too. One enterprising young lady took her tale of "A Dope Crazed Weekend With Donovan" to the *News of the World* (a distant cousin of the *National Enquirer*). Soon afterwards Donovan was busted. After all the smoke cleared he was declared persona non grata by the United States. Such behavior for an ex-Good Humor man! Now he had to cool his heels for a while. He visited a couple of local gurus and then disappeared altogether. Where had the Good Fairy flown? Who would be there to man the fantasy factory? Already the copies of *MELLOW YELLOW* were wearing thin.

But Gonzalla! The young sage was returning to them, with an offering. *COSMIC WHEELS*.

"Ought to be pretty heavy stuff," one fan remarked. "Must have taken years of contemplation," said another.

Surprise, surprise. No more Mr. Nice Guy. Donovan hasn't been hiding in Never Never Land. Seems he's been hanging out on street corners for the last three years with some heavy duty characters. In fact he bought OBA'S BAR AND GRILL and he's operating from there. You should stop over. He's got *Maria Magenta*, *Delightful Dolores*, and *Henna Ma Honey* lined up for the Wednesday night show, and we can't forget THE WILD WITCH LADY. She's got poison lipstick/She drives King Kong wild/She eats boys for breakfast/She's a goblin girl.*

This time around Donovan is really shakin'. I mean you could even dance if you want to.

And did you ever expect to find



Here's Donovan in Fantasyland, where he always belonged. It's a long way from enchanted castles to intergalactic laxative, but then there's no telling where those bananas will take you.

out how an astronaut takes a shit in a Donovan song? Just tune in on *Intergalactic Laxative* (no it's not a Pink Floyd cop). My romantic visions shattered when it was explained to me that space men wear old diapers in which they shit and pee.

I always thought that Donovan was hiding something. He wasn't no sissy. I've heard about coming out of the closet but slithering out of the gutter... *Jan Uhelski*

GRAND HOTEL

Procol Harum
Chrysalis

In a period when Decadence and illusory metaphor have become musical staples of a sort, leave it to

Procol Harum, long the overlooked four princes of Decadence and illusory metaphor, to create an album which at once typifies the movement and reduces it to its most basic absurd realities. GRAND HOTEL, a musical journey through a state of mind as provocative as anything this band has done, also finds them in relatively fine form. It all makes for a package which thoroughly reinforces Paul Williams' comment in the SHINE ON BRIGHTLY liner notes to the effect that were there not a Procol Harum, we would surely possess a gnawing void where they did not exist.

Despite his insistence that he doesn't want to create a concept album until he's ready to sit down and do it right, Keith Reid has once

again written words which reflect a fairly consistent mental framework. The grand hotel theme serves as a good umbrella for it, a hostel for traditional, aristocratic splendor as it were. The main concerns of life, give or take a few, have finally been rendered properly trivial by Reid, who more than ever has simplified the face value of his work and still created lyrics which typify the mood of his style.

The title song, along with several other blockbusters on this LP, helps to raise the general ambience of the album above that of any Procol album in a couple of years. With majestic, sweeping passages featuring orchestra and chorus and waltz movements for contrast, *Grand Hotel* firmly establishes both a setting and a musical basis for the record. Amidst the cleverly textured grandeur, Reid places lines about the travails of high society. The following song, *Toujours L'Amour*, bounds along exuberantly in the footsteps of its predecessor; the singer's lady leaves him a note, takes the cat and splits, in sort of a *Sunny Afternoon* saga, only much more continental. Some nice chord changes rescue an average melody and new guitarist Mick Graham (formerly of Cochise) gets to pump a bit, playing a solo which proves he's already growing into the distinctive mold created by the group's first guitarist, Robin Trower.

A Rum Tale, a lovely waltz ballad done at a slow march tempo, contributes a whimsical alienation to the lyrical array. It's catchy, with a singalong feeling and an impressive, carefully Brooker-created melody. A biting, but only fair track. *T.V. Ceaser*, closes side one with a commentary on the one who really rules the roost in most modern homes in the Western World. This is one of the few more temporarily cynical cuts on GRAND HOTEL.

Side two begins surprisingly with a street-busker tune, *Souvenir of London*, with Brooker belting out a V.D. lament while playing banjo. It's the kind of song with some relevance for all seasons and eras, though stylistically it's another Procol surprise. *Bringing Home the Bacon*, however, is all Procol and utterly stunning. B.J. Wilson's contrapuntal percussion, Chris Copping's shrill organ and Reid's lyrics about slobbering gluttony are entirely arresting throughout this high-energy number.

For Liquorice John goes back to classic Procol balladry for its basis, and chronicles a man's enigmatic fall from grace and good fortune with a blitheness appropriate to this album. Beneath the surface, it paints a depressing picture of man's unwillingness or inability to aid his fellow man. All of which certainly leads in well to the album's masterpiece, *Fires (Which Burnt Brightly)*, certainly a song about man's lack of humanity if ever there were one. Alluding none too obliquely to America's adventure in Vietnam, Brooker sings about a war for which the reason has long been non-existent. A memorable melody, fine instrumental work (especially by Alan Cartwright on bass and Copping on organ), and an unexpected appearance by a Swingle Singer make this very classical piece all the more powerful.

Closing anti-climactically is *Roberts' Box*, a saucy rhumba about dependence on chemicals for well-being (a modern as well as long-standing tradition) that trumpets "just a pinch to ease the pain" with tongue firmly implanted in cheek. Some Beach Boy basso vocal harmony further elucidates the group attitude.

GRAND HOTEL is as effective for its ability to juxtapose the great Procol musical stateliness with Reid's insightful but almost elementary lyrical concepts as it is for being an overall masterpiece. Realistically, it isn't really the latter anyway, though with four or five exceptional tracks, the album rates favorably with any of its predecessors. But with its sense of humor, its high standards, its

application of ideas, GRAND HOTEL qualifies as a fitting step forward for a group whose direction remains one of the most unique and exacting yet attempted in rock and roll.

Jim Bickhart

STORIES

Stories
Kama Sutra

It's mortifying, devastating, and downright criminal. Absolutely terrifying. It's just that when I come across these type albums — oh, there haven't been too many historically, 'been more than ever recently, I guess there's about eight or nine now — well, the quality and stylistic brilliance here makes you realize recording is just as exciting as it ever was. STORIES is such a fine album it almost totally excuses Judy Collins from my memory banks...There are some still hung-on 1965 and the ramifications that the rock culture wrote then. Unfortunately the multitudes are too self-conscious to cringe like they ordinarily would otherwise to harmonies such as are splurged throughout STORIES, the band's second album in their two-year history.

The fact this is a brilliant LP, and it's 1973 could mean it's quite boring. Like Bruce Springsteen is 'spose to be brilliant. So's John Prine, shit, he ain't nothin' but a dummy. Dresses like a dummy. Sings dummy songs ("There's a hole in daddy's arm where all the money goes", how corny). In fact, the only thing John Prine will be remembered for, ifret he's assassinated is *David & Lydia*, the world's first ode to jacking-off on record. But with Stories it's an entirely different situation all together. Even if Michael Brown had decided to call it quits after *Walk Away Renee* and *Pretty Ballerina* in the mid-sixties, he still would have accomplished more than Carly Simon ever will, even with the old man's millions. Like Ray Sharpe didn't need to follow-up *Linda Lu*, Bobby "Boris" Pickett will always be with us, likewise for Jimmy Soul and "If Ya Wanna Be Happy For The Rest Of Your Life (Never Make A Pretty Woman Your Wife)"...Wanna know why, 'cause these dudes got class...uh-huh...The Left Banke were to 1965 what The Kingston Trio were to '61, Gene Vincent & The Johnny Burnette Trio were to '58 and what Creedence were to 1969. And that is they represent something. Which is more than you can say for Jim Croce, all he represents is deficient taste. But The Left Banke didn't quit at all — as most of us thought.

Stories are The Banke incarnate. And seeing as how Mike was only 16 when The Banke were at their chart peak, presumably there was more to come. And last year some of the receivables were in, in the form of *I'm Comin' Home*, the regional hit single by Stories from the act's first LP...that album, while a touch beyond acceptable on both a critical and commercial level, is childish in comparison to this second. Specifically, two tracks, *Love Is In Motion* and *Please, Please* qualify STORIES as the first hit for Kama Sutra since Brewer & Shipley. I mean, the company could recoup their all deals which have resulted in the red from the past two years if only they could get across the concept of STORIES to the multitudes. But it's never happened before, and it probably never will with the music business as it exists today. 'Cause there's only a couple ways to break an act and/or record today. Through a hit single or a hit LP...STORIES could easily have both, which is the reason they will have neither. If that sounds like a contradiction, then listen to this LP immediately. The musicians just reek of prowess on a REVOLVER level, the lyrics and vocals shit all over Pete Ham and Nilsson, the melodies are discreet, glamourous; and you've heard it all before. Remember (Please turn to next page)

Here he is again, guru of the vaseline minstrels. We just thought you'd like to see the castle upside-down. Actually, if you look real hard, this is a pretty weird picture. Everyone who finds 25 things wrong with it will get his name on the cover of Pink Floyd's next album.





This is Stories, 1973's answer to the Left Banke, the final answer to all questions of balance, the reincarnation of everything Paul McCartney should've been, and a bunch of honest-to-goodness cutie-pies to boot...

(Continued from previous page)
Don't Wanna Say Goodbye by the Raspberries. No? Piss off then. 'Cause you are the same people who have kept Eric Carmen from his true destiny as pop-evangelist, rock avatar. So if that isn't familiar, and you missed *I'm Comin' Home*, and thought *No Matter What*, and *It Don't Come Easy* by Badfinger and Ringo respectively were stupid...then you're stupid for reading this far.

You bet I'm feelin' pretty bitchy tonight. 'Cause I fear the fate of this LP, and as if it were mine — like I'd invest two thousand bucks in a new short and crashed with no insurance — it's gonna be a real injustice if this LP doesn't sell. And shit will hit the fan...seriously.

Miss Lisa told us at the beginning of the book about the new Beatles LP that was just completed in Los Angeles...About how cordial she would be in the next issue by tellin' us about the LP cut for cut if we treated her right; well I don't even care, Lisa, fact is I've had the new Beatles LP for two weeks now...of course it's STORIES, what ya think I meant, AMERICAN GOTHIC?

Now this is not the SGT. PEPPER, MYSTERY or WHITE BEATLES. It's really a flash-back to the BEATLES SIXTH plus SOMETHING NEW...and naturally it's been brought up to date. I'm sure Mike Brown has different ideas 'bout what STORIES is really all about, but Paul McCartney never had it so good. In fact he died when they said he did, and on a Sai Baba/Rosemary Brown level, he's Mike Brown now...I don't know who that other impostor, is on Apple, Keith Allison maybe, but he better watch it...

Stories have nothing against twelve cuts on an album, they know that's what it's for...Jefferson Airplane was a lie all the time. And, continuing with what must be called logic, the beginning of the LP happens on Side One, Cut One. *Darling* is a frenzied, anglo, Searchers-styled track with pleading vocal by Mike, as are they all. Here he lets us know about the predicament he's in due to the fact his babe has flown the coop. What a drag — "Darling if you want it, you can be sure...taking the best of the lesson, you know there's many in the stars up in the sky, and you know that somehow most of them will die"**...and the thing is, all the lyrics on the record are real innocent...No raps 'bout nuclear holocaust, Tito Rodriguez, cerebral hemorrhage, and Mike has even spared us homosexual rape. Heavens, thank goodness for that. I think we've all had it with them puds, right guys? And if any of those others were in my gym class, I'd punch 'em out too. Now Mike and the rest of the dudes may look a taste girly, mi-ol-ladi goes even as far as to say they're honest to goodness "cutie-pies" but all that's there for the same reason Ricky Nelson applied it at the end of those TV shows. it's fer show, not for blow. So if you see Mike in the Valley, let 'em alone; he's cool. Shit, anyone who pumps out lines like: "Someday, maybe, you'll

learn to sing my song/You'll say, please stay, — you're waiting will be gone...Love is in motion, I'm trying to get to you/That's cause and devotion, will make it come true for you/Could be, somewhere, another star will shine, someday, maybe your lovin' will be mine"**...Sure, it's all natural stuff...I'd like to see these cats take a shot at surfin' and hot rods...goes right good with chicks, mush, and a chusion lyric...And that tune, *Love Is In Motion*, I've waited eight years for it...Not since *Pretty Ballerina* and *Walk Away Renee* have lyrics and vocals done what these do...And if you're into what these guys are, then you'll lap it up as well.

Other outstanding, really outstanding tunes are *Please, Please* as mentioned earlier and all ninety-four seconds of *Circles* — an instrumental that puts *Nut Rocker* and *Bumble Boogie* by B. Bumble and the Stingers to the test...No offense to Mr. Fowley, but Stories win the contest without even breathing hard (*Circles* was, however, the wrong choice for a single)...

We should take notice of Ian

Lloyd who at least helped if not co-wrote all of the tracks on the LP with Mike...That is all of them with the exception of *Changes Have Begun* which belongs to Steve Love...He's an incredible guitarist and works out with Ian's bass-flash better than we could hope, but he should be required to mind his own business...for the time being anyway...Like why should Steve mess around when he could be paying attention to what Ian & Mike are doing...someday hoping to compete on their terms...Bryan Madly is the fourth cat. Like Ringo, he's very competent, but expandable and anytime none the less...The group is Mike, Ian and Steve...in that order.

This second LP was produced by Stories and Eddie Kramer. It was recorded between October of last year and this past January. And you'll never guess where: *Bell Sound Studios* in NY and *Olympic* in London. If you know these facilities' background, it should be easy to put all the elements into perspective; this act retains an identity-complete.

If you've never purchased a recording on the basis of a review

The last of the red-hot International Submarines, Gram Parsons still manages to transcend flashy fiddle-faddle.



or advertisement, this would be a damn good place to start, quite frankly. I think you can trust STORIES to deliver all I've promised it will. WARNING: If you're a fan of Leslie West, Alvin Lee, Jerry Garcia or their ilk, avoid this LP! And if that's the case, you've wasted yours and my time, so screw you. If by some freak of nature you know of a hermaphrodite out there somewhere who owns both MOVING WAVES and STORIES, and he doesn't reside in Walled Lake Michigan, we must hear from you urgently: This person is in danger, chronic danger. HE'S DEVELOPED A TERMINAL DISEASE. Science has no idea what causes the effect or how to shake this terminal virus once exposed. There's no cure for taste.

Martin R. Cef

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GP
Gram Parsons
Reprise

Welcome back, G.P. — where y'all been keepin' yourself, Lordy, must be three years now, ain't it? I sorta disremember all the rumors and hot gossip been floatin' hereabouts ever since you dropped out — pills, seems like, yeah, and bad health and depression nigh unto death...

Well, let 'em be, 'cause the Waycross Waif has survived all that and come back to do for you and me again his own very special brand of oh-so-countryfied rock. For my money, there's never been no better band for that sort of semi-snuff-queen stuff than the early Flying Burrito Bros — what with backside California bluegrass from Chris Hillman, down-and-dirty 'Bama bass from Chris Ethridge, space age technology and beercanny steel from ol' Sneaky Pete, just barely enough rock 'n' roll drumming from Mike Clarke, and the weary, wary, cooney-us-a-stump eccentricity and wiregrass grace of "Sin City" Gram.

But then Parsons pulled the ripcord, and the Flying Burritos were left to settle inexorably back to earth. Since 1970 all we've seen or heard of the elusive G.P. is one track on a Fred Neil release and lots of photos and rumors of messback Gram tagging/dragging along on various Stones excursions through the New and Old Worlds. An ignominious comedown for such a sure, albeit scrambled, talent.

But now here he is again, resurrected from whatever heaven or hell, credited with playing no instruments, and with a grin and grimace in his voice on the order of how do you like your good ol' boy, Mr. Death? Album produced by Rik Grech ('yep, that one), and brilliant backing courtesy of the Glen D. Hardin assemblage (Elvis' on-stage combo, including James Burton), plus some old friends and extra treats like By Berline, Al Perkins, and Emmylou Harris.

It ain't all beer and skittles — but what ever is? Besides, the kid's a bit out of practice. So pass lightly over the stupefying slowness of *She, the odd, over-saxed c&w-meets r&b of Cry One More Time* (G. Parsons, say goodbye to J. Geils), even the flashy fiddle-faddle farewell of *Kiss the Children*. As for the rest, it's like the old saw says: Anybody can kick the shit around; ain't too many can make it stick as good as Gram Parsons.

Still Feeling Blue, for example, bursts from the grooves with vast networks of energy and charm, fiery fiddle and rippling steel filling in the holes around G.P.'s remarkably mellow vocal. (I say "remarkably" because many of the tunes suffer just a tad from the wear-and-tear, the ravages of time and whatever else, still evident in his vocal chords.) *We'll Sweep Out the Ashes in the Morning*, on the other hand — like its counterpart on Side Two, *That's All It Took* — is a sort of Conway Twitty/Loretta Lynn duet special, with some sweet-voiced sophistication and farmer's-daughter from Ms. Emmylou Harris (from whom I hope we hear much more).

A Song for You comes sad and slow, with By's fiddle and Glen's organ droning dirgelike and G.P. himself drifting touchingly in and out of tune. The lyrics, in part at least, suggest something more of his

Parson Gram, sin-and-atonement side (think of *One Hundred Years from Now, Sin City, Down in the Churchyard*);

Jesus built a ship to sing a song

to

It sails the rivers and it sails the

tide

Some o' my friends don't know

who they belong to

And some can't get a single

*thing to work inside.**

Add the *I've been living deep in sin, I've been living blind of How Much I've Lied*, and you've maybe got an overworked c&w shtick made to live again in ol' incongruous Gram.

And so it goes the rest of the way — Burton's downhome dobro and Hardin's honkytonk piano turning *Streets of Baltimore* into a directly-from-the-airwaves-to-yore-heart-friends-an'-neighbors smash; some resonant reverb enhancing the bitterly beautiful *New Soft Shoe* — on down to *Big Mouth Blues*, a final high-energy footstomper, a sort of rhythm 'n' booze *adios* as G.P. climbs back up onto his rig and vanishes down the highway into the night, for another couple years maybe.

But I surely do hope not. 'Cause this here battered-and-bruised country kid has still got all his hickory chops down, and I'd pay triple the cost of this fine album to see or hear him any time. God love ya, Gram. You're a tired ol' good ol' boy — and you've just earned country music's annual Hard-Livin', Hell-for-Breakfast, Tulsa Turnaround Award. Congratulations. Ed Leimbacher

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TYRANNY AND MUTATION

Blue Oyster Cult
Columbia

This is as good as any album that will be released this year. Maybe not in a commercial sense, as I don't expect anyone to walk around humming *7 Screaming Diz-Busters*, but in complexity and imagination. And don't get rock and roll complexity mixed up with *Yes* (a competing rock combo) either. *Yes* is complicated just to show you how many years of music lessons they took. The Blue Oyster Cult (who learned to play on the streets) are layered and textured to make you play each tune over and over until you understand what they're getting at (which incidentally is to get naked and take sopsors).

The first BOC album was the finest record of 1972 with the exception of *EXILE ON MAIN STREET* and *THE DEADLY BEES*. The hypertension lyrics and the deep throat vocals of Jesse Python made it the most arresting debut album since Brewer and Shipley's, *MELLOW PEOPLE SMOKING DOPE IN THE COUNTRY*.

In true rock and roll fashion the words on *TYRANNY AND MUTATION* are obscured and mumbled beyond recognition. So on first listen you may think *The Red and The Black* is the same song as *I'm On The Lam, But I Ain't No Sheep* from their premier album. On second listen however, you will realize that it isn't. Yet on third listen you will come to the conclusion that it is. What lies beyond that beats me, as I haven't listened to it more than three times yet.

My favorite cut (and yours too!) is *Hot Rails To Hell*. Hard, melodic rock is the medium, and riding the subway during the rush hour is the message. If you've ever been in Grand Central Station at 4:00 P.M. you know just what they mean. Killer riff upon killer riff without forsaking melody. Thank you Blue Oyster Cult for remembering us fans who still like to sing along with records. *Baby Ice Dog* is another smoker, and Patti Smith is the guest lyricist. Let it be known that Patti is the only person on the planet who can officially "cook" on paper. And also let it be known that she does a lot of off-stage cooking with BOC organist/guitarist Alan Ianier.

It's no fun to like an album the first time you hear it. And you can bet that BOC producers Murray Krugman and Sandy Pearlman know it. They purposely constructed the album so it sounds better each time you hear it. Bright



An historic supersession caught by PRM's omnipotent candid camera. L to R: Brian Wilson, Doug Sahm, Jimmy Rabbitt and Lord Sutch, at the Second Annual San Jose Folk-Rock Festival. Sutch, of course, appears as "Bob Dylan" on Doug's latest album.

fella!! Don't cha think? So you might not even like it the first time you hear it. I didn't! So you can really dig the rush you get when you begin to fall in love with it on each succeeding listen. It's better than junk or booze, even if it won't cure your cough.

Adny Shernoff

TYRANNY AND MUTATION

Blue Oyster Cult
Columbia

You might remember my brief mention of Blue Oyster Cult's new album in the heavy metal piece. That was after only one listen, however, and I really shoulda known better. You have to remember the context, though. Blue Oyster Cult's great first LP, an absolute mind-boggling unreleased live album, and then...

A real disappointment. TYRANNY AND MUTATION just doesn't measure up to the Cult's first studio album in any way, save possibly the marked improvement in engineering. The songs are just nowhere in comparison. In retrospect it seems possible that the first album's material may have been the group's best tunes as accumulated over several years. In any event, it looks like Blue Oyster Cult just don't have the standout songwriting capacity one might've hoped.

Every cut on the album does have enough deft touches, enough compelling riffs and traces of melody to sufficiently hold your attention, but not once on this entire LP does a fuzz chord ring out with the sort of brashness that almost defines hard rock or metal music. And that's shocking, considering that two months ago I would've considered this band the ultimate heavy metal monsters. The lack of mania here is just as glaring as on their first album, only more pronounced.

Not that there aren't some good things on the album. All four cuts on Side One rock pretty well until 7 Diz-Busters fizzles out towards the end, with Hot Rails To Hell probably the album's best track. The second side is less distinguished, the songs just barely having enough hooks to make them listenable. Throughout the album, the Cult never do more than flirt with kicking out any jams, and this side is particularly lacking in guts. Too much cutesy shit and

cluttered, overly-psychedelic arrangements.

One thing, though. If you ever have the slightest opportunity to get your hands on a copy of Blue Oyster Cult's live promo album, do everything short of risking your life to do so. Not only is it the most crazed high-energy recording in the history of rock and roll, but it's probably the closest thing to a definitive hard rock or metal statement ever set to vinyl. The difference between it and the Cult's studio albums, even the first one, is like day and night. Which leaves me feeling the same way as when I sat down to write this review: utterly perplexed. I just can't believe that Blue Oyster Cult aren't capable of words better than this.

Mike Saunders

DOUG SAHM

Doug Sahm and Band
Atlantic

I remember once when I was trying to tape an interview with Doug Sahm, somebody in the Quintet spent a half-hour rolling a marijuana flower top into this bizarre joint which had the twig sticking out at both ends and was about four inches long. "Sure, man," he said, "Bob Dylan showed me how to do that." It was the kind of thing you hear a lot when you're around Doug and his people, and it isn't really name-dropping at all — Doug's been a lot of places, and he's taken a lot of time to get to where he is today, mainly because he's been saddled with a bunch of personal and business problems that would've sunk ten other men. But there are a lot of other people in this world who love and respect Doug and his ability to make music the way he does, and largely due to them, he's persevered.

Today, he is out of his nightmarish Mercury contract and signed with Atlantic, whose Vice-President Jerry Wexler is doing his best to see that Doug gets what Doug wants in the way Doug wants it. When it came time for Doug to record his first Atlantic album, all the pieces were right there in place for him. Just look at the names on the back of his album! Far — as Doug would say — out!

A bit too far out, perhaps, because it is my sad duty to report that the good stuff on this album isn't where you think it is, and

taken as a whole this album is one of Doug's weaker accomplishments. There are a number of reasons. First off, Bob "Drop-in" Dylan and Doug can't sing harmony for beans, no matter how much they dig each other. And in his well-intentioned desire to give every good picker he knows a piece of the action, Doug has cluttered several cuts here so badly that they sound like weird Texas outtakes from *Exile on Main Street*.

But as I'd hoped, the good stuff is good. Johnny and Jack's *Poison Love*, long one of Doug's favorite is given a fantastic send-off, changing it from the odd C&W tango it once was to a Cajun skip-along. Atwood Allen can sing harmony, and his *It's Gonna Be Easy* is my own favorite on the album. *Papa Ain't Salty* shows Doug's Texas shuffle guitar at its best, which is very good indeed.

At this point in his career, as I see it, Doug needs three things. He needs a band that will stick with him and that he can stick with; he needs to take this band out on tour so that those of us who have been Doug Sahm fans, as I have, for four years now without ever hearing him perform can get that long-awaited opportunity; and he needs a hit single. Doug, we dig that you got friends and we dig that they love you, but now it's time to get serious and kick ass!!!

Ed Ward

TRUE STORIES AND OTHER DREAMS

Judy Collins
Elektra

Like air pollution or a sore that won't heal, Judy Collins will not go away. She is godlike only in that she's been around forever. On this, her eight-hundredth album, she finally ventures out of her comfortable art/folk idiom a bit, a brave move which may alienate both her remaining fans, one of whom happens to be crack *Rolling Stone* reviewer Stephen Holden, who calls TRUE STORIES Judy's "best album since her *hugely underrated WHO KNOWS WHERE THE TIME GOES*." I don't know where Steve gets his records, but here in L.A. WHO KNOWS went for the exact same rate. (\$5.98 list, \$3.59 at the discount shops) as all

Judy Collins has done it again. Just when things seemed bleakest for rock & roll, she came through with the greatest album since SERGEANT PEPPER. Nice job, Judy!

her other albums. But who knows? Steve goes on to rave about the "glorious orchestral arrangements" and "insistent piano motifs" but I'll refrain from any more direct quoting and let you read it yourself in his forthcoming Straight Arrow anthology, *Golden Holden*, reportedly in the works right this minute.

The bulk of TRUE STORIES is standard Judy Collins fare — overblown trendy productions (her 1973 LP is full of pedal steel) vacuous family remembrances (her grandmother, her father, her sister) Laurel Canyon politics, Steven Stills songs, etc. What separates this album from the other 799 is Judy's venture into inane top-40 material, songs you would never associate with this *Gerdes Folk City* album.

A case in point is *The Rapper*. Judy's lovely arrangement of this standard from the Jaggerz is perhaps the high point of the record. While it doesn't utilize the glorious orchestral arrangements of *Song For Martin* or *Secret Gardens of the Heart* one is inexorably drawn to the cut time and time again for Judy's remarkably poignant phrasing in the chorus. "Rap rap rap, they call him the rapper," she sings in a voice so totally piercing that it is at once both believable and touching. Like Tom Seaver or your milkman, Judy's gift is her delivery and it never fails.

Earlier J.C. albums were heavily laced with tributes to her father and this one follows suit, but apparently mom has demanded equal time. How else can you explain Judy's balls-out rendition of *Mama Weer All Crazy Now*? Starting up where Slade leaves off, Judy literally whips the entire orchestra into a frenzy, all of 'em gettin' down for the first time with this piece of solid raunch from the pubs of England doin' for Noddy Holder in '73 what she did for *Sylvia Fricker* in 1967. Of particular note here and on the rest of the record is Lou Killen's outrageous concertina work. Obviously driven to the summit of his abilities by the crazy Collins, his playing is filled with a sense of commitment that no doubt made itself felt by the entire orchestra.

Incidentally, did you ever wonder why Judy calls her publishing firm "Rocky Mountain National Park Music Company"?

Neither did I, but what about the title of this album: TRUE STORIES AND OTHER DREAMS (!!!). Now there's a puzzler for you. Kept me up all night, even dropping a few tabs (still looking for 'em, by the way) trying to get to the bottom of that one and here's what I came up with: even things that we think are real (true stories) may be, in fact, merely dreams! *Nothing is real!* It may have taken her six years, but Judy's come up with the ultimate 1967 album title and Steve Holden didn't even notice it.

Getting back to the music on this record, it's pretty much downhill the rest of the way. *Cook With Honey* is so down home and organic that just listening to it will get your hands dirty. Marcia Strassman's self-righteous *The Flower Children*, seemingly an ideal choice, generates no fervor given its semi-rock setting and Collins' inability to transcend vocal decorum.

The by now expected "father tribute" on side two disappoints as well. A medley of Paul Peterson's *My Dad*, the Winstons' *Color Him Father*, and Pat Cupp's *Long Gone Daddy* sounds good on paper, but it just doesn't work here. Judy blows the transitions, clumsily changes the words in the Peterson tune to fit a female voice and, worst of all, somebody very loudly miked (the producer? Judy?) keeps sneezing throughout the track. A total bomb and eight minutes worth, too.

You may treasure this album or you may hate it. Only one thing's for sure — you won't buy it. In the meantime, this reporter's off to the National Judy Collins Fan Club Convention, to be held this year in a phone booth on Sunset and Vine. (I think her dad's the other fan). Cook with honey, kids.

Mark Shipper

APPROXIMATELY INFINITE UNIVERSE

Yoko Ono
Apple

Yeah, well, believe it or not: this is a totally rock 'n' roll album. It's also so far and away the best Beatles-related effort to come out since the Beatles' breakup that the immediate question here is whether John Lennon wrote the music (for which Yoko claims credit) on this double LP.

This isn't just the academic question of whatever reverse sexism would be involved in Yoko's claiming credit for things she didn't write, nor the even more pedantic one of my being a cynical jade in doubting Yoko's ability to write songs this good. It's more a simple detective mystery: did John Lennon write this stuff? A couple of songs sound strongly like his style, but many don't particularly, and the whole matter is muddled by the fact that John has not exactly been a consistent songwriter since about 1965 (leaving it hard to say how much of his old rocker brilliance he still possesses). In the end none of it matters, because whoever did write the music here has come up with one of the best, most listenable batches of material I've heard in a good while.

Number two, Yoko's singing is great. You could tell on SOMETIME IN NEW YORK CITY that she was making steps toward a normal singing style, in fact I dug *Sisters O Sisters* a lot, but her voice was still rather weak. This time it's down pat. I might as well admit my bias out front, in that I'm one of the biggest girl group oldies nuts around, and a real sucker for good female rock 'n' roll voices. Yoko's here is a striking combination of Kathy Young, Linda Scott, and Rosie Hamlin, plus some mannerisms all her own, so it goes without saying that I dig it.

Yoko also plays around with her voice a lot, gets numerous different sounds, and comes up with some great phrasing on occasion; it's fun to listen to. Like the music on the album, her singing is pure, very Fifties-rooted rock and roll, but nonetheless Yoko seems to approach it all from a drastically different set of premises than most rockers. It makes for a weird mix. I dunno, maybe she did learn to sing from John's battered copy of *Angel*.

Please turn to next page, John...



Baby after all!

Getting into the music, *I Felt Like Smashing My Face In A Clear Glass Window* may be the punk rock song of the month. Great music, some great lyrics on the level of the Stooges; a genuine punker. I guess you just have to hear it to believe it. The songs that rock are all good; *Approximately Infinite Universe*, *Yang Yang*, *Peter The Dealer*, and *Kite Song* are only some of the obvious standouts. *Catman (The Rosies Are Coming)* has terrific gibberish lyrics and rocks just fine; I'd rather listen to it than Captain Beefheart any day.

Of all the Fifties riffs and cliches that pop up here and there, *Air Song* may be the most truly brilliant. An overused word, just like genius, but when you hear the same old stuff, yet twisted around in a way that makes it fresh all over again, it can be really something. Shows a real sense of rock and roll, too.

Of the 22 cuts, 10 are basically ballads. Like any double album, this one could've been reduced to a single LP (actually, there are about three sides of excellent music here), and the lesser ballads would be the first to go. In general they slow down the pace of the LP. But a couple are great. *I Want My Love To Rest Tonight* may be the best song of its type since *Soldier Boy* or so...The vocal similarity in the chorus to Diane Renay, plus a couple other people I can't put my finger on, boggles the mind. Besides, the song has a beautiful melody.

Ditto parts of *Now Or Never*, which is mostly dumb lyrically, but has one line that goes "People of America..." that's just right. *Death Of Samantha* is the strongest down-tempo cut of all, a moody slow-paced 4/4 rocker about a girl that sez "I'm a cooool chick, baby." The music is like that, airy and detached, to perfect effect.

Oh yeah, lest I forget, Yoko still does a couple of her patented kamikazi warble vocal attacks. *What Did I Do*, though part of it is sung straight, is good; and *Is Winter Here To Stay* is a blues done 100% in kamikazi warble. While not one

of the LP's best cuts, it's still a classic of sorts, as you can imagine.

I hope I haven't overemphasized the Fifties aspects of the music here. Elephant's Memory sound like a typical Seventies band on most of the rockers, with plenty of fuzz guitar and wah-wah. They sound like themselves, if you know what I mean. Most of the occasional Fifties sound comes from Stan Bronstein, whose sax playing is just beautiful, perfect for rock and roll. Elephant's Memory aren't as raucous as on the last John & Yoko album, but as far as their contribution to the listenability of this whole double album goes, they're superb.

You may think I've gone nutso, but I don't care; Yoko has gotta be one of the new talents of the year, and hands down the finest female rock 'n' roller since the Shangri-Las. There have been four new albums I've played incessantly over the past month: Slade, Blue Oyster Cult, live promo, The Stooges...and this.

Those first three are so monstrously good, it seems that any album capable of holding its own with them must be masterpiece of sorts, and *APPROXIMATELY INFINITE UNIVERSE* may be just that. Remember all the bullshit about how the Beatles' white album supposedly assimilated all sorts of rock 'n' roll traditions? This album does it so much better, and it's far more fun to boot. Yoko Ono may be a pompous asshole, and possibly a reverse sexist pig to boot (as it even mattered), but I don't care, she's got the beat and that's what counts. She gets my vote any day.

Mike Saunders

HOGWASH

The Groundhogs
United Artists

The Groundhogs are one of the sparest, rawest, most elemental rock groups in the business today. They play a stripped down style of blues influenced electronic rock that apparently seems to be the

natural mode of expression for most three-man groups. The drums-bass-lead guitar combination is a self-contained unit that provides the motive power for some ninety per cent of the rock groups currently going. Even those groups that supplement the basic unit with either a vocalist, or duplicate guitar, organ, or banks of brass still build their sound around the unit core. Take away the unit from such groups as Chicago, or The Stones, or Procol Harum, and you are left with the frazzled ends of connectionless musicians. The unit is the soul of rock and roll.



It is no accident, then, that the most hardnosed rock groups are often trios. To make up for the lack of instrumentation, the lead and bass guitarists are forced to provide far more than their normal share of the music. Eric Clapton in Cream, and Jimi Hendrix in his Experience days both developed a technological orientation that changed the character of the electric guitar. Tony McPhee of the Groundhogs is the heir and the successor to Clapton and Hendrix, and perhaps a better musician than either of them.

The Groundhogs do not make patented boogie music. If anything, they produce some of the least ingratiating noise ever to be packaged and sold on the open market. It is serious music in a profound sense: searingly harsh, deceitfully complex, and fully as advanced as the Velvet Underground's *Sister Ray*, or much of Captain Beefheart's music, whom the Groundhogs often sound

like. The Groundhogs inhabit a hard, no nonsense world of sound. They maintain an aloof and frightening posture that puts as many demands on the listener as it does on them. But its rewards are well worth the effort.

HOGWASH is somewhat simpler in structure than their last album, *WHO WILL SAVE THE WORLD*. That last album was one of the best releases of 1972, although it received nowhere near the attention that it deserved. But then, the Groundhogs, for various reasons, are not one of the most immediately popular groups going. The combination of their unrelenting brand of music, plus the fact that the Groundhogs are one of the dullest looking bands, whose leader and potential superstar is a figure of craggy ugliness, and the additional burden of having no inclination to engage in the normal show biz show stoppers, leaves them in the position of having to rely on cult audiences for their popularity. Not a formula for quick riches.

While the electronically mutated strains of McPhee's guitar powers the Groundhogs on every song, they are rarely far from their blues influence. *Mr. Hooker, Sir John*, is McPhee's tribute to the blues, and therefore is least like the rest of the songs on the album. Elsewhere, blues trends run like a black weave through the songs, understated, but always present. *Sad Is The Hunter*, is more typical. A muddy mix, overlapping of simple repetitive riffs into a complex, obsessive stew. *Earth Shanty*, and *You Had A Lesson* both contain little side trips into Moody Bluesland, or undercurrents of space music. *I Love You Miss Ogyny*, is a howling banshee wail of a song, done with a constricted arrangement by the three musicians, and a subtle sense of the dramatic.

I guess it might be a little unfair to single out Tony McPhee, when Pete Cruickshank on bass, and Clive Brooks on drums simply cannot be faulted. The trio is like a tripod, and no single leg can function without the others. The Groundhogs make rock and roll.

They do not posture about in the glare of superstar hype nor do they try to be all the things that rock and roll is not. They make up possibly the best coordinated unit around. They are rock and roll.

Robbo Houghton

THEY LOVE ME/ THEY LOVE ME NOT

Genya Ravan
Dunhill



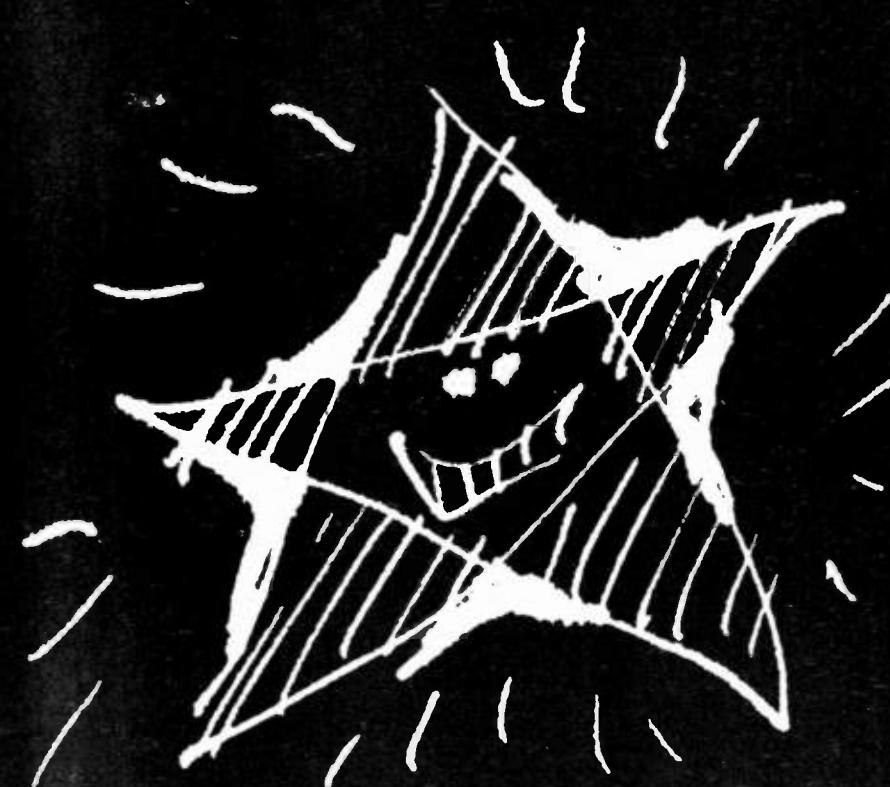
The cover of this one looks like a Bazooka Joe cartoon. And Bazooka Joe stinks!

Chester Morris is dead, even if he isn't dead he's dead. Wayne Morris is definitely dead, he's just plain dead. Gouvernor Morris is dead too. So is Bill Morris (Bill Morris is dead!). And last but not least Wesley Morris is deader than a puppy. Which sure was prophetic.

'Cause there never was a puppy in a Bazooka Joe strip and Weswuz the guy who drew it. Serves him right to be dead (Bazooka Joe never was any good). Cause Bazooka Joe never was any good. Never as good as Pud, that's for sure. Both of 'em came with gum but the gum with Bazooka Joe was always better than Bazooka Joe itself and the gum with Pud (Fleer) was never as good as Pud itself. Plus the Fleer was always better than the Bazooka.

Plus the lettering on Bazooka Joe was always worthless. Plus they never made use of the whole rectangle like with Pud cause of those stupid ads for worthless garbage like free baseball batting

BIG STAR // #1 RECORD



"#1 RECORD isn't revolutionary—it's just exceptionally good. The group seems to have used the California bands of the mid-Sixties—primarily the Byrds and Moby Grape—as models, but there's a brightness on the uptempo tunes that seems Beatles-inspired. Even the prettiest tunes have tension and subtle energy to them, and the rockers reverberate with power."

ROLLING STONE

"Led by ex-Box Topper, Alex Chilton, their sound is full of attractive contrasts and just below the surface subtleties."

BILLBOARD

"There aren't any 'names' on the album other than one former member of the Box-Tops, and everybody sings so I can't name names when I say that, at certain times, one could swear the vocals were by Robert Plant, Roger Daltrey, Roger McGuinn, or any of a dozen others... just about every track could conceivably be made into a single."

FUSION

"...this album is one of those red-letter days when everything falls together as a total sound. BIG STAR is into new musical directions but with a firm hold on their roots."

CASHBOX

"No, this is a group you don't wanna pass up, believe me. And you may never hear of them again, God forbid, so let's do what we can to make sure they're around for some time."

PHONOGRAPH RECORD MAGAZINE



ARDENT RECORDS IS DISTRIBUTED BY STAX/COLUMBIA

glove (ages 10-14) for 375 Bazooka comics or 75 cents & 15 comics. Those x-tra 15 are still 15 cents so it's 90 cents total which means it's a real cheapie baseball batting glove and in other words it will fall apart after 13 at bats. So who needs baseball batting glove ads interfering with the comics?

Plus the stories are (pee-yew!), they're just (ugh!), they're, they're terrible. To read them is to puke like this one for instance: The guy with the turtle neck over his mouth sez "I've got some cold in my nose!" To which Joe replies "There's someone who suffers more than you when he gets a stuffed nose!" Turtle Face then sez "Yeah, who?" The answer is wordless, it is just the silhouette of Joe pointing his finger towards the fatso elephant behind closed bars in the zoo or maybe it's a circus but anyway there's bars and the pachyderm has its trunk (i.e. nose) immersed in a bucket of water. The bucket is white and the elephant is grey and the thing about these small comics is the people and animals are almost as small as the dots and the turtle guy has these gesture marks all around his silhouette to show his astonishment. He is astonished. Wotta dumb strip!

But at least one thing's all reet and that's having a half-blind creep as the hero. Blind folks from coast to coast would take heart in their affliction if they could only see this dip held in such high esteem by his comrades despite his bad peeper.

Then there's this one where him and the turtleneck - this time the t.n. has a sailor hat on - are in the restaurant and there's a human fatso who is eating at the counter. Turtle sez to Joe: "Since I'm working the lunch counter business has improved!" Joe: "Selling a lot of sandwiches?" "Nope - stomach pills!" Yes the fatty's tummy is all messed up by the onslaught of greasy-spoonitis but let's ignore the humor for a second and go back to the first frame. In it there is a reference to "the lunch counter business." In other words it is not a restaurant at all but in actuality a lunch counter, perhaps at a small-town drug store or maybe the suburbs or Whelan's in New York City. In other words the location is ambiguous but the ripoff of Wimpy for the fat guy is not: the fat guy is ripped off from Wimpy.

But the wax on the comics is not ripped off from the bees. Cause it's parafin not beeswax. Beeswax costs too much and if they used it they'd have to charge 2 cents. Do they charge two cents yet? Dunno, it's very likely so if they used beeswax then they'd have had to charge 2 cents in 1955. Nobody had two cents in 1955.

Pud was a lot better. For instance: they had each comic numbered so you could collect 'em in order. That's if you knew how to count. A lot of kids never learn how to count until the first grade. Yet a lot of them collect Puds and Bazooka Joes at an earlier age so in this regard Bazooka Joes are no worse off than Puds in this regard. Lucky for them cause in all other ways Bazooka Joe stinks.

Also, when was the last time you saw green in a Bazooka Joe? Never. Cause they never have green. Pink, yes, but no green and mostly just yellow and blue and red and black. Colors you wouldn't want your mother-in-law to be stuck with and they expect you to buy Bazooka Joe! Crazy!

But there's a lotta drama in Bazooka Joe cause when you open 'em up it's whether it's gonna be red on white or white on red at the top of the page where it sez "Bazooka Joe and his Gang." It could be either and it's never neither. Too bad, cause if it was neither then maybe it would be NO BAZOOKA JOE AT ALL (Bazooka Joe stinks)!

So it's lucky for Wesley M that Wesley M is long gone cause if he wasn't long gone he'd be soon to go and that's a lotta worries to carry on your shoulders in addition to having to draw Bazooka Joe every day or every 6 months or whenever it is. How often did Wesley Morris have to do it? Dunno, ask his widow if she isn't with the maggots herself.

And if you flip over the album to the rear cover you'll see that Genya looks pretty cadaverized

herself (but her nipples and cigarette look pretty lively). Poor Genya, who is left to mourn her?

R. Meltzer

STEALER'S WHEEL A&M

The concept of Stealer's Wheel began nearly two and a half years ago: Gerry Rafferty, was half of what was touted as a folk duo called the Humblebums. What the Humblebums amounted to, at least on record, was a very democratic alliance - Rafferty would do his songs his way, only marginally aided by his partner, Billy Connally. Connally, then, would do his songs his way. Which meant that the two albums they did together yielded the equivalent of one fine album - namely the Rafferty tracks. (There was a first Humblebums LP released, in the UK only, Rafferty didn't appear. The second and third LP's were released here on the now defunct Liberty Records.)

It became evident on those two albums that Rafferty was far from being a folk artist which Connally was. Rafferty's talents were pure Mainstream Pop. His high voice, which bordered on a delicious nasality, was perfectly suited to the form.

Stealer's Wheel, then, was to be the pop outlet for Rafferty's quite substantial talents. Some two years and numerous personnel changes on, an album has been released which realizes Rafferty's conception. It is, in short, one fine pop album.

While Rafferty's remarkable voice does demand most of the attention, it is far from the one man show that was expected. Joe Egan, who replaced original member Rab Noakes, contributed four songs, co-wrote four of the best tunes with Rafferty, and sings real pretty in his own right.

Economy has always been the basis of the finest pop music. Rarely does overindulgence beget good pop music, a fact of which Stealer's Wheel are apparently well aware judging by their choice of producers. Jerry Lieber and Mike Stoller, ace pop economists of all time, have done a keen job here. Their ability to keep the production crisp and interesting while avoiding the overproduction traps that so many have fallen victim to is a testament to their capabilities. The tracks are the epitome of conciseness and economy.

Stuck in the Middle is a perfect example of this. It begins with a bright, upbeat acoustic guitar which is soon joined by Tony Williams' loping bass and hand claps (a la *I Want to Hold Your Hand*) on the backbeat. Rafferty then slides in with the vocal, soon aided by Egan on harmony. Clipped electric guitar chords then work off the handclaps. The drums don't appear until well into the song but the rhythm that Lieber, Stoller and the Wheel have generated is so infectious that their absence is barely noticed. In essence, this song points out the real strength of the album in the context of pop music - it is, above all, superbly crafted music - well conceived, well structured, and simply but effectively executed. *Stuck in the Middle* is the kind of song that can grace the tubes of my car radio anytime.

The rest of the album is just about as good. It encompasses quite a few styles, from the bossa nova of *Next to Me* to the tongue-in-cheek heaviness of *I Get By* to the wistful *Gets So Lonely*.

The only depressing thing about STEALER'S WHEEL is that it's the only album by them that will be honored by Rafferty's presence. He left the group in December and was replaced by Ex-Spooky Toother Luther Grosvenor. It'll be no mean feat if Luther can be the hub that Gerry Rafferty was in Stealer's Wheel.

At any rate, if you're even half as susceptible to any weekend in the company of actual melodies, skillful harmonies, well-crafted tunes, handclaps, and Gerry Rafferty's voicebox as me, grab this album. It's damn spiffy.

Bruce Burkhartsmeir

JIMMY CLIFF in The Harder They Come



If you live near New York City, Washington, D.C., Cleveland, Macon, Jacksonville (Fla.), St. Louis, Kansas City, Boston, Atlanta, Savannah, Ocala, or Sarasota you've had a chance to see this film.

THE HARDER THEY COME will be opening soon in places like St. Petersburg, Tampa, Charlotte, Miami, Ft. Lauderdale, Del Ray, Sparta, and Rome (Ga.). Additional playdates are in the works, so keep looking.

Meanwhile, the well-reviewed soundtrack is available EVERYWHERE! So, if you can't see the film, you can hear the music. THE HARDER THEY COME is on the new and different MANGO Label, available through your Capitol dealer. There are no lemons on Mango.

THE HARDER THEY COME (Film Soundtrack) - Jimmy Cliff with The Slickers, Desmond Dekker, The Maytals, Scotty and the Melodians. Mango Records (SMAS-7400).

"But words can't do justice to the music."

—Lorraine Alterman, NY TIMES

"Fast, tough, sinuous, with a score of Jamaican reggae that jauntily accentuates its vigor . . ."

—Jay Cocks, TIME

" . . . I left the theatre whistling those catchy, syncopated tunes . . ."

—VILLAGE VOICE



IN THE BEGINNING
Frank Sinatra
Columbia

Robert Ulrich's term an "autobiographical singer" is as good a way as any to describe the hypnotic sibilance and sense of lovelorn/starstruck polarity (and shadings thereof) that so soothingly equal vintage Frank Sinatra. And the recordings collected on these two discs (all waxed between 1943 and 1951) are indeed vintage: from the days when Sinatra was the superstar of the airwaves, before he was really into movies, or making money make money; when that strain in his voice was for real, when that aura of liveliness was evincing the way a whole generation of Americans felt. Tunes from the escapist lexicon of the likes of Sammy Cahn, the Gershwins, Irving Berlin and Johnny Mercer (where would any Sinatra anthology be without the inclusion of *Dream?*) and others, all brilliant and rarefied by the bittersweet inflections of the Crooner, allowed a nation At War to still dream and enchant a little among the bruises and bestiality of each day's headlines. From the cartwheeling inanity of *The House That I Live In (That's America To Me)* and *The Coffee Song (They've Got An Awful Lot of Coffee in Brazil)* to the loopingly fine lyricalese of *The Moon Was Yellow* and *Sunday Monday and Always* to the unabashed pathos of *Saturday Night (It's the Loneliest Night of the Week)* and *I'm A Fool To Want You*, the pace is breezy yet bold, tongue-in-cheek tremulous (nobody rhymes anymore like Cahn or Kern) yet loaded with anguish in between those string swoops and ultrasonic Big Band pauses and hesitations. That always curlicue quietly back into that upper register baritone "glide" that was the essence of Sinatra during the breadth of the Forties. That birthed all the still-continuing line of Vic Damones, Tony Bennets and Johnny Mathises that surfaced in his wake. All attempting to emulate what always came so naturally for singers like Sinatra and Sam Cooke — who had that ability to monopolize whatever banal arrangements or nonsensical vocal choruses they were tossed into or among; with that emotional punch and poignancy in their voices and intonations.

A tune by tune rundown on this disc would be ridiculous — stretching the obvious to the point of non-appreciation, as a matter of fact. Let me just single out a couple to add to the list in the first paragraph: namely the everwistful *Nancy With The Laughing Face*, the subtly crescendoing *Full Moon and Empty Arms* (that is classically based on Rachmaninoff's Piano Concerto No. 2), the best-ever version of *Ol' Man River* (aside from the Five Keys) — and the Wizard of Oz-sounding, yellow brick roadish innocence of *Put Your Dreams Away For Another Day*. What we have with this collection, in summation, is the ultra-best of that syndrome known as Tin Pan Alley, sung by one of the few really gifted vocalists this country ever produced. Plus, these are the tunes that World War II took place around and among — for me the lush opiate for a complacency that was to spring full-blown into the McCarthyism of the Fifties. Kind of an auditory barometer of an era featuring a man who couldn't resist the neon and glitter of it all. And, maybe, deservedly so. Now if only Capitol Records would re-package and re-issue some of the best of Sinatra's mid and late Fifties material so the picture would be more complete? With the original covers even, maybe? What could be better except perhaps the session he did with Elmore James!

Gary von Tersch

DARK SIDE OF THE MOON
Pink Floyd
Harvest/Capitol

I have mixed emotions about



No, it's not Frank Sinatra with the Tommy Dorsey Orchestra. Pink Floyd is still tryin' to get to the moon, they don't seem to realize NBC has already been there and back.

this album. On the one hand, it's too bad that in this age of David Bowie and T. Rex, serious science fiction rock bands are going on to mainstream themes and leaving us to be sugared-up and condescended to by newcomers who hide their ignorance under tons of camp and call it Dada. Pink Floyd, the band that used to eat neutrons for breakfast, has gone the way of the Moody Blues, King Crimson and Kurt Vonnegut. No neutrons are eaten on their new album. Not even a nibble. The majestic and haunting interstellar echoes of *Set the Controls For the Heart of the Sun* and *Let There Be More Light* are scratched in vague ways on their new album, but for the most part, the syrupy production smothers the music's cutting edge and closes in the empty beauty of their early albums.

On the other hand, they've considered their new waters before jumping in. If we can't have the power and expansive grace of Pink Floyd's science fiction, we are still given a finely-honed musical picture. Possibly the most concise they've ever done.

DARK SIDE OF THE MOON is Roger Water's rock opera of the destruction of a cool young executive. It is a compassionate view of a very cold and lonely way to die. The geography mentioned in the title is where all this takes place — somewhere as cold and lonely as the back of the moon.

Except for the harshly cynical *Money*, the tone of the album is wistfully sad and languidly dreamy. We are ushered into the album through a heartbeat fading into the dim voices of a bad dream. These voices fade in and out all through the album, like delerious memories of a cocktail party — stabbing, stumbling, self-excusing and pitiful. They lend continuity to the musical narrative and create the air of a morphine fantasy to their world of impersonal, 9-to-5 warfare and battlefield living. In the end, we're ushered out again, like visitors in a hospital ward, by another heart beat. Nothing changes. You can put

a frame on the picture, but you can't rearrange it.

Musically and thematically, the album is the best they've done with their own theme since *UMMA GUMMA*. The lyrics are direct and subtle. On some tracks, such as *Brain Damage* and *Us and Them*, they reach a poignancy they've never even tried for before.

The only thing wrong with *DARK SIDE OF THE MOON* is the unnecessary horns and female back-up singers. While they don't sound as out of place on a Pink Floyd record as you might think, they don't do it any good either, and they do take the clean bite off the music.

But that's a small hassle. The album as a whole is a big come-back from *ATOM HEART MOTHER* and *MEDDLE*. It's a new thing for them and they do it very successfully. If they're leaving science fiction for good, this is a nice way to go out.

Richard Wadholm

BATTEAUX
Columbia

Boy, what a pretty cover! An underwater, Captain Jacques Cousteau type photo of the two Batteaux brothers, I guess that should be Batteau Brothers, the x just makes it plural when you skip the brother part, or maybe it's the name of the group, Batteau with an x, Batteaux, anyway, here you've got both brothers, one of which was in that baroque melodic Al Kooper-says-they-rate group, Appaloosa, and was also the Batteau half of Compton and Batteau, the other of which (Batteau of which) went to Choate, maybe they both went to Choate, times get confused, but if you're still along, here you've got 'em, the Batteaux brothers, no longer preppies or New England folk-kids, they're solidly out in the Marin part of California County, and here's both of 'em, right on the cover, naked as jaybirds, stark stripped bare-assed and showing their buns, taking Fred Neil at his word and

actually swimming underwater chasing dolphins in the sea, and for all we know those dolphins are also brothers, and they also may have an album coming out soon, on Columbia no doubt, the Dolphin Brothers, watch for it.

Brian Cullman

DIXIE CHICKEN
Little Feat
Warner Bros.

Lowell George is probably the best ear-to-the-earth, eye-on-the-bar-line writer of folk-themed rock and roll this side of Robbie Robertson, and *Dixie Chicken* by Little Feat (the group he writes and sings and plays guitar with) is one of the best pieces of highly (but not slickly) professional contemporary musical Americana since *The Band*.

George's songs sound sometimes like sophistications (don't let that word scare you) of greasy truckers' songs; other times, they sound like basic, gritty, bluesy things played through a filter of country harmonies and big-city back-beats. They always have a firm, rough sense of organic unity to them — they seem completely conceived, in other words — and they are not dumbly simple, despite their relative sparseness of style. Songs

JAZZ

A short column this time: I'm running (figuratively, at least) to catch a plane to Paris, and from there to Bulgaria, where, among other things, I'll do my best to find out as much as I can about Bulgarian jazz. Which is not as much of a joke as it might sound. For one thing, there is the excellent, heady, complex Bulgarian pianist, Milcho Leric, who now plays with Don Ellis' various orchestras and small groups. For another thing, there is the fact (which Ellis has pointed out repeatedly) that Bulgarian folk music is extremely complicated rhythmically (to us, not to Bulgarian folk), and contains a number of what might be termed "jazz features," like syncopation, harmonic improvisation, etc. Finally, there is the fact that — as I reported last year — Bulgaria's neighbor, Romania, has developed a fiercely original, individualistic jazz style based on local musical tradition as much as on American jazz records. All these factors lead



They don't look like a rock & roll band, but the sound of Little Feat can still be heard in many a respectable teenage household. Hetero rock is not dead.

like *Two Trains, Roll Um Easy, Fat Man in the Bathtub*, and the title track, are surely among the future classics of the whole folk-rock-and-roll (as opposed to folk-rock) genre.

This version of Little Feat is a six-man group: only George and keyboard player/vocalist Bill Payne and drummer/vocalist Richard Hayward are left from the group's previous incarnation, and only Payne and George were on the group's first LP. The amazing thing is that the ensemble sounds very much the same as it did on the debut album (but better, more sure, more complex). George and Payne must be very strong, dedicated influences indeed.

(Also present here are a couple of Bonnie's in the background [Raitt and Bramlett], Tret Fure, Milt Holland, and Fred Tackett [Jimmy Webb's old mate], who plays acoustic guitar on his own fine compositional contribution to the LP, *Food Yourself*. To name but a few.)

Little Feat plays cohesively; every sound seems to know what all the other sounds are doing. Both vocal and instrumental harmonies are engaging, slightly twangy, and alive with the energy of confident direction. The group's sound is rich, full of intense textures, thick and smartly sweet. There are even jazzy, Tropickey sounds grafted onto rocking blues bases sometimes — especially on *Juliet* and *Lafayette Railroad*.

It's a group you can listen to with a reasonable amount of ease: you know from the first that they're not going to make mistakes. Maybe superb technical skills and the true spirit of rock and roll are not incompatible after all...

Colman Andrews

me to believe that there might, just might, be some very interesting jazz music being created in Bulgaria today. As the Romanian bassist, Johnny Radenau, has said, jazz is truly an international language today, regardless of its very specifically American (black American, for that matter) origins. If we can hear a fresh, thickly-accented kind of jazz from a country like Bulgaria, then perhaps we oughtn't to laugh too hard. Perhaps we ought just to listen and enjoy and maybe be surprised.

Anyway, if there is good jazz being played in Bulgaria today, I assure you I will find it and report on it here.

Chick Corea is one of the best-known of the younger new-jazz pianists who came into musical maturity in the late '60's. From his work with Miles Davis, from his solo improvisations on European record labels, from his work with all manner of better-known (at the time) New York jazzmen, and from his own group, Circle, in both its trio and its quartet versions, he showed himself repeatedly and with great certainty to be an aggressively complex musician with formidable keyboard technique and oft-daring compositional conceptions.

He was fascinating to listen to, but not always easy to hear. To be sure, he had moments of great delicacy and lyricism, moments of calm and moments of restrained introspection. But he was also thoroughly unpredictable, likely to frighten and startle and anger and confuse the unwary listener at any instant. To hear him, together with reedman Anthony Braxton, bassist Dave Holland, and drummer Barry Altschul — this was the four-man

April's Best Albums

1. STORIES
2. BILLION DOLLAR BABIES
3. SILVERHEAD
4. II
5. ELLIE GREENWITCH

Stories
Alice Cooper
Silverhead
E.L.O.
Ellie Greenwich

Kama Sutra
Warner Bros.
MCA
UA
Verve

April's Ho-Hums

1. IMAGES 1966-7
2. BECK, BOGERT, & APPICE
3. BYRDS REUNION
4. LONDON SESSIONS
5. LIVE

David Bowie
Beck, Bogert & Appice
Byrds
Jerry Lee Lewis
Lee Michaels

Deram
Columbia
Asylum
Mercury
A&M

Turkey of the Month:



Six Wives Of Henry VII

Rick Wakeman
A&M

The result of a scrupulously exacting survey of the most qualified rock scene observers, PRM's "best-ho-hum" section is the most reliable, accurate charting this side of the Billboard charts. If you would like to participate in our poll, send your choices every month and they will be carefully tabulated to produce an even more reflective sampling of popular opinion.

version of Circle — twisting, fragmenting, inverting, subverting, and just generally working on his already-obscure melodic lines could be a thrilling, maddening experience. It was certainly one of the best groups of its time and of its type, in terms of musical ideas and (with one exception) of great technical facility.

It was also, as has been noted, rather inaccessible. Which fact didn't make Corea any too happy, since he conceives music as primarily a communicative medium. A little more than a year ago, then, he changed direction. He now leads a group called Return to Forever, and RTF is easy, in fact downright pleasurable, to get into.

There are some familiar names in RTF (assuming that the personnel is the same today as it was when the group's two currently-available recordings were made). The bassist is wunderkind Stanley Clarke; Airto Moreira, the inventive Brazilian percussionist who has lately been with Miles, Cannonball, et al, is playing conventional jazz drums here — for the first time regularly, so far as I know; Flora Purim, Airto's wife, sings and plays percussion; and the reedman is Joe Farrell, who concentrates on flutes and soprano with RTF.

The albums in question are RETURN TO FOREVER (ECM 1022 ST) and LIGHT AS A FEATHER (Polydor PD 5525). The former is a German import, incidentally, and well worth the trouble it may take to find. (See last month's column for a hint of a possible mail order source of the LP.)

Corea's music, which used to closely resemble contemporary classical chamber music more than jazz at many points, is now heavily grounded in Brazilian jazz (which will, I think, turn out to be a tremendously important musical influence on jazz and maybe even on rock in the near future), and in

Corea's own personal vision of a number of other Latin and South American musical styles. There are vocals by Purim — some with unexciting but certainly inoffensive words and some, the most effective, merely human/instrumental lines of warm, sensuous elegance — and Corea plays a great deal of electric piano. As I've noted here before, the latter instrument, for all its electronic possibilities, does not have a great deal of dynamic range. Corea dispenses with the very necessity for such a range, because his playing is extremely linear, extremely even, extremely controlled. His horizontal improvisations are so right, so firm and clean and well-thought-out, that he doesn't even need vertical diversity.

Clarke plays splendidly, particularly on his acoustic interplays with Corea on *Sometime Ago/La Fiesta* on the ECM LP, and, to a lesser extent, on *Spain* on the other one. Moreira has a distinctive style (already) on conventional drums, favoring rim shots and percussive snare effects, and usually maintaining a nice, galloping rhythmic flow. Farrell stays pretty much on the lighter side of his talents tonally, rather as though he were trying to musically emulate the seagull on the cover of the German LP or the feather on the cover of the American album in terms of drift and buoyance; luckily, he can handle that sort of performance quite handily (one doesn't show up on Creed Taylor records for nothing), and even in his lightness, he is never superficial.

Both of these albums are definitely worth having, though my own preference is for the earlier of the two, the ECM. For one thing there is only one vocal-with-words (as opposed to three on the Polydor); for another, there is more of a flow, more of a logical progression of rhythms and highly-visible melodic lines on the German recording; and finally, the

group simply seems a little more sprightly, a little more inspired.

It would certainly be a pity if, now that Corea has found a way to give a more general public access to his work without, at the same time, becoming commercialized or creatively diluted, the more general public itself did not respond by giving him the rewarding courtesy of attention.

Colman Andrews



Link Wray

his secluded musical trailer camp somewhere in Arizona. Undaunted, Link set out to produce and record several members of his musical family. Polydor released one or two Wraymen solo LP's and Link went underground once more. That was nine months ago. Several weeks ago, Link was seen in San Francisco at a glorified recording session laying down some tracks with such modern day rock luminaries as Jerry Garcia, The Greatful Dead, Nick Gravenitis. Polydor promised Link would call us to detail his sessions, but since

he didn't have a phone, he wired us to tell me he couldn't call. Typically Wray!

Hearsay has it that he redesigned an echo chamber through a toilet and finally through the sewage of the trailer camp. Some claimed they've seen him on the *Dating Game*, at the *Speakeasy* in London with some mojo men and others have seen him at a local army surplus store on Santa Monica and Hollywood buying some hiking gear. At least he's in the vicinity. Let's just hope Mr. Wray doesn't venture out into the desert on another one of them twelve-year walks. After all we'll need his advice on his legendary master series.

DOBIE GREY from page 14

control over the situation, and confused that it seems to be happening all over again.

"I used to be so caught up in the performing and the hullabaloo. Now I want my music to mean something, not just grabbing a tune that will make the charts. I can't just like a tune now, I've got to love it."

So Dobie Gray drifts away with a piece of the past and a chunk of the future. Like it or not, Dobie Gray is right back in there with the in-crowd.

HOLLYWOOD

continued from page 8
most illustrious of the Hollywood press, headed by the incomparable Sharon Lawrence.

Guest of honor, of course, was Cherry Vanilla, whose presence in town brightened things to no end. Hope you caught some of her radio interviews, which were fabulous. We were listening when Sable and Laurie, currently Hollywood's

front-running groupies (actually, we're all groupies, as Cherry so rightly says) phoned a station and screamed a welcome to Hollywood to the BonBons? They're so sweet. Actually, Chuckie BonBon, who'd flown in for David's concerts, was already on his way home, where a full-scale press conference was scheduled. He wrote a song about Sable on the plane, and I'm just dying to hear it. And speaking of BonBons, do check out the March issue of *Inter/View* and see what Lou Reed had to say about his gig in Milwaukee. And speaking of Lou, rumors were flying all over the America party at the Rainbow, first that Lou was in town, then that he was right there in the restaurant! Can you imagine? Some people will believe anything, won't they?

Lisa Rococo

BRITAIN

continued from page 8

what about *In Concert*? I can't believe either show really appeals to fad mad 14 year olds. *Whistle Test* and *In Concert* are very reserved in atmosphere and are more or less aimed at young adults who prefer to take their music straight — no sets, frills, dancers, lurex, glitter or glamour. I don't think kids are really interested in Phil Spector rapping about "Bring Back Mono", they don't even know what mono was probably. So the kids are left with *Top of The Pops* and a producer and director who know they don't even have to try hard or do anything special, the kids'll watch anyway. And ain't it a shame? Nobody will ever explore the show's possibilities or realize its potential. My bet is that the kids today won't be half as enthusiastic about their memories of the show the way I still am about *Shindig*. *Top of the Pops*? I remember it, kinda.

He Went to London to Visit the Queens. He Came Back With This Album.

"Kim Fowley is a character . . . a creation of the music business. He works hard at what he does. He's succeeded at songwriting, producing, various forms of oratory, publishing, label owner, idea man and companion to the stars. And, somewhere along the line, he picked up 43 gold records for one reason or another."

—England's NEW MUSICAL EXPRESS

"He's been associated with a whole raft of hits, from Nut Rocker to Alice Cooper's Elected. And, artists he's worked with range from early Mothers and P. J. Proby to Johnny Winter, The Byrds, and Slade."

—MELODY MAKER

"Kim Fowley's new album, INTERNATIONAL HEROES (ST-11159) will place him within the ranks of David, Mott, Alice, and Lou in the hearts and palms of the American teenager."

—CAPITOL RECORDS



HEAVY METAL TODAY CONT'D

from page 17

**SURFERS
RULE**

Mike Saunders, caught in a rare photo just before he was driven into the hills by the readers of PRM, raving as usual.

major force in rock. Alice Cooper, Led Zep, Black Sabbath, and Grand Funk all made a huge jump over erratic previous releases, while Dust emerged full-blown from the womb as crazed metal rockers. *Master of Reality*, *Love It To Death*, *Killer*, *Led Zep IV*, *Paranoid*, *E Pluribus Funk*: these were all products of the same year. *Add Look At Yourself* by Uriah Heep, UFO's fine first album, the great things on Deep Purple's *Fireball*, and you had, well, what else but... a trend.

A year later, the outlook has changed drastically. 1972 was not a good year for heavy metal. Dust were the first to bite it, with their infuriatingly uneven and pretentious album *Hard Attack*. Alice Cooper came next in the washout category, followed by Grand Funk's abandonment of metal for mainstream rock and Black Sabbath's *Vol. 4*, a disturbingly unpleasant and depressing effort. Topping it all off, Led Zep failed to show, a huge disappointment when their double album was postponed until this February or so. Nitzinger had a good debut album and Uriah Heep had *Demons And Wizards*, but both wiped out badly with their following releases. New groups have not arisen to replace all these aging stalwarts, mainly because record companies have just not signed many metal groups and don't seem interested in changing this policy.

So the state of metal music today can be summed up in one word: stagnant. Outside of Blue Oyster Cult, The Stooges (whose stunning comeback is more than I'd dared even dream of), and hopefully Led Zep (their LP still not out as I write this), the field is simply in a state of outright decay. Many groups are either well past their peak or in a temporary slump — Grand Funk, Uriah Heep, Deep Purple, possibly Alice Cooper, and particularly Black Sabbath, in whose case I really have extreme difficulty imagining any

resurgence at this point are the program directors of America, that and Bill Drake.

That sort of turns the question around: where does that leave heavy metal? Metal has had very little in common with great pop — relying as it does on force rather than ingenuity, elephant stompers riffs rather than mere hooks, power rather than melody. Still, there's Slade, whose singles are rawer, much more distorted than anything the Stones have done in the last five years (or for that matter, since *It's All Over Now*), not since the mid-60's Who and Stones have hard rock 45s of such quality topped the English charts. Slade's new studio LP is a must for anyone with the faintest interest in hard rock: Slade tread the edge of having a metallic sound, but at the same time possess that extra consciousness — the kind of spark that makes the most natural thing in the world songs about dancing (or drinking, or...you name it).

It all seems to point to heavy metal's having been a transitional phase. A possible development might be the amalgamation of metal techniques into the three-minute pop form of the aforementioned current groups — such a trend could be quite incredible, making most of the old metal groups sound like dinosaurs. It's my bet that such a style would come from a new generation of metal rockers, though. None of today's metal groups seem capable of such a switch, with the possible exceptions of Led Zep and Blue Oyster Cult. Anyhow, it's all speculation, and we know where that leads. Into the void.

All in all, heavy metal has been — and may continue to be for a while more — an important transitional chapter in rock and roll history. The scoffers to the contrary, Led Zep and company have seen it to that rock and roll will never quite be the same again.



This was the group that started it all, back in the days when velvet was underground and Lou Reed confined himself to sidelong looks.

sort of viable future.

So where's that leave rock and roll, if heavy metal was decided to be R&R? Well, there's still three-minute AM oriented pop, amply covered in the pages of this journal over the past year: great singles by Slade, the Raspberries, Mott the Hoople, the Move, and David Bowie, all on a level matched by few 45s in a long, long time. The only thing standing in the way of a real R&R

potentialities, the things you can do with slabs of bass and a million amps, have been tested to the utmost, and exploited quite well by many groups. There's something intriguing about the fact that the punk rock of the early 1970's wasn't left undiscovered until five years later, but was revered just shortly after its high water mark. Maybe it's just that we're all five years older.

THE IAN WHITCOMB STORY

Continued from page 12

was pleasant but not a commercial success; the Mae West album, on MGM and backed by the ubiquitous Mike Curb Congregation, marks her third "contemporary" music venture (on an earlier Tower LP she had performed *You Turn Me On*) and is also unlikely to become a smash sensation. It is intriguing, however, with a rocking *Great Balls Of Fire* (title track) and three Whitcomb compositions, *How Miss West Won World Peace*, *Men*, and a version of *Naked Ape* told from Miss West's point of view (with added ape grunts in the background, presumably also supplied by the Mike Curb Cong.).

After *The Ball*, the pop music history, is a fascinating and entertaining volume, particularly valuable for its detailed coverage of Tin Pan Alley and the ragtime genre (as well as Ian's highly amusing popstar reminiscences), and full of educational items establishing abstruse connections between earlier musical eras and the present-day rock epoch (you may have known, for instance, that the Byrds' track *We'll Meet Again*, on their first album, was a World War II Vera Lynn hit; but did you know that the Small Faces copied the title of Miss Lynn's first record for a cut on *THERE ARE BUT FOUR... Up The Wooden Hill To Bedfordshire*? Not to mention the original Whistling Jack Smith... whom, owing to space limitations, we won't). The book is a delight to read, and a valuable reference work for those a bit unsure of their pre-rock musical ground.

In England, EMI released a companion illustrative double album for the book, also titled *AFTER THE BALL*. It included a version of the title track (the first million seller — in sheet music form in 1892) by Whitcomb, and continues blithely through the decades with deathless songs like *Yes We Have No Bananas*, *Let's All Sing Like The Birdies Sing* (co-written by Ian's great-uncle Stephen Damerall), and Tennessee Ernie Ford's proto-rocker *Shotgun Boogie*, Laurie London's repulsive *He's Got The Whole World In His Hands*, Gene Vincent, the Shadows, on up to Ian's *You Turn Me On*, where the book and album end (Ian feeling too involved with the post-'65 scene to chronicle it objectively).

Ian's new album, *UNDER THE RAGTIME MOON* (produced by ex-Bonzo Neil Innes), is a charming sampler of various ragtime styles and



The Mod Look: Ian Whitcomb in 1978, ahead of his time once again.

We're Going To Celebrate The End Of The War In Ragtime. The LP is very edifying indeed for ragtime novices like myself; and the music, Ian's "first love" (as admitted in a '65 interview), is played with affection and assurance.

It's good to have Ian Whitcomb back with us on the pop scene, both as a literary commentator and a performer. He is equally adept at both pursuits, and should continue to bestow upon us further examples of his urbane and gently satirical approach to rock, pop, and literature. His next album will probably be in a rock 'n' roll vein, with original material, and should be something to look forward to; if not for the general public, at least for those who agree with TV-rock pioneer Jack Good that "to delight in Ian Whitcomb is to be vaguely decadent, interestingly eccentric, and very very civilized."

PERFORMANCES



Electric Light Orchestra

from page six

beneath. The crescendo and the glissando are the weapons which put across the ELO's epic stance, a looseness alternating with hammering drum rolls and military attacks on hard-edged rhythms.

The entire set is unstoppable, an impenetrable force led by the 'cellos, drums and Jeff Lynne's chunky guitar. Awesome is the chunder.

But there is also the important lyrical side to the material — they actually perform Paganini on stage, and Wilf Gibson's violin can be soaringly beautiful as well as crazily jagged. The new arrangement of *10538 Overture* allows for some of this lyricism and the slamming, and Kuiama from the latest LP is the supreme example of the synthesis possible.

Highlights of the set include the insane, abandoned version of Berry's classic, just exuding fun (and Bevan's drumming here is nothing short of unbelievable), a new untitled tune (which Lynne spontaneously dubbed *A Browner Shade of Brown*) with more enigmatic lyrics and the encore of

Hall of the Mountain King, the perfect vision of an intruder stalking about, stomping on everything in his path. Unlike the Nice, the ELO doesn't find it necessary to muck about with the rhythms or melodies of the classics to make them easier (Emerson's joke version of *Blue Rondo*, miraculously transformed from 5/4 to 4/4 time, comes to mind) since their three London Symphony escapees can handle things very well thank you.

At last! Conclusive proof that there can be a connection between the brain and feet when it comes to music.

Mark Leviton

Spirit in Hawaii

-from page 6

stage and threw Spirit balloons into the crowd while dancin' as Al and John shined them on with *Future Shock* and *Concrete and Steel* — executed in a Hullabaloo context, which only attested to the fact these cats learned all they know from the Shindogs anyway. Before closing out the first set, John got another chance at a solo and was left quite alone on stage as he

hugged what time was left playing with "his magical black box", an electroplastic reverberation of some sort that was still going minutes after he left the stage (rumor has it the box serves all manner of additional purposes backstage).

After a half-hour intermission and a change of clothes (that cursed box again) they came back and tried to get it up for an acoustical set but were hampered by feedback, appropriately. Dropping that format quickly they squeezed out a couple Buddy Holly sides and a Yardbird's track for good measure and succeeded in burning off a chill that the first few minutes of the set brought along with it. They closed with *Cadillac Cowboys* which they should have performed in the first set so I could have split earlier... Well after that, we bid Spirit *aloha* but they came back anyway (kinda the way Judy Collins is always hangin' around)... The encore was this twenty-minute Australian trilogy called *Rocking In The Bush*, of course. It's supposed to be their next single... naturally. (I think they've got bugs in da bushes, 'specally Little Brother.)

After the gig they scampered off to Waikiki for a traditional luau/jam session which lasted 'til four in the morning and then joined the ranks waiting in line for a week's sanctuary-vacation on the isle of Maui.

In all honesty, the Spirit that exists today bears no resemblance to that of yore but on the basis of their performance here they are indeed a worthy trio, eligible for continued success, and certainly deserving of a second opinion.

David Reynolds

HOGWASH

THE GROUNDHOGS

Tony McPhee is one of a handful of guitarists whose name is legend in Britain. Of them all, only he is still playing with his original group and continuing his development uninterrupted by outside events. And it shows.

The Groundhogs can't be touched when it comes to tight, cohesive music: they've been together so long playing has become second nature, leaving them free to experiment with new ideas. On HOGWASH, their sixth album, the innovations introduced on SPLIT and WHO WILL SAVE THE WORLD are carried to new heights in such numbers as *Earth Shanty*, while at the same time the Groundhogs' reputation as a no-nonsense rock 'n' roll powerhouse is enhanced through *Sad is the Hunter*, *You Had a Lesson*, and *3744 James Road*, and their roots as a blues band were never more evident than on *Mr. Hooker, Sir John*, a tribute to their mentor, John Lee Hooker.

In all, HOGWASH is the group's most accomplished effort to date and one of the most consistently exciting albums anybody's come up with this year. And that's no hogwash.



DISCOGRAPHY:

SCRATCHING THE SURFACE	World Pacific
BLUES OBITUARY	Imperial
THANK CHRIST FOR THE BOMB	Liberty
SPLIT	United Artists Records
WHO WILL SAVE THE WORLD	United Artists Records

GENE CLARK, CHRIS HILLMAN, DAVID CROSBY, ROGER MCGUINN, MICHAEL CLARKE

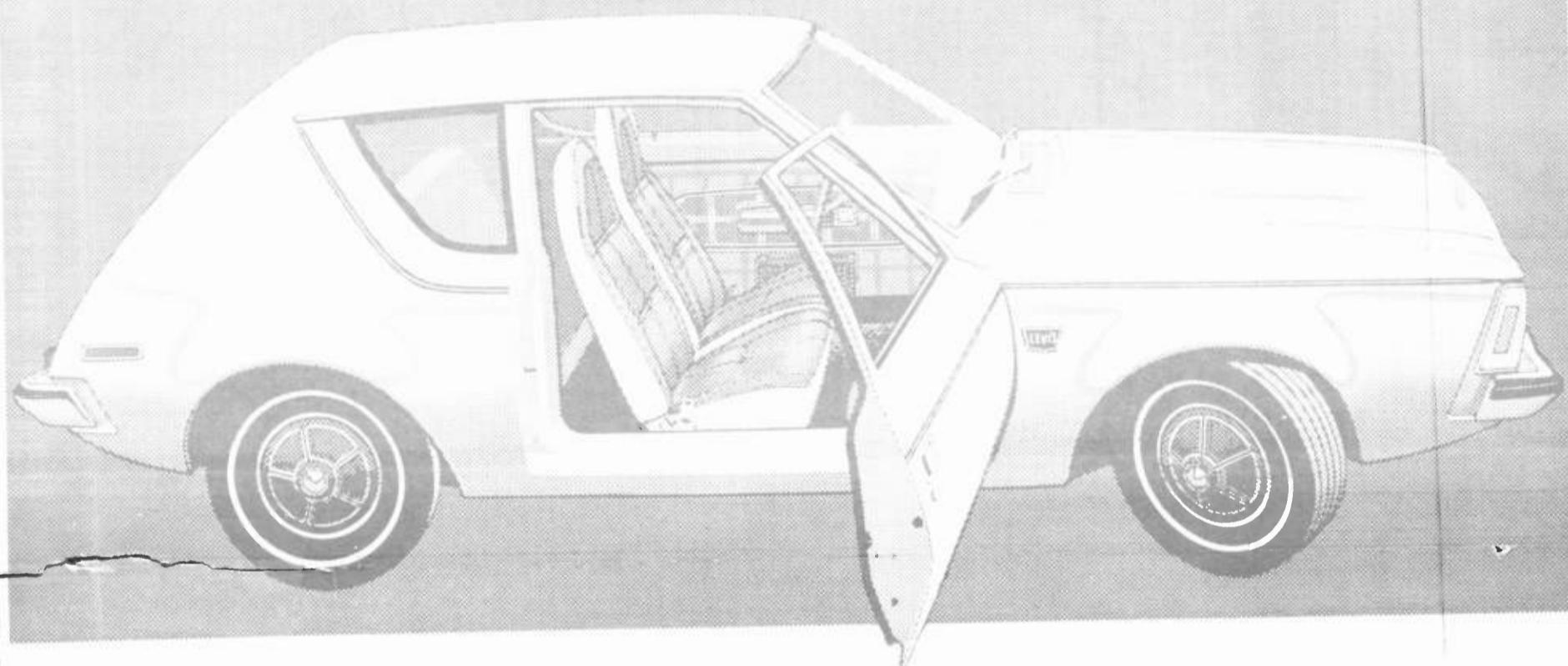
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