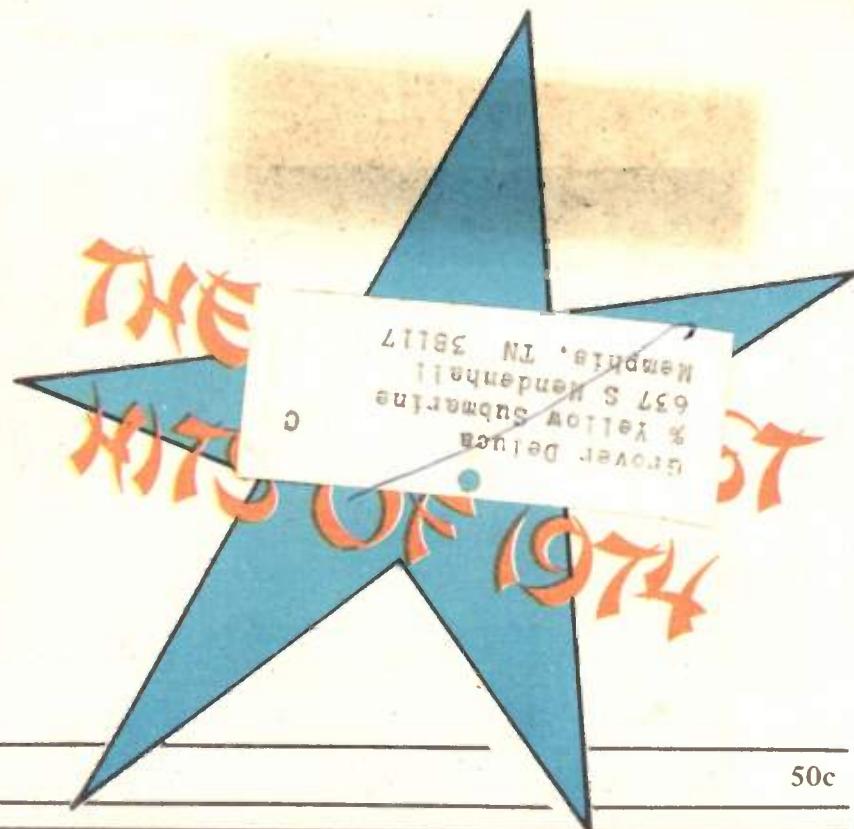


Phonograph Record

Vol. 4, No. 5

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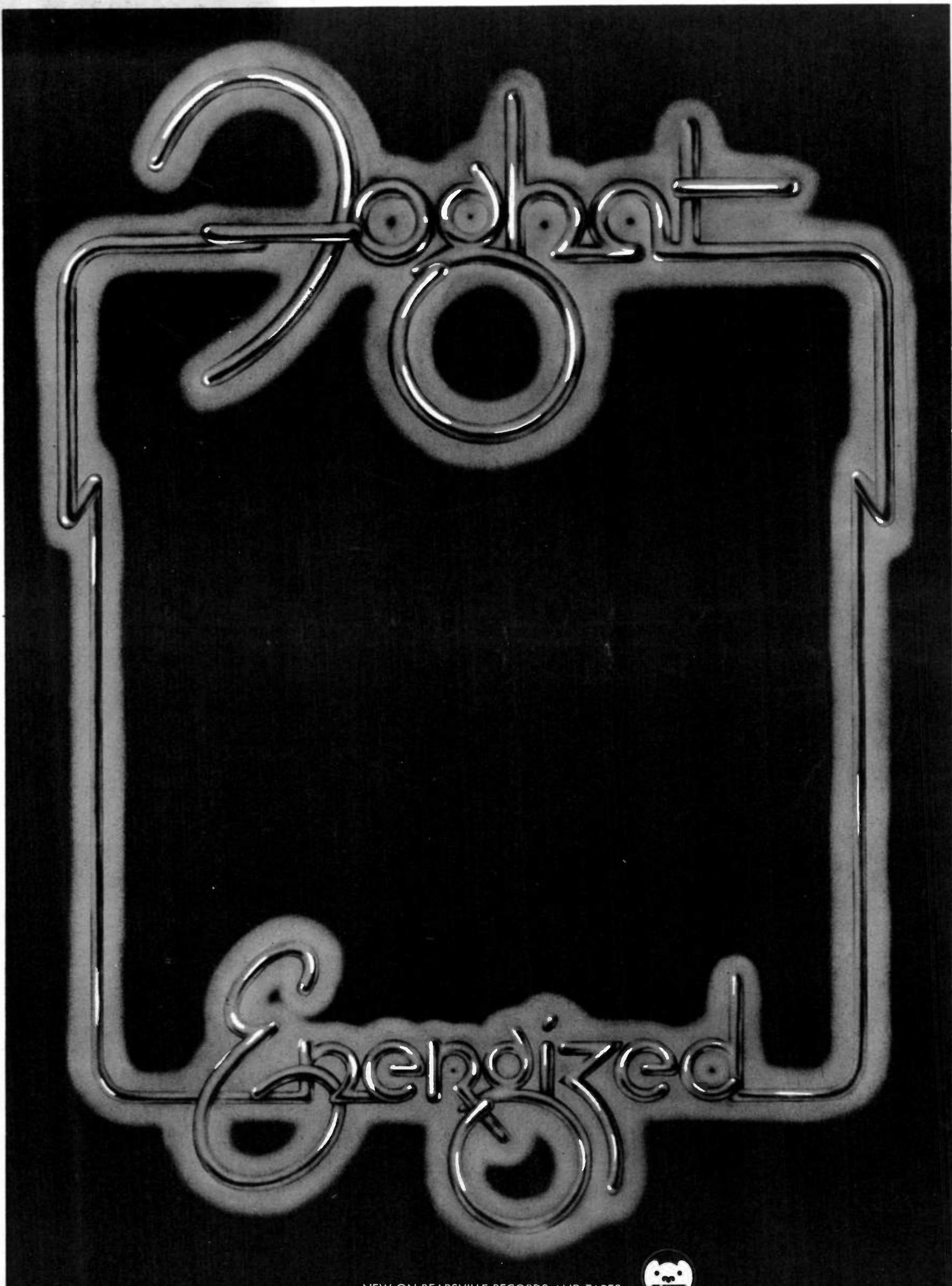
Ray Davies & The Kinks

Pop Music
in 1974

Flo & Eddie
as Rock Critics

also:

Rick Nelson,
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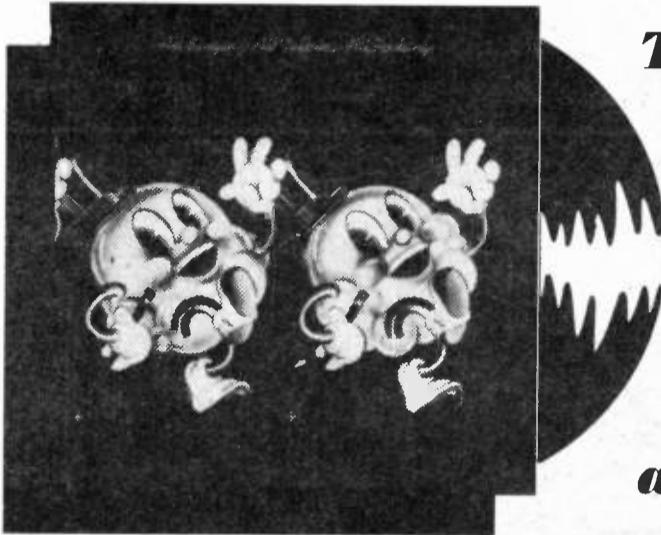


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Phonograph Record

Volume 4, Number 5

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 Editor: Greg Shaw
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FAN MAIL

Dear PRM,

Today I heard an anti-hard drug spot on the radio in which Harry Chapin explained how heroin and downers (ain't he hip?) had either killed or ruined the talent of so many of "our favorite" artists. All this time I thought it was due to the fact that they didn't ever have talent, got old, had a producer who could get flashes of good stuff out of otherwise lame asses, or were "blessed" by the LORD.

That's what I get for listening to all you critics. From now I'm thinking for myself and not listening to you bozos. You're so lame you just know this letters about chew!

I.P. Daily
 Yellow River, Nevada

P.S. Do you know where I could get some crystal meth?

Dear PRM,

Great! That's what I thought to myself when I got your October issue in the mail. There was really only one flaw in your cover article in that enough wasn't done on the BOC, whereas there was more of an emphasis on the loves of the feature. Still you had all bases covered and the article cut anything else I've seen so far on the Dolls.

Yeah, they are New York, more or less. In fact, any big city in these, the United States of America, 1973. And that may prove their downfall. Maybe my having been bred in the BA for

the first sixteen years of my life gives me some insight on this (and maybe not), but bozos like we've got up here have been nose-stuck in Woodstock (and now Watkins Glen) muck for so long that the Dolls' urban reality might prove beyond their comprehension. Hell, it's happened in this burg, generally. Still, maybe their TV gig will tap them into Alice's and Bowie's audience.

Best,
 Leonard Tirado
 Saratoga Springs, NY

Greetings:

Many thanks for Greg Shaw's excellent piece on my former favorite super-spiffy rock couple, Sonny and Cher. Such a shame that they deteriorated... or was it me?

Anyway, I thought I'd bring up one error Greg made. He mentioned "Sonny's recent acting debut in an episode of Marcus Welby, MD" when, in reality, both Sonny and Cher had their acting debuts in an episode of THE MAN FROM U.N.C.L.E. broadcast March 10, 1967. They played Jerry and Ramona, a pair of garment center employees who got mixed up in the usual madness one associates with the United Network Command for Law and Enforcement.

You may recall that U.N.C.L.E. presented many vestiges of rock including Every Mother's Son (who passively played "Come On Down To My Boat" as a Thrushie was drowning Illya Kuryakin) and

Carol Shelyne, the Shindig dancer who's "Girl With The Horn-Rimmed Glasses" certainly changed the course of rock.

Sincerely,
 Mark N. Zimmerman
 Kingston, Pa.

Dear PRM,

This is the first time I've read your newspaper and I dig it a lot. I especially dug what you wrote about Leon Russell in your Oct. 1973 issue. I wonder how old he really is! Too old for me but I still dig him. I think that Leon Russell, Jethro Tull, T. Rex and Eric Clapton are some of the greatest musicians that ever lived, and of course the Beatles.

Patty Villastrigo
 San Antonio, Texas

Dear Greg Shaw,

In your review of the Herman's Hermits Greatest Hits, you didn't notice that "Leaning on a Lamp Post" is not the original, or maybe I should say not the song that was on a 45 or what we heard on the radio. I was disappointed in that. Keep up the Good reviews.

Alan Larsen
 Santa Rosa, Calif.

Dear PRM,

Fowley is Positively Argyle Ave. In his review of Pin-Ups, which he uses mainly as a vehicle to impress the reader with his

knowledge of music, he derides Bowie by accusing him of dwelling in the past while "The rest of us are living in the future." Yet, in his review of the same artist's previous work, *Aladdin Sane*, his chronological perceptions show that his is the reactionary attitude. In that June PRM he calls "Drive-In Saturday" a "retrospective look back (sic: repetition) to the silver sixties." Funny, Kim, the rest of the world thought that song was about the future.

Gordon Miller
 Sherman Oaks, Calif.

Dear PRM,

I can't believe my dilated eyes!!! Lisa- tell me it ain't so!!! Iggy Pop actually knows how to write!! God, what a let down. Who can you believe in any more?

Also- The reason both the Ig and Fowley can't jive with Pin-Ups is that the two old pimps remember and relate to the original versions. For TRUE punks like yours truly (17 wasted years), the stuff is dynamite cuz we ain't nevah hoid it befoh (excuse me Lester B.). However Mr. F is right; we wastrels miss Bowie's 'technicolor visions'. Do make that movie, Dave.

By the way, I think I saw Mark Shipper the other day. He was being dredged up off the bottom of the Missouri river. Has he been in the midwest lately?

Jon Syz
 Kansas City, Missouri

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PERFORMANCES



Dennis the mystic covers his ears in distant reverie as the Beach Boys once again bring back echoes of old summer days and California nights.

Beach Boys
Anaheim Convention Center
Anaheim, Calif.

By GENE SCULATTI

Where else could the Beach Boys preface a performance of "Surfer Girl" with, "on our way down here tonight, we passed within two blocks of where the girl who inspired this song used to live"? Elder brother Brian scribbled the selfsame sylph portrait

one fine day in '63 on the way to his orthodontist's, somewhere down among the sweltering palms.

It's home territory. The Convention Center, that is, down Katella past the Westward Ho!, Rip Van Winkle, Ivanhoe, Candy Lane and Space Age motels, around the corner from the Mattel horn and the monorail.

Some spiritual home base, is what it is, 'cause there's no way these talented youngsters who call

themselves the Beach Boys could get the kind of response in New York, Cleveland or anyplace else, that they draw right here.

Brian's homebound now and Al Jardine fills space on "Don't Worry Baby" and Carl warbles "Caroline No," but that doesn't change a thing to the home crowd. They've been cruising the parking lot since this afternoon, they're all casually dressed, primed for the event, and they're all sixteen years old.

They stir aloud during intermission. Lights dim and they scream in anticipation. The preparatory clap 'n' stomp starts, fades and restarts: "We want the Beach Boys! We want..." Intent on making one final adjustment, a lone equipment man enters stage left and the screams commence again.

Once onstage, their very presence inspires both rapt attention and pinch-me-is-it-real squeals; little Al, cherub Carl, foreign fireball Blondie, laid-back Mike Love and the rest, and always Dennis, the wandering focus for all that "mystique" talk. Toss-off references to "Brian", "Hawthorne" and "glad to be back" are greeted like gospel, repeated and verified, absorbed by an audience high on spirit and shiny from SoCal sun. Dennis points out his mother in the crowd and they give her a standing ovation.

Sure, there's a bond here. The songs, from Mike's arch nasalteen "Surfin' U.S.A." ("if ev'rybody had an O-shun.") to Blondie and Carl belting wistful harmonies on a smooth "Sail On Sailor," get the kind of response that indicates they're accepted, acknowledged as some kind of South Bay birthright.

The dichotomy still exists; one clump of sophomores and juniors behind us shout themselves hoarse for "Oldies!", and two rows in front a blond chorus pleads for "Pisces Lady" ("Funky Pretty") and "Leaving This Town."

Four years ago, the group were reluctant to drag out the "Moldies", dressing them up as pitiable parodies. Now they can accommodate their entire career. And it's

precisely the presence and persistence of their audience, growin' younger every day, that's accountable for the fact. *Greatest Hits, Pet Sounds, Wild Honey, Surf's Up, Holland* are served up as one sumptuous buffet and everyone partakes.

The audience sings along with every tune, drowning the group's clear-cut harmonies out completely by the end of "Fun Fun Fun" and the "Jumpin' Jack Flash" encore; all around the arena, from folding-chair floor to the high-up cheap seats, they're dancing in place, together, uninhibitedly goofing on this unique kind of California energy exchange right before their sunburnt orbs.

It's a bitch of a show. The hits and non-hits, all go down as smashes with this crowd. Mike brings the house down twice with the intimation of a "big party" to be thrown New Year's Eve in nearby Long Beach.

In Concert, the latest waxing, is damn good in its way too. You have to give it time, 'cause, unlike the kinetic explosion of the live show, its magic lies partially concealed. But it has special treats in abundance too; the strong new contender, "We Got Love," "Heroes And Villains" rendered with clarity, lyrics and melody breakdown notwithstanding, the buoyancy of "Wouldn't It Be Nice," "Marcella" as it never sounded on *So Tough*. It ain't the sweaty summerblast of their 1965 *Concert* (Cap. STAO 2198) and it might tame against the import *Live In London*, but it's representative of Beach Boys '73, and that's still one of the damn finest properties extant.

Hawkwind
Ford Theatre
Detroit, Mich.

By GREG SHAW

Of the mere six dates Hawkwind had chosen for their American debut tour, it seemed most appropriate to be seeing them in Detroit, the ancestral home of heavy metal and the final resting place of the counter-cultural revolution. Hawkwind, the last of the great psychedelic freakout bands, knew what they were doing when they turned down other gigs in order to appear in Detroit. And the scruffy, vacant-eyed kids who filled the hall, some of whom had come hundreds of miles, seemed to know what was in store for them.

Hawkwind is a band with a mission. They'll waste no time in telling you their goal of reviving the "Spirit of '67", whatever that may be. And somehow, the whole five-foot shelf of starry-eyed rhetoric they've absorbed, from Tim Leary to P.D. Ouspensky, has come together into an impressively calculated image and musical style.

The music itself was nothing new to these ears. Two chords basically, back and forth, over and over, loud and fuzzed, obliteration through repetition. An acquired taste (or, as one record company exec said to another at the L.A. show, "This is music??") but one that, thanks to the Stooges, has already been acquired by many. Hawkwind, of

course, are interested in more than just blotting out consciousness: like good crusading hippies, they want to raise it.

"Fifteen minutes to lift-off" announced a robotic voice over the PA. "Five minutes to lift-off." "Two minutes to lift-off." On a darkened stage mystic symbols painted on amps and drums glow ultraviolet. Silent figures slip into position. Suddenly the hall is split with those relentlessly mechanical drum and guitar patterns, while the whooshing cartesian jetstreams and endlessly echoing boi-voings of the group's monstrous synthesizer banks fill the air with the sound-effects everyone knew space was full of even before we heard them on *Star-Trek*.

Synchronous with the opening chords, the walls and ceiling were engulfed in the projections of Hawkwind's own light show. Yes, a light show. Few in this audience were old enough to remember the days of Russ Gibb's weekly concerts at the Grande Ballroom, days that lengthened into tedious years in which it was impossible to see any band at all, anywhere, without squinting through gobs of molasses in motion. In fact, I'd wager that hardly anyone here had ever seen a lightshow before. There were audible "ooh!"s as each new effect (slides of moon-scape paintings; polarized filters; rotating prisms; and best of all, the old basic inverted-clockface-on-opaque-projector technique) came to light.

Technically, it was quite primitive compared to what lightshows were like five years ago.

Yet all the same, it was one of the most effective lightshows I've seen, because it always had something to do with the music. No Betty Boop cartoons or sensory-overload irrelevance; constant themes and images, of space and planets and weird star-creatures, were hammered home as repetitiously as the music, with the effect of strengthening Hawkwind's already powerful command of the auditorium.

Hawkwind's songs are seldom about anything as specific as an "Orgone Accumulator." Mostly they're filled with repeated phrases full of double meanings, vague futuristic slogans, or stentorously spoken doubletalk. There is an underlying mood to each song though, and occasionally a series of running images meant to suggest either some comic-book space adventure of some lesson in cosmic values, or usually both. "Sonic Attack" for instance is a spoken monologue accompanied by synthesizer flirtings with the subsonic. "These are the warning signs of sonic attack: you will experience extreme nausea..." Fifteen people had to be carried from the room in convulsions — those subsonics will do it to ya good, as will those flickering strobe lights, if you happen to be among that minority of borderline epileptics for whom the deep end can be that close. Think only of yourself; don't try to help others.

The people loved it though. Even when they had no idea what was going on, two hours into a show during which songs had come and gone without ever

seeming to begin or end, a half-audible line like "Murz furble revolution of the mind zarbic frablezam overcome mumble forces of garblezarble" could still elicit cheers and clenched fists, especially from the contingent of Rainbow People seated in front of me.

For those in need of still more input, Hawkwind provides an interpretive jazz dancer, a girl named Stacia who has graced their shows for some time and helped make them one of England's most popular performing acts. Her face painted with day-glo eagle features and her amply-endowed frame clad variously in star-emblazoned capes, flashing robes, stylized loincloths, and nothing at all, she stalks the stage acting out the drama and trauma

of each song's multilayered message, providing no little relief from the group's otherwise anonymous appearance.

They did a whole bunch of their old songs and a few new ones, all of which were quite difficult to recognize let alone distinguish, with the exception of old AM radio favorites like "Master of the Universe" and "Silver Machine", which came at the very end. What Hawkwind offers, as their fans well know, is more than just a selection of songs. It's a total experience of light and sound and image, designed to simulate the effects of LSD and barrage the senses with mind-blowing technosophical brainstorms.

(Continued on Page 8)

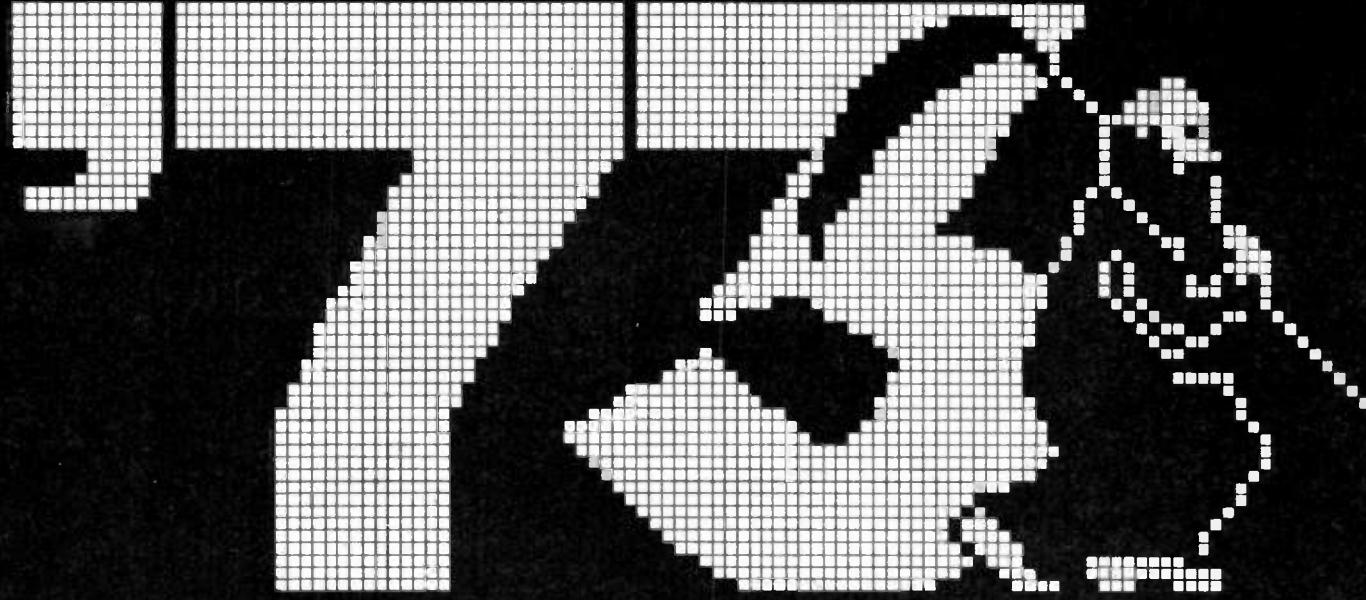


Richard Creamer

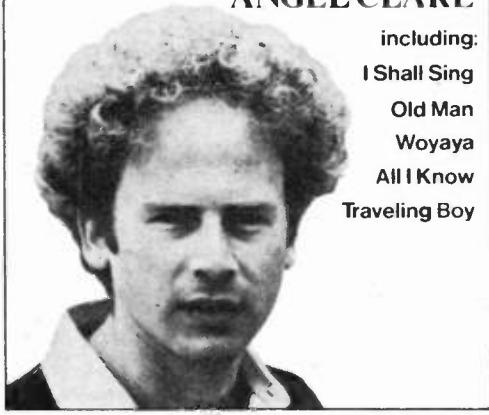
Don't laugh — this is Stacia, the girl who keeps the houses packed whenever Hawkwind plays. You should see the photo we couldn't use!

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Pete Townshend of The Who: still the best.

(Continued From Page 6)

It's all been done before, and better in its various elements. But no group has ever gathered it all into such an impossibly solid image. Had they appeared in 1967 or 1968, when even the Grateful Dead couldn't keep from outnumbers their "Dark Star" with their Muddy Waters and jugband blues songs, Hawkwind might well have prolonged the psychedelic revolution and seized the *zeitgeist* to who knows what effect. This tour proved they could still make a strong impact on kids young enough to appreciate their novelty value, but to the rest of us, getting ready for the mod-discotique styles of 1974, Hawkwind seems at best a jolting anachronism.

In fact, all I could think of throughout this show was Sha Na Na. The way they must have appeared to people their own age, just starting to get laid-back and then seeing them in 1968. "My God, did I use to carry on like that? Funny how serious it all seemed in those days. Well, we were young. It's a good thing that we can look back and laugh at ourselves nostalgically — and besides, these guys are kinda trippy!"

That's the sad fate of Hawkwind. They're in the right space, but in the wrong time. Maybe they should've been more careful before stepping out of their time machine. But they're here now, and who knows, they may amount to something — after all, they are kinda trippy.

The Who
St. Louis Arena
St. Louis, Mo.

By KEN BARNES

The Who were always unbeatable when it came to undiluted bedrock blasts of R&R power, and their 1973 appearance proved that the proposition still holds water (and maybe somebody's daughter). Ten years have taken the inevitable toll, and the manic,

near-frightening edge is gone, but for the most part the Who again proved peerless hardrockers.

Visually they're still a treat; Daltrey may fumble a few more mike tosses but he struts the stage just as jauntily as ever, and Moon drummed antically as always. Townshend's penguin-like peregrinations remain among the most magnificently ridiculous (or ridiculously magnificent) stage spectacles extant, and he still tilts his guitar with windmill arcs; and Entwistle continues to stand immobile, a temple of anchored watts.

Abetted by much clearer sound than on the last tour, the band rolled through an invincible "Can't Explain", "Summertime Blues", and "My Generation", thankfully reduced from the bloated proportions of the post-Leeds version. Next came the live unveiling of *Quadrophenia*, and it was, in a word, stunning. The concert rendition supplied all the raucous power seemingly latent in the story line, and the added dimension invested the monolithic Mod Quad with the true rock and roll excitement missing in large part from the album. The Who, especially Townshend, seemed genuinely enthusiastic playing the new material (in contrast to, for example, the nearly worn-out "Summertime Blues"), and it showed in a galvanizing performance.

Standouts included "The Real Me", "The Punk & The Godfather", "I'm One", and especially "Sea And Sand", with a gratifyingly extended High Numbers memory-maker "I'm The Face" at the end. A few songs (notably "Drowned" and "5:15") were overextended, with empty lead guitar posturings as filler, but virtually every selection played (the bulk of the LP) was top-notch.

Inevitably the remainder of the concert was a trifle anticlimactic, if only from relative over familiarity, but sublime moments still abounded. A second version of "My Generation", not varying drastically from the first, seemed

PERFORMANCES

rather pointless (why not "The Kids Are Alright" instead?); and the obligatory "See Me Feel Me" crowdpleaser and an excessively drawn-out "Magic Bus" (their most expendable live number) failed to excite. But countered against these disappointments were a smashing "Pinball Wizard" (liberated from its smothering operatic envelopment) and a rousing performance of the British-only hit "Let's See Action". And to top it off, the group closed with "It Don't Really Happen That Way At All", a song known only to fanatic bootleg connoisseurs, containing some highly potent riffing — an unexpected bonus.

After a subpar performance in 1970, a near-disaster in '71 and a two-year absence, it was infinitely reassuring to witness a 1973 Who triumph — especially in a year when alarming signs of age have afflicted so many top-echelon headliners. The group's unique brand of hyperkinetic excitement hasn't faded away; and at their best, the Who are still, simply, the best.

Eric Mercury
Millenium '73,
The Astrodome,
Houston, Texas

By SUSANELLA ROGERS



When Eric Mercury and his entourage took the stage on the first day of the Millenium '73 celebration hosted by the Perfect Plaster Master Guru Maharaji, the audience was some 60,000 short of the predicted minimum 80,000 devotees, but the mesmerized followers of the Guru made up in

glazed apathy what they lacked in numbers. Mercury was up against two formidable obstacles: restoring to the audience any faith in possibly being entertained (Eric had the unpleasant luck to be scheduled to appear after an unusually hard act to follow: a physically live but vocally pre-recorded tableau of J. Christ's life and times, interminably long, pneumatically staged, an unspectacular spectacle that sapped what little enthusiasm the blissed-out zombies were hiding), and the unfortunate concurrence of Eric's set and the cafeteria's (only) dinner service.

There was a discouraging exodus as the faithful—many of whom had been Astropresent since early morning—sought to test the claim that Peace is Protein, but the walking dead who stayed, whether out of curiosity, catatonia or real interest, were soon converted to Eric's personal brand of evangelism—a throbbing, infectious insistence that love is taking over.

Eric Mercury had been invited by Guru Maharaji's musical brother Bhole Ji to attend as the only non-devotee performer at Millenium (the political motives for which I shall refrain from discussing...). Impressed with Eric's latest album *LOVE IS TAKING OVER* (Enterprise ENS-1033), the organizers chose that slogan as a theme for the three-day Astro-bash. Eric's presence was a reassuringly refreshing note of sanity amid the smothering fog of super-hype otherworldliness.

Despite a balky sound system and an unsure reception, Eric's set was positively electrifying. The early tangible doubt of the audience soon gave way to an unparalleled exuberance and joy; the zombies responded to the proffered breath of life as groups of believers formed circles to dance the Divine Light *hora* and snaked through the once-again packed floor of the Astrodome, blissfully tripping over unsuspecting outflung limbs and sleeping children.

In person, Mercury displays an explosive vocal power barely noticeable on record; backed by 31 instruments and a chorus of 21 voices, the love-gospel-rock sound is nothing short of uplifting. The L.A.-based orchestra, headed by leader Fred Jackson, Jr. on alto flute and piccolo, Ken Marco on guitar and William Smith on keyboards, is tight and together, and the choir, conducted by Doug

Richardson and directed by Eddie Kendrix, counterpoints the orchestra to effect a perfect background for Eric's strong vocal.

Mercury himself exhibits a commanding but not overbearing presence: he has the manner of a man who knows what he's about and gets on with it (at a press conference that day Eric claimed "I may look slick to some people but it's just that I know what I'm doing—if you're good, you're good, and if that makes me slick then I am"). In performance, it's obvious that Mercury is a man of conviction, that he believes and practices the message of his music: that love will make way for an untroubled world, that the most important and valuable resource we have is ourselves (ironically, somewhat antithetical to Maharaji's egoless master-slave teachings).

The set consisted of songs from the latest album, as well as several new tunes (co-authored by Eric)—"Life is Full of Joy" was the number that propelled the crowd to their feet, and the bouncy old-timey-gospel "I Shall Not Be Moved" raised the vibrations to a fever-pitch intensity. Mercury enjoyed an undeniable success with the audience, but the enthusiasm did not develop into a full-fledged frenzy—through no fault of Eric's though; after all, there's only so much one man can do with 20,000 brain damage cases.

(But don't go 'way yet, sports fans—this is a performance review, and the show wasn't over yet: Two days later as the chartered 727 jettisoned us back to Sunny California a quiet chorus whispered up from the back of the plane—in a flash the whisper grew to a roar and the cabin pulsated as a hundred voices joined in "Love is Taking Over"—hardhearted Hollywoodites laughing and hugging, sexy press agents and freebie-grabbing writers singing off key. Eric and the choir counterbalancing the cacophony with solid harmony, and red-suited stewardesses dancing in the aisles. As we taxied into LAX, Eric led us through "Blessed is He" and I felt an uncharacteristic dampness in my own jaded eye, a joy and lightness of heart that (really!) lifted me out of myself and lingered long after I planted a firm smack on Eric Mercury's brown lips and floated out into the Hometown Smog and the Real World.)

Eric Mercury entertains the troops at Houston's guru festival. He wasn't a believer, but they liked him anyway.



Black Sabbath

Netherworld music with a difference from the dark princes whose four previous Warner Bros. albums have claimed a million or so souls apiece.

Leo Sayer

All England has been buzzing about Leo Sayer ever since The Who's Roger Daltrey recorded an album of his songs (including the hit "Giving It All Away"). He's Great Britain's best new export in the winter of 1973-74. On Warner Bros.

Dust Your Turntable



Graham Central Station

Larry Graham, former bass player for Sly and the Family Stone, leads a group fully prepared to advance music at least another decade. His Warner Bros. album debut reveals traces of where Graham's been, but where he's going is even more exciting.

Foghat

The British band which has outplayed the competition in a series of relentless U.S. tours has surged all of its energies into a most potent third album on Bearsville Records.

And Warm Your Ears

HOLLYWOOD



Richard Creamer
The Hollywood Starrs (with two r's, aahrring) - they sound as good as they look; you can draw your own conclusion from that.

LISA ROCOCO

Well dears, your blissful Lisa is seeing out the old year with Stars in her eyes - Hollywood Starrs, that is. It's merely a local bonfire right now (which brings to prouss mind that Steppenwolf's Mars Bonfire wrote one of their songs, "Supermen Are Always Gentlemen"), but chances are that it'll soon spread like wildfire. They're young and they're pretty (and you know that Lisa's a tough judge in such matters) and with the help of the indefatigable and ingenious Kim Fowley, these five sweet boys have become potent enough to inspire A&M Records to ship flowers and champagne over to the Whisky dressing room. That company has some avid rivals, though, and the contest for the Starrs' signature is waxing warm. Whoever ends up with them is bound to have a smash on their hands. Lisa just can't decide which of their songs (all of them keep running through her musical head) is the hottest. "Russia," "Tough Guys Never Cry," "Will the Lights Go On Again" and "Escape" seem to dominate the inner soundtrack at the moment, but I just can't wait to hear the currently in-progress "Fighting Star," the first martial arts rock 'n' roll song.

Angela, by the way, is gracing Hollywood with her presence for two full months. She's taken a house in the hills, where she'll be working on her show (whatever that may prove to be) and perhaps playing the lead in Warner Bros.' "Wonder Woman". She jetted to Las Vegas over New Years to see Ann-Margret's show, and will soon be on her way to Rio for the Carnival. So, a hearty Rococo welcome to Jipp Jones; it's truly an honor.

Elsewhere on the music scene, Genesis arrived from England with a smashing West Coast debut that surprised even those who knew of the theatrical band's reputation in England. A smashing time was had by all (including the lovely Jackie DeShannon) at the Laurel Canyon party for the band, after which Peter Gabriel and his wife took off for a palm-lined vacation in Hawaii.

Lisa's rhinestone - studded crystal ball sees big things ahead for Genesis.

And wasn't it nice to see Jeri and Boby Bonbon in Newsweek (the special year-end Arts issue), in color no less? Jeri and pop journalist/mail artist R. Meltzer have been maintaining a torrid correspondence, by the way: Richard sent Jeri a tin of live New York cockroaches (no relation to the Dolls), which our Bonbon answered with a bag of dog droppings.

Rocket's second stage: Rocket Records has dropped Mike Silver, their bearded folkie, and have signed one Lane Caudell, who'll be recording here presently Playing bass will be Kirk Henry, formerly Christopher Milk's "the Kiddo," and at the controls, reportedly, will be the Rocket Man himself. (Ex-GTO Miss Pamela took quite a liking to the strapping Lane, and even stopped off in North Carolina to meet his parents on her way to New York, where she's to star in a film produced by the *Rainbow Bridge* people). And don't be too surprised to find John Lennon on the Rocket ship before too long.

Things are looking up for the Stooges as well. They got three encores on the bill with J. Geils in Florida, and at this very moment are preparing for their New Years Eve show in New York. Lisa fervently hopes that they're performing "Private Cell," a true killer that they threw together at a rehearsal just before they left... The charming Naomi Ruth Eisenberg, former Lickette, now has a band together and was in town for a few days hunting up material. She's set to play a fashion show at SF's new Hyatt hotel... Look for some good things from the durable Del Shannon, who's cut some tracks under the producership of the ELO's Jeff Lynne... Word is that the Eagles may be on their last wings. Lisa weeps not... And a special Hollywood thanks to San Francisco's Sylvester for his smashing pre-New Years Eve party. You can S.O.M.F. any time, love.

Do have a fabulous '74, alright darlings? A big kiss from Lisa to each and every one of you.



RODNEY BINGENHEIMER

(It's with the greatest pleasure we welcome Rodney Bingenheimer to the pages of Phonograph Record. An authority on pop music and a leading pop figure in his own right, he symbolizes more than anybody the spirit of pop music in the seventies. Beginning next month, Rodney will be bringing you inside news and tidbits from the fabulous world of pop royalty. This first installment of his column features a listing of the most-played records at Rodney Bingenheimer's English Disco, the haven for West Coast pop connoisseurs and favored gathering place of the stars. Most are imports, many as yet unreleased in America - or in England, in some cases!)

STAR RATED SINGLES

1. "Ballroom Blitz" - The Sweet
2. "Dynamite" - Mud
3. "Do You Wanna Dance" - Barry Blue
4. "Daytona Demon" - Suzi Quatro
5. "Forever" - Roy Wood
6. "Trash" - New York Dolls
7. "Can the Can" - Suzi Quatro
8. "Hellraiser" - The Sweet
9. "Suffragette City" - David Bowie
10. "Sha Na Na Na" - Dave Clark

MERSEY BEAT

LADY BANGLA BOOM, MS.

Christmastime and the living is glowmy, as the hollowdays dwindle down. The outlook for Britain is at best austere and the music industry is certainly not unaffected. Vinyl's even more scarce here than Stateside, and already much product has been postponed and new projects scrapped. '74 could be, as the Hollies used to say, a hard hard year.

Still, 1973 threw quite a few surprises at us (the emergence of Wizzard, Suzi Quatro, Nazareth, et. al.), with another stunner coming in the last few weeks - latest Pops-toyter Alvin Stardust, the Glitteresque singer currently scoring with "My Coo-ca-choo", was revealed to be none other than early-60's hitmaker Shane Fenton (his "I'm A Moody Guy" was a big '62 chart item and Bobby Elliott of the Hollies hails from his backing Fentones). All very heartwarming, especially coupled with the revelation of Mott drummer Dale Griffin (ex-Buffin's) long-standing desire to produce another decade-ago record/film heart-throb, John Leyton. And Spark Records have released a *Liverpool Echo* anthology as well as an Artwoods LP (mid-sixties legend featuring Jon Lord, Keef Hartley, and other likewise thrilling personalities).

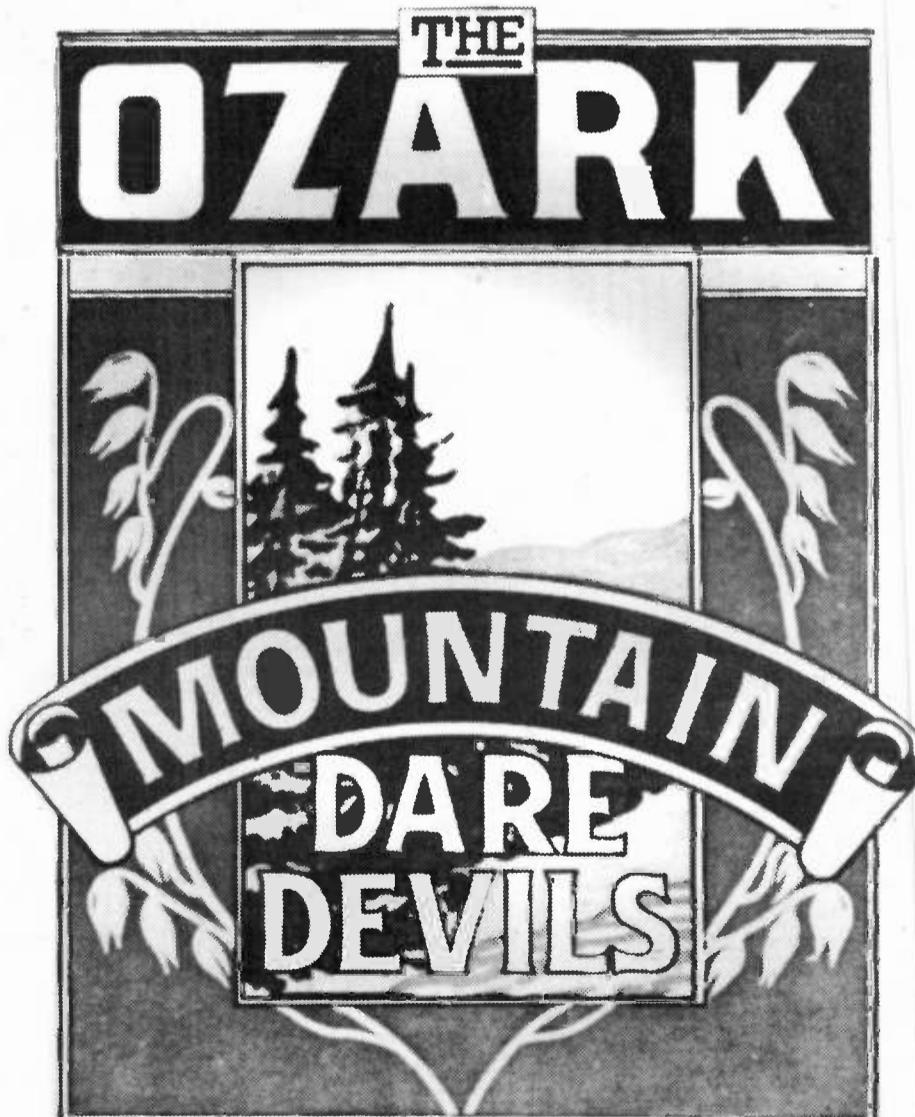
Enough nostalgia, though.

What's new, among other things, is Cockney Rebel, and their outspoken lead vocalist/Scengali-type Steve Harley had some refreshing comments on the state of the art:

"The Woodstock period... was death and the worst period rock went through. Grace Slick, Jerry Garcia, James Taylor, they were the ones to blame, they're just dummies... And Jimi Hendrix was... a phenomenon, but what did we get? Thousands of little guitarists all over the world... screaming out long boring solos!"

No argument from this corner, but it's good to hear it from a musician. Cockney Rebel's debut LP, *The Human Menagerie*, is good to hear, too, fascinating Roxy-esque material. Meanwhile Lulu's younger brother Billy Lawrie is awaiting imminent release of his first LP. Other new or impending albums include Lindisfarne's *Roll On Ruby*, Manfred Mann's *Solar Fire*, Mott The Hoople's *Bash Street Kids*, another from Wizzard, and (rather anticlimactically) a Chick Churchill (TYA) solo set. Also, in case you weren't aware, Traffic's *On The Road* is a double LP here - and still a dreadful bore.

final LP notes - Bowie protégés Carmen release *Fandangos In Space*, and the old incorrigible trouser carouser himself, P.J. Proby, is back with an album called *I'm Yours*. Same to you, Jim.



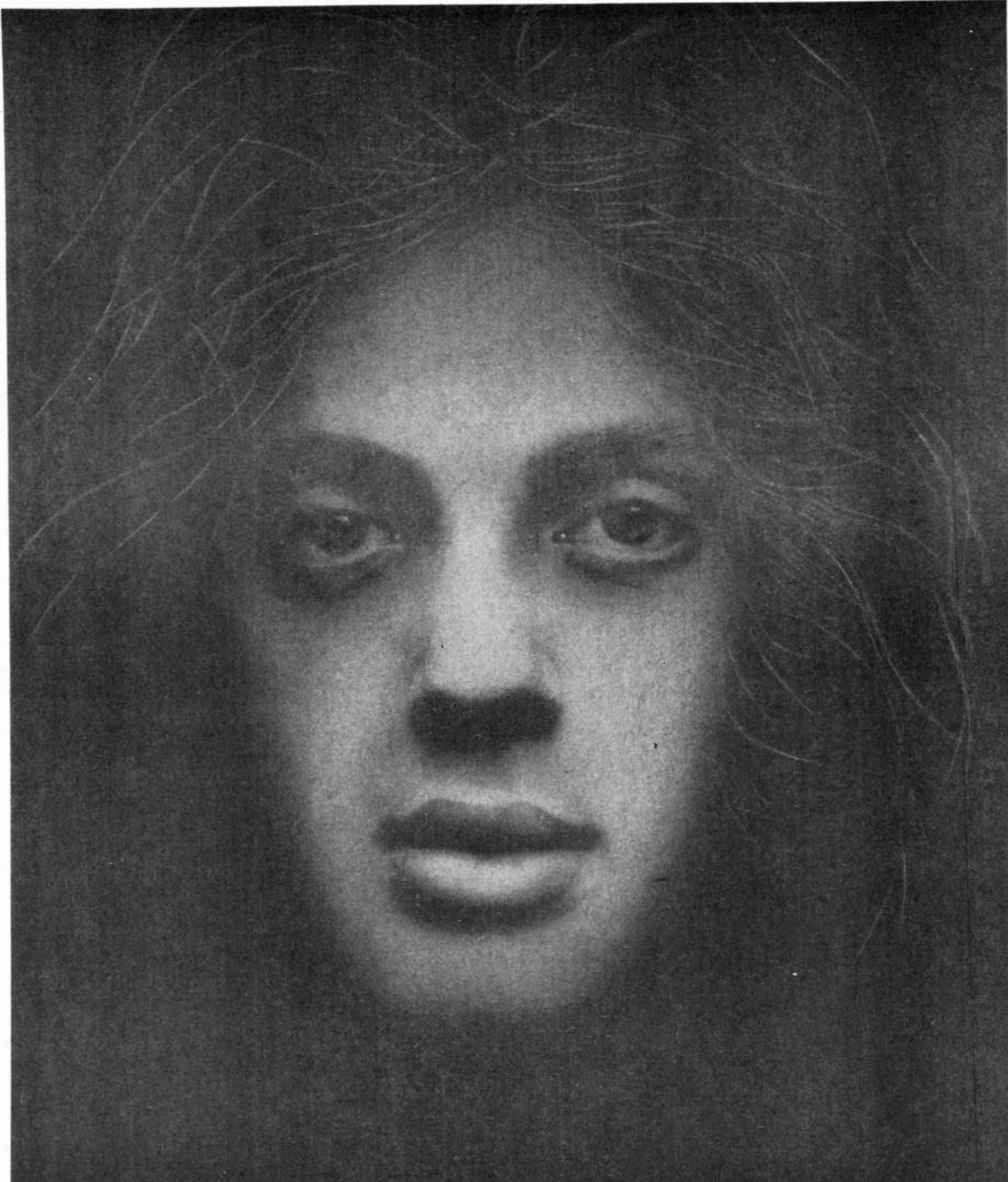
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ROCK RETROSPECTIVE ELEVEN

By Billy Altman

THE PRESERVATION OF A MYTH RAY DAVIES AND THE KINKS

It was truly an amazing moment. Ray Davies was bouncing around the stage of the Century Theater in Buffalo, N.Y. and 2,500 kids were going bananas. Suddenly Ray stopped, turned sideways, pointed to his derriere, and slyly addressed the multitudes. "Isn't that the most beautiful ass you've ever seen?" A wild whoop went up from the crowd and as brother Dave Davies launched the band into the frenzied opening war chords of "Till the End of the Day," my friend Joe walked over to me and whispered in my ear, "how many times do ya think Jagger's wished he had the balls to say THAT!" We both looked at each other with one of those patented "I don't believe this is really happening and I'm here to see it" looks as the band finished up and the Kinks' roadies carried Dave (who had been suffering from exhaustion throughout the tour) up the stairs to the dressing rooms. And as Ray went by us backstage, he smiled that famous Ray Davies smile, the gap between his front teeth adding just that right bit of Chaplinesque charm, and he gave us exactly the same look we had given each other a minute before. It was an experience I'll never forget.

*"When I look so far way
Please don't wake me from my daze
I'm just wondering who I could be
If I could live inside my dreams.
I could be a king or a football star
Drive around in a big sports car.
An astronaut or a billionaire
I could do anything, I could go anywhere.
Please don't wake me from my dreams."*

The above lyrics are from "Dreams", written by Raymond Douglas Davies for the soundtrack to a highly forgettable film called *Percy*. And if one needed one song to put into focus the complex personality of the Kinks' leader, this would do as well as any. Because the world of Ray Davies is one of dreams, and the fact that he has been able to live, write and act out his own personal fantasies has made the Kinks one of the most beloved rock 'n' roll bands of all time.

Of all the groups that invaded our shores in the mid-sixties, only three still remain at the top: The Stones, The Who and The Kinks. And unlike their superstar colleagues, the Kinks have survived without the aid of million-selling albums and jam-packed hockey arenas. Yet Kinks Krazees have remained loyal to the cause and there are now actually more Kinks fans than there were at the time of *Arthur*, when the last-ditch "God Save the Kinks" publicity campaign was launched into full swing.

The question of why the Kinks are still with us is somewhat complicated. The band has always managed to be in the wrong place at the right time, starting in early 1964 when they first burst upon the scene with "You Really Got Me." They were a great raunch band, but it was the wrong place for them, as later events proved, and when the group's true person-



Andy Kent

ality began to emerge, they slid from stardom to a state of esoteric limbo from which they have surmounted all odds by tenaciously hanging on to the present day. *Preservation Act 1* (their fifteenth album, not counting *Greatest Hits*, *Kink Kronikles* or *Great Lost Kinks Album*) has just been released, and it finds them as fresh and lively as ever, still not making it, but undaunted just the same.

But let's start at the beginning. I don't think there's one person that was alive then and listening to the radio who doesn't recall vividly the first time he heard "You Really Got Me." There were so many great songs and great groups assaulting our virgin ears during that first wave in '64, and yet when that two-chord progression hit the airwaves, ears swerved off the roads as we fought from the back seat while our fathers tried to either turn the damned thing off or switch it to another station. "You Really Got Me" had much more of an impact on me than either "I Want to Hold Your Hand" or the Stones' version of "I Wanna Be Your Man" — there was absolute chaos going on

in that song, and the violence that had merely been threatened by the early Stones was made real by "You Really Got Me." Drunken, slurred lead vocals, a completely deranged guitar break that defied all reason, a pounding relentless beat. And all in two minutes thirteen seconds. You could play it about twenty-five times in one hour, and I have one friend who did just that, and he swears to this day that it changed his entire life.

I waited and waited for them to appear on *Shindig* and when they finally did I was shellshocked for days. There were Ray, Dave, Pete Quaife and Mick Avory, all dressed up in frilly suits, the perfect English gentlemen. Ray dangled that limp wrist and pointed his index finger at the camera while the rest of the band unleashed their fury behind him. It was a sound that hit you directly in the gut and wrenches your insides till you felt like screaming, although you loved every minute of it. And the hits kept coming. "All Day and All of the Night", "Tired of Waiting For You", "Set Me Free", "I Need You" and "Well Respected Man",

each one as good as the one preceding it and equally uncompromising in its sonic attack.

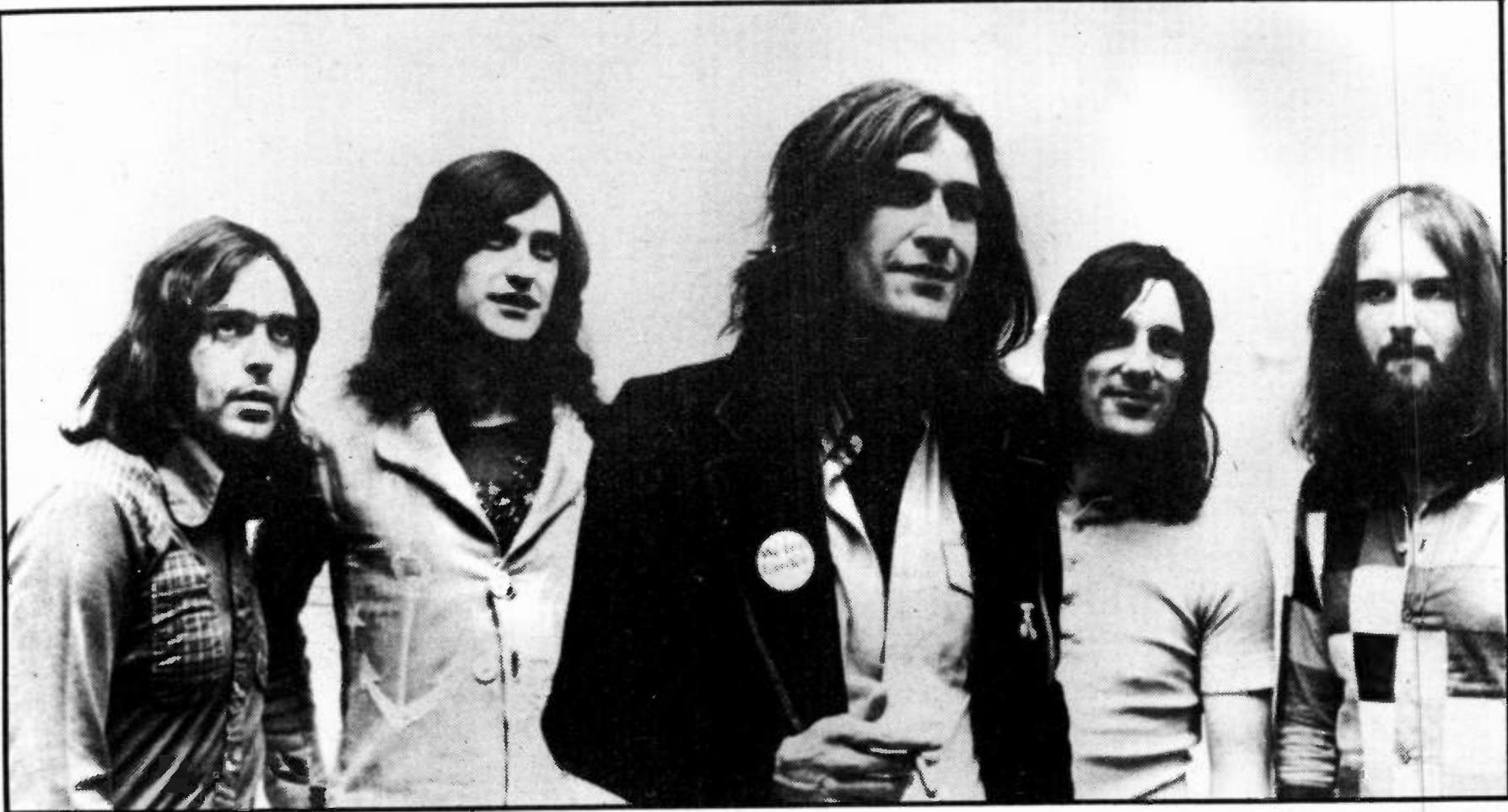
The first four Kinks albums can be roughly lumped together as representing the initial phase of their recording career. Under the guidance of producer Shel Talmy, who seemed to possess a special gift for translating the raw force of their sound into sizzling wax, the band prospered and grew. They had hits in America, even more hits in England. They did all the tours, played all the T.V. shows, graced all the fan mags. They became known for rough, two-chord rampages, hot reworkings of the riff from "Louie Louie" (a song they recorded twice), and in those days brother Dave's slashing guitar and screeching nasal voice were as important to the group as Ray's role.

One of the biggest Kink controversies arose in this era, one that has haunted them to this day. A popular session man named Jimmy Page was brought in to play second guitar on a couple of early tracks. He'd been on records by all kinds of hit groups, but somehow when word got around that the Kinks had used him, people started saying that Dave was unable to handle his own axe. The group angrily denied it all, denied having ever set eyes on Page, and deny it still to those who persist in asking. It was an inane controversy from the start, as Page's only contribution was in giving those early hits a full, pounding rhythm track that enhanced but hardly altered the essential sound the Kinks had created.

Early in the game, though, Ray Davies could be seen transforming the music he had grown up with in the fifties into something new. Though the Kinks did sprinkle a few Chuck Berry and Slim Harpo tunes into their first album, Ray was already writing almost all the band's material by their second LP, *Kinks Size*. In retrospect, it's the tamer songs that showed an inkling of where Ray was headed as a songwriter. On their third album, *Kinda Kinks*, there's an acoustic blues entitled "Nothin' In This World Can Stop Me Worrying About That Girl" that for the first time brought out the pathos and melancholy of Ray's mind. It's a haunting song about a guy who falls in love only to find himself being two-timed and lied to. The feelings turn to bitterness by the time we get to "Who'll Be the Next in Line", on *Kinkdom*, with its undercurrent of impending violence.

Still, the bulk of the material in this phase was loose, youthful and wild. Mammoth sized rockers like "Come On Now", "I Gotta Move", and "I Need You", with a startling feedback intro, kept the Kinks high in the charts.

The first great break with convention came with the transitional *Kink Kontroversy*. The blurb on the back cover says, "the many moods of the Kinks raise up the *Kink Kontroversy*," and that's a rather shrewd way of getting around the fact that all is not well in Daviesland. On



this record, for the first time, many of the songs find Ray in the midst of hopeless depression. On side two, the first three cuts ("The World Keeps Going Round", "I'm On An Island" and "Where Have All the Good Times Gone") make up a trilogy of darkly emotional tunes. In these songs, Ray seems more concerned with the world and the inevitable misery it brings than ever before. Even a weary song like "Tired of Waiting For You" was directed at one lousy chick that was shaking up Ray's pride. But "The World Keeps Going Round" is enough to depress anybody:

You worry about the sun
What's the use of worryin' 'bout
the big old sun?
You worry 'bout the rain
The rain keeps fallin' just
the same.
You worry when the one you need
has found somebody new
But the world keeps goin' round
You just can't stop it.
The world keeps goin' round

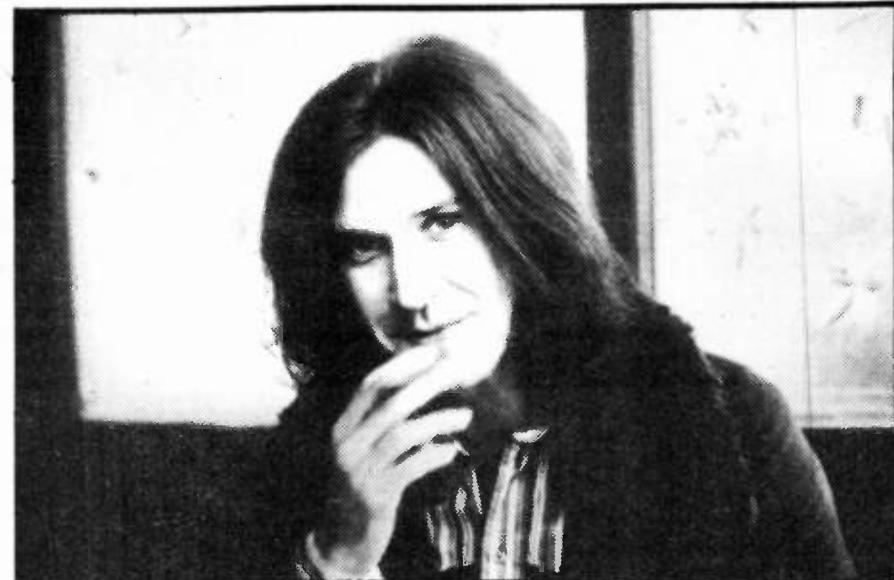
"I'm On An Island" is another of many calypso-tinged tunes Davies has written. (I once asked Ray if Harry Belafonte was much of an influence on him. He laughed and said, "not at all — unless you mean like 'Oll dae an' oll of de nigh' and then he winked.) Though it's pretty much a simple exercise in self-pity, Ray throws in some strange lines: "I'm on an island, and I've got nowhere to run, because I'm the only one who's on the island." Then, in the bridge, he announces that "There's nowhere else on earth I'd rather be." The sense of isolation that seems to crop up again and again in Ray's songs has its roots here on *Kink Kontroversy*.

Of course, the Kinks were still rocking like crazy, as evidenced by "Till the End of the Day", the last of the great Kinks power chord songs, and their incredible rendition of "Milk Cow Blues", with Dave howling out the lead vocal and the band getting into some high energy jamming. Here was demonstrated, for all who cared to listen, that the Kinks were keeping up with the rising powerhouse sounds of the Yardbirds and the Pretty Things. The group's punkoid tendencies were likewise exhibited in the down-your-nose stance of Dave's "I Am Free" and the guitar-heavy "You Can't Win", with Dave and Nicky Hopkins battling each other during the solos.

With the release of *Face to Face* in late 1966, the Kinks moved into their second phase, which encompassed that album, *Something Else* and *Village Green Preservation Society*. *Face to Face* is seldom thought of as such, but it could well be considered one of rock's first concept albums, building a community of everyday experiences into an entire vision of the world, one in which many of Ray's fantasies have lived until this day. It always struck me as strange that when "Well Respected Man" and "Dedicated Follower of Fashion" came out, cries of "oh no, social comment from high on the hog rock stars!" were so common. One of the most pleasing things about Ray Davies' songwriting is that he's always managed to stay down here on earth with us regular people. Be they parables, as those two songs clearly were, or just whimsical scenarios, like most of the tunes on the three albums named above, Ray was beginning to set down his thoughts on real life and the real people who must face the tax man taking everything they got or the daughter running off to the big city in search of excitement, only to return broken and cynical.

Perhaps this is why Ray's ballads have consistently struck me as being a touch more honest than most of what you find in popular music. Most ballads written by rock groups these days seem painfully extracted, if not patently insincere. The last Stones song that made any kind of human impression on me was "Wild Horses." With the Who, it would be "Sunrise", from *Sell Out*. I use those two examples not because I don't love the Stones and the Who, but just a general feeling that the alienation of being who they are after all these years has driven them away from bared emotions in their music. When it is there, as for instance in a song like Led Zep's "Stairway to Heaven", it's a detached sort of love, directed at an intellectual feeling rather than a heartfelt one.

But enough editorializing; the simple fact is that on *Face to Face*, Ray Davies came to grips with the world he lives in and emerged with a maturity as a songwriter that was pretty much unexpected at that point in his career. Take a song like "Dandy" that Herman's Hermits also finagled into a hit. On the surface it is a half-serious, half-ridiculous tune about a good-looking cad and when Peter Noone sang it, it stayed on an innocuous, pop



"I'VE GOT THE MOST BEAUTIFUL ASS IN SHOW-BIZ"

level. The Kinks' treatment starts at the same point, but by the end when Ray starts repeating "You're all right!" his voice goes up high and turns to an angered and vicious shout. The whole tone of the song changes in those last few seconds, right down to the acoustic protest song strums at the end.

The characters on *Face to Face* jump out at you like pictures in a book. "Too Much On My Mind" finds Ray in a bleak pit of depression, musing "it seems there's more to life than just to live it," while "Session Man", presumably dedicated to Nicky Hopkins, captures the lot of the "chord progression" beautifully — "he's not paid to think, just play." The driving "Rainy Day in June", an overlooked classic, is the first Kinks song to find Ray venting grievance against the world of technology, here in the form of the ever-looming bomb. To borrow a few thoughts from John Mendelsohn, "House in the Country," "Sunny Afternoon," and "Most Exclusive Residence For Sale" form a trilogy involving an anti-hero who gets "his job when drunken daddy tumbled down the stairs," leads a life of sin and corruption, loses everything he owns except for "a big fat mama trying to break

me," and finally has to sell his fancy house to get out of debt.

Beginning with this album, Dave begins to take on more importance as the voice of the rocker in the Kinks world. "You're Lookin' Fine," a song still performed live by the band, is built on an unusual riff and works its way into a showcase for Dave's guitar playing. On *Face to Face* it is Dave's breakout number, most assuredly designed to button up the lips of the Jimmy Page rumor throwers, which he does quite well. Dave also sings "Party Line," co-authored with Ray, a jug-band nonsense number about the problems of British telephone service ("And I'm not voting in the next election till I find out who's that speaking when I'm talking on my party line").

No discussion of *Face to Face* would be complete without a mention of the one bona fide love song on the album, "Fancy." One line from this song always comes back to haunt those who think they've figured Ray out by this time. "No one can penetrate me. They only see what's in their own fancy." It's an incredibly tender song, with an unsettling Indian arrangement that hypnotizes the listener.

Something Else has been generally looked upon as the Kinks' and Ray's

Thank you for listening.

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**"GONE CRAZY."
THE NEW GRIN ALBUM.
ON A&M RECORDS**



pinnacle, a true masterpiece of a record that captures virtually the entire universe in its lyrical and musical scope. Enough has already been said about this record, in fact. Suffice it to say that it is a brilliant extension of the themes and feelings set forth in *Face to Face* and that it has held up to this day as one of the few records that I'd rate as absolutely perfect in every respect. The key songs on the album are "Death of a Clown," which rose to the top of the British charts and established Dave Davies as a fine songwriter in his own right, and the blissfully sad "Waterloo Sunset." As perhaps the single finest song that Ray Davies ever wrote, "Waterloo Sunset" is a song of joyous resignation, with the forlorn romantic sitting in his room, content to watch the world go by from his window. The lilting backup vocals by Dave are among the most ethereal and sensitive ever done.

Of note on *Something Else* is the beginning of Ray's infatuation with the cabaret/crooner genre. "End of the Season" is a wildly outrageous swing and swayer with Ray showing off yet another side of his personality. Included here too is a Broadway-based, brassy putdown of suburbia called "Tin Soldier Man" and a barrelhouse Irish folk "music to down mugs by" song called "Harry Rag," on which Ray raises a few eyebrows with lyrics about "rolling myself a Harry Rag and putting myself to bed."

Though both "Death of a Clown" and "Waterloo Sunset" were monster hits in England, *Something Else* was a commercial flop and by the time that *Village Green Preservation Society* was released in 1968, the Kinks had entered a vacuum that they would not emerge from for almost two years. Despondent over the general decline of the band's popularity both in England and in the U.S. (where they were turned down from touring because of the band's usual raucous and destructive manner when on the road), and perhaps angered by the oddly timed release of *The Live Kinks* between *Face to Face* and *Something Else*, (a great album to be sure, but hardly representative of where the band was in '68) Ray retired further and further into his turn of the century Kinkdom. *Village Green* is an intricate, low keyed record, loosely based around the small town lying somewhere on the outskirts of anytown, England. The only real rocker on the record is a kiddie horror tune called "Wicked Annabella", sung naturally by Dave in a menacing, shrieking voice. Ray's cabaret act was also coming to the fore here with songs like "Sitting By the Riverside" and "Picture Book", complete with "scoo-be-do-be-do" chorus.

Generally overlooked were some amazingly poignant tales of small town life such as "Village Green", about a man returning to his home town after a life of non-importance and deluding himself into thinking that everything is still the same, so much so that he honestly believes that his old girl friend, now married to the "grocer boy", will return to him and sit under the old oak tree with him just as before. The whole album seems to center on themes of illusion, delusion and fantasy, most heavy-handedly brought home in the gypsy tambourined dance of "People Take Pictures of Each Other", which Ray concludes is done to "prove that they really existed." Likewise, "Big Sky" portrays God as a big ceiling that looks down at the poor people on earth but is "too big to sympathize."

Unfortunately, the Kinks' flowering as observers of life, along with what many consider their peak as musicians and songwriters, came at a time when hardly anybody seemed to be paying attention. Songs that were hits in England, like "Dead End Street", "Waterloo Sunset", "Autumn Almanac" and "Days" were unheard here, and subsequent releases failed even at home. As a result, Ray retreated further into his own kinkiness, and the group's record companies took to



releasing all manner of odd songs as B-sides of singles in strange countries, and holding back other material that should have been released. It must have been a discouraging period for them, creating masterworks at an ever greater pace (and a listen to *Kink Kronikles* or *The Great Lost Kinks Album*, on which most of these tracks finally did appear, will instantly reveal their superlative quality), all the while being told they couldn't put out another album because nobody would buy it. For the same reasons, Dave's solo career, despite a couple of promising singles, ground to a premature halt.

Village Green Preservation Society had bombed miserably and internal strife within the band led to the departure of bassist Peter Quaife, who left suddenly and without stated reason, though it was clear at this juncture that only a miracle could save the Kinks.

Well, God save 'em, that miracle did happen. Ray was commissioned to write a score for a British television show about the decline and fall of the British Empire, as seen through the eyes of the little people, personified by the character of Arthur, every good English mother's son. John Dalton came in as the new bass player, and with the aid of a big American publicity push by the newly-restructured Reprise Records, the Kinks were back in full swing by the end of 1969.

Arthur is a great record, a perfect subject for the Ray Davies magnifying glass, executed with loving precision. "Victoria", the leadoff track, has Ray rocking hard for the first time in years, expounding on the virtues of the "land of hope and Gloria" (whatever that means). Throughout the record, Dave can be heard tearing loose for rip-snorting solos that had been left dormant within his slim fingers for quite a while. Ray's wit is sharp, sometimes subtly attacking the life style ("Yes Sir No Sir") and sometimes tenderly teasing it ("She's Bought a Hat Like Princess Marina's"). The critics took up the cause, rallying to the Kinks' side, and soon the band was out touring again, playing horrendously as always, but managing to regroup the loyalists and win a few new followers.

It was in the summer of 1970 that the Kinks returned to the Top Ten with

"Lola", a song that ushered in the seventies as well as any song short of "All the Young Dudes" could have done. References to Ray's bisexual nature, like his manic-depressive tendencies, had been made openly before, and Lola, "who walked like a woman but talked like a man", was more kindling on the fire. But those who expected more of the same were a bit surprised when the album finally appeared.

Musically, it was their strongest album in some time; it was evident that they had won back some of their lagging confidence. John Gosling had joined on keyboards, and the fuller sound the group now had enabled them to stretch out like never before.

In theme, however, *Lola Vs. Powerman and the Money Go Round* revolves more around money and social economics than sex. Two concepts seem to be at work in most of the songs. First, the story of a young songwriter climbing the ladder of success. "Top of the Pops" uses perhaps the two most overworked riffs of the sixties, "Louie Louie" and "Land of a Thousand Dances", but Ray makes the syntheses work musically as well as sarcastically as the band pounds out the driving beat. The success is short-lived, however, as we see in "The Moneygoround", a Gilbert and Sullivan word-crammer depicting the plight of a rock star watching his money slip away as managers, agents and publishers zero in for the kill.

Paralleling this tale is a second plot line, concerning a poor working man trying to eke out a living. "Get Back in the Line" is a lovely tune about a laborer whose entire existence hinges on whether the union man will call his number on the waiting line, and "Long Way From Home" is a chilling portrait of a selfish man who has passed all his friends by in his search for wealth.

The *Percy* soundtrack referred to earlier was released early in the summer of 1971 in England but never made it to the U.S., mainly because the Kinks had decided to switch labels when RCA came along and offered them a healthy contract. The *Percy* album is a curiously satisfying record in much the same style as Pink Floyd's *More* soundtrack. Though I never

saw the film, I heard that the music was the best part of it, as Ray penned some great mood music and a few lovely ballads. "God's Children", the last Kinks single on Reprise, is an anthem call to arms against the advance of the modern world — specifically, in the film, genital transplant ("We gotta go back the way the good Lord made us all..."). Maybe not quite what the film's producers had in mind, but a touching song all the same. The rest of the album is uneven but far from lacking in other such gems.

The Kinks moved to RCA amidst considerable hoopla. The company, tired of its staid bureaucratic image, had brought in several bright young executives who were expected to bring RCA up to date. Along with many other shocking developments, the company found itself with David Bowie, Lou Reed and the Kinks, and what seemed to be a commitment to making stars of them all.

The RCA era begins with *Muswell Hillbillies*, released in the winter of 1971. On this album, country and western creeps its way into the Kinks' music — foreshadowed perhaps by "Willesden Green" on *Percy*, which transposed Bobby Bare's "Detroit City" to a British setting. Here, Ray's voice takes on a distinctive Southern accent as he dreams of the Black Hills of Dakota that he's "never even seen."

The temper of the record is made crystal clear by the opening track, "20th Century Man."

"My mama says she can't understand me
She can't see my motivation
Ain't got no security
Ain't got no ambition
I'm a 20th century man
But I don't wanna die here."

The age of machinery, the age of insanity, that's what Ray's up against here. By the second song he's got a good case of "Acute Schizophrenia Paranoia Blues" (I got 'em, you got 'em). The doctor sends him away for a "Holiday" where "the salt gets in my blisters and the sand gets in my hair, and the sea's an open sewer but I really couldn't care; I'm breathin' through my nose so I don't have to sniff the air!" The song smacks of Randy Newman, although Ray contends that Fats Waller was its primary influence.

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'Tubular Bells' is a vast work, almost classical in its structure and in the way a theme is stated and deftly worked upon.

Geoff Brown — Melody Maker.

It is not often that you get in a batch of the first releases from a new record company and find among them an album that not only strikes you with its freshness of ideas and excellence of execution, but surpasses your expectations of the artist concerned. But Mike Oldfield's 'Tubular Bells' (Virgin V2001) does all that and more. Steve Peacock — Sounds.

I can't think of another album that I'd as unhesitatingly recommend. Steve Peacock — Sounds.



Tom Newman and Simon Heyworth

I THINK it is obvious to all who have witnessed Oldfield's excursions with a guitar, that he ranks along with Messrs. Eric Clapton, Jeff Beck and Richard Thomson amongst that exclusive legion of master players. After all didn't Kevin Ayres say "My favourite guitarist after Hendrix".

Malcolm Heyhoe, I.T.



Mick Taylor and Steve Hillage



Mick Taylor



John Greaves



David Bedford



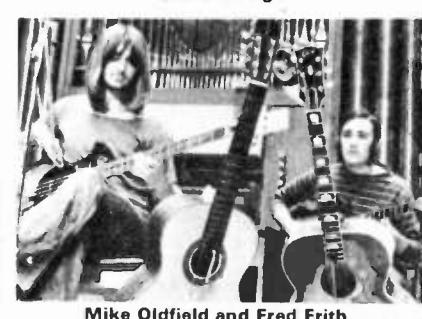
Steve Hillage



Jeff Leigh and Terry Oldfield



Pierre Moerley



Mike Oldfield and Fred Frith



Steve Hillage, Mike Oldfield, Fred Frith, Ted Speight, Mick Taylor

MIKE OLDFIELD'S TUBULAR BELLS

I do not think that words could ever do justice to this beautiful, beautiful music, nor praise it enough. William Murray — Time Out.

It moves me to the same immensity of feeling as Sibelius or Debussy. It is a major work, and an exquisite achievement. William Murray — Time Out.

"The almost unanimous opinion is that Oldfield's broad awareness of the way rock music can develop has already produced a major breakthrough." Andrew Bailey — *The Times*.

It is one of the most mature, vital, rich and humorous pieces of music to have emerged from the pop idiom. One hearing should provide sufficient proof. Al Clark — NME.

His musicianship throughout the album is flawless and Oldfield amazes the listener with the seemingly never-ending list of instruments he plays. Music Week.

MIKE OLDFIELD'S "Tubular Bells" is a rock masterpiece, and will be remembered as one of the handful of major works that has broken the musical barriers and created a new art form.

The Guardian

An unknown English teenager playing over 20 instruments has produced the most important one-shot project of 1973. It is a debut performance of a kind we have no right to expect from anyone. It took Mike Oldfield half a year to lay down the thousands of overdubs required for his 49 minutes of exhilarating music. I will be playing the result for many times that long.

Trying to convey what *Tubular Bells* bears musical resemblance to its fruitless. I remembered music by Sam Cooke, J.S. Bach and Dick Rosmini when I first heard the album, but the associations are as personal as yours will be. People will hear different things in *Tubular Bells* because they will bring to it their individual musical experiences, some of which Oldfield will no doubt have incorporated.

I first heard this album in the home of a disk jockey who feels *Tubular Bells* will be a lasting work of the rock era. I cannot see into 2000, but I can say that this is a major work. And in the land of should-be, it is already a gold album.

PAUL GAMBACCINI
Rolling Stone

MIKE OLDFIELD'S "Tubular Bells" was one of those rare and charming experiences believed all but lost to the London music scene. In an age of endless "great little rock and roll bands" desperately projecting into the voids, it was a pleasure to hear a whole crew of mixed musicians — rock and classical — submerging their talent to the art of a composer.

There were no flashy, long-winded solos, no exhibitions of stamina or endurance at London's Queen Elizabeth Hall on Monday night. Instead, there was a co-operative contribution to the mood-weaving, fragile jollity of Oldfield's two-part invention for rock musicians and string section.

There were some patrons slightly disappointed that the assembly of talent didn't jam in the usual fashion, but this would have destroyed the meaning and purpose of Mike's outstanding composition. Virgin Records and Mike Oldfield should be congratulated for taking a bold plunge into the non-commercial aspect of rock music. — CHRIS WELCH

When on Monday evening the entire audience at the Queen Elizabeth Hall rose to its feet and hollered for more, it was one of those rare spontaneous outbursts of appreciation. It was the power of performance and the splendour of the music that motivated such response.

Oldfield's music is a total upper — but without resorting to those false histrionics and predictable bum-shakin' devices. The name Mike Oldfield may not mean too much at the present moment, but if he continues to sustain the quality of both his album and this concert, he will eventually emerge as one of the most rewarding leaders of the musical vanguard of the 70's.

Indeed, I can see a time when the name Oldfield will become synonymous with a whole original concept in contemporary music.

ROY CARR
New Musical Express

From these sparse ingredients emerges what a famous rock critic called Keats would call a thing of beauty. On first hearing, the record left me breathless and feverish. Feverish with anticipation of hearing the album over again. Side one clocks in at 25 minutes, which in these times of 15 minutes per side (remember Lindisfarne?), is mighty fine stuff. This particular side is a truly gargantuan piece of music.

Malcolm Heyhoe — I.T.

Mike Oldfield's musical triumph, "Tubular Bells," is now available on Virgin Records and Tapes. An Atlantic custom label.



"I THANK GOD I'M STILL AROUND TO SEE ANOTHER DAWN"

Much of the beauty of *Muswell Hillbillies* comes from the fact that many of the songs sound as though they were written in another age. "Alcohol", an almost Vaudevillian number, has the Mike Cotton Sound (a horn aggregation who had joined the Kinks for touring purposes) turning the whole group into a plodding Salvation Army band, with Ray camping it up like Marlene Dietrich with tambourine face up, waiting for contributions. The "window world watching" theme comes back in "Oklahoma U.S.A.", which rivals "Waterloo Sunset" in its sense of misty-eyed fantasy. The lonely old maid who "buys her paper at the corner shop" is off in the dreamworld of Hollywood where she's "Rita Hayworth or Doris Day and Errol Flynn's gonna take her away..." The song is framed by one of Ray's most poetic couplets:

"All life we work but work is a bore
If life's for living then what's living for?"

Muswell Hillbillies was hailed by many as the album of the year and it certainly was the most impressive Kinks album since *Something Else*. The band was working hard live, doing two complete tours of the States in less than six months, and Ray was having a grand old time of it, doing mock strip teases to the nostalgia-filled chords of "Mr. Wonderful." Live shows were getting better and better, the band thriving under Dave's more mature leadership. Mick Avory's drumming suddenly seemed letter perfect on stage, and with the horns adding some *oomph*, the Kinks were riding high.

Everybody's In Showbiz, recorded and released in the summer of 1972, substantiated Ray's repeated contentions that the man onstage and the man offstage were as different as night and day. Reality and illusion, the two most recurrent Kinks themes, were finally being examined in their most exposed state. Over half the songs on the two studio sides of the album (the live half is a dismally embarrassing record, with much of Ray's onstage antics being lost in the translation to wax) deal with the life of Ray Davies, superstar. "Sitting in My Hotel" seems to be a summation of Ray's psychic state at this time:

"If my friends could see me now,
Driving round just like a film star
They'd all be saying that it's not
really me,
They'd all be asking who I'm trying to
be...
Sitting in my hotel room,
Hiding from the dramas of this great
big world,
Trying to hide the gloom..."

Not a very happy man, it would appear. Ray's wistful nostalgia reaches its greatest heights with "Celluloid Heroes", a breath-taking melody written while Ray was in Hollywood. As he walks down Hollywood Blvd. and sees the immortal names written in concrete, Ray is overcome by the immortality of the great film stars of the past. No real conclusions here, just insights and more hopeless dreams.

These two songs aside, however, *Everybody's In Showbiz* is a terribly disappointing album. Most of the songs are flat and uninspired, and though the music is top notch, it just doesn't work. Two great songs do not make a great album, which may be why the live set was tacked on, to satisfy the increasing numbers of new Kinks fans who probably wanted a recorded version of Ray Davies singing "The Banana Boat Song" live.

All of which brings us up to *Preservation Act 1*. The first thing you notice is that the band has almost doubled in size. New horn men, a five part mixed chorus. The cover shows them all happy and gay while some red-faced, stately looking

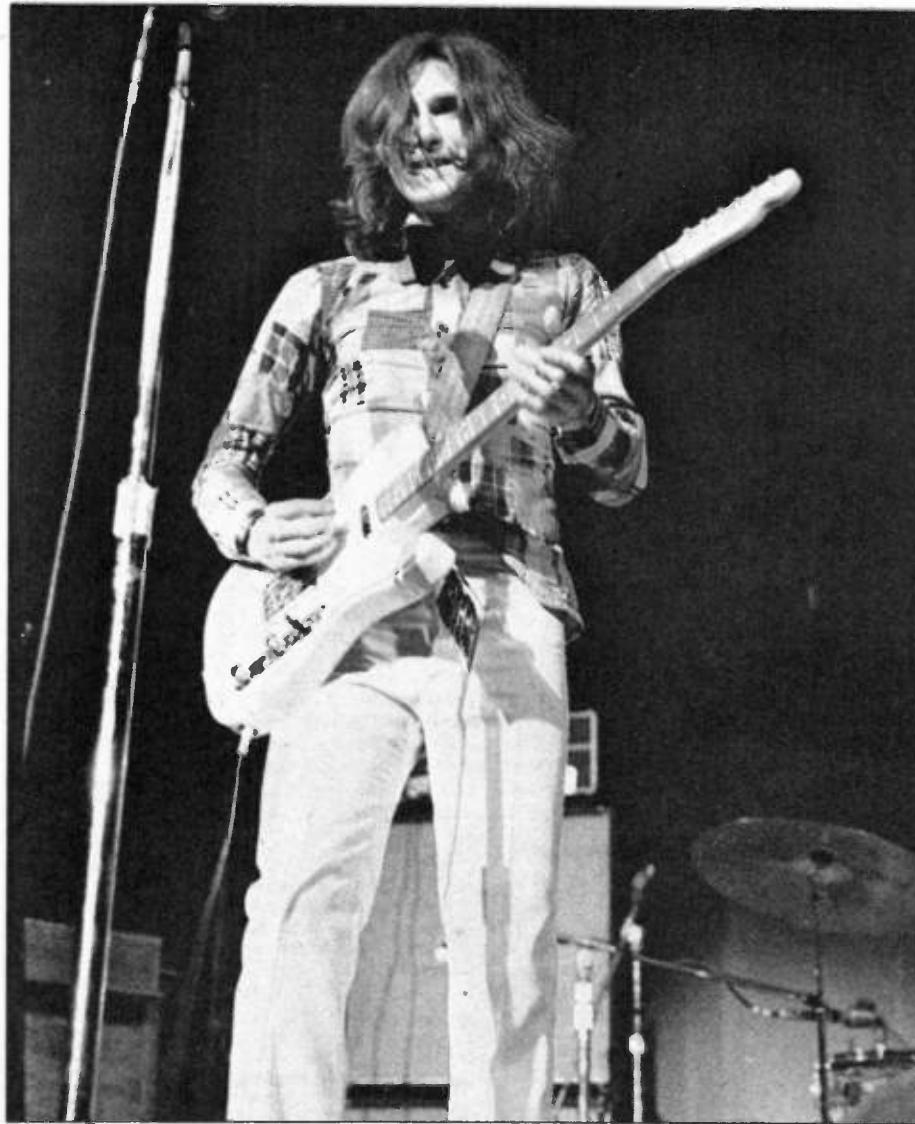


figure hangs over them. Big brother is the instant association, and one the album itself helps to bear out. It's a sneaky record, takes a while to absorb. Ray has returned to his Village Green theory of the universe, this time a lot more politically aware than before, and he has amassed an unusual set of characters to act out his play.

Ray plays a tramp (a natural role for him, to say the least), a Vicar, a political leader, a motorcycle greaser, and a land speculator named Flash. Together, these characters weave a tale of love, hope, religion and impending doom, and the fact that it is only Act 1 is a scary thought since Ray has been known to leave projects in the middle and never return (remember *Lola Vs. Powerman, Part 1?*).

The album begins with "Daylight," a simple, beautiful ode to the sun and the fields and the "village green." The stage is set with the villagers rising to meet the day: "Look at all the busy people, this way, that way, everywhere/ biting toast and swallowing tea and breakfast specials on the air." We also get flashbacks on old Davies characters: Lonely spinsters dream of dating Roger Moore or Steve McQueen (the woman from "Oklahoma U.S.A."), Health fanatics in their attics training for the empire games ("Skin and Bones" from *Muswell Hillbillies*), and "school boys dream of Captain Scarlett, battle ships and aeroplanes" ("David Watts" from *Something Else*). Our protagonist, though, is simply content to be alive and watching the sunrise - "I thank God that I'm still around to see another dawn in."

Enter the tramp, who has been out to see the world. Unlike the journeys that so many of Davies' characters have taken, the tramp returns to the Village Green a calm, carefree and still hope-filled man. He meets his old girl, "Sweet Lady Genevieve," and vows that he won't break her heart again. The song is a great pop tune, with a Beatle type harmonica punctuating the chorus.

Gears shift as the band swings into

mock soul for "There's a Change in the Weather," as we see the differences between the three classes of society. The poor man is just trying to get by, the rich man doesn't care about anything, and the middle class man is downright terrified by the impending doom he feels in the lightning and thunder on the horizon. It's the first signal on the record that evil is lurking just around the corner. Quickly though, it's back to the tramp, under his tree by the riverside, thinking back to the days of the sixties.

"Where Are They Now?" is similar in form and content to "Celluloid Heroes," as the tramp waltzes down nostalgia lane reflecting back on the likes of Christine Keeler, Mary Quant, Teddy Boys and protest songs. The song ends with a positive note as the tramp concludes that above everything "rock 'n' roll still lives on, yeah rock 'n' roll still lives on." And just as he finishes saying that, Johnny Thunder, "One of the Survivors," comes rolling down the highway on his motorcycle.

"One of the Survivors" is a tremendous song, released this past summer as a single with little notice or hype. It's a driving rocker with four totally different parts merging together. Johnny's been heard from before, on *Village Green Preservation Society*. He's oblivious to the present times, living out his past as a greaser even though he's "a little overweight and his sideburns are turning grey." He exists somewhere in the middle of "Dion and the Belmonts, Jerry Lee Lewis, the Hollywood Argyles, Danny and the Juniors and Johnny and the Hurricanes."

The most overpowering part of the song comes when Dave's voice blares out over the swarming guitars - "Feel those vibrations, flowing through my brain, got my freedom rolling down the highway/ keeps me sane, feel alive/ I'm one of the survivors." Johnny Thunder is well aware that his time is long gone, but he doesn't care one bit.

Side two starts off with the Vicar giving

a sermon to the people about the joys of "Cricket" and the perils of the "demon bowler." It's a wryly humorous song, Ray giving a good whack to organized religion. "Money and Corruption/I Am Your Man" finds the townspeople lamenting in good old English folkstyle about crooked politicians making promises they never keep. Along comes Black who, in a possessed, yet relaxed voice, offers to lead the workers to "a new society." What kind? "Every home will have a stereo and TV, a deep freeze, a quadrosonic and a washing machine." Ray has already made it clear in "Shangri La" on *Arthur* what he thinks about this kind of life, namely that material status symbols are not the true goals of life, so scratch Mr. Black as the hero of this play.

"Here Comes Flash" is one of the strangest Kinks songs ever, incorporating Russian folk influences in the guitar break and Jewish wedding music in the verse arrangement (I once saw Ray spontaneously break into "If I Were a Rich Man" onstage). Dave sings lead on it, portraying a greedy gang leader with lots of money and power. The housewives are scared stiff by him as they chant "You'd better run, you'd better hide, lock your doors and stay inside, here comes Flash."

Breaking things up temporarily is "Sitting in the Midday Sun," sung by the tramp, who is still wandering about with stars in his eyes, in perfect crooner style. "Who needs a job when it's sunny?" he asks, quite contently. "Demolition" ends the album, a violent piece of music capturing the image of the houses being knocked down by Flash's destructive crew of thugs. Flash's plan is to buy up all the properties, demolish them, rebuild them into identical little boxes, and then sell them back for "treble the profits."

The album ends on the somewhat ambiguous note of "building a whole new world of our own." The next act, if there is one, should clarify the story a bit and bring out the suitable heroes and villains. Till then Kinks fans will just have to sit it out and hope that Ray doesn't go off the deep edge as he did in the late summer, when he threatened to retire from music completely after his wife had run off with his two kids.

I don't really believe that the climax of *Preservation* will be completely satisfactory or particularly illuminating. It should, however, provide a final conclusion to at least part of the drama that Ray Davies and the Kinks have been enacting for us over the past decade. As Ray returns to the Village Green to once again grapple with the dilemma of just how much he wants to preserve, and finds himself cherishing the '50s and '60s as much as the china cups and virginity of the Victorian era, he may come through with some really significant statement dealing with his place, and ours, in this ever more modern world. It would be nice to see Ray Davies come to terms with the past, since he has so much to contribute to the present and our future.

But Ray Davies is much too complicated a man for easy answers. One can at best only try and put together the thousands of pieces of the puzzle that the hundreds of songs he's written have created. Without even trying to touch on the many obscure singles and little-known songs the Kinks have been responsible for, I've attempted here to somehow put it all together. However successful it's been, I know that just sifting through all those albums has been an exhausting experience for me. I think the best thing to do now is just to put them all on again and sleep for a week while they play. And please (to return one last time to the words of Raymond Douglas Davies) don't wake me from my dreams!

THE GREATEST HITS OF 1974

Welcome to 1974. The year we've all been waiting for. The one that could prove to be the most exciting yet for us faithful followers of rock 'n' roll. And then again, maybe not. Nobody can say with certainty what will happen; a year is a long time, and trends in pop music can be very short-lived indeed.

What can we expect this year, anyway? Another phenomenon of Elvis/Beatles proportions? So say some. But everyone has his own theory. Such things are beyond the power of mere prediction. One means of determining what lies in the immediate future is to examine the recent past. We've seen in 1973 the development of any number of trends that could assume greater importance in the future, although on the whole it was a year characterized by carryovers from the final stages of older trends.

While the late sixties produced no coherent dominating style, the various styles that arose in the post-acid rock years all reached their greatest and probably last fruition in 1973, which may go down as the last year of the sixties, just as 1962 was the last year of the fifties. Heavy metal fans had their best year since 1971 with the success of Alice Cooper, Blue Oyster Cult, the Stooges, West Bruce & Laing, Beck, Bogart & Appice and a plethora of hit singles and albums from the likes of Uriah Heep and Deep Purple. The singer-songwriter plague, having pretty much dried up, left us with only the best — vastly improved recordings by Jim Croce, Elton John and others.

But if one thing became clear in 1973, it was that singer-songwriters as well as heavy metal bands would no longer hold the sway they once did. The heavy metal audience has been won over by the rock and boogie based bands that have come out of the midwest and the south, playing every night and building a following that has resulted in the 1973 breakthrough of Brownsville Station, Z.Z. Top, and the various Georgia bands.

In addition to the already successful Macon sound, which hit a peak in late 1973 with the Allman Brothers' "Ramblin' Man", last year also saw the emergence of Atlanta as a music center, with a club called Richard's as the major showplace and a variety of local bands, notably Lynyrd Skynyrd, with devoted followings.

The South was not the only regional scene to gain vitality in 1973. The celebrated New York glitter scene has already produced promising if not brilliant recordings by the New York Dolls, Stories, Elliott Murphy and N.Y. Central, with many others such as the Brats, the Dictators, the Planets, Luger and Wayne County lurking in the wings. Ohio could have become a major scene if its spearhead group, the Raspberries, hadn't suffered a premature decline. Split now into two groups, they are joined by an excellent band called Circus and dozens more in a scene that may yet erupt. Austin, Texas became known as a center for what's being called "progressive country" — actually just plain country music, with emphasis on the more exciting "western swing" style of the '40s, being played by hippies. Commander Cody and Asleep at the Wheel have made Austin their home away from home, and both recently recorded there. Local bands and radio stations also support the scene. Boston, with the J. Geils Band, Aerosmith and the Modern Lovers, is growing again, and the Canadian scene is bursting with talent and local identity.

The growth of regional scenes is a healthy sign for rock & roll, but it was a disappointing year on other fronts. At the beginning of the year, it looked like the long-predicted birth of '70s pop was about to take place, with the revival of interest in '60s roots such as surf music, girl group sounds, and the classic English groups, and the next stage, which involved the synthesis of these styles into a sound and style for this decade. Various American groups and a great many British groups pioneered this movement, among them David Bowie, Lou Reed, Mott the Hoople, the Sweet, Suzi Quatro, Gary Glitter, 10cc, Roy Wood, ELO, Queen, the Sutherland Brothers, and Slade, but 1973 brought little advancement over the previous year as far as denting the American commercial market. All these artists and more recorded great records in 1973, but of them all only Bowie and Reed were able to reach the Top Forty. Elton John did well with his tribute to Slade, "Saturday Night's Alright For Fighting", but most people realized that if Slade's name had been on the record instead of his, it wouldn't have had a chance.

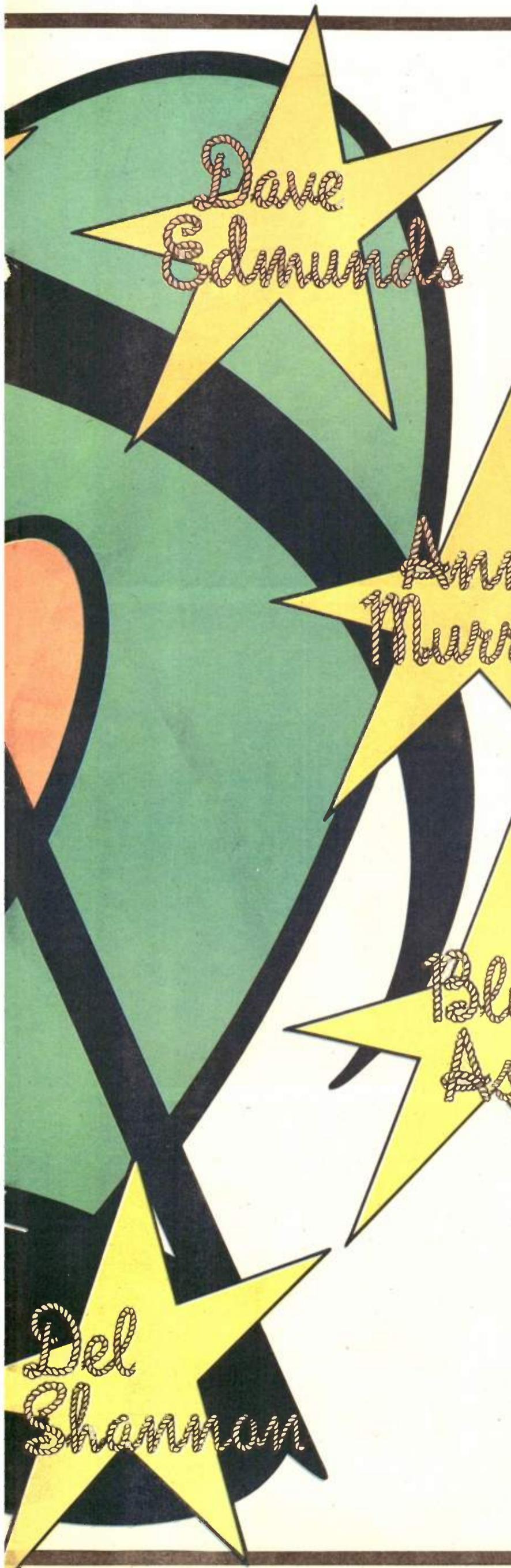
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Elliott Murphy

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Ann Peebles



THE CRITICS CAST THEIR BALLOTS

The setbacks suffered by glam/glitter rock in 1973 can be expected to continue in the coming year. One reason for this is radio. Playlists are as tight as ever, on FM now as well as AM, and there is much resentment against the new music on the part of some of the older people who control radio programming. Also, there is no lack of alternate programming. Along with all the other trends, what used to be called "MOR" is becoming a staple of pop, and producing some thoroughly palatable and equally unchallenging music. Lobo, Dawn, Kristofferson, Carole King, Seals & Crofts, Gilbert O'Sullivan, David Gates, Paul Simon, John Denver, the Carpenters and B.W. Stevenson are some of the new MOR artists who have come to prominence in the last couple of years. In addition, the Women's Lib movement has proved beneficial to a number of female MOR singers who have captured a strong pop following, among them Helen Reddy, Anne Murray, Maureen McGovern, Roberta Flack, Vicki Lawrence and Donna Fargo.

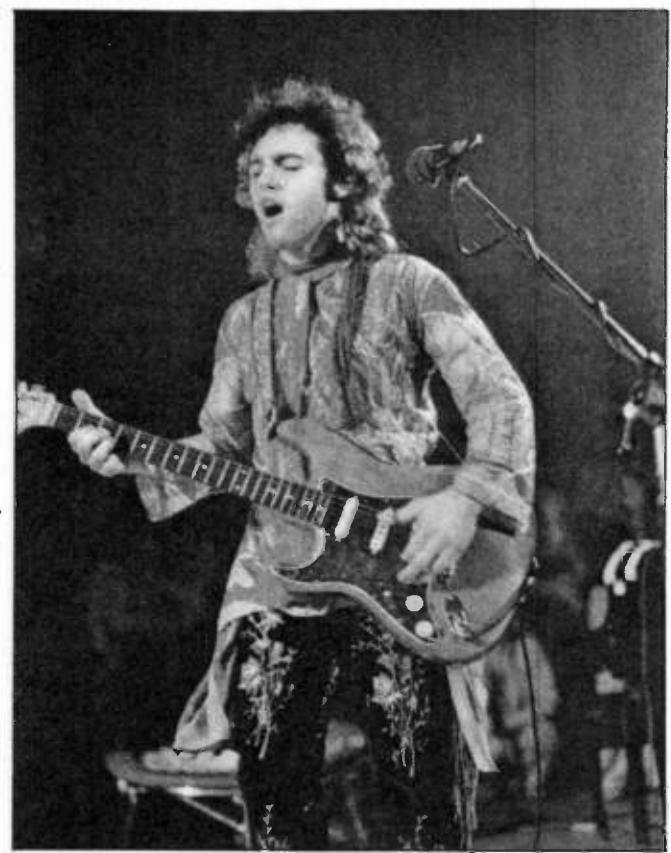
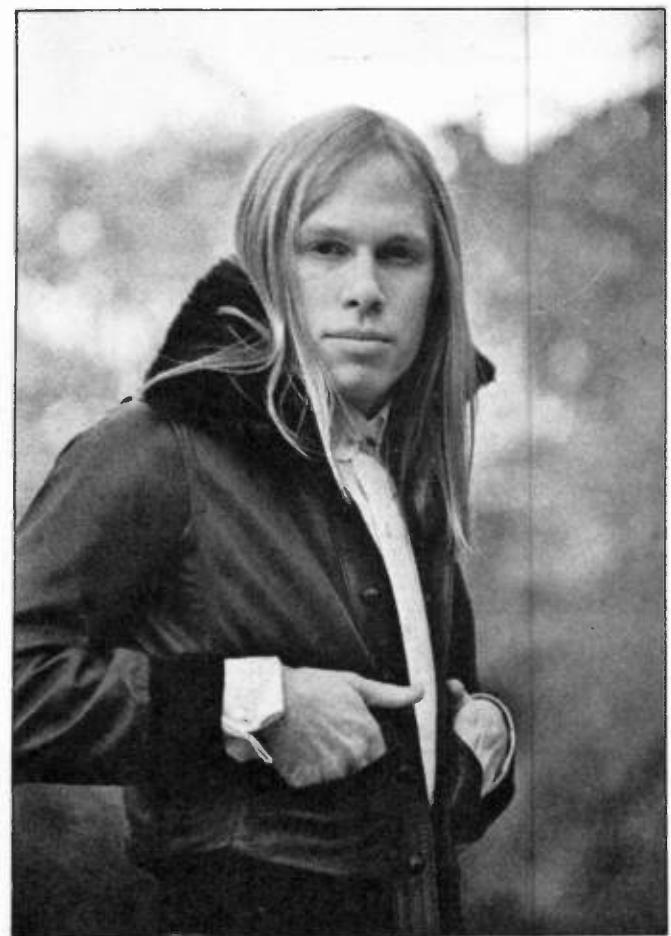
In addition to the new MOR, an increasing number of chart positions are being filled by R&B records. The list of R&B acts who achieved consistent success throughout 1973 is quite long — Al Green, War, Gladys Knight, Stevie Wonder, the Spinners, Marvin Gaye, the Stylistics, Billy Preston, Curtis Mayfield, Bobby Womack, Billy Paul, Eddie Kendricks, the Chi-Lites, Barry White, Joe Simon, James Brown, the O'Jays, the Isley Brothers, Harold Melvin & the Blue Notes, the Staple Singers, Bloodstone, Sly Stone, the Four Tops... the list goes on and on. Black music has never been stronger in sales or influence, and its popularity has inevitably hurt other trends. Not only the young white bands, but even competing black styles such as reggae, have been kept in the background by this phenomenal explosion of American black music.

So that's where we stand at the dawn of 1974. With the airwaves ruled by MOR and R&B, along with increasing country crossovers and other filler, there's not much room on the charts for hard rock or experimental sounds, and any rock that does slip through is likely to be from an established superstar — a Who, Stones, Alice Cooper, Elton John, Todd Rundgren, Grand Funk, Paul McCartney, etc. It's becoming increasingly difficult for a new artist to gain exposure, and with the vinyl shortage and all-around belt tightening having its effect, things can only get worse.

If anything, the first part of 1974 will be a watershed of sorts for rock. The good will have to be damned good to be heard at all, and one worthwhile side effect will be the disappearance of much that is mediocre. Without so many new artists diverting attention, it seems likely that some acts that have been overlooked before will rise to prominence. The birth of '70s pop may have to wait until 1975, but 1974 should be at least as good a year for rock fans as last year was. Although it's doubtful that many of the hot English bands will break through here, a couple of them will, and new American bands inspired by the British sounds will undoubtedly arise from the growing regional scenes. These scenes will provide a means for bands to bypass the radio logjam by building local support from concert audiences and we may see the return of local independent record companies and regional breakouts.

One of the first and most significant effects of the energy recession will be the success of many worthy artists who have been lost in the shuffle up to now. Those we've singled out in the following pages represent the most likely candidates in all fields of music. Much as we'd like to predict the smashing success of innumerable other "critics' groups" from the Flamin' Groovies and Earth Quake to Curt Boettcher and the Modern Lovers, few of them, unfortunately, have any kind of realistic shot at stardom right now. But those we've chosen, for reasons that will be made clear, can be expected to be a more significant part of the musical landscape in 1974 than past performance would perhaps indicate.

And we will let that be the extent of our predictions. The old will still be with us, the new will have a tougher time of it than perhaps ever before, and inevitably there will be developments that no one can anticipate. The unexpected is what keeps us all listening, it's what keeps pop music vital, and it's the one thing we feel safe in predicting for the future. So be patient — things will get better.



*Some of the faces
you'll be seeing more of
in '74 (clockwise from the
top): England's 10cc; Elliott
Murphy; Nils Lofgren of Grin;
Blue Ash at home in
Youngstown, Ohio; and the
delightful Anne Murray.*



BLUE ASH

You remember Blue Ash. They put out an album last year that all the critics loved. It was sort of Beatle-Byrdish, yet quite original in its way, and full of what those who are supposed to know would swear were extraordinarily commercial songs. Yet like other such albums by groups such as Big Star, the Wackers, Stories and the Raspberries, it was totally ignored by radio and the majority of the record-buying public. Stories was lucky enough to score a left-field hit single, but even that didn't draw attention to their other songs, and the rest of the groups have not done so well. In fact with the exception of Blue Ash, they've all

broken up or regrouped. How long can Blue Ash survive?

So great bands, bands that might've become the Beatles, Stones, Beach Boys of this decade, are forced to grovel in local bar circuits. Maybe that will turn out to be a good thing, in the long run. At least it makes us all the more thankful when a group like the New York Dolls manages a brief breakthrough. For Blue Ash, the breakthrough may never come, but if it doesn't it won't be for lack of talent. Their story could be taken as one of the classic object lessons of our time.

The big question here: Can Blue Ash sell records?

That was the topic of discussion during part of Mercury's recent semi-annual sales meeting, according to A&R man Paul Nelson. "Bearing in mind how few copies Blue Ash's album sold, I was a bit apprehensive that the group might be dropped from the label without further discussion," explained Nelson, the man who discovered Blue Ash in a pile of unsolicited demo tapes. "So I was quite frankly surprised, to say the least, when a full two hours were spent discussing the group's music, their future, their strengths and weaknesses."

The decision reached was that Blue Ash will get one more single... If the 45 shows some action, the group then gets to put out a second album (already recorded). If the single flops, Blue Ash will be dropped — and their recording career quite possibly finished before it's even off the ground. Not even a second LP in the tradition of ex-Phonogram stars Bull Angus and Sir Lord Baltimore. Nothing. Nada.

Actually, seeing as how the first album didn't put Blue Ash over, it's unlikely that the second one would either, unless given a N.Y. Dolls-type push. After hearing the rough tapes a few times, it strikes one as less flashy, less immediately familiar than *No More No Less* — but still good enough to indicate that this is a good, potentially great, group. Curiously, there's only one loud, flashy Mod-ish rocker, "Start All Over Again." The other standout songs are much less visceral than



the bulk of *No More, No Less*, rocking moderately while stressing melody rather than raw energy.

After being praised as having the guts their fellow Ohioans the Raspberries lacked, it's really kind of surprising to see Blue Ash switching to a lightweight pop emphasis, while the Raspberries have gotten a new bass guitarist and drummer and claim that their next LP will be "very Who-influenced" (they ought to know — Eric Carmen's late 60's group

Cyrus Erie used to regularly perform a 14-song Who medley!). But Blue Ash's new stuff is nice anyway. "Halloween Girl" and "With You On My Mind" would sound super on a jukebox at 45 RPM — remember the naivete of "I'm Happy Just To Dance With You"? Three cuts are pretty weak (especially the Berry-influenced "Rock On, Rock And Roller"), indicating that Blue Ash need someone to whip their ensemble sound into shape, a sound engineer who knows what he's doing,

and more variation in shading and arrangement from song to song.

What they don't need is the scenario of being dropped from Mercury, turned down by the remaining majors, and finding that they'll have to remain dependent upon their Midwest bar circuit for a livelihood. On the other hand, maybe the only answer these days is to retrench back to some sort of local scene while waiting for something to change in the record biz and American popular music. It's no easy busi-

ness, playing rock & roll in 1973. A couple examples come to mind: the Flamin' Groovies' disastrous past two years in England, after having been turned down by every record label in the U.S. They're now considering moving to Detroit, just so they can play bars and eat regularly again. And a Bay Area group called Earthquake, dropped by A&M after two albums, who have now taken to releasing 45s on their own label, Beserkly Records. The key issue seems to be one summed up a while back by the true Dean of American Rock Critics, Mark Farner, in one word: survival.

You could blame it on lots of things. A rampant breakdown in the field of A&R for one — if you accused the majority of A&R departments of hating hard rock, you wouldn't be wrong. Paul Nelson, renowned for bringing the N.Y. Dolls and Blue Ash to Mercury, knows a lot about the frustrations of battling the inertia everywhere. He had to put his job on the line to get the Dolls, was vetoed by his higher-ups on Elliott Murphy, and ditto with Christopher Bell (the spark behind Big Star's LP and an excellent songwriter).

So I asked Nelson, do you ever get frustrated, feel like you're banging your head against a wall, don't you ever just want to grab one of those balding rock-hating company executives by the collar?

No answer.

So you can imagine what Blue Ash feel like when they can't even find their album on the racks in their home town.

—by Mike Saunders



ELLIOTT MURPHY

The New York glam scene has already been publicized far out of proportion to its worth, but of all the bands who have followed in the footsteps of the Dolls, few are likely to make any impact. Thus far, the scene has proven itself simply too limited for much further expansion. Elliott Murphy runs the risk of being caught in the wave of general disappointment, so it should be established right now that he is the product of a separate and far deeper tradition, with a talent and an approach to rock & roll that is uniquely universal. He has all the makings of a star, and he's just the kind of star we could use right now.

My first glimpse of Elliott Murphy was riveting. A year ago, Mercury A&R man Paul Nelson and I were seeing a lot of the inside of the Mercer Arts Center in pursuit of the New York Dolls. One night Paul spotted a poster advertising a new band that called itself Elliott Murphy's Aquashow. The poster, showing a dressed-up, very nonchalant-looking blonde kid, seemed a bit uptown for the

Mercer and all the more interesting for that reason. On a whim, we went to see the group. As soon as we arrived, we could see that something odd was afoot: instead of the usual Mercer audience, the crowd in the Oscar Wilde Room was made up entirely of the fresh-faced and well scrubbed, with — and this was the clincher — what looked like several parents among them.

And then the band came on stage. There were five, and four were dressed entirely — but not theatrically — in black. These four ringed the stage around the figure in the foreground, who was completely in white, from his Gatsby suit to his blonde-finish Fender guitar and his white-blond hair. Aside from the striking visual effect, Paul and I were both struck by the air of relaxed confidence coming off the stage. This was hardly diminished when the band swung without fanfare into the first number; now and then I've been completely swept up by the first chords of the first song of a new artist, getting the sense that within those chords lies a

compelling, fully developed new realm — and this was one of those times. The band played like the phantoms of the sessions that produced "Like a Rollin' Stone" — that sense was unmistakable. At the same time, they had the casual intensity the Velvet Underground had displayed at Max's several years earlier. Murphy's Aquashow seemed just as cockily disdainful, just as matter-of-fact about its passions.

The set was a seamless display of classic rock & roll, in its music and in its over-all aura. And many of the fresh-faced were dancing merrily along with it. This band wasn't uptown, it was out-of-town — Long Island — and so was the audience.

It wasn't until after this incredibly good show that we found out the set we'd just witnessed had been the band's first professional performance. Needless to say, we were back the next night with our Sony 124s, putting the set on tape for posterity and for the boys in Chicago. They went for it, but not quickly enough — Polydor's Peter Siegel saw them not

(Continued on Page 27)

—by Bud Scoppa

THE GREATEST HITS OF 1974

ANNE MURRAY



Taken on its own merits, this stuff is real and indispensable. Like the fierce "What About Me" single from late last summer. Anne Murray music services a very fundamental need inside us all. For the housewives it makes Ivory and Palmolive dishsoap more tolerable and for the men, well we can always use another blonde, even a former gym teacher.

It's true she's no newcomer, but just as Brenda Lee demanded new judgment in 1964 with "Is It True", Anne has decided to abandon Las Vegas and concentrate more on ABC-TV and the Troubadour. Which is to say that Anne Murray music in 1974 will be just left of the right wing, rawhide meets leatherette.

As with Pet Clark, Anne has her own personal writer-guru. Then it was Tony Hatch (and sometimes Jackie Trent), now it's Kenny Loggins. His "Danny's Song" was the tune that started this whole awakening to today's Anne Murray, and her new single "Love Song" by Loggins is further exploration into an electric dream for this Canadian sweetie.

Recently the chores of Anne Murray management were taken on by Shep Gordon, the man responsible for Alice Cooper's rise

to prominence. Among his first duties was to hold a press party for Anne in Los Angeles on Thanksgiving, at which John Lennon, Nilsson, Mickey Dolenz and Alice were honored guests. Also Helen Reddy, who bears no little resemblance to Anne and her psychographic appeal. But the general feeling is that Anne will inevitably outlast and thus surpass Helen's popularity, just as Pet Clark edged Connie Francis out of competition.

To appreciate Anne Murray music you must rid your mind of all prejudice and place yourself in a thoroughly pop-conscious state. Also, you have to ignore her live show with its back-town group members and corny jokes (which we would assume Shep will alter shortly...). With Anne it's only the recordings, and specifically her singles.

As the months fall this year, we think Anne Murray will take her place in pop history just as Pet, Connie, Doris, Helen and the rest. And as the public's taste becomes more and more in need of MOR-POP, she may well even surpass these others. Anne Murray is not in competition with Alice Cooper or Led Zeppelin, only in terms of display space on the nation's top ten LP racks.

Nice goin' girl.

by Martin Cerf

10cc



Of all the groups that have been experimenting with this style, the most promising by far is 10cc. Although long veterans of the business, their records have shown an unremitting freshness, vitality and originality. That they will continue to develop, and probably become one of the leading forces in the new pop scene, seems inevitable. Watch out for 10cc.

I don't care if your heart rests with country twang, surf harmonies, acid riffs, folk strums, commercial muzak, or Anglophilic accents. There's one thing that ties all great pop music together. That one thing is energy. There must be a vitality, imagination, and creative spark to make it all worthwhile — usually this energy is a sound, but it can also come with an image, or merely an idea. This sound, image, and idea concept of pop is in reality like a spherical scale.

Imagine a group being placed inside a large rubber ball. Their three inputs, (sound, image & idea) are all placed inside, and the ball starts rolling down a hill. If the three concepts work together (though not necessarily in equal proportions), the ball keeps rolling, eventually snowballing gathering speed and substance. If one element is too pronounced (i.e. out of balance), the ball becomes lopsided, and eventually grinds to a halt. Ninety-eight percent of all music stays within this ball, which according to the group's popularity, grows or diminishes in size. Occasionally a musical force is born which is just too big to stay in the ball and, like a butterfly emerging from its cocoon, breaks free. If all this Mr. Wizard claptrap means anything in reality, then 10cc are presently encased in a rather huge incubator-ball growing at such an enormous rate that it threatens to burst open at any moment.

Songwriting whiz Graham Gouldman has had success before, writing Top 5 hits for the Yardbirds, Hollies, Herman's Hermits, and Wayne Fontana. But he's also had his failures. For a full year he was under contract to a US publishing company where he was required to write a specific number of songs each quarter, and a specified fee was sent in return. Graham turned out about 22 songs that year, but unfortunately not one was placed, Graham: "This was a very depressing period for me because an artist needs his ego fed — he needs recognition." So after the

publishing deal expired, he did some work for the Kasenetz-Katz team, and that's where he met the rest of 10cc.

Lol Creme and Kevin Godley had been mates and friends of Graham since 1965 when they were in a group called the Mockingbirds. Eric Stewart, who had his heyday with The Mindbenders, also knew Graham since Graham had actually been a member of the Mindbenders during 1968. Stewart, Godley, & Creme were working up in Stockport where Eric's new venture Strawberry Studios was being organized, and Graham got them all down to London for the Kasenetz-Katz sessions. Although the session work was drawn out and often quite dreary, the quartet felt a certain magic emerging. Eric, Lol & Kevin returned to Stockport and came up with a massive hit as Hotlegs, "Neanderthal Man". Graham joined them on the road but soon after, Hotlegs fizzled out. After doing additional session work for over a year, the quartet decided to give it one last concentrated push.

So 10cc was born, and the rest is history. The first single "Donna" went to No.2 on the British charts, and the followup "Johnny Don't Do It" seemed headed for similar success. But it flopped. Some might have thought it was going to be the Hotlegs story all over again, but not Eric: "We were disappointed, but we weren't worried, because we had recorded a bunch of new things.

"Rubber Bullets" shot to No.1 in Britain, and with some hype and push reached No.50 in the U.S. As "Bullets" fell off the UK charts, the deejays wanted a followup. The group was busy touring and finishing their debut album, so they didn't have time to record a followup. "The Dean and I" was taken off the album, and it too became a Top 10 chart item.

When you think about it, the 10cc success story seems almost too obvious. All four are amazingly talented and

experienced writers, vocalists, musicians, and producers. They all knew each other — in fact they were actually quite good friends.

"We should have been doing this years ago" declares Eric. Well, better late than never, and it really has been worth the wait. 10cc is a brilliant synthesis of what the group is all about. Beautiful, powerful melodies with hooks that could kill, perfect vocals with lilting harmonies, and lyrics that are masterpieces in their own right.

With Britain behind them, the group has turned their attention to America. They are currently busy at Strawberry Studios working on their next album, scheduled for a February release. About a half-dozen tracks have been completed and those who have heard them label them as merely "stunning". One, "The Worst Band in the World" seems to be a likely prospect for the next single. It is a change of pace for the group, being neither an 'uptempo rocker' like "Rubber Bullets" or "The Dean & I", nor a 'nostalgic ballad' like "Donna" or "Johnny Don't Do It". It is unmistakably 10cc though, this time with new touches of reggae, and Southern California/Mill Valley harmonies. The group is also flying over to the U.S. during January to tape a segment for Don Kirshner's *Rock Concert*, and a U.S. tour is pencilled in for February.

Their four talents are so distinctive, it's hard to believe that they could be contained in one unit. But it is working and what they will come up with next just can't be predicted. Eric: "We've decided that everything we've done so far has worked in its own terms but we're still only working within the limits that have been set up during the last ten years of rock and roll — from the Beatles to 10cc today. And it's time to transcend all that — if we can..." It's that type of thinking and determination, backed up by immense talent and knowhow that will make 1974 the year of 10cc.

by Alan Betrock

ANN PEEBLES



Robert Foothorap

Why Ann Peebles? Her name doesn't exactly spring to mind when you think of the major trends in black popular music this past year. She didn't truck on the big Soul Train line of performers whose music sparked the discotheque revival (like Eddie Kendricks, War, Earth, Wind & Fire, Barry White); isn't African or Caribbean or any combination of the two (like Osibisa, Cymande, Manu DiBango); wasn't produced in Philadelphia at Sigma Sound Studios (like The O'Jays, The Spinners, The Stylistics, The Intruders); isn't a girl group (like Love Unlimited, The First Choice, Labelle, Three Degrees) or a hard-bumping soul band (like Kool & The Gang, The JB's, The Fatback Band); and didn't make a film soundtrack (like Willie Hutch, Marvin Gaye, James Brown and more people than I care to remember). So where does that leave her? Some place special, I suppose: out there on her own, singing bluesy ballads and hot mama love songs, a traditionalist in an aggressively gimmicky, often future schlockified, field.

A comparison with Al Green would be very much to the point: both Green and Peebles come out of that sweet and sour, down-to-basics Southern tradition which usually begins in a church choir stall somewhere (Ann's was in East Saint Louis) and often ends up in Memphis (in both cases, at Willie Mitchell's Hi Studios); both have chosen to stay with this blues-based sound even though nearly all the other popular black performers had dropped the style for the nouveau soul of Motown or Philadelphia in the late Sixties

(when about the only people left singing de blues were over 50, Taj Mahal or white folks); yet neither are purists in any sense — this is not Old South blues, but New South sophistication; and both are young and attractive (who knows, if Albert King were 23 and hot, there might be a *real* blues revival). The point being: Ann Peebles could become the, well, female Al Green.

She is hardly as distinctive as Green or as clearly brilliant as a performer, but she's entering a field with little competition. Aretha, while she's beyond being challenged, has been working in an entirely different style recently; her Memphis Shoals days seem far behind. There's Denise LaSalle, who occasionally collaborates with Peebles, and Betty Wright, the Clean-Up Woman, but they've been disappointing. And whatever happened to Laura Lee and Carla Thomas? Not exactly a star-studded little genre.

So Ann Peebles could snatch up the title of Queen of Southern Soul with little effort, even if she never did another thing after her second album, *Straight from the Heart*, but, with any luck, she could be much more than a regional champion. She's got a tough, hard-edged voice that cuts right to the heart of a song. She can ache with loss, as she does in her fine single, "I Can't Stand the Rain," or rip into some exhilarating funk like the old Sam and Dave tune, "I Take What I Want." In songs like that last, Peebles becomes the ultimate Strong Woman, the embodiment of a new, aggressive mood. But then she'll turn around and sing a

song like "How Strong Is a Woman" which, unbelievable, answers the title question with, "A woman is as strong as the need of the man she loves," and dismisses Women's Lib-eration bluntly. This odd contradiction in her persona, if indeed she can be considered to have one, could very easily hold her back: just when you're beginning to love her for her tough renunciation of the Woman's Role, she turns around and reinforces that role at its dumbest. She makes it even harder when "How Strong Is a Woman" is given one of her tastiest deliveries. I never liked mixing politics (especially sexual) and art anyway.

Some signs in her favor: John Lennon called "I Can't Stand the Rain" the "best record since 'Love Train,'" which is an interesting remark if you think John Lennon knows any more about music than you do. Bette Midler included Ann's "I Feel Like Breaking Up Somebody's Home Tonight" on her second album; she does it awfully but she does have great taste. London Records, Hi's parent company, is getting ready to give Ann Peebles the Star Treatment — advertising, promotion, etc. — which, more than anything else, could assure her 15 minutes of fame. I'm in love with Ann Peebles, but I'm always a little dubious about the Next Big Thing, especially when the ads start appearing in the trades. Besides, I didn't like the wig she wore on Soul Train. Ah yes, it's down to that level. Forget about all this and just remember Ann Peebles describes herself as "99 pounds of natural-born goodness/99 pounds of soul."

by Vince Aletti

DAVE EDMUNDS



Dave Edmunds is perhaps the most enigmatic figure to gain notoriety of late: his potential is vast, his pursuits are unpredictable, and his image is, at best, invisible. Apparently he can do anything in the studio; in fact, it seems he already has — and his next move is anybody's guess. Yet his talents are so impressive that he could well break through to some form of stardom when we least expect it.

He first came to public notice in Britain with the blues trio Love Sculpture, from Wales. Except that Love Sculpture was no ordinary blues trio. Granted, one album (*Blues Helping*, Rare Earth) was primarily slow tedious typically British blues workouts (along with an energetic "Wang Dang Doodle" and a version of Slim Harpo's "Hip Shake" some prefer to the Stones). But their Parrot album, *Forms And Feelings*, featured some soft melodic originals ("In The Land Of The Few") and three instrumental adaptations of classical themes — including the long version of their 1968 Top 5 smash, "Sabre Dance". Love Sculpture also cut an LP as Warren Phillips & the Rockets (*Rocked Out!*, Parrot), 12 compact versions of rockabilly classics.

Edmunds next surfaced with a superb adaptation of Smiley Lewis' "I Hear You Knocking" in late 1970 and took it to the top of the British charts. Almost a

year later, he released an album, after a couple of follow-up failures (not included on the LP); *Rockpile* was an excellent combination of rocking blues and straight rock and roll. It also marked the introduction on record of Edmunds' own Rockfield recording studio in Wales, in

addition, he played everything on the LP except bass and occasional pedal steel.

Rockfield became headquarters for any number of Welsh acts; and Edmunds, working with Man, Deke Leonard, Memix Bend, and others, played an instrumental role in catalyzing the burgeoning

Welsh-rock movement (currently stirring up considerable interest in Britain). His production of Foghat's first album was also acclaimed highly, and just recently he co-produced Deke Leonard's stirring rocker "A Hard Way To Live".

Having rocked awhile,

Edmunds next turned his attention to Phil Spector — with characteristic painstaking thoroughness. Unskilled in playing string parts, he played them one note at a time and overdubbed endlessly, creating in "Baby I Love You" an absolutely brilliant recreation of Spector's awesome sonic walls, playing and singing every note himself. Flipped with the Chantels' "Maybe" in the same cataclysmic style, the record (RCA 0882) was a truly astonishing achievement, and hit the British Top 10 to boot. Edmunds followed it with an equally consummate Spectorian arrangement of the Chordettes/Sonny James hit "Born To Be With You" (RCA 5000) and again gained Top Ten honors; and instigated a small-scale Spector revival in Britain, the most notable disc being Larry Lurex (Queen's) "I Can Hear Music", admirably produced by Robin Cable.

A Spectorsound album from Edmunds was supposedly set to follow, and was eagerly anticipated; but it has enigmatically failed to appear. Edmunds' sole recorded output for 1973 was the two aforementioned singles, but they are so masterfully crafted that Edmunds must be accounted one of 1974's brightest hopes. It would be folly to predict what he'll come up with next, but we can be assured it will be well worth the listening.

by Ken Barnes

C&W IN '74



Asleep At the Wheel may be forced to change their name.

People have been talking about a country-rock fusion for as long as people have been desperate to predict what the "next thing" may be, conveniently overlooking the fact that rock and country have been feeding each other since the very beginning. Still, rock and country music find themselves in an unusual proximity these days, and maybe a few words of explanation are in order.

For one thing, we may have to wait until the Devil builds a snowman before we see a straight "rock" act crossing over into the country charts. Country deejays, who still control what gets played and what doesn't (and, consequently what sells and what doesn't) will play a country cover version that is nearly identical to the rock original any day rather than allow a record to cross over. To use a mediocre example, the country version of "Take It Easy" was almost indistinguishable from the Eagles' cut, and the thing that made it work, the harmony on the chorus, was a mingling of four or five voices, but the reason it got played was that there was only one name on the record. You're not gonna catch a country deejay announcing something as nebulous as "The Eagles" when he can announce that one guy's name.

Now, this is the problem that Asleep At The Wheel is facing. They play country music, they play it as well as or better than 80% of the groups who are doing so professionally, but they can't seem to get any airplay because they're this group, and they have a freaky name. The way they may — reluctantly — have to deal with this is to put CHRIS O'CONNELL with Asleep At The Wheel, or RAY BENSON with Asleep At The Wheel on the singles they put out. Along with Commander Cody, who are turning more and more towards rock as country acceptance for their music seems to dwindle, they are about the only "pop" act (and they are only remotely that) who have to worry about such things.

Far more likely is the country artist who will be trying to crack the pop barrier. This type of individual has a much easier task ahead of him in many ways be-

cause of the fact that so many rock artists have been incorporating their own strange version of country music in their repertoire. Pedal steel guitars are no strangers on Top 40 AM any more (even if good steel playing is), and a lot of the self-conscious back-to-the-rootsism finds the country feel comfortable.

Conway Twitty found himself in the enviable position last year of having a pop hit with an uncompromisingly countrified record, "You've Never Been This Far Before." It may be that the reason this particular record made a pop indentation was the "dirty" lyrical content, but it could be argued equally well that the pop world was rediscovering the fact that Conway can sing like nobody else. Charlie Rich, another pop rediscovery also scored with a "lewd" number, "Behind Closed Doors," but Charlie's always been pretty unclassifiable, and it wasn't nearly the surprise Conway's record was, even if the final sales figure (country's first gold single of the year, and it couldn't have happened to a more deserving fellow) was. Country's second gold single of the year also crossed over to pop — Jeannie Seeley's "Satin Sheets," yet another sex song.

Maybe, then, Waylon Jennings should record an off-color number. More and more, he is playing to pop audiences, yet his record sales seem to stay over in the country corral. This is largely due to the production on his records, which doesn't come close to faithfully rendering his live sound. On the one record — his latest, *Honky-Tonk Heroes* where he was allowed to use his road band, the material, songs by Billy Joe Shaver, was simply not strong or varied enough to sustain a whole LP. Waylon needs a good producer, a good A&R man, and a good solid break.

And if Waylon can't get a pop break, what about the scads of newcomers and "New Nashville" people in the circle which includes him, Kris Kristofferson, and the rest? They are, by and large, of the same sensibilities as the pop audience, just filtering it through a different cultural context. Kristofferson has already broken through, both as an artist

and as a writer, and I think it's only a matter of time before Billy Joe Shaver writes his "Me and Bobby McGee." Tompall Glaser has been hanging out with Kinky Friedman ever since the Jewboy came to Nashville, and Kinky has written Tompall some songs with immense crossover possibilities. Johnny Rodriguez may be too close to the old-line conservative country sound for the pop market, but I woulda said the same about Conway Twitty a year ago. Troy Seals has the advantage of a fabulous voice, a good sense of material, and being on Atlantic, which label has immense pop clout. So does Willie Nelson, who has the added advantage of a friendship with Leon Russell.

These are just a few of the country stars who could make a pop crossover with no difficulty at all. The old masters will most likely stay where they are (although have you heard Dolly Parton's "Jolene," or Barbara Mandrell's "The Midnight Oil" and "Tonight My Baby's Comin' Home?") out of choice and chance, although interest in their older material on the part of pop groups is rising.

The most encouraging sign for both pop and country that I've seen in a long while is a radio station operating on a shoestring in Austin, Texas, KOKE-FM, which bills itself as "progressive country," which means that you can hear everything from the Louvin Brothers to *Wake Of The Flood* in a given half-hour's listening. Of course, Austin is for a multiplicity of reasons, a stone shoe-in for such programming, but I'd be willing to bet that an identical format in New York, San Francisco, Los Angeles, or Chicago would do just as well — if not better. After all, in Austin, you have non-progressive country stations to listen to. San Francisco's losing theirs in 1974, New York's is terrible, and the other two cities could stand some competition. And stations like KOKE-FM encourage non-categorical thinking about the music they play, just like the old FM stations used to, and it is the blurring of lines like that which makes me enthusiastic about the country crossover into rock turf.

GRIN



Nils Lofgren is the "Pistol" Pete Maravich of rock 'n' roll. For all you non-basketball fans, Maravich is a fancy-ass flash who plays guard for the Atlanta Hawks. He came into the National Basketball Association a few years ago after becoming a national college hero under the watchful eye of his coach at Louisiana State University whose first name was Press and last name just happened to be Maravich. His dad. Back then, everybody knew he was exciting and everyone knew he had the potential to be a great basketball player. Why, he even had a gimmick: a pair of drooping socks that settled down around his ankles making his sneakers look like a pair of muck-lucks. Of course, he overdid it for the first couple seasons, throwing too many needless behind-the-back passes and, in general, not waiting for his teammates to play with him. But, now, "Pistol" Pete is coming into his own and has finally garnered the respect of the entire sport, not just his pop.

Well, the Nils Lofgren/Grin story reads almost the same way. For all you unknowledgeable rock fans, Lofgren is the smart-ass who walked in on Neil Young in some backstage dressing room a few years back to tell Mr. Dream Wimp what a hot-shit songwriter he was. Young, who was on the brink of superstardom at that point, was seemingly amused by this impish punk and he actually had him play on his very next album, *After the Gold Rush*. Lofgren also wrote and played a couple of songs on *Crazy Horse*, the first album by Young's former back-up group. Finally, finding friendship with Neil Young as good as having a relative at a record company, Lofgren made the big league as he and his group, Grin, were signed to

Spindizzy/Columbia Records. Everyone knew he was exciting, a good songwriter, and had the potential to be a great rock 'n' roller. He even had a gimmick: he performs with a trampoline and does acrobatics while playing his guitar. But, like Maravich Lofgren tried too much too soon, pulling all the stops on nearly every song in an effort to overwhelm his listeners. His band, for the most part, lagged behind and dragged most of Nils' excellent material down to near-mediocrity. But, after three albums on Spindizzy and a new one on A&M, Lofgren has learned that his songs have more impact when they are performed more simply and, without putting a strain on his band, he has begun to realize his potential.

It just seems inevitable that Lofgren will make it. It's not as if Grin was a novelty act that might only appeal to specialized tastes (*a la* Bonzo Dog Band), or that Lofgren has some personal affectations that make him displeasing to hear and watch (*a la* Roger Chapman), or even that Grin plays any sort of ethnic music that people simply can't get used to (*a la* The Wailers). Grin plays solid mainstream rock with a good mixture of hard and soft timbres. Nils has a gravelly voice which is flexible enough to be strong and soft, sometimes both at the same time. He writes catchy melodies and lyrics which are neither difficult to understand nor hard to identify with. Now, if record buyers only appreciated good music as much as sports fans appreciate a good basketball player, Nils Lofgren and Co. might even make it in 1974. By the time Pete Maravich appears on the cover of *Sports Illustrated* for the third time, maybe Grin might make their debut appearance on the cover of *Phonograph Record*.

by Ed Ward

by Gary Kenton

DEL SHANNON

Comebacks are becoming as common as oldies these days. When you think about it, rock & roll has been around some twenty years now, with a staggeringly high cumulative total of worthy artists, most of whom are inevitably pushed into the background by succeeding generations. So it stands to reason that every now and then some 'name from the past' should come along and surprise everyone. Rick Nelson, Charlie Rich, the Troggs, the Beach Boys, Johnny Rivers, Carole King and the Hollies, are but a few who have done it, and hundreds more are out there trying. At the threshold of 1974, we are about to witness the return of three giants from the past, all with new and reportedly quite advanced contemporary sounds. Neil Sedaka, a prolific early-sixties pop singer/songwriter on a par with Carole King and Ellie Greenwich, has been recording in England with studio wizards 10cc, with a much-anticipated album due shortly. Dion, out of the spotlight for several years, is about to return with a Phil Spector-produced album that could bring him more of the attention he so richly deserves. Most exciting and perhaps least expected of all is the case of Del Shannon.



by Greg Shaw

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long after Paul and I had, and he got his company to sign the group.

After the Polydor signing, there

were a few problems. Someone decided this superb band should be rearranged, that Elliott and his brother Matt, who played bass in

the group and who was just as blonde as Elliott, should become a brother duo, with the others in support. That idea lost them a

For starters, Del Shannon is not your average "oldies" artist. Like Dion, he was a rock & roll stylist whose forceful personality dominated his work. When he first appeared in 1961 with "Runaway," he was nothing like the Philadelphia pretty-boys of his day. He had a hard, coarse, aggressive style in the tradition of Elvis, Buddy Holly and Eddie Cochran, but uniquely his own. His 1962 "Little Town Flirt" was a clear precursor of the Mersey 'beat' sound, and "Keep Searching" and "Stranger in Town" were two of the strongest sounds of 1964-5.

He didn't have many hits after that, but has been in constant demand as a concert performer, with a dynamic show that was recently captured quite effectively in his first live album, *Del Shannon In England*, just released on United Artists. He gives the fans what they want, rocking versions of his great hits, which might fool some into thinking he hasn't done anything since.

Which would be far from the truth. The truth is, he's been taking his time, looking for something new worth doing. He tried producing, and came up with a Top Ten hit in Brian Hyland's "Gypsy Woman." He could easily have gone into country, as Jerry Lee Lewis and others did before him; his 1965 *Del Shannon Sings Hank Williams* album proved he

had a natural feel for country arrangements and phrasing, and songwriting as well with a song called "I've got Eyes For You" recorded by Waylon Jennings, and some 1973 Nashville recordings showing great promise.

In 1973, in fact, Shannon spent a lot of time in the studio, producing finished masters in a surprising number of styles, all very appealing and thoroughly commercial. Most exciting of all were three songs done in collaboration with Jeff Lynne and backed by the Electric Light Orchestra. Like Andrew Loog Oldham, in 1967, Lynne found himself unable to resist the opportunity to record with his longtime idol, and Shannon found in Lynne a natural songwriting partner.

The three astonishingly good tracks, thrown together in scattered hours whenever Del and Jeff found themselves in the same country with some time off, should be appearing soon on some major label, and they provide only a hint of greater collaborations to come. Both musicians are anxious to write more songs together, and while Shannon's role, as lead vocalist and featured artist, is more pronounced and at least as significant as that of Lynne, there's no question that his association with a popular English group will offer Shannon a convenient foothold in 1974's pop parade. Welcome back, Del.



drummer and a keyboard player, and the three remaining players were forced to find appropriate outside musicians to play on the recording sessions. They were lucky to get former Byrds drummer Gene Parsons and keyboard man Frank Owens, who – not at all coincidentally – had played on "Like a Rollin' Stone" (Elliott asked Owens whether he'd played piano or organ on those sessions and was taken aback by Owens' answer: "I don't remember.").

The album came out fine, although not as fiery as the best of the Mercer sets; it might have benefitted by the inclusion of their one non-original, Martha and the Vandellas' "Heat Wave." But *Aquashow* does contain enough of the magic we'd been witness to at the Mercer to make it one of the best albums of the year, and one of the most impressive debut albums in ages. Now the band, with replacements, is back up to full strength, and they've just played a week at the Bitter End, winning over practically the entire critical community in the process.

Currently they're as cold sales-wise as they're hot critically – it's the most unbalanced critical-to-commercial situation since Blue Ash. But the music is there, the group just needs a chance to have its work heard. It's certainly not hard to imagine this music on AM radio. Murphy is a distinctive singer, he plays it cool, business-like guitar and a touching, melancholy harp, as the bandleader in the group's live performance – he's magnetic – and then there are his songs, about which so much has already been written.

They reflect his preoccupations with the old Dylan, the old Lou Reed, Gatsby and Fitzgerald, wealth, the family, the pursuit of myth and the perpetrators of myth, the books and the records

and the movies. All these fuel a still-budding but already noticeable genius, and all can be traced to the growing up years of a kid from Long Island whose origins lay in both show business and in quiet wealth, and who developed an active imagination and the ability to find the mystery beneath the commonplace. There's a continuous autobiographical sense about Murphy's songs: he suggests both the literal realities of the suburban world and the fantasies that come to someone who inhabits it.

Murphy – whom Paul Nelson describes as "a Long Island super-punk with too much brains and too many heroes" – has followed the steps taken by the most inspired talents of the era: he's dived boldly into the heart of his sources and he's emerged on the other side out only with the marks of his inspirations but also something quite apart from them – and thoroughly personal. The Dylan of *Blonde on Blonde* and the Lou Reed of "Sweet Jane" are transmogrified in this suburban kid, who – unlike the Hollywood hillbillies and the would-be spacemen – revels in the very commonness of his origins, and who finds more than ample mythic content there. He may do for the Long Island - Manhattan axis what Jackson Browne has done for Southern California: exalt and romanticize the everyday without distorting its ordinariness. These two are handing white middle-class kids their lives back to them by illuminating and pointing out the stuff of myth in their own realms of experience. That's what rock & roll did in the first place, and – thanks to Elliott Murphy and a few others – that's what it's beginning to do again. If Fitzgerald had been born 40 or 50 years later, he might have been the leader of a rock & roll band.

Living Or Not, Here They Come.

The latest collection of music for Dead Heads is "Wake of the Flood," the all-new studio album featuring 45 minutes of previously unrecorded music.

Many of the seven new songs on the "Wake" have been brought to life during the Dead's concerts in the past year, including "Here Comes Sunshine," "Let Me Sing Your Blues Away," and the two-part, 12 minutes-plus genuine energy flash, "Weather Report Suite."

"Wake of the Flood" is the debut album on the new Grateful Dead Records label. And since it was recorded, mixed and mastered under the band's complete supervision in Sausalito, Marin County, satisfaction, both theirs and yours, is guar-an-teeed.

Newer than new music to take you in all directions, as the crow flies.



The Grateful Dead With All New Stuff.

"Wake of the Flood" is available wherever Grateful Dead Records are sold.



Photo: Chuck Pulin.

**Livin' For You.
The new album
by Al Green.**

Oooh, baby.



Produced by Willie Mitchell and Al Green.



LONDON



THE RECORDING SOURCE



PHONOGRAPH RECORD REVIEWS

Lane Changer
Michael Fennelly
Epic

By GREG SHAW

Let's establish one thing before we even start. Michael Fennelly is a legend. If he never cuts another record, his previous contributions are enough to ensure his lasting importance. Unfortunately, that doesn't change the fact his name is unknown to most rock fans. So, a little background. Fennelly is a product of the same school of California post-Beatle harmony and studio technique that produced Emitt Rhodes. He shares with Rhodes a genius for melodic songwriting and a high, clear voice that can take your breath away.

But while Rhodes was quick to ditch the Palace Guard and go out on his own, Fennelly spent the Sixties in a series of noble, failed experiments. With his pals Curt Boettcher, Lee Mallory, Sandy Salisbury and Gary Usher, he led a group called The Millenium that produced one astonishing album around 1968, without success. He did a little better with his next group, Crabby Appleton, but though their two albums were lavished with critical praise, the public never quite went for it. The problem was most likely one of timing; caught in the Beatle-rock Backlash, they arrived too late to be a '60s pop group, and too early for the '70s.

But the '70s are finally beginning, and Mike Fennelly is right on top of them. Like Boettcher, he hasn't forgotten the lesson of the Millenium, but in an effort to break the pattern of failure that caught up with Boettcher's fine 1973 solo album, he left the West Coast and Gary Usher to record for a new label in New York. And his album, anticipated hotly for almost a year now, is here at last.

The first thing to say is that it's not quite as great as it could have been. I find the overall spell distractingly broken on a couple of occasions by the introduction of jarring pseudo-Delta bottleneck guitar blues stuff that threatens to erupt into nouveau-Cream baloney. Quite unnecessary, Mike, if you ask me. And, much as it goes against my grain to say it, I could have done without the rockers. The title song, "Won't You Please Do That" and "Watch Yerself" are good rockers, understand, but there are a thousand good rockers in this world, and only one Mike Fennelly.

Surrounding those tracks, however, are several magnificent songs that mark Fennelly beyond question as a major artist. To appreciate them, you must have some appreciation for the genre; Uriah Heep fans might not be impressed. But if you ever liked Badfinger, Grapefruit, Emitt Rhodes, the Tremeloes, any of that kind of stuff, then you too will marvel at this album. I've only heard it a few times, but I'd venture to say even now that "Shine a Light," "Touch My Soul" and "Over My Dead Body" will stand the test of time that determines true classics. "Easy to Love" is the kind of song I suspect will grow on me, and I am already quite fond of "Dark Night" and "Give Me Your Money", rockers both but with a strong dose of the subtlety that characterizes Fennelly's best



Michael Fennelly has come a long way from his days as leader of Crabby Appleton, a band hardly anybody ever heard of. Soon, a lot of people should be hearing about Fennelly.

work.

I hope this turns out to be the album that breaks Michael Fennelly's losing streak. The time is right for him, his sound is just what we need, and if he doesn't make it big this time, we probably didn't deserve him anyway.

Dylan
Bob Dylan
Columbia

By TOM NOLAN

This "new" Dylan album is actually leftover tracks from the *Self-Portrait* sessions, delivered to the stores in time for Christmas by Dylan's former record company, Columbia. Taking into consideration that the artist himself did not intend or approve its release, *Dylan* is still hugely entertaining.

It contains two marvelous musical jokes: "Spanish Is the Loving Tongue," and "Big Yellow Taxi." Dylan's rendering of Joni Mitchell's final verse made me laugh out loud like I haven't laughed at a record since the Bonzos. I hope you hear the lyric switch for yourself before reading or being told about it; suffice it to say it plays on the *raison d'être* of the song itself, and demolishes what can now be seen as its mite

of pretension.

The probable reason some of these tracks weren't included on *Self-Portrait* is that their obvious comedy would have been confusing in the context of what I still believe to have been a serious project. Now, when folks ask, "Is he putting us on?" the answer, at least in these two instances, is Yes.

The second big laugh, "Spanish Is," is in great, almost bawdy contrast to the straightforward rendition on the flip side of "Watching the River Flow." That "earlier" version (were these radically alternate takes possibly recorded on the very same day?) was almost reverent in the simplicity of its piano accompaniment and Dylan's strict reading of the familiar folk ballad. But this is a hilarious tour of South-of-the-border mandolin clichés, all stops pulled out and a female chorus la-la-la-ing us into Spanish Harlem and helplessness.

The rest of the nine tunes offer varying degrees of enjoyment. Two of the cuts are for me completely unlistenable: "Mr. Bojangles" and "Ira Hayes." I'm really tired of these songs. Dylan's versions don't come near the conviction of the originals, and they're much too long.

"Mary Ann," from the Public Domain, features a quavering gravel-voiced female chorister

who helps make it one of the better moments on the album. "Sarah Jane" is based on the folk oldie, but interestingly there's no (P.D.) disclaimer, indicating perhaps someone's confusion over what seem to be original lyrics, which may be in part "about" the artist's wife and children. The words are bit hard to discern, because Columbia's vaunted "360 Sound" is several degrees less than full-spectrum here. The track sounds as if recorded in a closet, or taped off the teevee by a bootlegger. (Original Recording Sessions Produced by Bob Johnson)

"Can't Help Falling In Love" – popularly known as "Fools Rush In" – is done in lavish style and I don't mind it a bit. Ditto "A Fool Such As I" and a lively "Lily of the West," closest in feel here to the *Self-Portrait* ballads.

Even with its two tedious cuts, I wouldn't be without this album, and even if its release makes the Master hopping mad (and rightfully so), I hope there's lots more where this came from. And it seems that there is.

Neil Young
Time Fades Away
Warner Brothers

By ED WARD

I don't care what anyone else

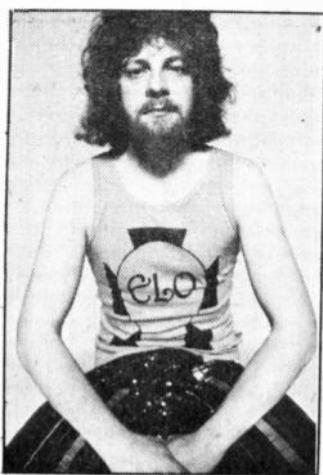
says – this is Neil Young's best album since *Everybody Knows This Is Nowhere*, and I find myself coming back to it over and over. I know it's an album I'll be dragging out from time to time to play and listen to, and that sure is more than I can say about a lot of the albums in my collection.

The reason I like *Time Fades Away* has a lot to do with the title cut: sloppy, badly recorded, sounding like an imitation of Dylan with stupid, meaningless lyrics, it is by far the least pretentious thing ol' Neil's done in a long while. It actually sounds like he's having a good time singing it, and the infectious good times jump off the grooves and into the room. It's not a painful record to listen to – some of his previous efforts have been so pulling and dripping with introversion and self-pity that they were real hard to keep on the old turntable.

And the sloppiness of the whole venture is one of its major charms. There's a song here called "Don't Be Denied" that is superlative, easily one of the finest things he's ever done, yet I wonder if it would have grabbed my attention quite so easily if it had been on *Harvest*, for instance. You hear enough antiseptic-sounding studio-made albums with perfectionist sidemen working with the option of making innumerable overdubs and you begin to realize that it's getting harder and harder to extract the kernel of essential information: what are these here songs, anyway? Even a voice-and-piano song like "Journey Through The Past" is more of a grabber performed live. Not that I think recording artists should make a cult out of imperfections, but jeez it's nice to hear some living music.

Anyway, there is a whole lot to this raggedy album, although a couple of the songs are just plain bad. That's okay, since they are listenable (see above) and he's put out whole albums of just plain bad songs in the past. So I can excuse him for being so goddam sanctimonious about "LA/Uptight city in the smog" (and when the boy is sanctimonious, I mean the boy is *sanctimonious!!*) and I can forgive him the fact that "The Bridge" had such an unmemorable melody that it's the only song on the album I can't recall even part of, because on the rest of the songs, when the lyrics are a bit slight, as on "Love In Mind," there's a decent melody to make up for it, or, like on the title cut no melody in particular is atoned for with real neat lyrics.

Neil Young is one of the current group of "superstars" that I'd given up on completely. (In fact, now that I think of it, are there any I haven't..) Fortunately, I always listen to said superstars' albums at least once so as to have conversational barbs all polished and ready to go should anybody ask me what I think (or ask me to write a review), so I'm pleased to find one of them coming out of the funk, at least. In fact, if Neil Young really isn't taking himself too seriously, that could be a sign that maybe the rest of his cronies will wise up. Or at very least, maybe it's a sign that Neil has maybe a couple more good albums in him. I dunno. I'm just going to end this review and go back to laughing at him screaming "Negative, negative" at the end of "Last Dance." Good show, Neil.



Jeff Lynne of England's Electric Light Orchestra, took time off during their latest tour to review one of his favorite albums.

Live in England
Del Shannon
United Artists

By JEFF LYNNE

This album is like a breath of fresh air, good honest music without any pretentiousness. The tunes are magic, and sung superbly by Del, whose voice is better than ever. Shannon rocks through his set with great enthusiasm, starting with the million seller "Hats Off to Larry," which has the audience on their feet right away (I saw the show four times in England).

"Handy Man" features a nice guitar solo from our friend. Lots of audience response and it's off into "Swiss Maid." What I love is the fact that Del puts as much feeling into the songs as he did on the original recordings. Then comes one of my all time favourites, "Hey Little Girl," and all that's missing is the top harmony (I'd have gladly obliged).

It seems as if Manchester can't believe this string of great songs, because the audience gets louder after each one. Ahh it's "Little Town Flirt," a massive hit in Britain and another favourite of mine. It must be a great feeling to know that every song he plays, the people are going to love. There's a very nice version of "Kelly," and then Del proves on "Crying" just what a great vocal range he possesses. He hits some very high notes true and clean and with feeling. Del says, "Here's the B-side of "Kelly," when in fact it was "Two Kinds of Teardrops," which was very big in the U.K.

There's one thing that's bugging me as the record goes on, and that's the level of the drums. I wish they'd pulled them down into the mix more on some tracks, but live recordings can't be perfect.

A bit of fun with the "Coopersville Yodel" gets the crowd stamping and clapping. "The Answer to Everything" is nice to hear again. Then comes another million seller, "Keep Searchin'" - good one. Del sings "What's a Matter Baby." I hadn't heard him sing this before, he does it well, but I'd rather he'd done another original like "Cry Myself to Sleep"! Or any Del Shannon song, I love 'em all.

Then comes yet another favourite, "So Long Baby," which builds well to the climax. Del Shannon closes this great set with my all time favourite song, "Runaway." This song is pure magic and was a multi-million seller. A knockout way to end a really nice album and if you like a bit of nostalgia combined with songs that still stand up as great, then you'll love this.

Live at Keystone
Merl Saunders/Jerry Garcia
Fantasy
(Sides 1 and 2)

By HOWARD KAYLAN
(Eddie)

Jerry Garcia. Jerry Garcia and who? Jerry Garcia and his bearded, black, round-glassed counterpart and two other guys. A two-record set, no less. O.K., I'm a masochist. I'll listen to it. Besides, if I, (Howard), tear the jacket in half and write about sides one and two, and he (Mark) writes about three and four, we'll have two diverse, unbiased opinions, right? Hmmm...

To begin with, this album is reputedly "Live". That may be so, but it's reclining in a comatose state, as was the "mini-live" token audience obviously 'inspired' by the music. What dramatic proof that anyone with a Sony is not necessarily an instant Wally Heider, and that any Superstar can, eventually, lose his "ear". Too!

"Live"?... Well, it's certainly a 'Ya had to be there' L.P., But, I'll tell you, if Garcia was sipping on an already-dosed Electric Budweiser, I'd still be falling asleep to this one. Sorry.

This is, after all, despite its packaging, a Jerry Garcia album, for better or worse. I guess when you've got your own record company, you can afford to forget about your career and your talent, and loan yourself out to other labels and artists. Jammin', you know? Might as well get your photograph on as many album covers as possible before the big Film Shortage sets in. There's a picture of all these guys just sitting around, bored, on the inner jacket. The audience? One guy looks like Harrison, one looks like Dylan - your usual Berkeley/Sandelwood crowd. Here's what they, and I, sat through.

Side One, cut one. "Finders Keepers, Losers Weepers!" An Afro-American-Speaking-Gentleman-inspired wah-wah "jam" with the only synthesizer on my half of the record, playing the opening lines, and mere shades of pre-meditation on the backing track. At its best, innocuous. "Oh, was the stereo on?" Maybe this was a hit once for someone with "James Brown" lyrics. Sorry, Jerry... My beer hasn't kicked in yet. But, I don't really hate it, ya know?

"Positively Fourth Street." Don't get me wrong. Garcia should sing party 'nuff to unclog every truckstop diner's drain within his range. He moans this standard just fine. Like singing in the shower. Casual. Real casual. Everyone in the band stays in a nice safe rut, except for "the bass player", (My half of the album doesn't have the credits.. it's better this way) who persists in skipping around out there in the ozone. Garcia plays one or two nice guitar licks during his soloing. It's the closest sounding track to the good ol' Dead, despite of, or, on account of, its lack of originality. For some, even that might be enough. The song ends surreptitiously.

"The Harder They Come." Jimmy Cliff is Jamaican. Jerry Garcia ain't. This, the theme from Cliff's cheapo Black-action flick of a year or so ago, is lifeless. Cliff's rendition, on the other hand, was bouncy, authentic, and beautiful. Don't misunderstand me, I'm certainly not looking for any authenticity here. Just a reason. A reason to record it in the first place. A reason to own it.

Live at Keystone
Merl Saunders/Jerry Garcia
Fantasy
(Sides 3 and 4)

By MARK VOLMAN
(Flo)

Since you probably have already read Howard's review of sides 1 & 2, my feelings about sides 3 & 4 might just be ramblings, because by now you have already decided (A) Whether we're full of shit or not, or (B) Whether you will buy the album or not.

Jerry Garcia has such a large following of people who will buy anything he does, this album will probably sell a lot of records whether I like it or not, and it's too bad because for \$6.98 you

could get 2 good albums instead of 1 slightly boring. The record I heard, specifically sides 3 & 4 presumably a continuation of sides 1 & 2, is to my opinion not unlike our political situation, in a rut, and not worth much except the vinyl it's printed on, but Fantasy Records (always a mainstay in esoteric jazz) has done it again.

Side 3 opens with "That's All-right Momma" and it's interesting to note that the only thing I found worth saying about this song is, it has the profound lyric $1+1=2$, $2+2=4$, and that's all I remember except that when I finished listening, I realized it reminded me of about any number of typical bar bands I've had the pleasure of puking up thru.

Side 3 continues with the once-great "My Funny Valentine", 18

minutes, 6 seconds worth of I'm sure what must have been a great jam session, in the early hours. Besides not being very experimental, which is sort of what you expect out of a jam at the very least, was some nice Jerry Garcia guitar and thank goodness, because other than that, the fact that Merl Saunders is a keyboard player in this group must have been a secret to the engineer, because on all the solos he plays on this cut, he is very well hidden, not mixed or just left off. Either way, the song used to be one of my favorites, and if this version were edited down to single length it would be a hit anyway.

I went to the turntable hoping for the best, but received the worst as I turned to side 4 and yes you guessed it, "The Blues" - 10

(Continued on Page 32)



Richard Creamer

Alice Cooper demonstrates the calisthenics of love. Watch those bruises.

more zorch manner. Hooray! Horrible Shirley Bassey ending.

"A Teenage Lament" must be hard when you're imitating the Band from Big Pink. Where's Chester? Jackie DeShannon was more convincing. Touching! The doo wops are out of place.

"Woman Machine" is sexist

slop. When is James Brown going to record a glitter song?

Shep Gordon is a genius. Bob Ezrin is a genius. Alice Cooper is a genius. Muscle of Love isn't a genius piece of work. The LP by Queen on Elektra tries harder than Muscle of Love. Buy it instead.

less, quasi-sincere vocal, (No threat, Leon), and some extremely tentative lead guitar work. Oh yes, and it's slow. Sooo Slooowwww. Like someone's finger is dragging on the turntable...

"Space", second cut on the side, is the one that just sorta starts, and everyone comes right

(Continued on Page 32)

A reason to say any more about it except...

Who are these guys? Am I a dummy? Keyboards by Merl Saunders? Where? What? He's a star? Why can't I hear him? Is this music 'happening'? Is it, at least, communal? What about the vinyl shortage? Am I having fun? Well, I'm flipping it over, anyway.

Side Two opens with another

Dylan, "It Takes A Lot To Laugh", etc. This one's strictly the old high-school rock band. The gaping holes in the boring track are a blessing in disguise compared to what happens when the lads try to fill them up. Especially our bass player freak who thinks he's got a telecaster and keeps trying to play lead lines. Same old "Band" triad organ chords, a list-

(Flo, Continued From Page 31)

in, like... "like...a cosmic trip, ya know?" Blah! Granola and stoves all wrong. Every man for himself... Instrumental poppycock... Junk jazz freeform... An Alice Coltrane "Louie Louie." Only one more song to wade through.

"It's No Use", a Pre-Flyte McGuinn-Clark song whose only recording should have been on microfilm somewhere. Blues, man... blues blues blues... Pup and Tacos variations of CHUCKLEMONALBERTBCCOLLINSKINGDIDDLEYBERRY. Trash. Enough is enough.

Listen, I'll put a two-track machine in my garage, and my wife makes one helluva acid punch. Twenty-five bucks an hour, union hassles, and you and your friends can make rancid records, too.

(Eddie, Continued From Page 31)

minutes worth. Now maybe I'm missing something or just getting old, but it was terribly tough to get thru. One verse lyrics alternating with 20 verses instrumental, not just instrumental but I must admit, the musicians sound just as bored playing that crap as I was bored listening to it.

Finally rounding out this side of the album was a song called "Like a Room", and I'm sure you'll be surprised to hear I thought it was pretty good, some great chord changes and again some very fine Garcia guitar, and it's too bad that even one good song on two sides of a four sided record is not in my opinion a very good average, and who knows, sides 1 & 2 might be great. I hope so.

In conclusion the sound of this record is and does nothing to help the songs come off to their best capability. It's too bad because I am somewhat of a Jerry Garcia fan, and there is not enough of the fun in the music that you sort of expect after you see Garcia's smiling face on the inside cover. This album is more than just a mild disappointment to anyone less than hardcore Jerry Garcia fans or people looking for a Xmas gift for someone they can't stand. My advice: spend your money on something else.

How about some FOGHAT???



Mind Games
John Lennon
Apple

By SUSANELLA ROGERS

Lennon's Latest is the industry's most recent example of bankability in spite of yes-we-have-no-boogie-today poor quality. Lennon, like a handful of others, sells, no matter what. Elton or Jagger could go gold with a 2 lp set of rude noises, long as their name's spelled right on the cover; Lennon hasn't gone quite that far, but the mind boggles at



Don't look so defensive, guys; a few more drinks and you'll forget all about our review!

the possibilities of what MIND GAMES foretokens.

Lennon still sounds like he's straining to be heard from inside a shoebox; actually perhaps a blessing in disguise: the album goes down a lot better if you don't listen to the lyrics. When John is not waxing poetico-romantic in paeans tacitly dedicated to Yoko (enough to make ya reach for an air-sickness bag), the heavy-handed production reaches new heights of mediocrity with such inspiring exhortations as the adolescent meanderings of "Meat City."

The pedestrian lyrics and strictly boring arrangements are backed up by a catatonic chorus who croon "ooh ahhh" a lot (to their credit however—not a single "baby oh baby"), and I'm not even gonna tell ya that Lennon still hasn't shaken his tambourine fetish.

The every-20-minutes-on-FM "Mind Games" and "Tight A\$", a semi-country-boogie-Ringo-rocker, are the saving graces of the album, but the absolute standout gem is the Nutopian International Anthem—three seconds of total silence.

The most disappointing aspect of MIND GAMES is that it is an indifferent product; ten years ago Lennon set out to exhibit his genius and succeeded as one of the world's most acclaimed musicians, but MIND GAMES would seem to indicate that John is intent on making myth of his legend.

Ass
Badfinger
Apple

Badfinger
Warner Bros.

By GREG SHAW

Two Badfinger albums in one month! What more could a fan ask for after a two year drought? If only it were so... actually, the fans will be asking plenty, and Badfinger has a lot to answer for, because these two mediocre albums are already one of the biggest disappointments of the new year.

Let's start with the Apple album. Nobody knows why it exists. It was never explained why Badfinger mysteriously stopped recording right after "Baby Blue" and "Day After Day", the two biggest smashes of their career, when Nilsson was hot with their song "Without You" and it seemed they were on the verge of becoming truly huge. The most believable story I heard was that they were just sick of Apple, and

waiting for their contract to expire. Maybe somehow they were forced to put out one more album before ending the relationship, but how stupid to have it come out the same time as their first release on Warners!

If the Warners album were any good, it would have nothing to fear from the Apple one. Ass sounds like what it probably is, a collection of out-takes and practice tapes. There is a rough, unfinished aura about the album and a lack of really distinctive touches even in the best songs that goes against everything we've come to expect from this polished band. Once known for their exquisitely crafted singles, the best they could do here was "Apple Of My Eye", easily their worst single ever. My choice would have been "When I Say", but that's no big deal. One thing's sure: there's no three or four hit singles on this album — especially not the eight-minute "Timeless"!

There are always excuses to make for a bad last album. Not so when you've taken over a year putting together your debut album for a new label. And actually, The Warners album is a bit more encouraging. "I Miss You" is an engaging McCartney-esque ballad, "Shine On" and "Love is Easy" make for tolerable listening, "Why Don't We Talk" almost makes it, and "Island" would be really good if it weren't so aimless. That seems to be their problem throughout the album — melodies and song structures are simply not as strong as could be, so that songs like "Where Do We Go From Here?" and "Lonely You" emerge as pleasant where they might, with some effort, have been as striking as the group's previous work.

Once we've faced the fact that Badfinger has not given us a proper sequel to *No Dice* and *Straight Up*, it's possible to derive considerable enjoyment from this album. Most of the songs are very nice; only "Matted Spam", which sounds like Buddy Miles, can actually be called bad. This is a good example of minor Beatle-rock, definitely worth having, but nothing Grapefruit didn't do as well four years ago. And that's the shame of it, because I was really counting on Badfinger to bridge the gap between mere Beatle stuff and a new level of pop altogether. I believed that they, of all the groups who were trying, had it in them. And maybe they do. But the proof of that will have to come later — if Badfinger can manage to survive the double blow to their career these albums unfortunately represent. For what it's worth, I'm still hoping.

Ladies Invited
The J. Geils Band
Atlantic Records

By ALAN NIESTER

Unless your passion for the J. Geils Band runs to some sort of Dalek mindless obsession, you really don't need *Ladies Invited*. You've heard it all many times before, exactly how many dependent largely on how many of the band's four previous albums you've managed to procure. There are the usual few rockers (none of which even begins to approach the energy level of "House Party" or "First I Look At The Purse"), a few early Stones sounding harp blues, and a few other concessions to a few other people, but nothing you've never heard from this band before.

The J. Geils Band's basic problem is that they are so solidly tied to a sound that they can't possibly abandon. There are only so many things you can do with an ensemble that spotlights so predominantly the limited vocal raspings of Peter Wolf on one hand and the now all-too-familiar harp licks of Magic Dick on the other. You can occasionally inflict a

to Smokey Robinson, and a neat little tune, and is thusly the best thing on the album, the epic "Chimes," a supposedly romantic tour de farce, fails dismally. As a broken heart, Wolf is at his least credible as a vocalist. He sounds more like a broken muffler. And Magic Dick's frantic harp solo that unabashedly bisects the song is the most misplaced attack since allied force pioneered Hamburger Helper at Dieppe in 1941.

In all, the album doesn't really work on any level. As a dance album it falls way short because there are too few dance numbers, and what there are just aren't that good. You can't sing along to most of the songs because their structure is so blatantly anti-melodic. It definitely isn't groping on the bear-skin at midnight music, and as far as background music for scrubbing the walls etc., it fails simply because it's so damn irritating.

As a performing band, there's still a lot to be said for the J. Geils Band, and in that capacity they deserve our support. But as far as shelling out for this album goes, forget it. Wait until they at least put enough energy back to deserve you.



Why give more fat Canadians the time of day? Because this is Thundermug, and if you haven't heard 'em you're in for a few surprises.

little superficial originality, like by adding a xylophone to the mix on "Did You No Wrong," but in the end it all comes down to the same old neo-Siegel-Schwall jerk-off hiding under space age mascara.

In short, all the rockers here ("Did You No Wrong," "Take A Chance On Romance" among others) sound depressingly similar to all the other J. Geils rock songs, except that they're done here with noticeably less energy than in the past. A few months ago, "House Party" would be the song I'd play while drinking at home in preparation for an evening of juke-boxin' and bobby-soxin' on the town. Nothing on *Ladies Invited* is apt to take its place.

That J. Geils are becoming aware of their limitations is, I think, fairly obvious. It's a trend that began on *Bloodshot* when the band surprised with the likeable reggae-flavoured "Give It To Me." There, the change of pace tactic worked not only because no one quite knew what to make of it, but also simply because it was well executed. Similar diversionary experiments come to the fore again on *Ladies Invited*, but here they are less successful. While "The Lady Makes Demands" succeeds as both a tribute

Thundermug Strikes
Thundermug
Epic

By MIKE SAUNDERS

"Orbit" is the title of the opening cut here, and it's a beaut! What it really reminds me of is "Johnny Thunder" on the Kinks' *Village Green* LP. Ray Davies once said he wrote that song as a 1967 Who move, and "Orbit" seems to be Thundermug's premier success in the same vein: a poised effete melody backed up by hard rock riffing, made even more effective by the extra bonus riffs that keep popping up. Flawless power pop, it sounds like a perfect 45. And it was. If it wasn't a hit in Canada (Thundermug's homeland), there's no justice across the border.

For the real point of reference here, though, you have to forget about "Orbit" and move to the end of Side one for "Africa." As a 45 on Big Tree last year, this tune won Thundermug a bit of notoriety here in the U.S. No wonder—you'd have to be deaf to ignore a record that opens with a half-dozen jungle madmen pounding like War playing meth-rock, shifts into a short power pop chorus a la "Orbit," only to shift back to the

jungle until the next chorus. Interesting, and compelling as well, but kind of confusing if you know what I mean.

Most of *Thundermug Strikes* derives strongly from "Africa," with "Orbit's" influence intermittently straining to break through. Although a stylistically confused album, there are many flashes of genuine promise. A few points are in order:

(1) Why give more fat Canadians the time of day? Because *Thundermug* are from Montreal, a burg boasting groups like the Wackers, Pagliaro, April Wine, Fludd, Mahogany Rush, and Moran. None of 'em great, but all are respectable pop groups on one level or another.

(2) The Kinks are supposedly *Thundermug*'s favorite group and major influence. This doesn't connect at first, because *Thundermug*'s sound is far removed from the Kinks then or now. But there are song titles like "Victoria Muse" and "Garden Green," and if you'll sift through the frequently overbearing instrumental sludge to dig out the melodies, *Thundermug*'s Bill Durst has written some very catchy Kinks-ish effete melodies. Like "Garden Green." Or "We'll Never Forget," which done properly might sound like Sparks filtered through the 1968 Move. Or "Mickey Mouse Club," another fine song that should've sounded a lot better than it does.

(3) Which leads to the next point: this album is full of good to excellent material weakened by ill-fitting arrangements, mediocre vocals, and some serious excess. First, lead singer Joe DeAngelis has a voice that, I dunno, it just doesn't fit this kind of music. He's gruff like David Clayton-Thomas, at his worst sounding like a combination of Ian Gillan and Bob Hite. Too much excess vibrato and too much sweaty screaming.

Second, look guys: I love fuzzbox, tasteless wah-wah, and deluges of metal rain—if it's done right. Done poorly it just sounds like sludge. Except for "Where Am I," it doesn't sound like you'll ever be much of a heavy metal group, and that song's an anomaly anyway because the rhythm section is mixed down with the rhythm guitar way up in a frenetic fuzzbox style not heard elsewhere on the LP. Cool it with the War meets James Gang outbursts and listen to some more Kinks records, OK?

(4) For the time being, *Thundermug* would seem to be a singles group. This LP was compiled from the best of their two Canadian albums, which I'm told are pretty bad in comparison. Another unfavorable comparison is that of their 45 of "You Really Got Me" (included here) to the Kinks' original. It's great that *Thundermug* did it with an intended faithfulness to the original, but they blew it anyway, dragging the tempo and adding almost twenty seconds to the song's time! Nice try, but no dice.

Ultimately, there's only so much you can say about a young group with a couple outstanding singles. *Thundermug* shows a lot of promise, but they also have a lot of rough edges that need ironing out—they've got a lot of work cut out for themselves. They might make a good album given time. They might not. They might achieve one-month stardom just like Edward Bear and then devote their lives to scientology. Or they might be dropped by Epic five weeks from now when this album doesn't sell. Whatever the case, make a point to hear "Orbit" for sure. "Africa" maybe, and decide from there for yourself.

Ozark Mountain Daredevils A&M

By GREG SHAW

Kansas City has never been what you'd call a major center for rock music. It's a fairly large city, with a sizeable and extremely devoted rock audience that thinks nothing of coming from anywhere within a 200 miles radius for a concert. These fans know what they want, too. There is a very definite style of music, incorporating bluegrass and folk-rock and everything in between, that characterizes the taste of this part of the midwest. An all-star festival, dedicated to Earl Scruggs, was held near here instead of Nashville. The Nitty Gritty Dirt Band came here, where they are regarded as heroes, to record their live album. It's the spiritual home of country rock. And it's also the home of the Ozark Mountain Daredevils.

The Ozarks are the definitive Kansas City band. Their sound is fresh, natural, fully developed,

and the sum (and then some...) of all its influences. And their debut album is one of the year's most promising releases.

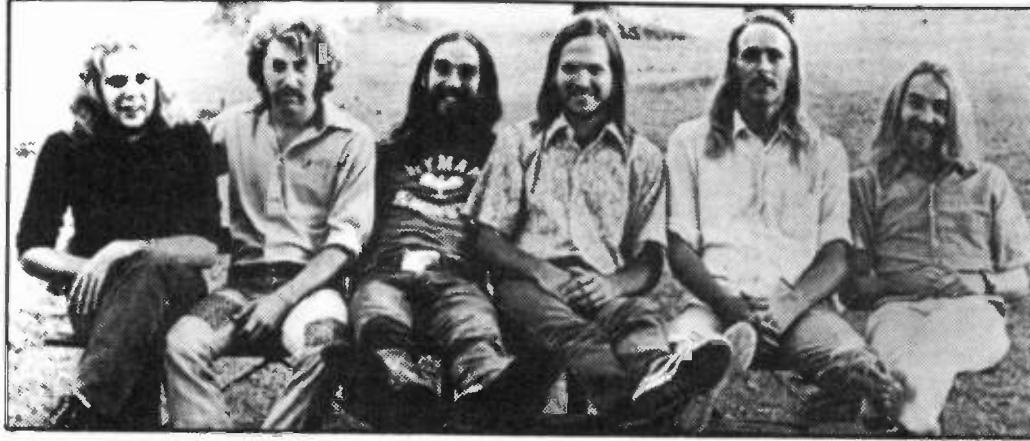
"Country Girl," the opening cut and likely single, brings back memories of the days when the Byrds and Poco and them were taking their first fling at country rock. It's a bit like the Dirt Band's "Mr. Bojangles," only faster, peppier, uplifting and smile-inducing. With Glyn Johns' excellent production, it's a natural hit.

Nothing else on the album quite comes up to it, but each cut presents a different side of the group, whose approach to music within this rather limited spectrum turns out to be quite varied. "Spaceship Orion" reminds me of those early Jefferson Airplane ballads like "Today." "Chicken Train" is pure Holy Modal Rounders, right down to the last lyric: "Laser beam/In my dream/I can't get on/I can't get off..." jaw harp and fiddles and barnyard noises and all. And right next to it, a song full of Humble Pie metal chords and hard rock guitar, yet

with an odd twangy western feel, is not at all out of place.

The most successful numbers seem to be the uptempo ones with the most country flavor. "Beauty in the River" and "Standing On the Rock" are the strongest. "Colorado Song," nearly as pretentious as Country Joe and the Fish at their worst, and a couple of fairly unremarkable ballads, round things out. The overall impression, however, is of a cheerful, honest album that you'll want to hear again and again.

If the Ozark Mountain Daredevils had come along four years ago, when this kind of music was in its ascendancy, they'd most likely be household names today and the kings of a whole Kansas City Sound. This late in the game, and especially with their beards and long hair, it'll take some effort to achieve real stardom. But if they can follow this album with anything nearly as enjoyable, they should be around for a long time. I hope so; this is one type of music there's never enough of.



The Ozark Mountain Daredevils (top) are the latest band to try and make bluegrass commercial. The Dillards (below) were the first, and after ten years they still haven't given up.

Richard Creamer

Tribute To The American Duck Dillards Poppy

By KEN BARNES

The Dillards have been too long overlooked. Not by the bluegrass/country set, although late-blooming Hollywood cowpokes poseurs always seemed to prefer the newer bands inspired by the Dillards to the original article. But pop fans have been unaware that for five years the Dillards have been turning out some of the most thoroughly pop sounds around, starting with *Wheatstraw Suite*. There's usually a countrified or bluegrass base to their songs, and the group does a few straight

bluegrass numbers, but their orientation is most prominently pop. It's a moot point whether the Dillards were responsible for the Byrds' pioneering folk-rock harmonic blend, as Rodney Dillard claims, but the fact remains that few groups can top the rich harmonies the Dillards consistently lay down. Their last album, *Roots And Branches*, was bursting with pop-style delights, and *Trips To The American Duck* (a worthy cause overall, though involving more than a few quacks) is right up there in the same class.

Straight pop harmony material dominates, with "Music Is Music," "You've Gotta Be Strong" (catch the arresting *a capella* chorus at the end) and "Carry Me Off" standing out..

"Caney Creek" weds a traditional mountain tune to a solid rock beat and becomes Side One's best track; while "Dooley" is a pleasant bluegrass piece, a reworking of a tune from their first album (in 1963!). There's a dismissible bit of whimsy at the album's end in "What's Time To A Hog," but the preceding "Hot Rod Banjo" and "Daddy Was A Mover" more than compensate. And Side Two is highlighted by the lovely "Smile For Me," one of the prettiest songs to emerge this year—irresistible.

After ten years of high quality music, it's about time the Dillards achieved some long-deserved substantial success. Do your bit for the cause; you can't help but enjoy the results.

Attempted Mustache Loudon Wainwright III Columbia

By JEROME DU BOIS

The only people I want to talk to about Loudon Wainwright III's new album *Attempted Mustache* are those who still read stories—those who care about story, mood, theme and lyrics, and the integration of these into a harmonic whole. To you I present this man and his four albums (the others are titled simply I, II, and III). Unlike other dramatists recording today, he possesses a refreshing lack of pretension and an abundance of talent, especially in his writing—some of the stories, like "AM World" and "Nocturnal Stumblebutt" on this album and most of the stuff on Albums II and III, are masterpieces of compression—but also in the balanced economy of the music. No overblown productions here. He has a broadranging ear for the kind of style he needs to convey his theme, and will employ everything from folk to funk to rock 'n' roll to cocktail-lounge music; the results are truly integrated, fully-realized stories and vignettes.

He's funny. In fact, humor, whether sardonic, fatalistic, or straight-forward, permeates most of his work, even though you only laugh when it hurts. "The Man Who Couldn't Cry," for example, is a mournful tale about the ultimate loser who dies an ironic death and witnesses poetic justice from heaven. The lyrics are effective in their absurd juxtaposition of images: "Napalmed babies or the movie *Love Story*/for instance could not produce tears." Or this: "His ex-wife died of stretch marks." Did he say *stretch marks*?

He cheerfully lampoons success, both his own ("AM World") and that of others ("Liza," of Minelli fame, who was a childhood friend). In the former, Wainwright lets us know that now that "I got three guitars, I got credit cards, I got more money than you," well, "who needs a heart of gold?" The latter pays backhanded tribute to Liza (as well as Neil Young) in a chanting voice solo that sounds like he's calling the faithful to prayer: "Now you've got that Oscar I don't think you'll be a nurrse."

A story that many can identify with is "Nocturnal Stumblebutt," (he uses punny titles a lot) about a man, ostensibly trying to stop smoking cigarettes, who finds himself stumbling around in the bedroom dark simultaneously searching for a butt and trying to keep from awakening his wife. "I Am the Way" completes the humorous stories, a perceptive glance at how ridiculous Jesus must have looked to the skeptics of his day. After telling us he can walk on the water and raise the dead, he explains: "It's easy, I'm the Way."

"The Swimming Song," a jaunty tune with crisp plucky banjo and guitar, seems to be about nothing in particular except the different strokes (no, I refuse to say it), but what's behind that haunting bass line and the words: "But once when you weren't looking, I did a cannonball?" Probably nothing, and he's laughing over my shoulder now, saying, "Idiot, it's just a song about swimming, I tell you!" Yeah, okay. Still . . .

"Bell Bottom Pants" takes a jab at hip conformity: "If you ain't got the pants, you ain't got a chance." He thoughtfully dedicates this half-sung, Arlo-Guthrie-styled tune to the U.S. Navy.

Flo & Eddie's Blind Date

Upon first listening, "Clockwork Chartreuse" (which closes side one), is hard to take, and it doesn't really get easier after that. In this heavy-chorded rocker Wainwright picks at the open wound of contemporary violence, and better than others who have dwelt on this theme. He takes the Burgess-Kubrick epic as departure point and carries it from casual everyday depravity—"We'll get our rocks off, we'll rape a coed"—to the final absurdity and horror: "Tomorrow is Sunday/there'll be some parades/And back at my house/I got some grenades." Some might be tempted to pick up the needle early.

Side Two opens with the funky, shuffling, bloozy comment on alcoholism, "Down Drinking at the Bar." A hard-edged, hard-eyed look at the drinking loser: "Go ahead get drunk it's alright/Lost Weekend on a Tuesday night"—it's even better than "Drinking Song" from Album III. Incidentally, I should mention that throughout the album, the musicians, including Kenny Buttrey, Doug Kershaw and Mac Gayden, acquit themselves admirably—especially on this cut—and the production (Bob Johnston—what can I say?) is bell-clear.

Katie McGarrigle, Wainwright's wife, wrote the only straightforwardly sad song on the album. "Come A Long Way" is a lovely, down-to-the-bone account of two friend, both bruised by experience, meeting once again after they have been through some sobering realizations. I quote pure poetry: "All my life I wanted to roam/To go to the ends of the earth/But the earth really ends where you started to roam/You and I know what a circle is worth." That's just one verse. She is a songwriter to watch, indeed.



The last two songs deal with their parenthood. "Dilated to Meeeet You" has Wainwright and McGarrigle sing-songing in chorus to their unborn child, giving it advice and the gentle warning that "You cannot get inside again/Once you have come out," advice not taken by many adults. "Lullaby" is a tender melody surrounding such fatherly phrases, addressed to the newborn, bawling-at-2 AM baby, as "Shut your mouth and button your lip/You're a late night faucet that's got a drip." I love you but gimme some slack, man.

A strange way to express tenderness, but Wainwright seems to need this protective shield of smart-ass toughness around him; the world has been cruel. On "New Paint" from Album III (I seem to be reviewing that fine album, too) he sings "I'm a used-up, 20th Century boy, excuse me." World-weary, yes, you're excused. But used up? No way. Each LP gets better, and I for one am eagerly awaiting whatever he plans to come up with next. I hope I have a lot of company, but if I don't—well, it's your loss. I mean it.

Phonograph Record recently won a blind date with those priceless clown jewels of rock-dom, Flo & Eddie (a pleasure comparable to winning a bootleg Barry Manilow LP). Making the best of an awkward situation, we bearded them in their den and played them a number of new and old records anonymously. The endlessly clever ex-Turtles had knotted together a pair of exquisite blindfolds fashioned from old socks. Their commentary follows. (Note: since Flo & Eddie are in the endearing habit of speaking simultaneously, no attempt will be made to distinguish individual speakers)

Rick Derringer (Blue Sky). Are you sure it's the right speed? Sounds like it's at 45. Bad, huh? Let's hear the next cut. Who is he? I'm unimpressed, whoever it is. What is it? Rick Derringer?!! You mean that little guy from the McCoys who says he knew albinos once? Oh man, oh man! Gloria Stavers album design. I don't like it.

Ricky Segall (Bell). Isn't that the little Negro on *Jack In the Box*, Rodney Allen Rippy? Is he famous? Is he in the Waltons? Wait, this is the kid in the Partridge Family! Segall! And the Seagulls. Hey, we got one! It's hip to get one. That was easy, it was either the little Negro or the little white kid. (looks at album) Inside is Ricky and the Segalls press bag. Oh ho! Postcards! A picture of Ricky in boxing gloves. Glossies! The little kid has a future. The little kid has no future! I think Rick Derringer, however, is more childish in his approach than Ricky Segall. He's a nice little kid.

Thundermug, "Orbit" (Epic) No clues? (*They're Canadian*) Canadians, huh? Guess Who? Bachman-Turner Overdrive? Stampeders? The Wackers! I never heard of these guys. Thundermug! Why should I know them? I think they'd be great in person. It was better than that last thing I heard and I think that's the best way to rate a record: that it's better than the last thing. I could probably put on a cut and play it all the way through. That's a lot for me, cause I took off Graham Nash after I heard him singing about little bears. It's not as high a rating as Lee Mallory would get.

Santana, "Samba De Sausalito" (Columbia). He's gotten very serious about it, hasn't he? I figure when the hair went, the personality... went with it. The Clearasil sopping up the oil there... No, he's a great guy. He's got his guru. It's remarkable how you can sound like Desi Arnaz and sell records. It's Arthur Lyman! He seems to have mellowed out considerably. He's boring! It's dinner music. It is not. It is for me, I'm starving! For African decorated restaurants only. Unless I've got a big rum

drink in a coconut mug I don't want to hear it. This eats. I suggest Hawaiian shirts. I suggest Hawaiian Eye!

Ventures, "Tequila" (from Play Guitar With the Ventures, Vol. 2, Dolton). I'm very into esoteric music. Sounds like Martin Mull. It's Kenny Rogers with that guitar instruction course he's been selling on the tube! It's so rank! I like it. It's an old timer? How old? Not old like Pete Seeger? This is a hit for Martin Mull. I think we could move on.

Bob Ruzicka, "Soft Rocker" (MCA). I don't know. Philip Goodhand-Tait? Bob Ruzicka! Who the hell cares? I don't like him, I would never follow up on him. It's just... the same. What would you call that? Sleep music. This is junk! I mean, that's my opinion. "Soft Rocker"! I wanna give him another chance. His name is cool. It's a baseball card name.

Burt Reynolds, "The First One I Lay With" (Mercury). Joni? Cat? Stephen? Liv? Carole? Bob? Rita? Philip Goodhand-Tait? Area Code 213? Gordon Lightfoot? David Ackles? David Blue? The Soft Machine? Oh no man, it's got the same aura of "I love my puppy and my puppy loves frogs", that Mac Davis song. You know, "I like babies' butts." Who is that, Chip Taylor? No Chip Taylor's great, is this Walt Whitman or somebody? I don't like it. Okay, who was it? Burt Reynolds! Aaagh! I'm frightened when I look at this cover. He's not naked inside or anything!

Focus, "Sylvia" (Sire). Steve Miller? Oh man, that song, "The Joker" ...too bad! I really can't take it. Of course what do I know from commercial? We haven't had a hit in years, but if that's what you have to sound like... Is it Canadian? Ah, no more of that Canadian crap. Hawkwind! Rare Earth! It's gotta be. Sure it's not Vanilla Fudge? That is rancid. Shocking Blue? Are they from Holland? Is it like the George Baker Syndrome? The Tee Set! Is it Mouth & McNeal? Finland. Helsinki. Amon Duul? Focus! God, it took us til the turkey started singing. That didn't sound complex enough for Focus. That didn't sound rancid enough for Focus! One of these days he's gonna get that note and his groan's gonna give in and he'll sound like Rodney Allen Rippy.

L.A. Revolucion, "Excerpts from Revolucion 1970" (UA Latino). Lighthouse? If? Yes? Chase? Malo? Santana? Wait, I know who this is. The Sons of Champlin. Is this that group Bowie had on? I can't judge this 'cause I'm a big fan of bullfighting. It's tough to review when you can't understand the lyrics. He may be singing something cool. We did a song just like this on our last album. Yeah, and it sounded just as rank! I don't understand where the market lies... Oh,

there's a large market, Farmers' Market in downtown L.A.!

Creation, "Making Time", "Painter Man" (British Charisma). Gotta be the Move, right? DDBT&Z? Is it of that ilk? Legendary group, eh? Shel Talmy... The Nice? Two word name? One word name. Safe to assume it's no girl drummer. Nobody's brother in it. Who is that, that's real neat! Creation, never heard of it. Sounds like the Fool. I like it.

Sugarloaf (Brut). Philip Goodhand-Tait! Black Oak! War! McKendree Spring! I know, but just to say the name, it's like Philip Goodhand-Tait. This isn't bad, who is that? America? Sounds like a Paul Anka song. Sounds like a Don McLean song. Who is it, Sugarloaf? They had a hit, didn't they? Green Eyed Lady, Ocean Lady? We're really letting you guys down, not guessing right. We just don't listen. I can't imagine listening to Sugarloaf. (Well, this way our readers will see what you listen to and what you don't.) We don't listen to Sugarloaf! For all the world to read! I can't even look at the cover. I'm staring at it and it doesn't make any sense.

James Brown, "Mind Power" (Polydor). Yeah, it is the man. I can always take James. It's not James Taylor? Carly! Get on the Good Foot Part 9. Even a cretin would get that one. He produces great guitar licks. Is that his new album? Just Like the Last One. Great name for an album. Oh, he's getting old.

Electric Light Orchestra, "Ma Ma Ma Belle" (UA). Scaffold! McKendree Spring! Smith! Hawkwind! Oh, I love it. Mott the Hoople, right? Sweet, huh? It's gotta be ELO. Well-produced band.

Philip Goodhand Tait, "You Are", "Reach Out For Another" (20th Century). Spanky & Our Gang? Suzi Quatro! Sounds like Jim Pons when he sings. What's that, a million dollar campaign on this guy? Who could it be? Don't tell me it's another Barry Ryan comeback. I love this guy, whoever he is. It is Philip Goodhand-Tait. It really is! I like him. It really is him. That was a nice tune!

Troggs, "Feels Like A Woman" (British Pye). Ah, I love the Troggs. Love them! Reg Presley's put on the weight of Elsa Lanchester plus his own in the past few years. Who produces them? Oh wow. Let's hear the flip side. Oh, well. You gotta remember, he did "Hi Hi Hazel." Who were the little guys who did it? Gary & the Hornets!

Bjorn & Benny, "Rock and Roll Band" (Playboy single). (Here's one you should like.) I don't like it. Who is it? Bjorn & Benny? I don't like anything with j's in it. I don't like music. I hate records! That's my statement for your readers! We hate records!! Get 'em out of here!!!



Pink Fairies
Kings Of Oblivion
Polydor

By ALAN BETROCK

The Pink Fairies grew out of a mid-sixties British subculture that spawned groups like the Deviants. The Deviants were a people's band, playing free concerts in the parks, and fostering a lifestyle of drug-induced revolution. Mick Farren, the leader of the Deviants, went on to record a solo album of sorts, and still more deviants (including some of The Deviants) worked with Twink on his solo effort *Think Pink*. That session led to the formation of the Pink Fairies which included Twink, Paul, Russell, and Sandy (they like to go by first names...). Three albums later, they finally get a US long player out, and it shows quite a turnaround for the group.

Much of the previous Pink Fairies work suffered from boring riffs and psychedelic mishmash which made most of their work dated, at best. *Kings of Oblivion*, while showcasing a new lineup of Russell, Sandy and Larry Wallis, also showcases a new Pink Fairies sound which just could break through onto the charts. The guitar, bass, and drums trio doesn't come up with anything new, but their music is hard, driving, and often melodic. If Alice Cooper had remained a Midwest phenomenon, this is probably what they would sound like today. "City Kids" is a good rocker, which could easily pass for an Alice Cooper track. This similarity remains throughout, due mainly to the vocals and slashing guitar of Larry Wallis. "I Wish I Was a Girl" is too long, but again has a strong melody, chorus, and nifty lyrics too.

The album is too 'samey' — but if you like the sound, I guess the sameness is a strong point. There's also some out-of-place psychedelic tomfoolery present — for nostalgia's sake I guess. "Street Urchin" is the other long track on the album, which vocally sounds quite a bit like current Marc Bolan jams.

When the third wave of British Heavy Metal arrived in 1970 with Black Sabbath, who would have dreamt that it would last long enough to develop a second phase featuring Uriah Heep? And now the third phase Pink Fairies are here, and it doesn't matter what "the critics" say, 'cause the kids that buy this stuff don't read much anyway. It's like there's an underground pipeline (made of heavy metal of course), where the fans give each other the latest news of what record to get each week. Last year, I got connected to the pipeline and listened for a while. The first week, the message said "Get Budgie this week". The next week they said "Get Dust". After that, they said "Get Bang". After a couple of months of this I gave up 'cause none of my local record stores carried this stuff. Even the record companies couldn't help me, 'cause they never heard of the groups that were supposed to be on their own label. I later found out that the fans order these records from special illicit dealers, at exorbitant

prices. Just like those Anglophile addicts with their English Imports. Like I said, it's an underground phenomenon.

So I leave it to the HMP (that's Heavy Metal Pipeline) to make the Pink Fairies' *Kings of Oblivion* next week's pick hit LP. If that fails, the Fairies could always move to Detroit and become legends like the Frost, SRC and Catfish. Then after a while, they'd become stars like Alice Cooper or Grand Funk. Terry Knight, where are you now that we need you most???



Richard Cromelin

Bazaar
Sylvester and the Hot Band
Blue Thumb

By RICHARD CROMELIN

When Sylvester's first album came out, his supporters' only defense was to say, "Well, he's a great live act." Now, in his second one, he's turned an abrupt about-face and shown that he can be a great studio performer/record maker too. The difference? Well, you could start with the material, or the production and engineering, or performance, or spirit, or album cover — anything. It's such a vast step forward that you have to wish that the first one was just a bad dream and would dissolve into non-existence when *Bazaar* surges through your speakers.

The first note Sylvester hits on the opening "Down On Your Knees" announces that the mousy, timid delivery of the first album is a thing of the past: it remains a thin, limited voice, but on *Bazaar* it vibrates with heartiness, confidence and expression that overcome its technical lacks.

And Syl has good reason to sound confident, considering the choice songs he's working with. Beginning with "All That I Need" (the last cut on side one) and ending with "She," *Bazaar* is, in sharp contrast to the disjointed programming of *Sylvester and the Hot Band*, a varied, cohesive parade of quality tunes and performances. "All That I Need" is a beautifully constructed piece, from its subdued opening, through a swelling bridge and into a chorus that makes the Mormon Tabernacle Choir sound like a barbershop quartet. Both the design of the tensions and releases and its theme — "You give meaning to my rambling life" — are in the classic mold, and it comes off with that rare and magical balance between the familiar and the new. Getting side two underway is "Don't Let Me Be Lonely Tonight," which comes closest to capturing the sequins/gardenia flash of the live Sylvester. When James Taylor sings his tune he sounds like he's pleading with his mother to tuck him in and leave the night-light burning, but Sylvester and the Hot Band ignite it into a torrid rocker that milks it for all its erotic potential.

Won't Somebody Dance With Me

Lynsey De Paul
MAM 3634

All Night
Lynsey De Paul
MAM 3630

Getting a Drag
Lynsey De Paul
MAM 3627

Sugar Me
Lynsey De Paul
MAM 3625

By MARTIN CERF

Lynsey is likely as not a fresh name to you; you must realize this chick's recording history predates 1972 however. Actually the first recording I'm aware of was "Sugar Me", about two years ago. And since that time her records have become among my favorites. As with the release of every Kinks Reprise single, I wait on splinters in anticipation of each new Lynsey De Paul; a more tasty thrill you could hardly desire.

Records by Ms. De Paul are not too frequent, about one every four months, just often enough to become a devotee should you get wrapped up in this De Paul mania to which I'm currently addicted.

Perhaps the best parallel would be Marianne Faithfull, but the Marianne Faithfull of 1965, not that chick you saw on the David Bowie special of a couple months back. It's not like Marianne could ever really sing, but at least she had hair like Cher and her skin wasn't riddled with flowerette texture. I mean Marianne used to sound as though her carcass breathed life of some kind.

"Sugar Me" is memorable for its vicious sound of cracking whips throughout... "Save me, save me, baby baby (lash, lash) Sugar me, gotta get my candy free; sugar me by night, sugar me by day (lash, lash)" — this is obviously raw stuff. Great Anglo-booga-boo here, with rhythms directly out of the best Chinn-Chapman. But like her succeeding records, this tune was written by an estranged man, in this case a guy named Green. She usually only uses her guys once; on record as well. No gigolo shortage

SINGLES



apparent here!

Anyway, this first record interested me enough that when the next arrived it was played forthwith. "Sugar Me" was a sure indication that greatness was forthcoming, and "Getting a Drag" was the fulfillment of that promise.

This side was co-written by David Jordan and, like the first, produced by Gordon Mills, the man who owns MAM and also produces Tom Jones, Englebert Humperdinck and Gilbert O'Sullivan. Now if it doesn't strike you as peculiar that Gordon Mills would produce a flat-voiced tony chick after all those MOR male super (housewives) stars, then imagine the scandal raised by this record, all about a chick who "thought you were a brother but you turned out like my mother" — high drag rock, with a female slant as it happens.

"Getting a Drag" is perhaps the best-known De Paul single, in England at any rate. Great disco record, right through the end with its "yeh yeh yehs". Some of the lines include, "most people make up when they break up but we break up cause you make up" — as you can see it's "Lola" in reverse.

Her third American release was "All Night", my favorite of all. It's an uptempo 1973 version of "Come And Stay With Me", but with a difference. Marianne was asking/offering: "I'll do all I can so you feel free, if you'll come and stay with me" — but Lynsey lays it right on the line: "Won't you step inside my parlor, oh my, oh my, and it will be all night." I love the opening lyric, "don't you

think I'm like a spider, spinning lies..." This is the ultimate in seduction-rock. Remember "Sweet Nothins"? Well, compared to Brenda Lee, Lynsey De Paul is Linda Lovelace, and she can handle all you can put out. Highly recommended; lonely nights advisable for best results.

Lynsey's latest record is a complete change. For the first time on A-side she's putting it all out solo — she produced and wrote "Won't Somebody Dance With Me", and unlike all the previous recordings it's a ballad, a tearjerker at that. I might add that Lynsey knows how to get the best work out of Lynsey, and this record while on the surface appearing over-produced (the chamber orchestra is more than divine) gets its message across perfectly.

As you might guess, the theme here is loneliness. The babe's got man problems, it seems that she's at this ball and can't get arrested on the dance floor. Reeks of Gilert's "Alone Again (Naturally)", complete with violin bridge and pathetic whimpering vocal... I mean after three minutes of this you're convinced this young lady needs it real bad, and I doubt if there's a gent among us that wouldn't be willing to give it to her (except maybe Gilbert, from what we've heard).

The real surprise on this single occurs in the last twenty seconds where this guy appears from nowhere and beseeches Lynsey, "May I have the pleasure of this dance?" We could assume she always gets her man, judging from the label credits. Lynsey must have relationships with every male in the U.K. that's ever had anything to do with recording, for on her mere four U.S. singles, get a load of the number of guys listed as either co-writer, producer or arranger: B. Green, Gordon Mills, Martyn Ford, John Bell, Ron Roker, Mike Bailey, David Jordan, Christopher Gunning... and by the way, she has co-written with Barry Blue as well ("Dancing On a Saturday Night").

I have the distinct feeling you'll all be knowing about Lynsey before long. Let this serve as fair warning, fellas. If she should come to your town, and if she offers you a chance at the big time, don't feel bad if it's just an overnight fling. With Lynsey De Paul you couldn't ask for more.

never really be back until he can rid himself of "Mrs. Brown," "A Kind of Hush" and all the others. If he is pigeonholed as a mere revival act, the novelty will quickly wear off, then it's back to the pubs again. So Peter has taken a major step in attempting to establish himself as a current performer. He has shelved his old label, hired a new producer, and released a new single.

The result is available on Peter's debut Philips release. Writer Tony Hazzard (remember "Ha Ha Said the Clown", "Fox on the Run", and "Goodnight Sweet Josephine") penned this ditty, and Tony Atkins produced it. It's a good combination of styles, and melodic too, with Peter's double-tracked voice soaring throughout. A steady piano rhythm carries the song which is accented by a nice use of strings. This use of strings is most thankfully tasteful, avoiding the usual pitfall of overdrastic and unnecessary arrangements. "Getting Over You" combines Noone's Bowie phase with middle Bee Gees, and adds a great high falsetto of his own. This is a good start and if Peter keeps putting out strong records, and getting airplay, he just might be back — this time to stay.

Another peak is then reached in "On Your Way Down," again a marvelous job of construction that plunges you down into shadowy, haunted forests of sound, paralleling the descent with a simultaneous climb to a tumultuous emotional intensity. "My Life" exemplifies the fine feel for dynamics, both within and between the songs, that keeps *Bazaar* moving along so well. Backed only by the rolling, syncopated piano of the song's co-writer, Warren C. Sams, Sylvester understandably projects a determination, an almost defiant self-respect, in a fascinating, quasi-show tune setting that quietly sets the stage for Chris Ethridge/Gram Parsons' "She," long one of Sylvester's most touching and powerful live pieces and a suitably majestic album closer.

One of the most notable and encouraging points brought home by *Bazaar* is the vast contribution that the Hot Band (James Q. Smith, Chris Mostert — they both worked in a group called Pollution with Dobie Gray — Bobby Blood, Kerry Hatch and Travis Fullerton) is making to Sylvester's musical identity. They play crisply, freely and expertly, their backup vocals are absolutely spine-tingling, and if Kerry Hatch has any more songs like "All That I Need" in him, he's going to become a formidable songwriter (and, more important, one ideally tailored to Sylvester's style). Smith and John Haeny produced, achieving a full yet relaxed sound, one in which Sylvester has a chance to underestimate instead of being constantly forced to press and strain.

Bazaar is a flowing, breathing album, a homogeneous blend of soul, rock and pop. Its ambitions are modest and its impact enormous, and it's the needed assurance that Sylvester is not a star-spangled bomb bursting briefly in the glam-rock air. Long may he wave.



Just Outside of Town
Mandrill
Polydor

By GARY VON TERSCH

Some groups start out slow. Mandrill's debut album — some three or four years ago — still sounds to these ears like watered-down, non-impact Santana and Sly mixed with a little Hendrix and the Isley Brothers. Much more Los Angeles and Chicago sounding than Detroit or Philly — swatches of Latin-esque percussion, wah-wah guitar and rhythm 'n blues cum soul vocals and horn riffs that let everybody know that here was James Brown's new backup band, if he needed one.

Number two had personnel an producer changes, but still lacked dynamism as well as direction. With the exception of the avant garde soul hypnosis of a few tunes like "Ape Is High" and "Git It All", most of *Mandrill Is* suffered from stylistic oversimilarity to elements in both the Chambers Brothers and Chicago. Only posing as the East Coast Santana did they have a



Suzan Carson

Peter Noone
"(I Think I'm Over) Getting Over You"
Phillips

By ALAN BETROCK

How could Peter Noone make a comeback if he's never really been away? After Herman's Hermits disappeared from the American charts, they continued to have mild success in their homeland, and Peter, on his own, recorded some wonderful solo singles. One, David Bowie's "Oh You Pretty Things" even dented the British Top 30. Having been a pop star at the tender age of 15, Peter is one

All of this is nice, but Peter will

chance. Other so-called "street groups" on the order of Earth, Wind And Fire and Tower Of Power were also struggling along like Mandrill in this vein.

Things really started jelling with their third disc — accurately titled *Composite Truth*. The tunes spanned Moroccan music to calypso to reggae to soul latin/black to discotheque. Lou Wilson (also on trumpet, congas, percussion and vocals) along with brother Ric (who also plays a snake-like tenor sax) came into their own as tunesmiths—while the remaining combo of Claude Cave, Omar Mesa, Fudgie Kae and Neftali Santiago finally began playing like they meant it. Sri Chinmoy devotee Mesa, on lead guitar, began moving beyond earlier John McLaughlin-echoey licks — well beyond, as "Aspiration Flame" from *Just Outside Of Town* asserts. Similarly, the diversity of Cave's keyboard and synthesizer abilities grew.

Which led to public acceptance. Which led to appearances at New York's Philharmonic Hall with the New World Symphony and at Newport with Duke Ellington. A national telecast on *In Concert* was promptly followed by a hugely successful East Coast tour.

And I can hear exactly how the music must have sounded in person all over this, Mandrill's fourth elpee. From the opening anthem-like "Mango Meat" (now getting airplay as a single) through the pop ecstasy of "Never Die" and the Ellingtonesque statements "Afrikus Retrospectus" and "Love Song" (both authored by the aforementioned Wilson brothers) there is no ebbing of the spirit. Fudgie Kae and Neftali Santiago toss in a couple of rockers (I have a fondness for Kae's "She Ain't Lookin' Too Tough"), Claude Cave comes up with the calypso "Fat City Strut" and Omar Mesa's "Aspiration Flame" has already been cited.

The core of Mandrill, undoubtedly, is the Wilson brothers. They wrote the most commercial tune on the LP ("Mango Meat") as well as the most experimental — "Afrikus Retrospectus", that certainly says it more clearly than their earlier "Here Today Gone Tomorrow" and the suite "Peace And Love" did. Similarly, the earlier, incandescent hit single "Fencewalker" proved to these ears that they had the abilities to produce a "Mango Meat". Whose success, hopefully, will begin to give this experienced "street band" a chance. Move over Last Poets and Tower Of Power, Mandrill and Company are playing in town tonight.



All American Boy
Rick Derringer
Blue Sky

Bette Midler
Atlantic

By ED LEIMBACHER

What we got here is a failure to commiserate—on my part, that is.

Well, 1973 is gone and a new year is upon us. The only reason I mention that is because some of you are so dunced-out that you're not even aware of it! But anyway, it was a horrible year full of rotten music and, frankly, I'm glad it's over. The only good thing that happened in 1973 was this column and the sooner we can agree on that, the happier I'll be. Apparently, there are still many of you who under-value the wealth of information I present to you every month in this spot. You confuse it with "record reviews" and "opinions" when in actuality I am giving you neither of those, but rather, hard-core, documented facts about albums that you might otherwise waste your parents' money on. I'll be blunt: if you don't believe in this column, if you don't cherish my syncopated sentences, if you don't cut out every installment to paste on your wall for future reference, if you don't accept me in your heart as the Duke Of American Rock Critics, then I have no use for you either. You are hereby excused to go back to your suburban bedrooms, to your Allman Brothers' albums, to your mom and your dad and your spoiled brat sister—in short, to the drug induced version of reality that drove you to me in the first place!

Thank you. I feel better with that off my chest. I'd feel even better if Linda Ronstadt's album, *Don't Cry Now* (Asylum) was off my record player. I just suffered through a song called "Love Has No Pride." Neither has Linda, if she's willing to put her name on garbage like this. She's built an entire career out of not wearing a bra onstage and has actually succeeded. Meanwhile, somebody who really needs one, Buddy Miles, still can't find anybody to buy his albums. He reached into his nose last month and came out with *Booger Bear* (Columbia). I don't want to be snotty, but his version of "You Really Got Me" got me! Sick, I mean . . .

Sorry to say Emerson, Lake, and Palmer haven't recovered from *Brain Salad Surgery* (Manticore) and neither have I. This is one salad that everyone in America will be tossing (out the window! . . .). The biggest thing in England right now is not Slade, or Bolan, or Gary Glitter. It's not Chris Jagger (Asylum) either and there's a reason for that. He stinks! You can ponder that for a while but first run downstairs and check your windshield. Somebody at Columbia Records has let *Jonathan Livingston Seagull* (Columbia) out of his cage and he's terrorizing the city! We now understand that it was Neil Diamond who gave us the bird, so let's give it right back to him! . . . Pink Floyd's *A Nice Pair* (Capitol) is one album you won't be sorry you bought. It's two albums you will be sorry you bought! . . .

CLASSIFIED DEPT.: All *Ladies Invited* (Atlantic) to find even one listenable song on this new J. Geils album. Men too. What a turkey! Speaking of tur-

Nothing really wrong with these two All-American albums—Rick's for the rockin' young herd, Bette's for the camp/nostalgia/entertainment-plus crowd. Hell, for me to even think of knocking their makers—him a once-and-future rock star from Ohio, America's heartland; and her the brassy babe who's risen from Hawaiian beaches and New York baths to the pits of Carnegie Hall—would be distinctly un-American.

Just look at those album jackets—they even look alike, punk-beautiful, garb agleam,

PIPELINE



by Mark Shipper

keys, that reminds me of Thanksgiving and one record I was given that I'm not thankful for is *Bette Midler* (Atlantic). Bette amazes every audience she gets in front of. "How can anyone with so little talent get a recording contract?" they are often overheard asking. And it's a good question, too. I checked around and it turns out that Bette is popular because she is "camp." Well, I went to camp once and was attacked by a swarm of mosquitos. But even that wasn't as bad as Bette's attack on Phil



Paul McCartney impersonating Mark Shipper.

Spector in the Uptown/Da Do Ron Ron" medley on side two...

Just in case you haven't heard, Bob Dylan has left Columbia for Asylum. But not the one he belongs in, we mean Asylum Records. Meanwhile Columbia has packaged an album they call *Dylan* that is easily his finest work ever. Lots of people believe that Bob reached his songwriting peak on albums like *Blonde On Blonde* and *Highway 61*, but they're in for a surprise with this one. Wait'll you hear "Big Yellow Taxi," a scathing indictment of big yellow taxis (a subject too long ignored by today's crop of "singer-songwriters") and "Mr. Bojangles," the story of a driver of big yellow taxis in New York City. And that's not all. Songs like "A Fool Such As I" will speak directly to the predicament of every Dylan fan who buys this album.

And just as you were about to forget the Band forever, Dylan has asked them to back him on his big U.S. tour. To commemorate this free ride on the Gravy Train, they've put out *Moondog Matinee* (Capitol) an album aimed

mouths and spirits agape to sing out "America the Beautiful," "There's No Business Like Show Business," or whatever, and suck back in all the adoration the boobooisie has for this Garland-with-chutzpah and this Osmond-with-balls.

Shucks, folks, I love 'em. Rick's the real McCoy, no question about it—just look what all he's done (with a distinctly American variety of charity) for those two under-achieving albinos from Texas. And Bette, well, she's simply terrific—big voice and even

at the previously ignored dog market. While it's not fit for humans, we predict a howling success for it with our four-legged friends...

A lot of you clowns who think that all it takes to make it big in the music business is a clever gimmick would do well to listen to Barry White's *Stone Gone* (20th Century) and find out how wrong you are. Barry's cornball heavy-breathing gimmick isn't the least bit clever and yet he's a star anyway. So there... *Get this*: Dave Mason thinks he still has fans! On his new album he acts as though *It's Like You Never Left* (Columbia). I hate to be the one to have to tell him . . . Black Oak Arkansas have just finished another great album back at their farm in Arkansas. It's Ringo Starr's *Ringo* (Apple) which they played all the way through yesterday. Hopefully, they'll get some ideas from it so that their next LP won't be as dismal as *High On The Hog* (Atco)... Meanwhile, I met a girl last week that Gregg Allman *Laid Back* (Capricorn) in 1968. She says it was quite a disappointment. Just like his new album...

It's been three years now since the Beatles disbanded. While George, John and Ringo have gone on to greater things, Paul McCartney has yet to write one worthwhile song! Still he continues to inundate us with a ceaseless stream of semi-saccharine slippshod sentimental slop like *Band On The Run* (Apple). On the run from who? People who've paid six bucks for this lightweight limey licorice, maybe? I just listened to a song on side two called "No Words," and believe me, Paul is right. There are no words to describe how terrible it really is...

BRIEFLY NOTED: Jackson Browne's *For Everyman* (Asylum) has nothing for me, *Overnite Sensation* (Discreet) by the Mothers will put you to sleep for eight hours, The Stylistics' *Rock & Roll Baby* (Avco) is an abortion, and Burt Reynolds *Ask Me What I Am?* (Mercury) is a question that can be answered by neither (a) worthless, (b) talentless, or (c) voiceless, but only by (d) all of the above...

LETTERS, LETTERS, LETTERS: Junior Mintz of Cavity, N.Y. asks: "Would it be a mistake to buy Poco's new album?..." No, Junior, it wouldn't be a mistake to buy it, only to play it... INTERESTING FACT: Two years ago America's "Horse With No Name" was a worldwide hit. What's so interesting? It was a terrible record! . . . SMATTERING OF SIGNS: Geminis will love Jesse Colin Young's *Song for Juli* (Warner Brothers) but we just talked to Juli (who is a Pisces) and she hates it... Capricorns seem to like the Allman Brothers while Columbias are fond of Chicago... KITCHEN HINTS: A Grateful Dead album cooked at 475 degrees for three hours will stink less than an uncooked one! (Thanks to Yves Dropping of Montreal for the tip.) See you next month.

bigger bazooms helping her put on the best stage show I've ever seen, complete with Harlettes in American-flag dresses and squeaky-clean underwear. Oh yeah, I love 'em both, everything they do and stand for.

But, gotta confess, I don't care so much for their new albums. Bette's pales some beside her stage presence and sounds like a song-for-song re-do of *The Divine Miss M*, while Rick's seems too self-consciously perfect, a hand-crafted, two-years-in-the-making teenage readymade, fer Chrissake.

Ladies first. Some of the blame belongs to Barry Manilow; Bette's pianist/arranger/bandleader has overemphasized his own Shearing-style piano and toned down the rest of Bette's backup. And Manilow, Arif Mardin, and Miss M. herself have made a tune selection that's light on the exciting remakes of old rock 'n' roll hits and heavy on the gospel-r&b ("Breaking Up Somebody's Home," "Higher and Higher") not really suited to her timbre and breathing.

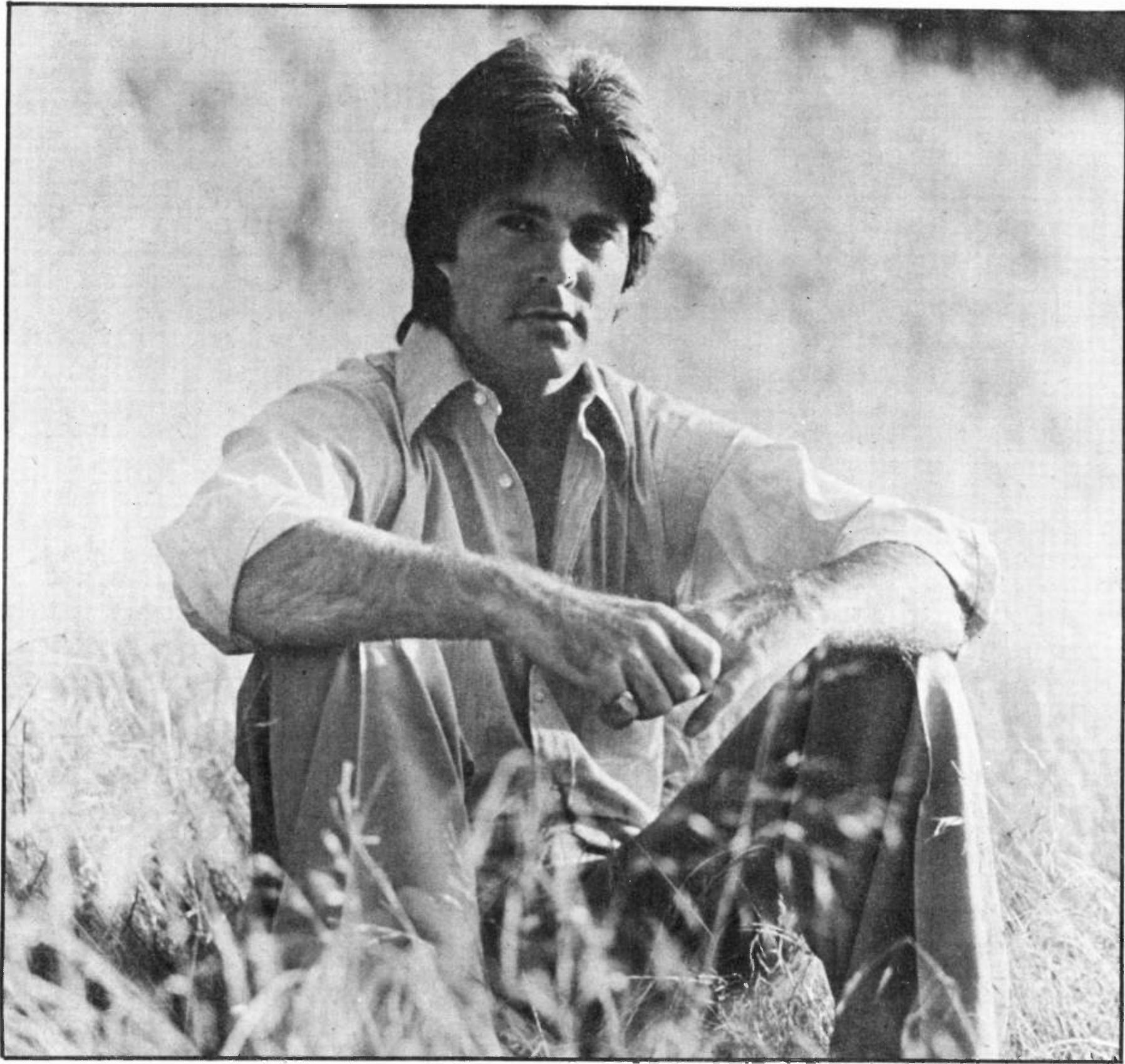
As for the correspondence to that first album, it's pronounced if not exact: "Skylark" has the same wishful, wistful air as "Do You Want to Dance?"; "Drinkin' Again" is the torchsinger special, sort of "Am I Drunk" rather than "Blue"; "I Shall Be Released" echoes Bette's impeccable "Delta Dawn"; and the new album's "Bugle Boy" is an amazing and energetic "In the Mood" with Bette as the umpteenth Singing Something Sisters. And so it goes.

My favorites are "Lullaby of Broadway" (coupled with "Bugle Boy" in her stage show), "In the Mood," the Latin-light "Uptown" which explodes into "Da Doo Ron Ron" (the gal sure does pump new life into old rock 'n' roll), and this album's "Superstar," the hoary Brecht-Weill haunter "Surabaya Johnny." Manilow's European/Oriental arrangement is just right this time, and Bette pulls out all the stops—a Bronx Lotte Lenya lost in her love-and-degradation role. It's a blatantly theatrical, painfully true *recitif* with Bette flashing what may well be her real forte—immersing herself so deeply in a number that the song's "voice" emerges from her as a three-dimensional stage character.

Rick D. has his persona too, a kind of secretly sensitive, teenage-macho punk. He's got the stance and the style down pat, oh my yes, so half of his album rocks like the San Andreas fault. But too many strings and mechanical things mar the rest. Like the saccharine sweetening on "Joy Ride" and "Hold," or the Mystic Moods sound effects and *Sesame Street* harmonica on "It's Raining," or the thoughtful, push-all-the-right-buttons rockers, "Jump, Jump, Jump" and "Uncomplicated."

No, my money's on a different handful. Rick's all-round best number is still "Rock and Roll, Hoochie Koo," and he gives those kick-ass lyrics an extra boost this time, including a multiplicity of guitars. "The Airport Giveth (The Airport Taketh Away)," on the other hand, is a tender ballad that insinuates itself immediately; the strings are much less intrusive, and it's precisely short, sweet, yet biting enough. As are the all-out instrumental "Time Warp" (Rick's own "Frankenstein"/"Space Race" entry) and the cosmically horny "Teenage Love Affair," with its lusty guitar licks and "quickie" rhythm method.

But I guess "Cheap Tequila" rates next to "Hoochie Koo"—maybe due to the unexpected, yet inspired addition of David Bromberg's merry dobro. Rick blends his own acoustic and pedal steel all around Bromberg; and though the lyrics are truly grim and maybe sexist-ugly, the tune's strong chorus overcomes my scruples. So drink up and be happy—live, like Rick, to play that rock 'n' roll. Still in all, his debut album sounds more like quintessential Todd Rundgren than what producer extraordinaire Derringer should be capable of. I prefer his inspiration suffusing all of *They Only Come Out at Night*. In short, he and Bette could both do a lot better.



Windfall
Rick Nelson
MCA

By MARTIN R. CERF

This fuel, paper and PVC shortage is nothing compared to the current music shortage – not to mention the Rick Nelson shortage. There's just not enough of this guy to go around.

It's been more than a year since *Garden Party*, you see, and more than eighteen months since its composition. Rick Nelson doesn't work a whole lot. That is to say, he doesn't play the chitlin circuit. You're not likely to find him at the Cellar Door or the Bitter End, or even Ebbitts Field. Why should he bother? Rick Nelson plays the Troubadour. Much to the rest of the nation's loss. Cause Rick Nelson is no stiff.

How many of you are tired of hate-rock, like John Lennon and Bob Dylan? How many have heard Rick's *Garden Party*, *Rudy the Fifth* or *In Concert*? Sonny, you have some catchin' up to do.

Garden Party marked a peak in Nelson's career. Just one of many however. *Windfall* is most certainly the natural extension of his last LP, like what *Goats Head*

Soup was to *Exile On Main Street*. Not a drastic change, but for those who missed *Garden Party* in the first place, it's a dramatic advance.

Garden Party is a more enjoyable album for me than *Windfall*, even after all these months; hindsight only lends more enthusiasm. I'm convinced now that Nelson most certainly has a career as a songwriter. He wrote *Garden Party*, his first Top Ten record since *"For You"* in '63. But even more significant, he wrote *"Easy To Be Free"*, *"Life"*, *"Thank You Lord"*, *"How Long"* and the classic *"We Got Such a Long Way to Go"* – all failures in the commercial sense, but songs that will live on for me for at least the next decade. And when it comes to an album of Rick Nelson's Greatest Hits, these will be high on my list, far above *"Hello Mary Lou"*, *"Travellin' Man"* and *"Young World."*

Particularly *"Life"*, which I'll be damned if it isn't a top ten record someday. Those with the fortitude to search out the very finest will locate *"Life"* on *Rudy the Fifth* (Decca 75297). Look hard.

As for *Windfall*, the majority of the tunes were turned in by this guy Dennis Larden, who used to

be with Every Mothers Son of *"Come On Down To My Boat"* fame (1967). He is well suited to Rick's style, lyrically especially. Most are thematically relevant; *"Legacy"* is a rather uncomplicated father-to-son confessional which is unjustly the first cut on side one. I must say Dennis has listened well to more than one Asylum Record (i.e., *"Peaceful Easy Feeling"*).

Following is *"Everyone Needs Someone"*, a Nelson tune which is to *Windfall* what *"Let Me Bring You Along"* was to *Garden Party*. Riff-rock, hot harmonies and teenage lyrics: *"Let me tell you about Sadie, a lady friend of mine... Sadie you're evil..."* Good stuff and one of the fiercest selections on this record. Recommended. *"Ya can't go wrong with someone to love."* It's much like Larden's *"Evil Woman Child"*/The flip of *"Lifestream"*, we could have done without the wah-wahs on this one, however.

My favorite *Windfall* side is *"Don't Leave Me Here"*, the final cut on side one. I'm not quite certain if I'd recommend this as the next single, but if the Beatles could sell two million units on

"Don't Let Me Down", then this might well be a gold single. I'm afraid you'd have to hear this ballad at least four times to get the melody's gist and thoroughly appreciate the exaggerated vocal over-dubbing. There's no doubt Nilsson would love this song. It's a Larden composition, and if it didn't say so on the label I'd have bet hard bucks it was Nelson's.

Side two begins with a riff the flakiest this side of the Kinks' *Arthur*, and while the track and backup vocals are no less than the finest Nelson has ever been associated with, the lyric is trite. *"Dreaming of wild nights in Tulsa, Tulsa won't let me down..."** Should be good for a few sales in Oklahoma anyway. Pass.

My choice for runner-up on *Windfall* is *"Lifestream"*, the only other tune on the album written by Nelson. Would have been the perfect follow-up to his hit *"She Belongs To Me"* four years ago, and if it hadn't already failed as a single, I'd suggest they take a shot with it following *"Don't Leave Me Here."*

There's only one cut on the album that cops to the Rick Nelson of yore, and that's *"One Night Stand"*, written by Dennis Larden again and if this isn't

"Travellin' Man" meets *"Teenage Idol"*... Good for you Denny; I assume you were aware of it. The lyrics are once again tailored for Nelson here – *"Goodnight Lady, I'm a one night stand."*** If Rick were indeed still a teenage idol, this would twitch every clit in town and break a few hearts to boot.

The title track, *"Windfall"* is a question, the context in which the title appears is *"Have you ever heard the wind fall"*, but they list the other kind of windfall, as in inheritance. Figure it out fellas... Anyway, it's the only track which was co-written by Dennis and Rick, and it's most certainly not the strongest part of the LP, ranking right behind the individual compositions of both. Nonetheless, it's a respectable conclusion.

All in all *Windfall* is an album you shouldn't be without. So if you're suffering from the record crisis and in need of a little shelter then *Windfall* was made to order, it's an escape from hate, easy to take, just as Rick has always been. Get a load of this face, you have to love it, give him a few minutes this time guys. He's worth a great deal more.

* c 1973 MATRIGEN MUSIC.

“..McLean is no more dependent upon ‘American Pie’ for his reputation than Dylan is upon ‘Like a Rolling Stone’..”

Don McLean / Albert Hall

After receiving one of the warmest receptions that it's possible for a sepulchral Albert Hall audience to give there can be no doubt about either McLean's enormous popularity in this country, or his abundant talent.

It was the climax to a successful European tour which proved, for cynics everywhere, that McLean is no more dependent upon ‘American Pie’ for his reputation than Dylan is upon ‘Like a Rolling Stone’.

When I saw McLean on his last visit (at a memorable television concert) it was evident that many years of learning his trade in folk clubs—persuading an audience that his music was more interesting than their booze—had given him the necessary experience to construct a varied and compelling stage act.

Again it proved so on Monday. He just stands there and accompanies himself on either guitar or banjo, and puts together a very fine act.

After the perennial favourite, ‘Mule Skinner Blues’ he sang his first single, ‘Castles in the Air’, and seemed to be nervous, and catching at words, but when he delivered songs like ‘Birthday Song’ and ‘Three Flights Up’ it was obvious that something special was beginning to take shape.

What is so important to his act is that his vast appreciation of his musical heritage means that he laces his own compositions with other American songs; all kinds of mu-

sic have helped to influence him, something which his forthcoming album, ‘Playin’ Favourites’ will demonstrate.

Thus he included ‘Fool’s Paradise’, a little known Buddy Holly b-side, a handful of instrumentals (he’s a fine guitarist) and chorus songs, before closing the first half with ‘And I Love You So’.

The second half opened with ‘Everyday’, which was quickly followed by an up-tempo ‘Dreidel’—a superior performance to the record. McLean was in complete control and the audience, despite their continued inability to keep time, joined in for everything.

There was a gentle ‘By the Waters of Babylon’, and several off the new album, including the beautiful single, ‘The Mountains O’ Mourne’.

In addition, ‘Bronco Bill’s Lament’ (still a hit single if United Artists choose to regard it as such) and

‘On the Amazon’, before he dutifully concluded with ‘American Pie’ and ‘Vincent’.

The overwhelming ovation was well-deserved. He returned, if I counted correctly, for four encores—‘Till Tomorrow’, a Patrick Skye song, ‘Nature Boy’ and a spiritual, ‘I Will Light The Way’.

Killing us softly with his songs, indeed. He’s a magnificent performer, and it was a shrewd BBC producer who decided to film the event for posterity.

—Bob Woffinden
New Musical Express
October 20, 1973



United Artists Records Proudly Presents Don McLean / *Playin’ Favorites* 

Band on the Run





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and the thunder

comes the Rainbow

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