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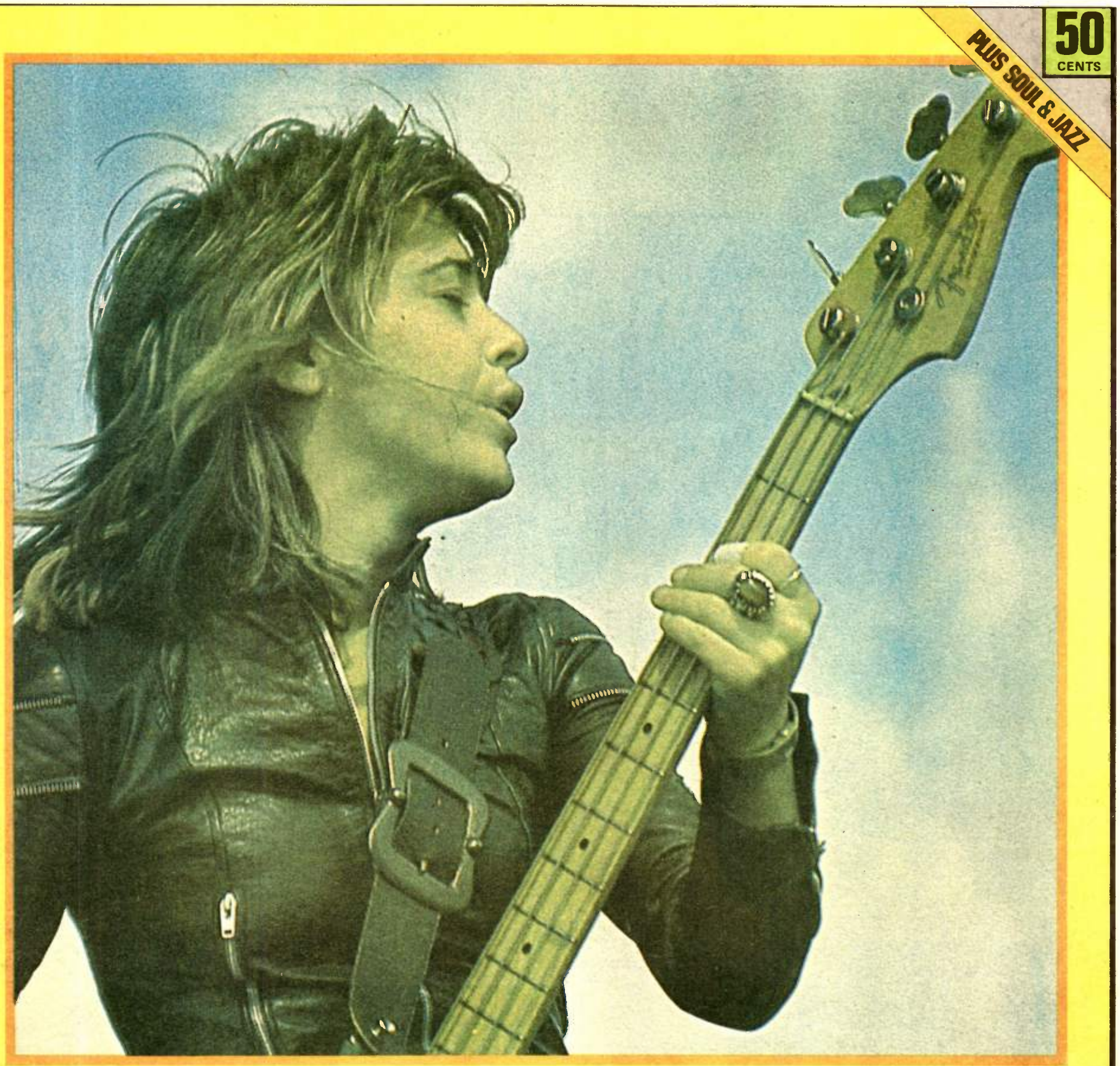

Suzi Quatro, Queen of Pop

RECORD MAGAZINE Aug. 74 Vol. 4 10

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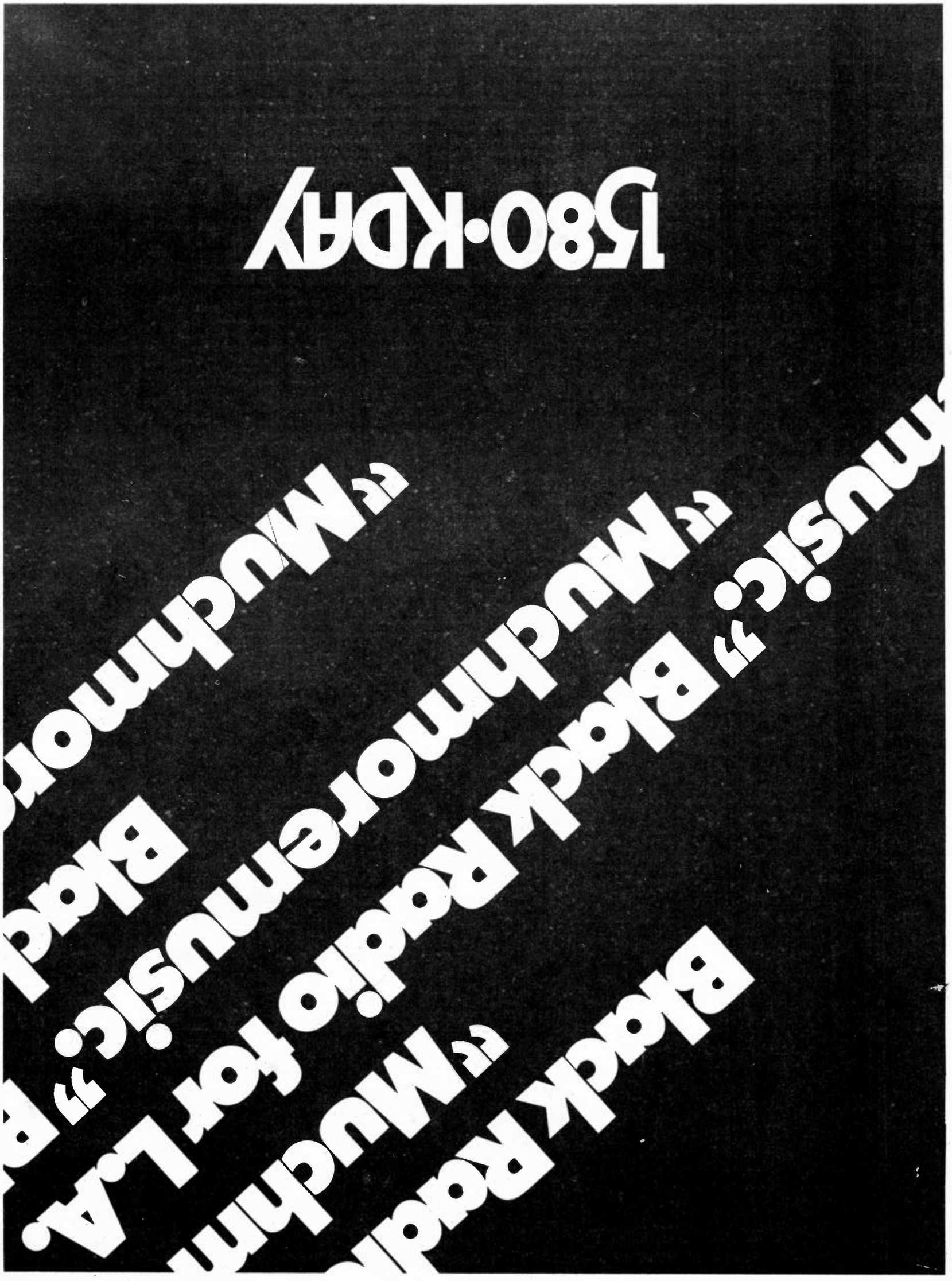
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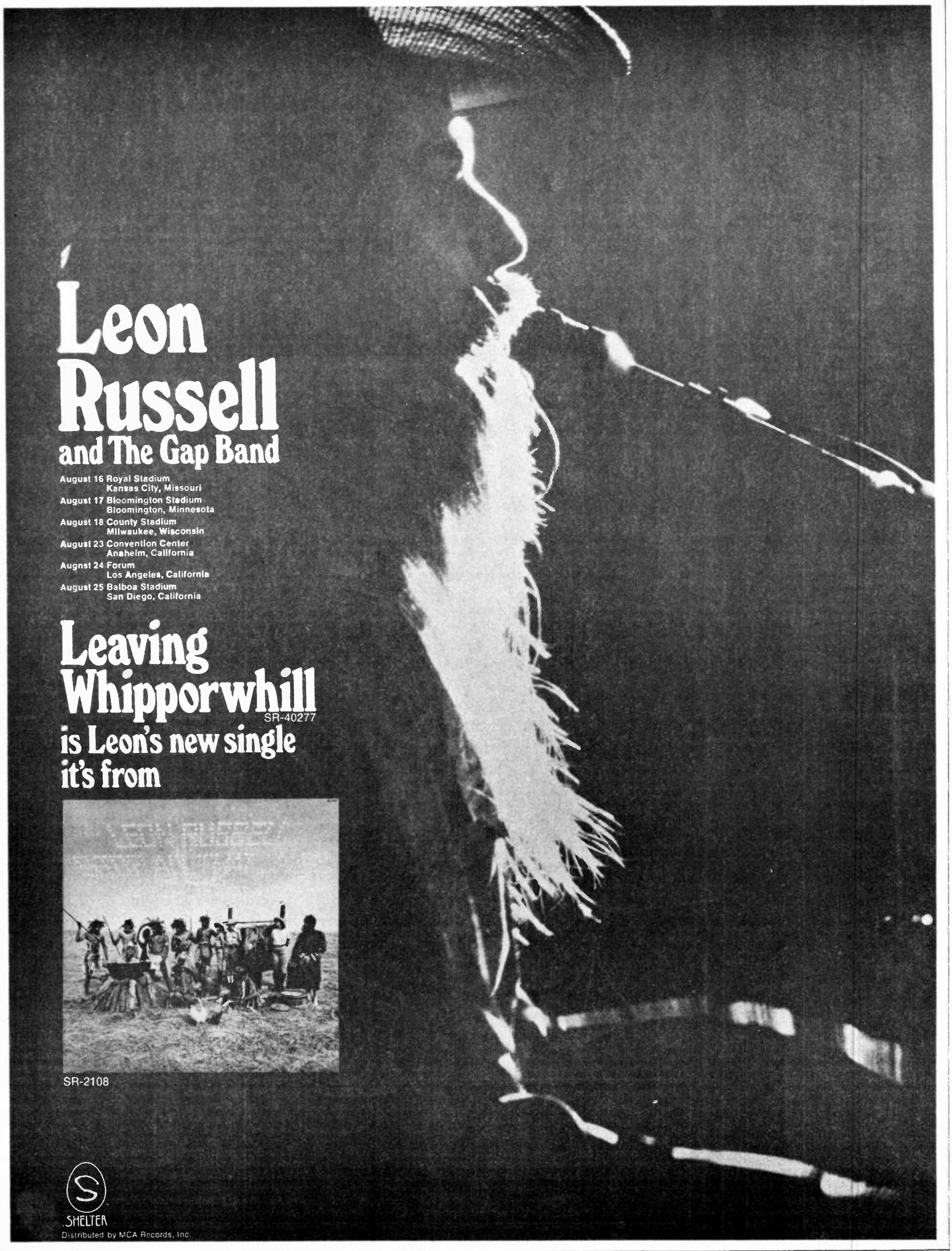
Leon
Russell
and The Gap Band
August 16 Royal Stadium
Kansas City, Missouri
August 17 Bloomington Stadium
Bloomington, Minnesota
August 18 County Stadium
Milwaukee, Wisconsin
August 23 Convention Center
Anaheim, California
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PRM

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The cover:
This month's cover girl is the lissome Suzi Quatro, Detroit child unappreciated in her homeland who moved to Swinging London to find fame and now returns triumphant to spread Quatromania in the U.S. Greg Shaw's cover story examines some of the things that happen, when girls do it.

Cover photo by Bob Gruen

PERFORMANCES

Maria Muldaur
Lafayette's Music Room
Memphis, Tennessee

By STEVE RHEA

Maria Muldaur has the most attractive belly in rock and an extraordinary hit called "Midnight At The Oasis". So it was with some enthusiasm that I went to see her at Lafayette's Music Room.

From advance reports I was expecting her to turn the graceful sensuality of her album into overdone sexuality on stage. Perhaps being simulcast in Memphis (WMC-FM); Jackson, Ms (WZZQ-FM) and Nashville, Tn. (WKDA-FM) inhibited her, because she relied more on lyrics than body movements.

Sensuality was definitely there, however, especially in the blues standards that dominated her set. Only five of twelve songs were from her album – "Any Old Time", "Tennessee Mountain Home", "Walking' One and Only", "The Work Song" and "Midnight At The Oasis". I think the audience was surprised at this (if Lafayette's audiences can be surprised at anything). The blues are an integral part of Maria Muldaur, but her album features almost every musical style *except* the blues.

Ms Muldaur began with Memphis Minnie's "Won't You Be My Chauffeur (and let me ride you)", but it was with her second song, Mississippi John Hurt's "Richland Woman Blues", that the audience became responsive.

"Tennessee Mountain Home" was well received for obvious reasons. Maria called it "Dolly Parton's song about reaching the state of nirvana in the state of Tennessee."

The really exceptional numbers of the evening were saved for last. Billie Holliday's "Lover Man, Where Are You Now?" oozed with female emotion and was the most physical song of the night. "Don't You Feel My Leg" probably should have captured that honor but, because of the broadcast, she was unwilling to perform it.

Maria closed with that crashing Southern anthem, "The Work Song", and encored with a blistering "W–O–M–A–N".

Maria Muldaur showed us that she is capable of much more soul than "Midnight At The Oasis". The set had its slow moments, but she kept us interested by her openness and her emotive interpretations of even the unfamiliar songs.

Lafayette's was full of people who came to hear her hit though. She performed it, but stiffly and up-tempo, as if to get it over with. Maria makes fun of "Oasis" in the press and has named her band "The Lost Oasians" in mock scorn. She's not the first artist to be surprised at the apparent randomness of top-40 success. But without that hit she wouldn't be playing to a packed house in Memphis, Tennessee.

"Midnight At The Oasis" got us to Lafayette's, but while there Maria Muldaur turned us on to the kind of music she's been doing for years.

"Ride My Machine"

Andy Kent

Maria Muldaur, unwilling sex symbol: don't feel her leg, fella.

Ten Years After
10 cc
Shrine Auditorium
Los Angeles, CA.

By JIM BICKHART

Rumors that Ten Years After will break up soon could not possibly be taking the toll on the band that their having been around too long is taking; individual members are out doing mediocre side projects and group efforts are assuming troubadour pretensions unbecoming a renowned boogie band. Lucky for them their concert show continues to be passable enough to belie superficial fears about their well-being.

Opening their first L.A. show in some time with a surprisingly solid "Rock and Roll Music to the World", TYA seemed bent on providing variety mixed with power. Nuance, never much of a calling card for this band dominated by Alvin Lee's hyper-guitar, was still lacking, Lee's recent interest in softer music notwithstanding. None of it mattered much to the packed-out house; they wolfed everything down eagerly.

The boogie chillun were ultimately rewarded with "Goin' Home," the albatross which has weighed TYA down since Woodstock. Frantic as ever, the song also remains as pointless as ever. Show pieces like "I'd Love to Change the World" add the kind of balance to the set Ten Years After need more of if breaking up is not to seem like a good idea.

Equally problematic, but for different reasons, was the unbilled West Coast debut of 10 C.C.. With no prior knowledge of their impending performance, the audience greeted the group with lit matches and roars of approval no doubt intended for Alvin Lee and Co.. It all ceased when the latter's absence became obvious. Their surprise was further embellished upon when guitarist Eric Stewart was shocked into near submission by an overcharged microphone during the first song. Add to this a sound mix which was losing a hopeless battle to the echo-filled opera house, and it looked as if 10 C.C. were in for a long, long night. Fortunately, however, the TYA audience were more patient than could have been expected, apparently sensing the essence of the band lost amidst the clutter and confusion.

With the crowd responding warmly, 10 C.C. bravely fought the elements, their complex arrangements lost in reverberation, their harmonies hanging together on a wing and a prayer and their choice of material much too demanding for this particular context. Most of their set featured material from *Sheet Music,* a new album less immediately accessible than its acclaimed predecessor. Songs like "Oh Effendi," "Old Wild Men" and "Wall St. Shuffle" are signs of recorded progress, but hearing them done live without benefit of proper acoustics made much of the set seem like a troubled rehearsal.

It came down to "Rubber Bullets," that Beach Boys-cum-boogie showstopper, to pull the band out of the fire and earn them an encore. Even this song was marred by some unspectacular guitar doodling by the revived Stewart.

What 10 C.C. could use to make their show as winning as the encouraging audience response indicates it could be is a bit of the blatant touchability their bassist Graham Couldman used to provide by writing songs like "Bus Stop." That lacking, they desperately need some help from the technical ingredients of the rock and roll concert biz; if they can be heard clearly, if they are advertised so their fans can be in the audience, if they can get through a set without suffering the slings and arrows of electrocution, maybe then you can regret having missed a 10 C.C. concert. As a live band, their promise seems to remain partly unfulfilled, and it will remain as much a challenge for them to bridge the gap to their potential audience as it is for that audience to discover what could prove to be one great band.

Golden Earring
Cowtown Ballroom
Kansas City, Mo.

By RICHARD CROMELIN

If the body of their set hadn't already convinced you that Golden Earring was just fine and at least lots of fun, the encore left you with little choice. The Dutch quartet, contrary to the image of European bands as avant-garde, cerebral soundmongers, chose not to spew out a twenty-minute rock operetta about the boy who stuck his finger in the dike (though it must be admitted that a lot of their music was rather suggestive) or an impressionistic tone poem inspired by the image of windmills and tulips.

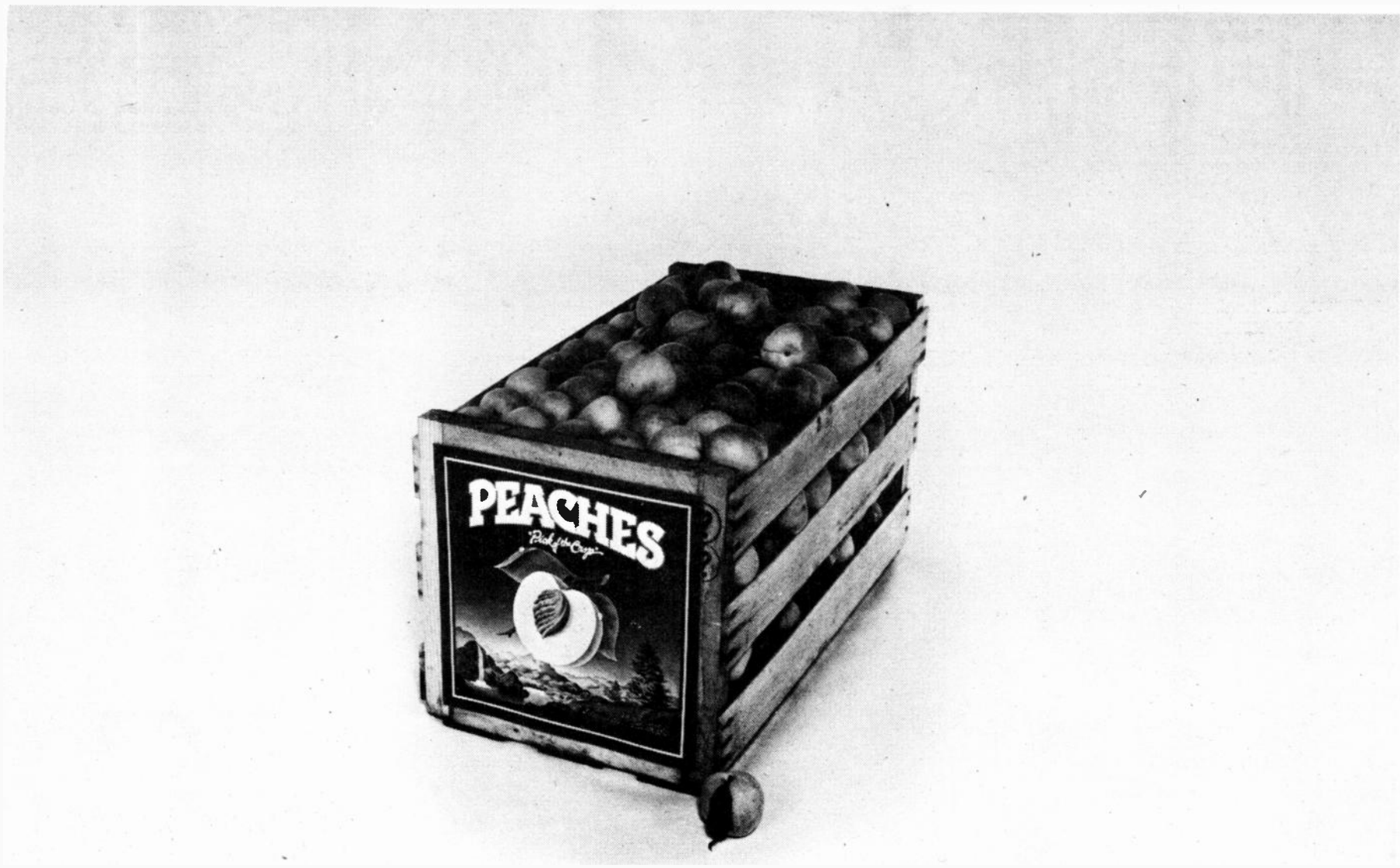
They played "Money."

"Money"! God, what a great old turkey. Everybody in the world must have done "Money" at one point in their careers. Remember how it slurped out of the grooves of *The Beatles' Second Album* like a giant slug and remains one of John Lennon's best uses of slurry, excessive vocal overkill: "Money don't get everything it's true"...You can practically feel him drooling on you..."What it don't get, I can't use/I want money." Every nowhere band, every great band in the world, has played "Money."

When Golden Earring did "Money" it wasn't sly, like the Kinks doing "Louie Louie," nor monumental, like the ELO doing it to "Beethoven," and it wasn't "rock 'n' roll revival time," as with Johnnies Winter and "B. Goode." It was as if they'd forgotten they were on an American tour and thought they were on stage at a fog-making German rock 'n' roll club in 1962. They played it as if the audience *expected* it! So it was great, and they almost made you forget that you *weren't* in that humid German club more than a decade ago. When rock 'n' roll makes you lose track of where you are, it's good stuff.

Earring's whole show is kind of like that. Straightforward rock 'n' roll for the most part (they have the sense to leave progressive excursions on the albums, throwing in only a bit of token Moodiness on stage), it's solid and exciting, if not especially memorable or far-reaching. They show a lot of Doors influence (particularly, as you know, on "Radar Love"), a bit of Alice – lots of mainstream elements selectively chosen and incorporated into their slightly, but sufficiently, distinctive style.

It's the delivery that punches it home and makes you remember it. First off, they've got that continental youth-culture charm about them; it's not as engaging as



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CAPRICORN RECORDS

PERFORMANCES

the British manner, but it's certainly less common and so more exotic. Drummer Cesar Zuiderwijk and bassist Rinus Gerritsen look like university guerrilas from a Godard film – tough, committed, intellectual but action-packed – while singer and flute-tooter Barry Hay affects a more passive, sensual dandy style. Guitarist George Kooymans looked, from this reviewer's seat, like Bernie Taupin on acid.

GE have obviously been inspired by the Who (on whose European tour of a few years back Earring was the supporting group), everything from charged, sweeping whacks at guitar and bass to the notion that the drummer should exhibit as much frenzy as possible. One of the great publicity photos of all time is the one that depicts three earthbound Earrings playing away while Cesar (you don't mind if we call you Cesar, do you Mr. Zuiderwijk?) sails high above at the peak of a Nureyev-style leap from behind the drums. This great rock 'n' roll moment comes during "Radar Love," which number ends with Cesar, now back behind the kit, taking a step or two back and lunging at it for the climactic crescendo like a midget necrophiliac greedily attacking Sophie Tucker's corpse.

Gerritsen gets into the act during his bass solo, which produces some of the most unearthly electric farts, bleats and groans heard by mortal ears. The cacophony doesn't stop at inspiring grimaces and wiggles to overtake its creator, but goes on to grab him and shove him into the speakers and finally comes right out and knocks him to the floor. Ariel Bender ends up on his back during Mott's floor show, but that's because Ian Hunter grabs him around the throat and hurls him down. This one is completely self-induced and is a knockout.

Golden Earring's show was shorter than the ones they play in Europe and England, and they were making do without their own elaborate lights and quad sound system, so it came off as more of a sampler than an entire production. But it did the job. It was crass, hokey and completely lovable.

One live wreck: Joe Cocker Gets Down

Joe Cocker
Roxy Theatre
Hollywood, Ca.

By RICHARD CROMELIN

It must be tough to always be coming back instead of going ahead. Joe Cocker is always coming back, like flowers you'd forgotten had been there last year until they sprout again at your feet. Joe Cocker's latest comeback was spearheaded by one show at the Roxy (press and guests only). A hot night in Hollywood. Cher sat next to Diana Ross and across from David Geffen. Packed and buzzing. It was a little like rolling out the red carpet and lining up the flower arrangements for the arriving prince, only he turns out to be a scrawny ragamuffin in tattered clothes.

Joe Cocker was a joke; pathetic and great. One must consider all possibilities. Maybe he just picked the wrong night to get smashed on his ass, and maybe it's true that, as reported his voice had been "superb" at rehearsals for an entire week prior, and even at the sound check on the same day. Until he nipped at the Courvousier. The talk that Cocker is junked out is fairly ludicrous and unnecessary; he even wore a t-shirt and showed no tracks. Alcohol will do just as well, for a one-night fall anyway.

But reports of inspiring performances at rehearsals, word that his singing on the imminent new album *(I Can Stand a Little Rain*, spawned in England, begun in Jamaica, completed in Hollywood) is excellent and required no overdubs or splicing – all of that is left scattered and unnoticed by the blinding, grisly glow of Cocker's wayward show that night. Hold them in reserve perhaps; pick them up in the quiet aftermath and use them to temper final judgement. Rock stars are symbols, and the images Cocker offered that night were uncommonly intense, a powerful negative input that, while discouraging, was undeniably if inadvertantly affecting.

The image. G.I. Joe staggering from a seared, smoking patch of jungle, shell-shocked, eyes glazed, fixed on the horizon; riddled with shrapnel, blood soaking through the makeshift white bandage wrapped around his head – real comic-book hero stuff here – lurching out of the fiery explosion and dragging himself past the point where by all rights he should have dropped dead, to warn, unconsciously and heroically, that the enemy's back there and movin in. Rock 'n' roll genocide.

You want to be outraged but can't, not even when Joe, crouched on his haunches between songs like a gruff bullfrog, wrinkles his nose and mutters, almost inaudibly, like a little boy who just hasn't been taught manners, "I smell a Jew". Ahem, yes. Titter. He didn't say that, did he? Here, shift your chair a little bit. Squirm.

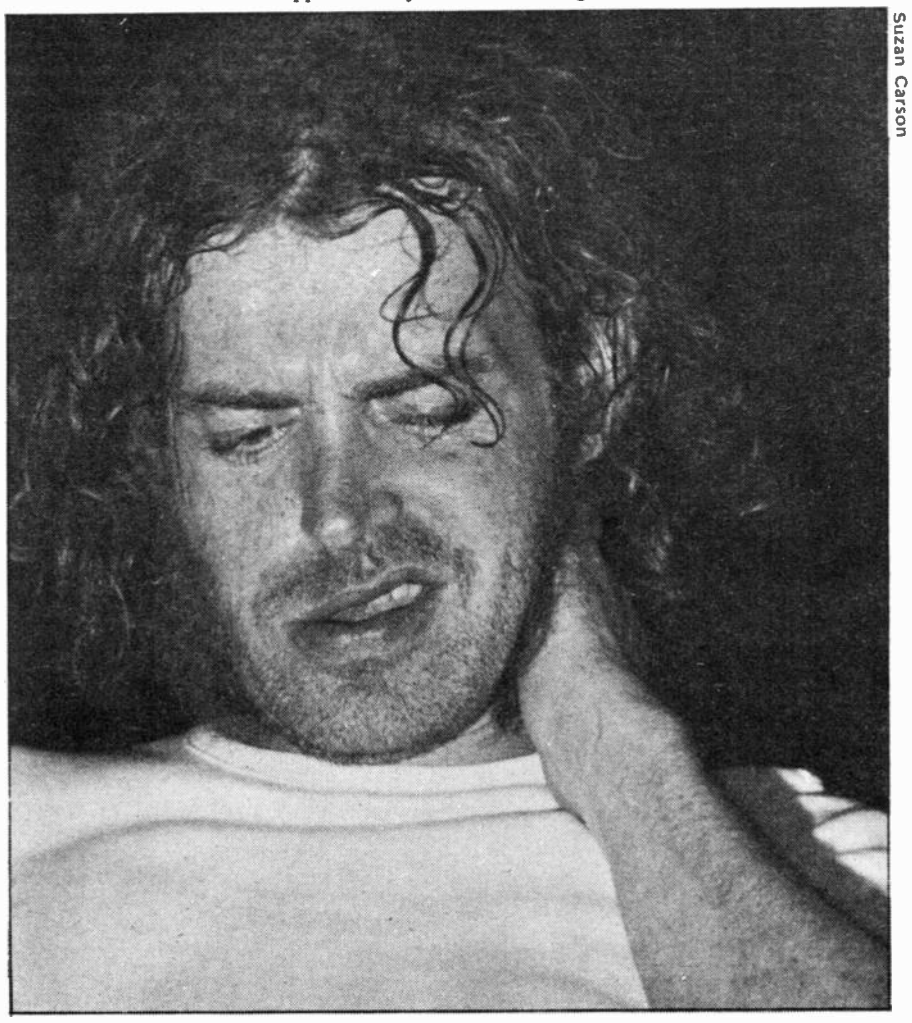
No, you can't be outraged at Cocker. He gives every indication of being a helpless, unwitting pawn in the hands of the situation. Like you. Only the spotlight is on him and not on you. Jim Price, who played ringmaster like the unctuous host of a kiddie show, was the most prominent symbol of manipulation ("Real high-level Rolling Stones popstar doo-doo," Michele said of him during the show). He talked for Joe, he announced the songs for Joe, he thanked everyone for coming to see Joe (who was squatting on the floor at the time), and after the last song he tried to tell Joe the show was over and tried to pick Joe up off the floor and carry him off the stage. But Joe wanted to stay on, and Henry McCullough (who probably should have been playing guitar that night), wandered drukenly onto the stage, where he and Joe kept bumping into each other as they stumbled around the darkened platform looking for a piano player. It was very confusing to the people in the audience; they should have had a "The End" sign.

The most likely theory on Cocker, the one expounded by some people who have known him a long time, is that his fatal flaw is his inability to say no to anyone. That means he's going to be exploited, as sure as the pirahnas'll get you if you jump into the Amazon. There are those who are always going to try to make money and a bit of a name off his ever-more-distant glory (you heart what started happening to his music when Leon Russell got hold of it – it went arthritic). As a result, he's not making his own decisions, he's not doing what he wants to do (at the Roxy he performed about ten songs that sounded like they wanted to be "St. James Infirmary" but couldn't quite hack it, backed by a shaky studio group (one-and-a-half weeks old) who could cook but couldn't chew it up and spit it out), so he becomes very frustrated. And that's going to come out one way or another. Cocker gets messed up; he could probably do worse. Cocker and A&M Records had both been extremely up for this show, and everything went wrong at precisely the crucial instant.

Joe Cocker is unique and unsettling because virtually all of the people we see under the lights on the big stage are successes, be it great or small. Cocker provides the rare chance to see the other side of the coin magnified to the same power, where it confronts you with all the impact that lights and a stage bequeath. It's a devastating and complex input, true horrorshow.

Perhaps the truth of the matter lies somewhere other than in the sharp focus of that one performance (of which Michele could only moan with pity, "He's blowing it, isn't he?" over and over). That persistent, taunting image wants to make you say things like Joe Cocker is more important than Janis Joplin, Jimi Hendrix, Brian Jones and Jim Morrison put together, because one live wreck is better than four dead ones.

Riddled with psychic shrapnel, Joe Cocker lurches out from the jungle of failure to lose yet another round. This is what happens when you come in through too many bathroom windows!



Suzan Carson

Kiss
Alex Cooley's Electric Ballroom
Atlanta, Ga.

By JIM PETTIGREW

Kiss is adamant about the fact that they are not a glitter band. In interviews and conversations, the New York City group tends to play down their use of thick, grotesqueco theatrical makeup and spacey leather outfits, to talk instead about the music, "All four of us have backgrounds in art," bassist Gene Simmons said on the afternoon before opening night, "and the visual aspects are just an extension of that. We're a heavy metal, rock-and-roll band."

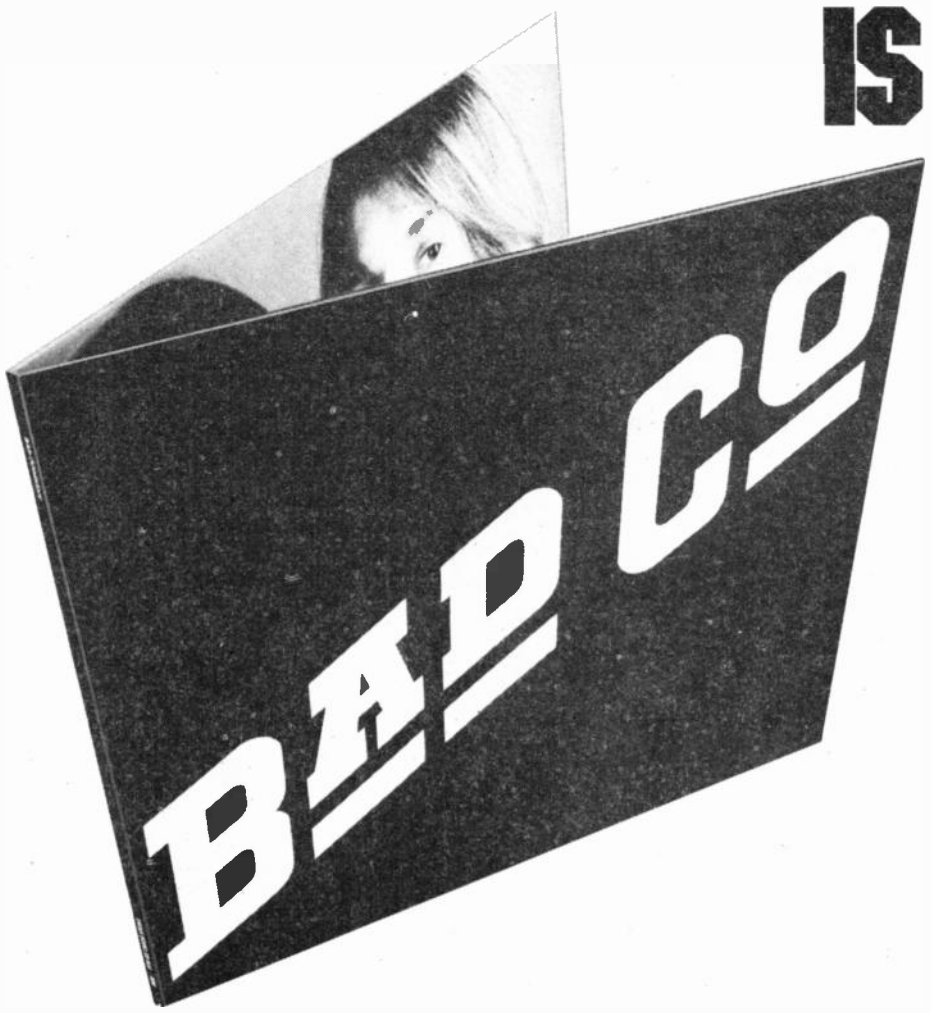
Which they proved admirably later in the evening at the Electric Ballroom before a packed house of don't-know-quite-what-to-expect types. Glitter freaks were the vast minority, even though a glitter contest was held just before Kiss' appearance onstage. The audience, rather, was composed of the Ballroom's emergent combination of expensively-dressed longhairs, more conservative-looking execs and students, and uptown blacks (Kiss admittedly don't really understand their growing black following).

Kiss hit them hard right from the first song with ultra-loud slashing riffs, tightly-done harmonies, and furious vocal/guitar interplay. The big difference between Kiss and most of their ilk is that on a song like "Strutter" they are perfectly in tune and each member is adept on his instrument; the vocal delivery from rhythm guitarist Paul Stanley and Gene Simmons is unusually good. In short, they produce juggernaut-powerful music instead of ear-shattering junk. Lead guitarist Ace Frehley's piercing runs above Stanley's rhythms, Simmons' volatile bass figures and Peter Criss' rapid-fire drumming make for stuff that sticks rather than oppresses.

There was plenty of the visual to deal with: superb stage lighting to enhance the imposing figures stalking and jumping around (they expend an exhaustive amount of motion and energy during a show), Peter Criss' drum stand – which "levitates" amid clouds of smoke at the finale – sways precariously back and forth as he smashes away, explosive belches of ignited lighter fluid from Simmons' mouth followed by a gush of "blood" running down his cheek and onto his bass, Roman candle-spewing drumsticks, and on, and on. An impressive offering, no doubt, but ultimately taking a back seat to the music. The quad sound mix was excellent as Kiss pounded from one number to another.

After the show, audience members universally commented on the music first. One lady remarked on the way outside, "They can play like hell, but there's something a little bit sadistic to me about the blood and the explosions, even though I know a lot of people get off on that. I think I would have enjoyed them just as much if they had been dressed – more ordinarily."

"BAD COMPANY IS WHAT ROCK AND ROLL IS ALL ABOUT"



John Rockwell, The New York Times,

"Their debut album is essential rock and roll stripped down to emotion and beat."
Al Rudis, Chicago Sun-Times,

"Straightforward basic ROCK 'N' ROLL. The music burns and flows."
Dan Nooger, The Village Voice,

Hear for yourself.

Bad Company is Paul Rodgers and Simon Kirke (formerly of Free), Mick Ralphs (ex-Mott The Hoople) and Boz Burrell (ex-King Crimson).

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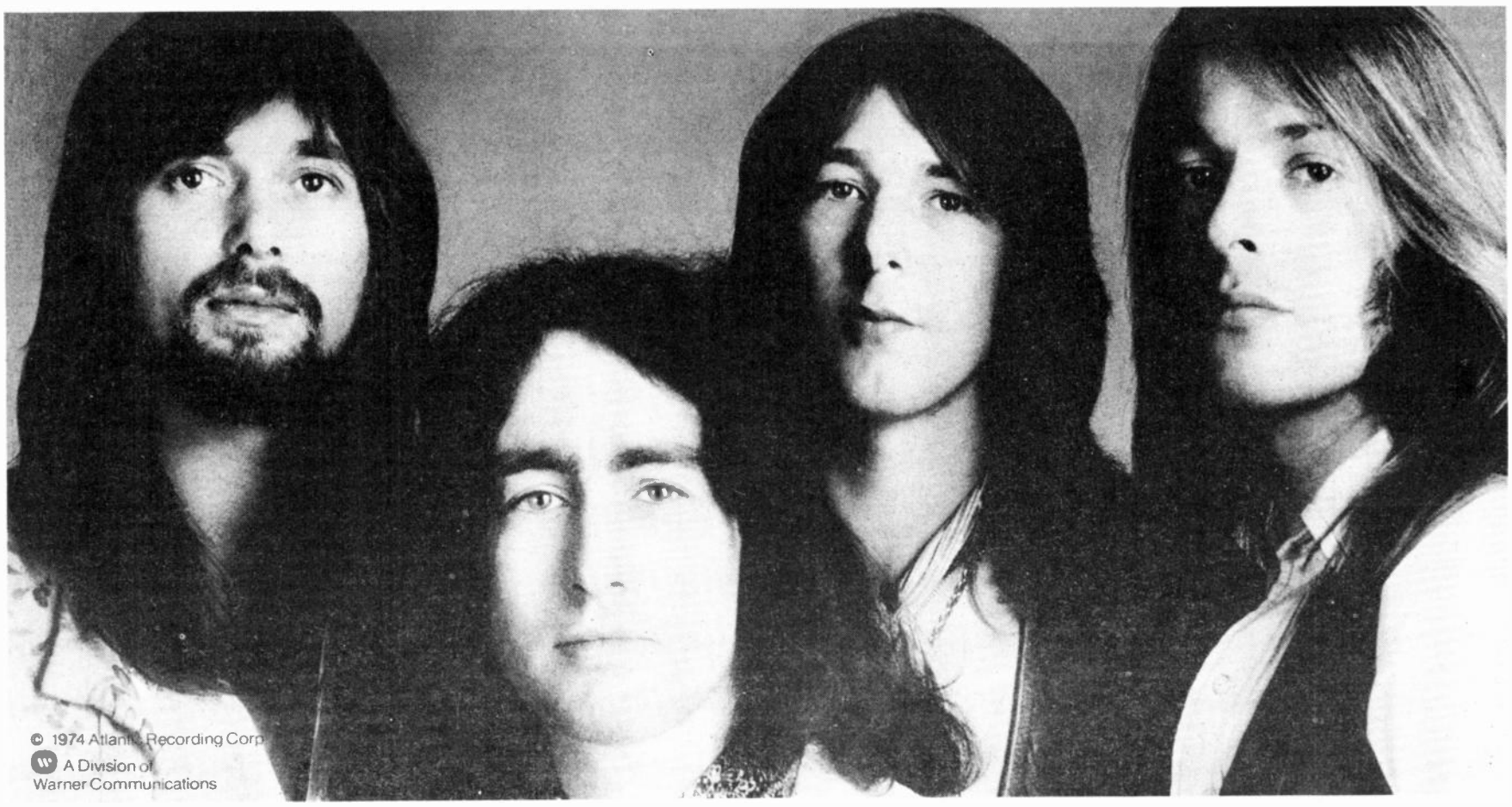


Flo & Eddie's Media Mania

When we last left our heroes Flo and Eddie (PRM September '73), they were poised on the brink of substantial obscurity. Mark Volman (Flo) and Howard Kaylan (Eddie) had completed the monumental Alice Cooper Billion Dollar Babies tour, had recorded and released their two Reprise Flo & Eddie albums, had seen no appreciable increase in the sales of the latter as a result of the former, and had determined to extricate themselves from the Warners corporate umbrella. They were also awaiting the release of *Cheap*, the X-rated animated movie in which they starred as lead voices and composed the soundtrack. Indecision and uncertainty clouded the big picture, and the indomitable duo even gave some thought (ten seconds) to reviving their surf band, the Crossfires.

The tumultuous reaction to the first *Phonograph Record* Flo & Eddie/Turtles article changed all that, of course. Sales of *More Golden Hits By The Turtles* and *Wooden Head* shot up dramatically in Thrifty's and Woolworth's cut-out bins (as did, in fact, sales of Turtle Wax in general), and tortoise-shell spectacles became all the rage. Soon a Flo & Eddie mini-renaissance was in flower, resulting in a syndicated radio show, countless commercials, new recording contracts for both Flo & Eddie and the historic Turtles material, and even the imminent release of *Cheap*. In gratitude for their big break, Flo and Eddie consented to donate a monthly column to *Phonograph Record*, and "Flo & Eddie's Blind Date" was born.

According to the magazine's editor, reaction to the column (wherein Kaylan and Volman comment sight-unseen on new record releases, in no-holds-barred fashion) has ranged from "the greatest feature in any rock magazine today" (G.S., Toluca Lake) to "a totally offensive exercise in futility, without redeeming social value" (H.K. & M.V., Hollywood). Actually, the most common reaction is probably "Who in blazes *are* Flo & Eddie anyway, and why do they have a monthly column in your otherwise infallible rock mag?"

So, partially to answer that perfectly logical question, and partially to acquaint an avidly indifferent public with the latest fast-breaking Flo & Eddie developments, this timely follow-up dissertation is being presented. If you already know of Flo & Eddie, you'll have already skipped to the record reviews or the back cover ad. If you don't know them, well, read on. Separate indentification has been provided for direct quotes, in order to prove that Volman and Kaylan *do* speak individually (though always simultaneously).

The movie *Cheap* will be released this summer, although exactly when it will reach your neighborhood porno palace is still in doubt. Kaylan explains, "With New World Pictures there is no such thing as a 'general release'. It just sort of *leaks* into the market..." However, Flo & Eddie hosted a screening recently for an exclusive Hollywood preview audience (no reviewers from the gardening weeklies invited), in a luxurious La Brea theatre air-conditioned to a precise 107 degrees. Consequently, many of the assembled critics commented that the occasionally (75%) lewd film had gotten them "all hot and bothered".

Cheap, written, conceived and superbly animated by Chuck Mitchell, is the epic tale of an average citizen's (voiced by Kaylan) odyssey through a multitude of colorful adventures and perversions (not suitable for description in a family rock magazine), aided and abetted by a boisterous duck (Volman). The "plot" is rather sketchy at times and some of the comic or risque' scenes are overdone, but throughout the movie there are highly amusing bits of social comment, satire, and typically absurd Flo & Eddie humor.

Even more impressive than Volman and Kaylan's voicing accomplishments, however, is the soundtrack music. It's the most diverse V/K musical opus since *Battle of the Bands*, everything from heavy metal to jungle boogie to languid coctail lounge rhythms. The title track is a stunning power-chord extravaganza, and the soundtrack as a whole compares favorably with any cinematic-rock experiments previously essayed.

"It was a unique thing for us to do," says Kaylan. "We're into writing songs, but when somebody says, 'we need 35 seconds of Landlady Music'... We wound up making little songs out of everything, so the soundtrack runs more like *Smiley Smile* than anything else... We got to do a lot of things we wouldn't ordinarily do. Like the scene in the subway (where Willard, the protagonist, is surrounded by apparently hostile black passengers and his morbid fantasies take flight) is not ordinarily our type of music."

"We're into writing songs, but when someone says 'we need 35 seconds of Landlady Music...."

"But lyrically we had trouble convincing the producer that it was valid," comments Volman.

"That we could say," Kaylan interjects, "'Snortin' whites, death to whites, poor white trash, kick his ass, smoke his hash, ball his woman, ball his son, death to Whitey, burn the honky.' He thought that was gamey even for an X. He didn't mind any sexual trips happening, though..."

One memorable scene involves a massive tank careening down the road to the accompaniment of what sounds like Canned Heat's most hackneyed amphetamine boogie riff magnified a thousandfold. When asked to amplify (that is, *explain* the song; it's already quite loud enough), Kaylan related, "'You Wanna Boogie' was recorded live at Nassau Coliseum on the Cooper tour before 17,000 screaming eunuchs. We yelled, 'You wanna boogie, you mothers, we'll give you boogie, assholes!' They don't know whether it's a parody or whether you mean it, and that worries me a little. We've given them an hour's worth of quality show and then we come back with our big closer and *ask* them 'You wanna boogie?' and whether they understand the joke or not they always yell *'Boogie*!', 'cause that's what they want. With 20,000 people screaming 'Boogie!', it drives you to the point where 'You wanna boogie, we'll give you Boogie!'

"We don't have a label for the soundtrack yet. You can't sell a soundtrack till you show a movie."

"But," Volman chimes in, "we'll have one in a minute. There are a lot of labels..." No problems are anticipated, and the strength of the music itself is incontestable.

Labels have been found for two other incarnations of the multiple Kaylan and Volman persona, Flo & Eddie and the Turtles (they've retained the name). Columbia has signed Flo & Eddie; "they've given us lots of support," says Kaylan winsomely. Howard and Mark have reunited with Joe Wissert, who produced "Happy Together" and three highly successful Turtles follow-ups in 1967 (he now handles Earth, Wind & Fire and the Helen Reddy. The first step was to go into the studios (in mid-July) and cut pop singles. "There's a contemporary philosophy going in regard to pop records," says Kaylan, "with people who consider themselves pop still releasing albums and fishing for the single from the album, and as a result everybody's in the hole to record companies for thousands of dollars. I think I'd like to cut a single and if that works, I'll sure cut an album..."

For his part, Volman says, "I want to have a *reason* to make an album. I want to make records one at a time and maybe one of them can be heard

by Ken Barnes

Andy Kent

Flo: "Who needs a Paul McCartney lookalike?"

this time. We made two others that are sitting there in the racks, filed under Turtles or Mothers or T. Rex or Flo & Eddie or Volman & Kaylan, but usually under '99¢'."

They've got material prepared both outside compositions and originals. As to what the results will sound like, Kaylan declares forthrightly, "Flo & Eddie will definitely sound like *pop* instead of moving away from pop to some kind of progression. Our own essence is pop. Every time we try to ignore that we're pop, that we weren't weaned on Hambone Mullins and stuff like that – I could care less about anything before 1960, to be perfectly honest with you. Those are our roots and every time we ignore them we wind up in a compromising position. We're going to make pop records.

"Don't *classify* us again. That was the Turtles' problem, but it was the Turtles' asset and we didn't know it at the time. We were hung up with this 'we don't have an *identity*; no one in our band wears little funny glasses or plays the autoharp or wears stripey shirts or has a mop top. We don't have a McCartney lookalike.'"

But who needs a McCartney lookalike when you had the original Volman image. The Turtles, as chronicled in almost stultifying detail in last year's article, were a brilliant and amazingly diversified rock band in their time; and skeptical readers will shortly have an opportunity to find out for themselves. Sire Records will be releasing the long-awaited (by Volman & Kaylan, at least) two-record Turtles anthology, containing 28 super hits and the complete story plus candid pictures.

"Originally five years ago we were gonna call it *From Rebelaire To Camarillo*," says Volman. "Then it changed to *Shell Shock*. Then it was gonna be *The Turtles Story: Five Years, 1965-1970*, then we decided that was like the Motown anthologies, so it's settled on *Solid Zinc*. It's more glittery."

Sides 1-3 will contain all the band's singles up to "Lady-O" in late 1969. Folk-rock with "It Ain't Me Babe", and "Let Me Be", the blithe "You Baby" and "Happy Together", the satirical "Elenore", "You Showed Me" "You Know What I Mean", and many more. It's a priceless collection. You also get more obscure 45's like "Outside Chance" (a terrific pop-rocker) and "Guide For the Married Man", from the movie of the same name (released as a single for about five minutes after "Happy Together" fell off the charts, until wiser heads prevailed and "She'd Rather Be With Me" was issued instead).

"I didn't know we were putting that turkey on our album. Whatever for?" Kaylan exclaimed when Volman mentioned it. "No, we put it on 'cause it's from a movie and people will remember it."

In any case, every compilation album needs a turkey, and *Solid Zinc* compensates for it with Side 4. It's a compendium of various obscure and/or unreleased tracks; they've thrown in everything, in fact, but the kitchen zinc. "We put on both sides of the Dedications record, 'Teardrops' and 'Gas Money'," says Kaylan. This was a single (White Whale 340) issued without the Turtles' consent or knowledge, recorded as a lark. "Gas Money", the old Jan & Arnie number, is a particular treat. "And we put 'Can't You Hear the Cows' on that side, depicting a side of the Turtles we're sure they missed. It was our sort of mantra at the time, sort of the Turtles' 'My Sweet Lord'. The cows were sacred."

There's a pair of unreleased tracks from a Jerry Yester-produced album recorded in late '69, "Can I Go On" and "She Wants to Be a Woman". And as a final bonus: "There's one Crossfires song," says Volman. "Santa and the Sidwalk Surfer'. It closes the album so they can take if off if they want. Just because it was recorded in '62, what's funny in listening back is it's just what we're doing now – it's a lampoon of surfing and it's just the same. It's funny..." For further details on *Solid Zinc* (hopefully out near the end of the summer), watch for an objective review in "Blind Date". Also watch for a possible reunion of the original Turtles for a one-shot tour, although this is quite tentative.

Not content with assaulting the media with old and new records, Flo & Eddie have been attacking from other directions too. "Right now in L.A. we have 23 commercials on the air," Kaylan calculates with impressive mental dexterity. "*Deep Throat*, Marilyn Chambers' movies, Jim Stafford, a camper company, London Britches, Pacific Stereo, Yamaha tennis rackets and bikes..." Having concluded this commercial for their commercials, Kaylan details the operation. "We're partners in a thing called BBC, Big Bucks Creations.'

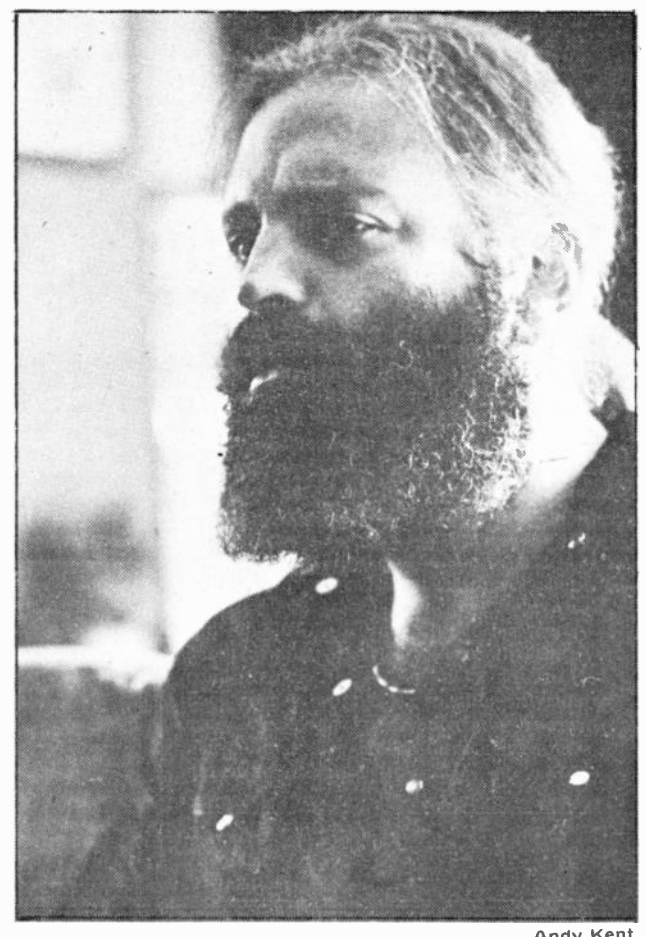
Volman adds, "We've built sort of an underground penthouse bomb shelter studio in the heart of Hollywood, and we'll do our radio show there too. We have glitter and C-rations and sea monkeys..."

"And a new addition," Kaylan comes back. "We were given as a gift a blow-up girl. The 'Deep Throat' model. She has two orifices; you pay $15 extra for the mouth. She's adorable – I call her Susie Sakimoff."

Susie's inflatable influence will no doubt inspire even stranger commercial flights of fancy, but the current examples are wacky enough (especially the Marilyn Chambers spots). But subverting the airwaves through commercials is not enough for the depraved duo. A frontal assault is being launched by means of "Flo & Eddie By the Fireside", an indescribable radio innovation/mutation spawned in L.A. a few months ago and now threatening to syndicate itself all over an unprepared nation's FM bands.

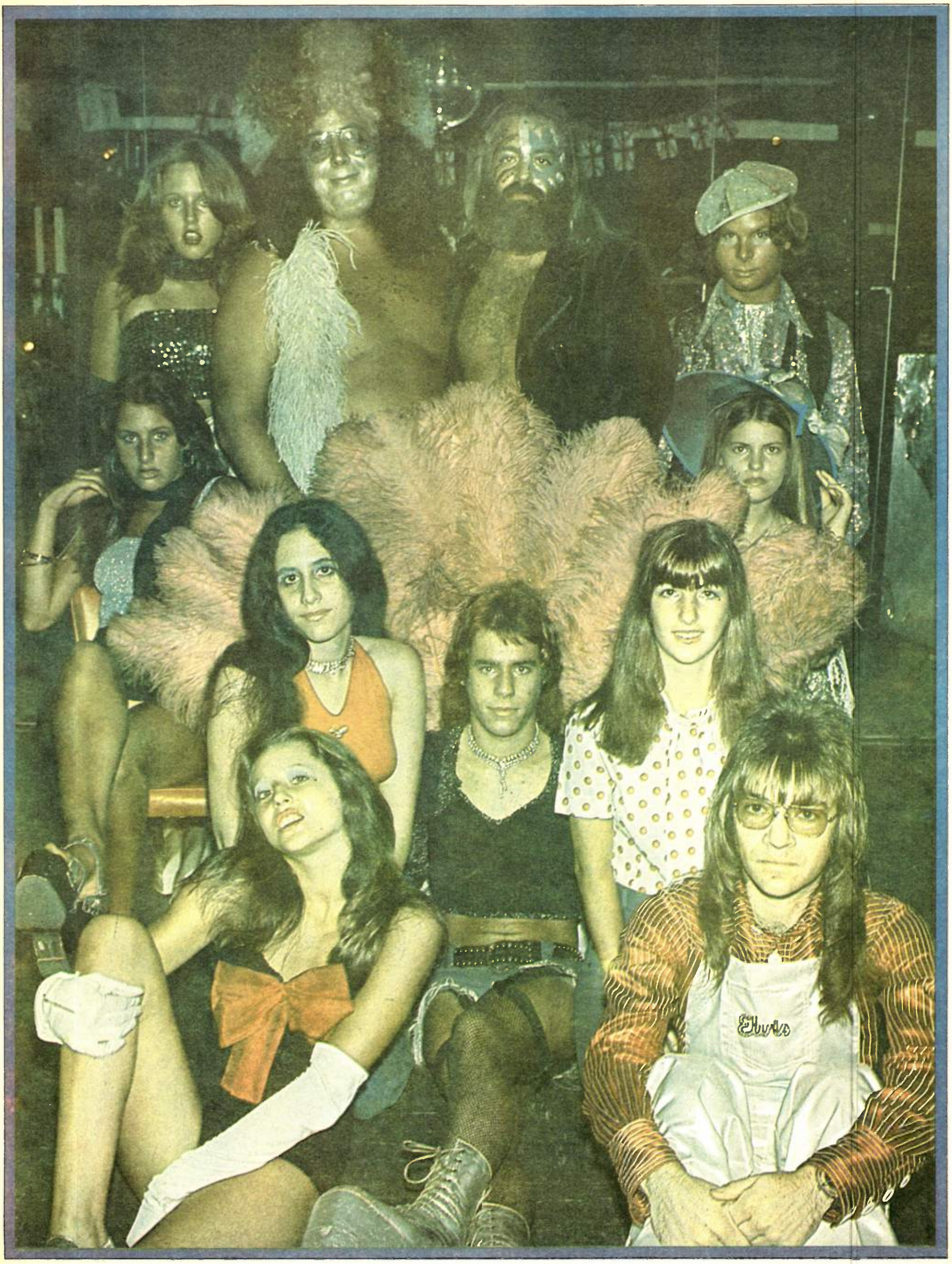
Actually, outre radio experiments have extensive historical precedents in Los Angeles. Barry Hansen's Dr. Demento show, featuring the most bizarre recorded novelties from the inception of phonograph records onward, sometimes tops the ratings for its Sunday evening spot. And last year the editor of a prominent national rock magazine, the former assistant editor of that rock magazine, the editor of a well-known radio tipsheet and the former editor of that radio tipsheet (almost none of whom are speaking to each other now as a direct result of this doomed collaboration) assembled a weekly show ("Shakin' Street" by name) on a local cable-FM radio outlet (the same station used by Flo & Eddie to test-run their show). The idea was to combine obscure, brilliant 60's rock records and new pop singles unplayed by AM or FM with satirical interviews and skits, to try to catalyze something different in radio. The concept was fine, but the execution and audience was lacking, and it folded after three months.

Only to be independently reincarnated with Flo & Eddie, and carried much further than anyone could have dreamed. In the course of five minutes of Flo & Eddie you might hear the Small Faces' "Sha La La La Lee"; "Monsoon", the Chantays' hopelessly obscure follow-up to "Pipeline"; Suzi Quatro's unreleased-in-America "Devil Gate Drive"; "Last Train to Clarksville"; "Mr. Peppermint Man" by Dick Dale; and Alice Cooper's "Eighteen." You might well ask, how could I hear all that in five minutes, and a very good question it would be, too. But Flo & Eddie have the answer – they rarely play any record for more than 60 seconds, and run totally disparate musical elements together into disconcerting audio collages that leave the listener completely bedazzled, wondering breathlessly what



Andy Kent

Eddie: "I don't care about anything before 1960!"

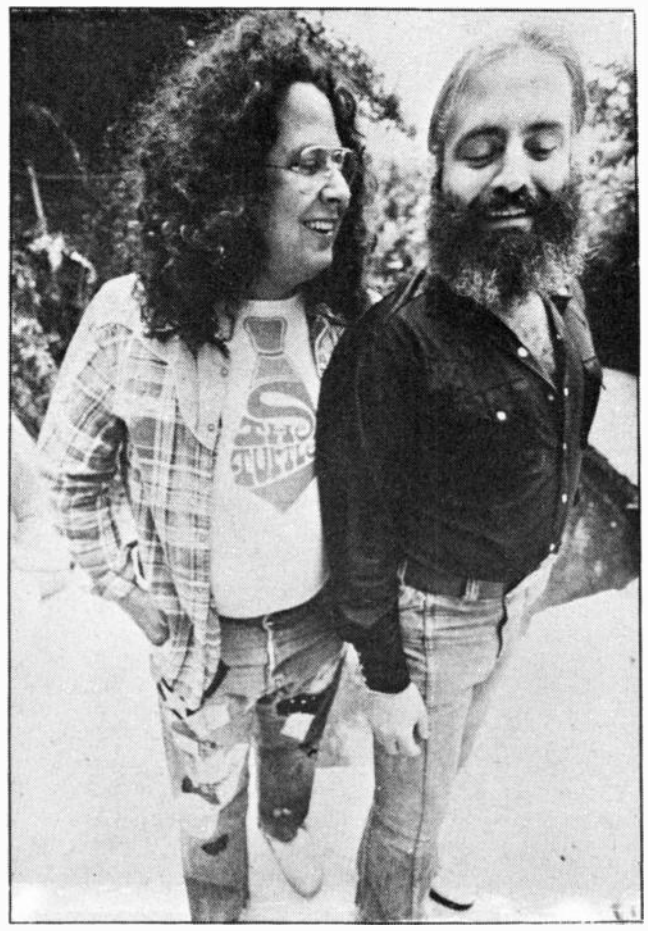


"All that matters to us is Pop"

in hell they're going to throw on next.

When the music's over, Flo & Eddie take command, stepping all over each other's lines, taking phone calls, listening for five seconds, ruthlessly putting down their callers and hanging up abruptly. Then they take time off to brutalize their various guests, and wildly humorous chaos is the normal result. The first L.A. shows (which have been condensed to make up the first 13 syndicated programs) featured the likes of Alice Cooper, Suzi Quatro, Ringo Starr, Keith Moon, Micky Dolenz, Dean Torrence, Iggy Pop, and a memorable reunion of the supposedly hostile Jeff Lynne and Roy Wood, who instead ganged up with their hosts to verbally demolish devoted callers who'd waited hours to regale their idols with stupefyingly tedious tales of rare Idle Race B-sides and Move outtakes. The laughs never let up (Flo & Eddie will always laugh even if no one else will), and the music is unbeatable. The combination could revolutionize radio.

A number of medium-to-large markets have been limed up (perfectly suited for Flo & Eddie to lay medium-to-large eggs in), and hopefully everyone will soon be able to hear this new form of radio mayhem themselves. Meanwhile, in addition to their other activities, Volman and Kaylan have a "science-fiction-rock story" scheduled in another rock magazine, and the ongoing "Blind Date" in this one. Worried that artists, record companies, and readers might be getting the wrong idea about the intent of their candid commentary on the sounds of the day, Kaylan says reassuringly, "We figure we've alienated everybody with our column. It hasn't been insulting, though, it's been constructive criticism. Like, your album cover is cheesy and you don't stand a chance, get out of the business. Giving them a chance to earn a constructive living elsewhere."



Andy Kent

Above: Flo & Eddie at home. Left: at Rodney's English Disco, surrounded by a bevy of Hollywood's trendiest flesh (center: Lance Romance).

"It's kind of a parody on reviews, too," says Volman.

When not parodying reviews, Volman can be found parodying softball players as a ringleader of a slo-pitch team which includes on its roster prominent sluggers like David Cassidy, Alice Cooper, Albert Brooks, and three-fourths of the original Monkees (minus Mike Nesmith). The team was first assembled for charitable purposes. "People would pay $1.00 to see the game and the money goes to feed George Harrison," explains Volman. But charity opportunities have been scarce, and they've ended up playing various record company teams (though they'll be helping out with the Special Olympics' fundraising activities). Their overall record is only fair-to-middling, but Volman is hitting an impressive .461 and the team's attitude couldn't be better – "We play to win."

Restless from the constant idleness brought on by dabbling in records, anthologies, radio, commercials, sports, and literary endeavors, Volman and Kaylan are also vaguely tossing around ideas for a book (*The Turtles Story*), a TV special, and world conquest (not until 1977, or whenever their schedule permits). Flo & Eddie still may not become household words (unless they collaborate on a cookbook, a task for which they are not at all unsuited), but they aren't really concerned about it. They're doing what they want to do (Volman: "We don't really know what we do, we just do it"), their randomized experiments should stir up a bit of comment and a lot of fun (Kaylan: "Lately we've been doing it on a media level, just sticking our fingers in a few pies, learning a little about each one, sort of grey flannel running it up a flagpole"), and music, radio, and any arena they venture into will be the richer for their presence. Okay, guys, where's my inflatable girl?

SUZI QUATRO, QUEEN OF POP

I was sitting in my den, as I often do, playing records and making notes for an article, when something clicked inexpectedly in my mind. In the grip of inspiration I started pulling records off of shelves, listening to things I hadn't heard in a long time, trying to pin down a vague impression that was slowly clarifying itself into an idea. I played Lesley Gore, Helen Reddy, Nancy Sinatra, Wanda Jackson, the Chantels, Brenda Lee, Janis Joplin, Lulu, Tanya Tucker, the Crystals, the Shirelles, Little Peggy March, Judy Collins, Patty Duke, Jackie deShannon, Dusty Springfield, Joni Mitchell, Diane Renay, Shelby Flint, Petula Clark, Maria Muldaur, Fanny, and quite a few more. I even thought of Isis and Chi Coltane, so feverish had I become.

Sanity prevailed however, and I began assembling my thoughts toward what I felt might be a truly comprehensive theory of the role of women in rock. I'dd never been satisfied with the accepted notion that the woman's place was to offer a gentle or peaceful alternative to man's rough, uncouth rock & roll. It left too many things unexplained, among them the entire history of female rock singers! I didn't feel it was correct to assume all women possessed a meek, passive self-image, for while there were certainly those who did, I had known a great many whose musical tastes were more liberated.

And with a little research, it became clear that from the beginning, there were women who played a leading role in each of rock's new developments. There were never as many, proportionately, but those who succeeded in defying the stereotype left a mark that has stood the test of time and then some.

That tradition has been carried into the Seventies by a few women, a very few indeed considering the extent to which women have made their influence felt in other walks of life these past few years. But rock has never been an easy road for women to travel, and those that did have by and large been pretty special. Currently there is only one who can truly be said to represent women in rock & roll—Suzi Quatro. Seen as the fountainhead of this tradition, her career and her place in today's pop scene take on even greater importance than the fact she's sold several million records over the past two years, doing things no girl before her ever had the freedom or the nerve to do.

In this context, Suzi Quatro is more than just a phenomenon. She's a link with the past and a harbinger of what may turn out to be a future in which women's place in rock is finally realized.

POPSICLES, ICICLES

To put Suzi Quatro in her proper perspective, it might be useful to look back on the history of rock and the ways in which females have been represented. In rock's earliest years, girls played a very limited role. If you can divide nearly all rock artists and records into two classes, the wild, rebellious, violent stuff, and the safe, acceptable, cleancut highschool stuff, then women have almost always ended up on the latter side, presenting themselves in song as the extreme of innocence and naivete. "To Know Him Is to Love Him" by the Teddy Bears, "Born Too Late" by the Poni-Tails, "Tonight You Belong to Me" by Patience & Prudence, "A Thousand Stars" by Kathy Young, all represented girls as romantic daydreamers, eyes alternately full of stars and tears.

This of course had its validity. Girls of a certain age will always buy and identify with records such as these, reinforcing through them their own overdramatized young emotions. From the late '50s right through the '60s and now, coming full circle with Marie Osmond's remakes of the original '50s songs, this approach has dominated the distaff side of recorded rock. Past that age of 12 or 13 though, as things start getting a bit more real and girls start coming into actual comtact with the boys on the other end of those crushes, complexities develop.

Even in 1958, there were some realities a teenage girl had to face that Connie Francis could never help them cope with. Shattered dreams were a part of growing up, but so were busted hymens, and the Shirelles' "Will You Still Love Me Tomorrow" and "Tonight's the Night" went a lot further toward symbolizing the mixed emotions of devotion and uncertainty, the hopes and dreams and fears that a girl had to live with. Although they continued to portray girls as the broken-hearted, abused, passive victims of the teenage mating game, the black girl groups like the Shirelles and the Chantels managed to inject a bit more urgency and depth of emotion than their white counterparts—if for no other reason than the fact they didn't have to contend with the reactionary morality of the people who ran the big record companies, since most of the black groups were with small independent labels.

With these groups, and those that followed them in the early '60s including the Crystals, Ronettes, Dixie Cups, Murmaids and on through the Supremes, this approach to female rock reached its zenith. Creating the proper mood of fragility and innocence was as much a matter of production and the correct material as the delivery itself, and it happened that the girl group trend peaked at a time when producers like Phil Spector and pop songwriters like Goffin & King, Barry & Greenwich, Mann & Weil, etc. were in their prime, the result being a period of two or three years in which there were hundreds of girl groups making records in this genre, thus reinforcing the prevalent image. And though the trend had largely passed by 1965, the style kept producing hits as late as 1969, with Merrilee Rush's "Angel of the Morning" and Evie Sands' "Anyway That You Want Me."

A formidable body of work indeed, one which had become quite sophisticated over the years, and produced some of the most powerful, memorable, and perennially listenable records in the entire corpus of rock. And behind the scenes, women like Carole King, Ellie Greenwich, Jackie deShannon and Cynthia Weil were using the girl group explosion to become as influential as any of their male colleagues. Any way you look at it, the years 1962-65 were the pinnacle of women's influence on rock. And yet, from another point of view, the ultimate effect was only to prolong the image of girls as soft, pretty little fools.

ROCK BOPPIN' BABIES

Let's return again to 1956, and pick up the story from the other side, the minority who chose the high road, to scream out whatever was inside them with as much abandon as a rock & roll band could incite. The traffic thins out quite a bit on this road, for in the Fifties even boys found little acceptance with truly savage rock. For every Elvis Presley who made it there were a thousand Alvis Wayne's who didn't stand a chance. Everyone was a pioneer in those days, and boldest of all were the few girls who dared to really rock.

I can think of only two female singers that had any appreciable success with rock & roll in the Fifties. Not counting the likes of Janis Martin, who covered a few Elvis songs and disappeared, we're left with only Brenda Lee and Wanda Jackson. Brenda Lee began recording at age nine and made her first rock record in 1957, when she was 11. By 1960 she was doing things like "That's All You Gotta Do" that showed her full grasp of rockabilly toughness. Although the majority of her hits were ballads, she knew how to rock out and did so on occasion. Which was good enough. Tanya Tucker, who has been called the Brenda Lee of the '70s, has an edge on her voice that could do equal justice to the right rock material, but I doubt if you'll ever catch her taking such a chance.

Wanda Jackson on the other hand was and is a marvelous country singer who, in 1959, was urged by her managers to cut a few rock tunes. And that's all it took. She went in the studio with Roy Clark and turned out a pile of savage rockers that hold their own with Gene Vincent, Eddie Cochran and the era's other top rockabilly kings. If you can image a raw-voiced young Wanda screaming out the lyrics to "Money Honey," "Honey Bop," "Hard Headed Woman," "Tongue Tied," "Slippin' and Slidin'," "My Baby Left Me" and others in that vein, you'll get an idea of how shocking this must have been to everybody at the time. She actually made the Top 40 with "Let's Have a Party" in 1960, thereafter having only country hits. But while she was young and hot she wasn't afraid to walk on the wild side of her talent, and there's no mistaking the obvious pleasure she derived from letting her hair down—almost as though she knew it couldn't last, and was determined to grab whatever kicks she could while it did.

LEADERS OF THE PACK

In the Sixties, there were more opportunities for girl singers to assert their independence, and a lot of them did. Jackie deShannon started out singing Buddy Holly songs and ended up one of the most successful singer/songwriters of the decade. Lesley Gore could be petulant ("You Don't Own Me"), bitchy ("Judy's Turn to Cry"), and even throw public tantrums ("It's My Party") but whatever she was upset about on each record, she never hesitated to speak her mind. The Shangri-Las were the first to prove that a group of girls could look like street tramps and still be stars. Marianne Faithfull made records that sounded pristine and pure, but talked openly about sex on the telly and was a well-known regular at all the pop orgies. Finally, all-girl bands, playing their own instruments, arrived on the scene.

At last, in the climate of freedom and self-expression that prevailed after 1965, girls were really able to assert themselves. A whole generation became folk singers, led by Joan Baez, Judy Collins and Judy Henske and others. It was this group that was to prosper, carrying on the passive tradition, while girl pop singers were forced out of the picture by trends they couldn't adapt to rapidly enough, such as acid rock (with Janis Joplin and Grace Slick as a couple of representative exceptions) and, in England, flower power music. This was a new approach to rock, abstract and intellectual, and not of much interest to most girl singers, who retreated still further into folk or pure pop, where they remained through the eras of boogie blues and heavy metal, returning to rock only in the last two years.

And that, in a nutshell, is what makes Suzi Quatro so significant. She is the first female singer to return to hard basic rock & roll, after nearly seven years in which women have had very little to do with the form. She's more than the Wanda Jackson of the '70s—she's the female Beatles of the '70s, here to remind us all of things we'd forgotten, to show us how things could be, and to inspire other girls to get back in the action.

SUZI IN DETROIT

Suzi Quatro was the youngest of a musical family. At the age of sixteen, when she and sister Patti formed their first group, their older brother Mike was already known all over the midwest as a promoter of teen dances, and consequently the girls had plenty of opportunity to learn at first hand the lessons of the Detroit rock scene. They were there at the Grande and the East Town Ballroom and wherever the MC5 or the Rationals or the Fugitives or Bob Seger were getting down. They danced to the heartbeat of the street, and were indoctrinated with the Detroit credo of rock & roll as something that was best loud, uncompromisingly tough, as soulful as possible without losing that traditional hard rock feel, and preferably heard over AM radio.

The Pleasure Seekers were the only all-female rock group to emerge from Detroit in the Sixties. Consisting of Patti Quatro (guitar), Pammy Benford (guitar), Arlene Fenn (organ), Darline Arnone (drums) and Suzi Soul (bass & lead vocals), the

GREG SHAW

Pleasure Seekers had little in common with other girl groups of the era; as cute-looking as the Cake, they were raunchier than the Shangri-Las, were nothing like San Francisco's flower-flaccid Ace of Cups, and were in fact as heavy musically as most Detroit bands of the time.

No doubt their brother had little trouble getting them bookings, and it was during a 1967 engagement at a New York discotheque that they were discovered and signed by Mercury records. Their debut single, released to coincide with a two-week engagement at Arthur (New York's most trendy disco), was pressed in such small quantities that neither Suzi nor anyone else to my knowledge even has a copy. It's a shame Mercury had so little faith in the Pleasure Seekers, for theirs was a commercial, exciting and well-recorded sound of which posterity should not have been deprived.

"Good Kind of Hurt" was the single, and it's a solid organ-driven cry from Suzi's soul. The lyrics, however, may have had something to do with its suppression. In 1967, no less than now, there was little acceptance for a song by a girl glorifying the loss of virginity—at least not in such explicit terms.

Even without hit records, the Pleasure Seekers continued giving pleasure to midwestern audiences for a couple of years. They appeared on TV, even had a film made about them before finally packing it in around 1970. Actually it was only the name that died; the group went on, without Arlene but with the addition of still another Quatro, Nancy.

This group called itself Cradle, was a bit more soul and boogie oriented than the Pleasure Seekers, and got as far as cutting an unreleased demo tape for Elektra Records before calling it quits, some say because of friction among the Quatro siblings. Patti and Nancy hooked up with brother Mike, who was then fronting the Mike Quatro Jam Band, a mostly instrumental group featuring Mike on a variety of keyboards, strings, and sound effects, and whose sole album was highlighted by the appearance of Ted Nugent on an extended version of "Court of the Crimson King." A couple of the songs were co-authored by Suzi, but by the time the album came out she had long since moved on to greater things.

SUZI IN ENGLAND

SIMON FRITH

"Just 'cause I've got a couple of buns in front don't mean I can't play rock 'n' roll."

Last year, out of nowhere, Suzi Quatro was the most successful girl rocker in Britain. Her single "Can the Can" was the first female number one since Mary Hopkin's "Those Were the Days," she headed the Annual Sales Charts (Female Section), she got the media treatment that certified her *Phenomenon*. Why? What was her appeal? How had a skinny 23 year old bass player from Detroit managed to grab at the guts of English Teen?

The first thing to realize is that she had been an old trouper for years before she arrived in England in 1972. Her family were typical American show-offs: father leading a band, brother Mike starring in one, Suzi and her sisters performing as Suzi Soul and the Pleasure Seekers. Suzi was brought up on public appearances and the girls' band (with her on bass) hit the road when she was fifteen. For the next seven years she worked the foxier fringes of the music biz—bars, strip shows, Vietnam bases. The Pleasure Seekers performed a dual role for their employers: covering the latest hits, uncovering their nipples. There's no doubt that Suzi learnt a lot in these years—about the geography of America and its motel rooms, about the bass and sibling rivalry, about playing pool and sex. She learnt to cope with the peculiar combination of feminine glamour and anti-feminine toughness that is expected of women performers (a tulip tattooed on her shoulder, a star on her wrist). After seven years the Pleasure Seekers had been a lot of places but they hadn't actually got very far.

So it's no surprise that when Mickie Most offered to take her to England and make her a star she leapt at the chance; the mystery is how Most came to see her and what he saw in her.

Mickie Most is the most successful pop *producer* England's ever had. His track record is stunning: the Animals, Herman's Hermits, Lulu, Donovan, Jeff Beck, CCS, Hot Chocolate, Mud, Cozy Powell—but the point is not that he had hits with these artists but that none of them have had the same pop success when they've tried to do without him. Most's talent lies in his ear. He is not a creative producer, not a writer or an arranger, a Phil Spector or even a Jonathan King. His skill is selecting the hit from a group's repertoire, giving an existing sound its maximum commercial polish, translating talented potential into Top Ten reality. He works most successfully with people who 've got a music and will of their own (even if this does lead to eventual trouble) and the question is: was this true of Suzie Q?

Most's previous involvement with an American girl singer was with Julie Felix, a folkie of the old school, a musician and not a glamour girl. When Suzi Quatro first met the press, in the summer of '72, she came across much the same but with a beat. Her press photos showed a thoughful, natural, healthy girl in jeans and a singlet; she was sitting in a field and looking at the sky, clearly a singer/songwriter—sexy, but in an adult sort of way. Her interviews confirmed the picture. She was a bassist, writer and singer; she'd got out of all girl bands because "too many of the girls were just in it for the glamour"; she was putting a band together which would include two *male* go go dancers, just to make it clear who was making music and who was shaking arse.

Unfortunately this plan, this girl, was thwarted. Her first single for Most's Rak label, "Rolling Stone," was a flop. Normal for American girl singer/songwriters, not normal for Mickie Most, someone who doesn't suffer losers gladly. Back to the drawing board.

* * *

Underwear is what Suzi Quatro doesn't wear anymore. Since May 1973 she's never been seen in anything but soft leather cat suits with zips down the front. No bra, no panties, but lots of chains and big boots. She put her band together. It's got three men in black vests and biceps. No go go dancers though, just Suzi's bass, thrust between her legs. I dunno if she's still not thinking about glamour, if she's still working on her Jack Bruce Advance Course, but she's certainly being successful. Since she put on her leathers she's had five successive British hits: "Can the Can," "48 Crash," "Daytona Demon," "Devilgate Drive," "Too Big." On none of them does she sound like Bonnie Raitt. Sometime between August '72 and May '73 Most introduced her to Nicky Chinn and Mike Chapman.

Chinn and Chapman's pop skills are exactly complementary to Most's. They provide the material (songs, sounds, images) that he can package and sell. They came to the fore by writing a succession of hits (starting in 1971) for Sweet and what was impressive was their successful translation of Sweet from a bubblegum/novelty group into teen idols. The question was whether this success was uniquely Sweet's or whether Chinn and Chapman had learnt enough from Slade and T. Rex to extend their control of the teenage market. The answer came when Most asked them to provide material for Mud. They had worked with Rak before, writing songs for New World (includg the brilliant "Living Next Door to Alice"), but this was simply as writers; their job now was to produce another Sweet, to turn a versatile but clumsy cabaret act into a glamourous youth group.

Mud's "Crazy" entered the hit parade in April 1973, proving that Chinn and Chapman could do it and that Mickie Most had lost none of his flair—he'd wrapped the Chinnichap sound as successfully as he'd once wrapped the Animals. The next step was obvious: Suzi Quatro needed a hit, Chinn and Chapman needed a challenge—could they provide the first female idol for the new teenage audience? The deal was clear: Suzi could gain fame and fortune, she'd lost her credibility as a writer or musician. After seven years on a dusty road she didn't hesitate at all and anyway she was as curious as the rest of us: what was the female equivalent of Sweet's mascara and rouge?

The skin trade has had no doubts about the meaning of Suzi's leathers and sweat: she's kinky and free with it. In fact she's entered the mythology of garage mechanics like no rock star since Mick Jagger (perversion) and Jimi Hendrix (black stud); *Penthouse* even ran a spread of her fully clothed (with leathers like that who needs flesh?) and she's

Bob Gruen

been giving full frank interviews to go with the pix: "It was in Detroit. I was playing really low and I felt this feeling come up and I had an orgasm right then and there." Even more revealingly she once left off her pants in her mini-skirted days: "I'll never know how many people saw me; mercifully I think they were all drunk. It really loses some of its niceness peering up from under a skirt, doesn't it?" (I dunno, Suzi, I guess it's a matter of taste.)

This sort of publicity, Suzi as rock as sex, is obviously a bonus but it's not exactly what Chinn and Chapman were after. Tit-talent spotters don't buy many singles and record buyers aren't yet that frustrated. Their relationship with the stars is rather different. Go to a rock show in Britain at the moment and what you see is a manic identification between performer and audience—they all dress the same! Roxy fans are in satin and silk, Slade fans have scarves and those hats, Sweet fans change their make-up and Bowie fans their hair styles as often as their main men, even Status Quo audiences look like Status Quo—long lank hair and baggy pants. But go to a Suzi Quatro gig and *no one looks like Suzi at all.* So what is going on?

* * *

The most important thing about English pop in the '70s has been the discovery of a new teenage audience. The Livingstone and Stanley of this process were Mark Bolan and Slade. Travelling in different directions from the fragmented scene of post 1967 music (pop and rock, bubblegum and progressive, body and mind) they met in the spotlight of mass attention in 1971. Bolan got there first, finding that by electrifying the simple boogie beat of Tyrannosaurus Rex he could stir the kids not only in the discos but out of them and into his concert hall gigs. Bolan rode T. Rex's success by becoming an old-fashioned star, glamour and glitter and sequins and hundreds of posters. Slade, arriving here slightly later, found an audience that not only wanted to get down and get with it but wanted to do it as a gang—this was a raucous and cocky *community*. Americans never realized the extent of T. Rex's and Slade's popularity in England in 1971-3 (to illustrate it: the ten T. Rex singles of those years reached 2, 1, 1, 2, 1, 1, 2, 2, 3, 4 in the *NME* charts; the ten Slade singles went 16, 1, 4, 1, 1, 2, 1, 1, 2, 1) but England's pop entrepreneurs were not slow to notice—where Bolan and Slade led, Bowie and Gary Glitter soon followed.

They succeeded, many other would-be idols didn't; the lessons to be learned about this new market (and how to exploit it) were superficially contradictory and needed sharp thinkers. On the one hand the new teenagers (this market was essentially aged 12-17) wanted music to dance to and not to think about (it had to stand up to disco stomping), on the other hand they rejected anything that was mindless or patronizing—their music had to recognize their power as well as their energy, to reflect their concerns and their identity. There was a new market for stars, for flash and pictures and careful TV shows, but it was a market only for "our stars," for glamour groups who nonetheless sought to identify with their fans, who played the byways of Lancs, appeared on Radio 1 and *Top of the Pops*,, didn't slope off to the States or the lazy life of the album charts. Faced with these contrary demands only Slade haven't faltered (and their lack of American success isn't for want of trying)—and Chinn and Chapman.

Their sureness of touch with this audience, first with the new Sweet, then with Mud and Suzi Quatro, has been startling but carefully worked. Their formula has four parts: Rule 1. To be a hit, a record must be good for dancing and it must get better for dancing the louder it's played. (Chinn and Chapman follow this by compressing the heavy riff rock of the '60s—the Kinks, Who and Yardbirds—into three minute bursts. For their most recent Mud records they've been using even older rock 'n' roll riffs—either way the result is a sound and a beat which varies only according to chorus melody. The *total* effect is what you hear, not any individual voices or notes.) Rule 2. To be a hit, a record must make sense as a teenage anthem. That is, it must have collective appearl, whether for dancing or singing along; it must be able to unite a gathering. (Slade are the masters here but Chinn and Chapman have got an equal knack for chant choruses and communal lyrics, and they've been able to give Mud, especially, an inspired "live" feel.)

(continued on page 20)

SUZI IN AMERICA

Richard Creamer

Suzi and band were accorded a full Beatle-sized welcome on their arrival in Los Angeles, as dozens of rabid fans thronged the airport, led by the illustrious Rodney Bingenheimer (center). Ms. Quatro, somewhat startled, could only ask, 'where.s Murray the K?'

Suzi Quatro was thrown out of kindergarten, she never had a birthday party, and she used to steal money from a coin box in the church and use it to buy popsicles for the other kids (until one day she found it padlocked). And she used to wiggle in front of a mirror, miming to Elvis Presley records. "You get bitten by a bug in this business, if you really love it," she says. "It's something you've got to do, and nothing anybody says can change your mind. I was always determined. I'd rather jump from a 22nd-story window than not make it. It's that fire that has kept me going. I just want to make it, no matter what it costs.

"I'm just in a different world when I'm on stage. I don't see a thing. The buzz. It's better than booze, and sex, and drugs. Really – is there any kind of drug that can compare with playing? There ain't. You get so high when you play that there's nothing else. It's such a downer when you come off the road. You're bored 'cause there's nothing to electrify you. I really like that feeling. Maybe I'll be electrocuted someday. Ah, what a buzz that would be!"

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Childhood Story No.1: "I remember going up into my older brother's room, and there was a little attic in the room, and I remember opening it up just to see what was in it, and he had like 15 stacks of dirty magazines. I was about eight I think, and I'd never seen pictures like that before. *Every day* I was up there after that, for the hour-long session up in the attic looking at the pictures. First time I'd ever seen it, and the first time you see a dirty picture you just go, 'Jesus!'"

***

Suzi declares flatly: "I would never, ever, pose nude. It's entirely against all my beliefs. If you spend all your life trying to be a musician, to be accepted as being just as you are, and do the most blatant female thing you can do and pose naked, I mean what the hell is it all about? It's so stupid. It doesn't take any talent to take your bloody clothes off, does it? Women do it every night. I did pose for a *Penthouse* centerfold, but I had my clothes on. White leather suit on, I had. Ha ha ha – go have a wank on that!"

Undoubtedly, many will.

Suzi is sharply aware of her position as a unique woman in rock 'n' roll, of her potential to wield tremendous influence. Because it comes from an untutored self-awareness rather than a developed class-consciousness, she defines it in personal, not political, terms.

"I'm conscious that I'm different. I've always been conscious of that," she says. "I am different. I don't know why. I've always been this way, though. It's never developed. I've just always been the way I am." When it's pointed out to her that there aren't any women in rock 'n' roll doing exactly what she's doing, her first response is a laughing, "Good – keep it that way." Then she opens up to the inevitable, and to her part in it:

"There will be. Kids will come up and get the buzz now. I've seen lots of girls oppressed because they're told to be something different from what they want to be, and I really hope in my heart that I'm opening up a few doors for the ones that really do want to be like me. And maybe now that I've done it they'll kind of go, 'Yeah, I'll do it too!' 'Cause I'd like to see some younger ones coming up that have an opportunity to be like me. Because there must be other girls like me somewhere. There must be. My God, there must be! Help!

"In the very first band I was in, the Pleasure Seekers, we had a girl drummer, and she was about as in love with the drums as I am with the bass. She *loved* it, lived and breathed it, and she was very close with her family, and they convinced her, after about two years, when she was just getting into it, that show business was bad and she shouldn't be in the business and yak, yak, yak, so she gave it up. This is like ten years ago. She still writes me letters. You can see the sadness in them. She loves rock 'n' roll. She would have been a girl like me, wouldn't she? Maybe if there was a me before now, they couldn't have talked her out of it and she would have been a lot happier person."

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Childhood Story No.2: "I was with my sister and we were babysitting my other sister's kid. I must have been about ten or eleven at the time, pretty young, and there was a movie set up in the room. We didn't know what it was. We thought it was cartoons or something, so we turned it on and it was like *Ukulele Boy*, you know, our actual dirty stag movie, and I was never so shocked in all my life. I think we looked at it for about three hours. That was the first time I'd seen anybody 'do it', and that movie stayed with me forever. The ukulele boy. He had a hat on, and this girl comes up and starts to play with him, and he doesn't do anything – he keeps playing his ukulele through the whole film. She's going nuts and doing everything to him and he's just playing his ukulele. It was great!"

***

"I was never happy with all-girl bands," Suzi says. "There's a dividing line between me and all the girls I've ever worked with. Their philosophy on the business is entirely different from mine. There's always been a tension with the other girls. Most of them I've worked with are out there because – 'I'm a girl and I can play too!' And I'm not like that. I'm out there because I like to play, period. It makes no difference to me what sex I am. When we used to lose musicians and had to find another one, I'd suggest getting a boy in the band and there'd be an uproar. That to me is as bad as being a male chauvanist, being a female chauvanist. I just figured whatever musician is the best.

"You see, you've got to forget that you're a girl. You really do. You've got to forget that it's a novelty for a girl to play. You've got to completely forget that. You've just got to accept the fact that you are playing. When I was 14, 15, 16, I was still *a girl playing*. And then after that I just started to gradually forget about it. It was when I was about 16. I can remember when I started sort of jamming more instead of doing shows, and getting into my music. When I first got into music everybody bombarded me with the fact that, 'Gee, that's different, that you're a girl playing.' So you get to believe it for a while – 'Yeah, I guess it is different for a girl to play.' If nobody would tell you, you probably wouldn't think about it. But it's a matter of accepting yourself and then waiting for them to accept you."

Suzi, who went to England determined not to return until she was a star, is flushed with enthusiasm over the acceptance she was accorded on her first American tour, supporting bands like Grand Funk, JoJo Gunne, ELO, and headlining a couple of clubs. Not that she didn't expect it:

"I wasn't surprised. In America, if you're good, they'll clap, no matter where you are on the bill. It's just usually an unfortunate coincidence that most opening acts are just thrown on the bill as an opening act. Even if they're not very good, they're cheap to hire and all that. But if you're good, they'll clap. I couldn't wait to get back and play America again because it made the band get together. They were all so buzzed by America. You could tell it in their playing."

Los Angeles manifestations of the buzz included a 400-strong greeting by fans at the airport, a full-scale party at Rodney's,news that Elvis himself called her recording of "All Shook Up" the best he'd heard since his own, and one of the rare line-around-the-corner nights at the Whisky (among the few who have sent it that far are the Kinks, John McLaughlin, the Stooges and the Dolls). And Suzi's coarse, hard-edged blast of rock 'n' roll (the standard introduction – "And now, five feet of shitkicking rock 'n' roll!" – sums it up nicely) justified it all.

"I think you've got to have a pretty universal sound to make it everywhere," says Suzi. I don't think we sound American. I think we sound like rock 'n' roll. The voice is American and the bass playing's American, but the rest is English. We've played for a lot of different kinds of people. It's the nicest thing we do, to be universal. Get everybody in on the picture."

RICHARD CROMELIN

(continued from page 18)

Rule 3. To be successful an artist must *look* successful; his appearance, whether on stage, TV, or wall posters, must have star quality. A good image can sell a poor sound, a poor image can't sell anything. (Chinn and Chapman understand flash: the way Sweet and Mud and Suzi Quatro dress is noticeable and it is most noticeable in the place where it most matters that they be noticed–the TV screen. Sweet make-up not to gay sensibilities but with a refined sense of outrageousness. Black groups may have understood the neatness of precise choreography for years, but Mud are the first British group since Dave Dee, Dozy, Beaky, Mick and Tich to exploit *Top of the Pops* with the same panache.) Rule 4. To be effective, a star's image must be *fun* and it must be shared fun, a secret. Adults (rock critics) may find Gary Glitter silly, but the kids are in on the joke. '60s teenagers (like their comrades of the fifties) know they're being exploited; the thrill is knowing that all this commercial energy is being expended *just for them*. (And Chinn and Chapman's true genius is that they are only in the pop business for a quick buck and a laugh.)

This, then, is the context in which you've got to appreciate Suzi Quatro, a product of the Chinn/Chapman assembly line. Musically she's got no problems–her records follow the yell-rock pattern. They're heavier than her fellows', without Sweet's cuteness or Mud's jokes, with her own dominant bass lines. They're not particularly individual records and they're certainly not feminine–her voice is buried in a mush of noise and the words don't matter much anyway. One-off dancing records, a brief good stomp and forgotten–her image is more interest. It doesn't (except for *Penthouse* readers) have much to do with sex. She's dressing to play not to kill, to join in the fun with the lads. If they can wear route, she can wear chains–and she's no more being butch than they're being gay. There's sex going on at this party, but not particularly. Suzi herself calls this scene "unisexual"–she's getting *everybody* off and not so much on her as on the rhythm and the fun. *She* is not the idol (which is why noone dresses like her).

What Suzi is really doing up on stage is, like the tomboys of old, proving that girls aren't spoilsports. She's a very little girl (only 5 foot) and her clothes remind me of the romper suits little kids wear to bang about in. Suzi can bang about with the best of them, her music is just as noisy and proud as any boy'd. But in competing like this she is ambiguous about the place of a woman. She claims to be liberating her girl (and boy) fans from the feminine stereotypes that are etched as deeply in youth culture as in any other, but she rejects feminism and has a touching trust in muscular values. She's an obvious target for sneers–she is a commercial creature, has put little on the line beyond her gender–but I think she's right to be pleased with herself. The history of English rock is a depressing one for women, a trail of squandered female talent and deadly deodorant sticks. Suzi's bass and sneer has a better chance of surviving showbiz than poor Lulu's shout. From '70s teen will come '70s rock , and if Suzi can hang on in there it'll be rock with a healthier respect for women's talents than we ever had.

Bob Gruen

Suzi Quatro, as she appeared on 'Top of the Pops.' Is this what they mean by, "The bitch's back"? Or is England just behind the times?

Meanwhile Suzi's facing a bit of a crisis: Chinn and Chapman, having proved their point, are losing interest in her. She's never had their best material (they don't play many games with her) and each of her singles has been less gripping than the one before. Unless they suddenly imagine a new joke, she's in danger of petering out and she lacks the resources to fight back. None of her own musical talents have been needed and so they've been ignored (except on the throwaway B-sides) and while Sweet and Mud have their histories and themselves to draw on for support, Suzi's present has nothing to do with her past and her group was formed only to play Chinnichap music. Mud may become a top cabaret act and Sweet a respected rock group, but Suzi will only be a memory. Mickie Most's skill in the '60s was to make pop music out of British blues and r 'n' b and folk; Chinn and Chapman's skill in the '70s has been to make pop music out of an audience. As this audience ages and changes, so will its music and Suzi Quatro will have been just an affectionate part of growing up. Still, what the hell, her presence is still now and she's funkier than Fabian, more fun than Maria Muldaur. Enjoy her while you can.

FUTURE SHOCKS

By GREG SHAW

Suzi's conquest of America is still far from complete. Rumors of her search for a new label affiliation here haven't done much good for her current single, "All Shook up," and she has yet to score a really big hit, although "48 Crash" sold a respectable amount over the several months it was receiving scattered airplay. And over-exposure of the Chinn-Chapman sound in England may be harming her, as her latest single, "Too Big" is her smallest hit since "Rolling Stone," although it's also her least produced, being a slow, bluesy thing with lots of "Heartbreak Hotel" piano from Alastair McKenzie.

What's really needed, I think, is to separate Suzi Quatro's image from that of Chinn & Chapman's production line pop puppet to one of her as the first universal rock & roll heroine of the '70s. There's so much potential in her image–she could be the girl next door, or she could be the girl on a motorcycle who'd kick your ass if you gave her any trouble. She's something any girl could identify with, any girl who wanted to be free and wild and run naked through the crazy world of rock & roll.

It's about time girls had an idol like this to pattern their fantasy lives after. In the same way Lesley Gore could look very simple and ordinary until she got on stage to scream "You Don't Own Me" from the defiance of her confused soul, Suzi Quatro is articulating and representing the unspoken desires and emerging fantasies of a new generation of '70s teenyboppers, growing up now and getting ready for some real protest.

Protest? Of course, it has to be the next trend. Social protest was at the heart of both the '50s and the '60s pop explosions, and there's no reason to think it'll be any different in the '70s. Any teenager who can resist the temptation to expand resentment of his parents to include the whole of society just isn't normal. And with women on the rise everywhere, rock & roll is one of the last bastians to be invaded.

Somewhere in all this lies a very important role for Suzi Quatro. She still needs Chinn & Chapman to keep her in front of the public, but as Mickie Most has been quoted saying, "the Sweet's records could have been made in the mid '60s . . . they're just like Dave Dee Dozy Beaky Mick & Tich . . ." and it's true that most pop groups are interchangeable in the hands of their producers. For that matter, Jonathan King has a kid named Ricky Wilde who can make records that sound more like Suzi Quatro than she does–until his voice changes, at least.

But as noted, it's not merely the sound that made Suzi Quatro. It was her, and what she represents, and the fact that the time is right for someone like her to do what she's doing. Even her producers realize that.

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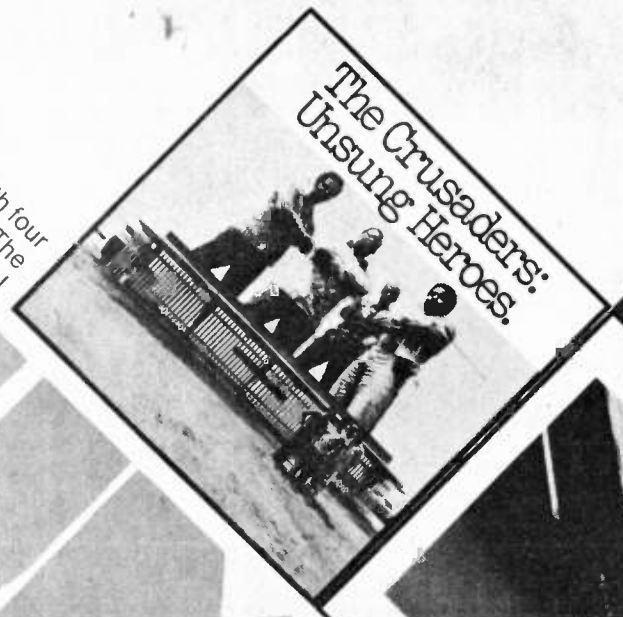

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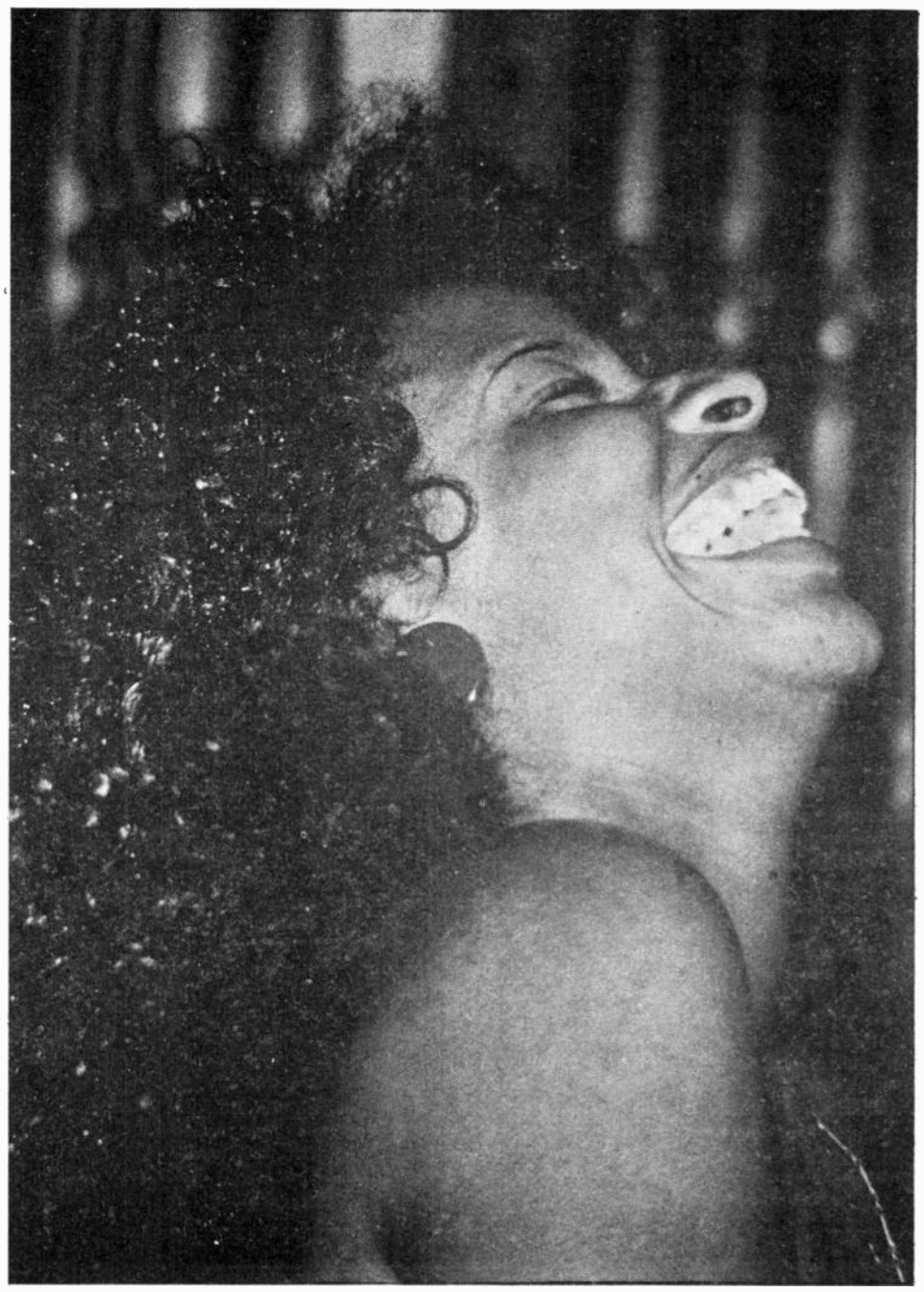


Roland Charles

Chaka Khan, the soulful fox, struts her stuff.

Rufus
Whiskey a go go
Hollywood, Calif.

By EDWARD ECKSTINE

A friend of mine and I were talking the other day about the state of affairs as far as new groups getting over was concerned. He wanted to know who was my personal choice for the group to watch and I replied Rufus. A bit bold and brash he thought for what about groups like New Birth, Graham Central Station, and Blue Magic who seem to be having a great deal of success at the moment and for all intents and purposes will most likely continue to do so. But quite frankly Rufus on stage is the best new band I have seen in a long time; they are young, vibrant, funky as hell and they have a soulful little fox named Chaka Khan who belts away with amazing clarity and intensity. Rufus has worked a great deal in L.A. since the success of their current single "Tell Me Something Good" and the work has obviously done them good for as they prepare for their first major tour they are so tight it is scary.

At the Whiskey Rufus opened to a packed house most of whom were crowded on to the tiny dance floor bumpin' and grindin' to the raucous funk of "Feel Good". Their set was a perfectly timed and paced set of dance tunes and two ballads where Chaka had the chance to strut her stuff vocally and had the crowd wild as she went up and down the register with awesome ease. They paid homage to Bobby Womack with a fine version of his "You're Welcome" as well as "You've Got the Love" and "Once You Get Started" from their current *Rags To Rufus* album and Stevie Wonder's "Maybe Your Baby" from their first album. The band was excellant, guitarist Tony Maiden has impeccable taste and knows exactly when and where to play a solo or add an important lick. The duo keyboard team of Nate Morgan on Electric piano and Kevin on synthesizers and organ lent a strong touch to the overall sound.

The synthesized horns and strings on "You're Gone Baby" added a new dimension to a lovely ballad and when they lit into "Tell Me Something Good" the walls shook from the people moving to the rhythm.

I don't know how Rufus could miss, Chaka Khan is oh so good, the band is tight and they have excellant material, (Stevie Wonder wrote "Tell me Something Good" for them). In between sets Chaka told me that she thinks that they are going to be a success. I think she's right.

The Mighty Sparrow
New York Calypso Festival
Madison Square Garden, New York

By LORRAINE O'GRADY

I thought that I'd outgrown calypso completely. For me it was relegated to the past, just one of so many odd splits in a Jamaican-American childhood, when you grew up dancing to both calypso and r&b. But there wasn't any question in my mind which one was going to win. After all, calypso was down there, and I was up here. As a little kid in Boston, I thought it was the weirdest thing I'd ever heard of when Gene Wolcott, an altar boy at our church, went off to be a calypso singer in Brooklyn. He took the name "Charmer" and wrote "Back to Back and Belly to Belly", a really huge hit, but I still wasn't convinced. I couldn't see how anyone could take that "country" music seriously. Later, Gene the Charmer, the ex-altarboy, came home reincarnated as Louis X, Boston's first Black Muslim minister, and that's when I *knew* I'd been right about him. Any kid born in the States who became a calypso singer *had* to be crazy.

I don't have to tell you, it's been almost two decades since I've listened to calypso with anything but peripheral interest. When Warner's sent me a copy of *Hot and Sweet*, The Mighty Sparrow's first album for them (Sparrow's hardly new – he's been named "Calypso King of the World" so many times since the mid-fifties that Trinidad should retire the title for him), at first I found the whole thing just a bit antique. And curiously, almost as if they felt the same antique quality in his music that I did, Warner's was calling him "The Last of the Great Calypso Singers" on their P.R. sheets. But as the only West Indian-American reviewer I knew of in the city, I began to feel a sense of responsibility. I had to keep on listening. And by the time I went to see Sparrow star in the Calypso Festival held at the Garden last week, there I was again, hearing almost like a West Indian.

Either Calypso has changed or it's me, though I suspect we've both aged quite a bit. Calypso's antique all right, antique the way Las Vegas is – and you don't have to be gay to love show biz. In fact the whole Festival, all eight acts of it, could have made it in Vegas without a hitch. Calypso, I now realize, has always been smooth, sophisticated music, the Caribbean version of "cool", and the years have simply added to an uncanny refinement. Watching this year's Festival, it was suddenly easy to see how far ahead of his time and what a fine Calypsonian old Harry B. had been.

Sitting in the almost sold-out Garden, watching comics, firedancers and a variety of groups, by the time Sparrow's co-stars of the evening, the Merrymen, came on, believe me, I was ready. The Merrymen are made up of five whites from Barbados and are now perhaps the world's top calypso group. And though they've performed on every continent, it's the black Caribbean that claims them. No need to tell you, for a group projecting a frankly white image, that's a coup. When they came onstage, young and handsome and dressed all in white and blue, playing amazingly tight, refreshingly new versions of the old standards and moving with a supple choreography that would be the envy of any Motown group, the black audience at the Garden, including me, nearly went crazy. In a smooth man's game, these young white Bajans were the smoothest of the smooth.

But when a white friend asked me very sincerely, "I don't get it, what's their appeal? To me, they're just an easy-listening group" – I can't tell you what despair set in. If white Americans don't stop listening to black music for all the fabled funkiness and mythic sexuality they can get out of it, I think I'll go insane. And *I'd* been wondering what Sparrow was going to do to top the Merrymen! Oh Calypso is sexual in its music and its lyrics all right, but it has other elements, including grace and wit, and the white boys from Barbados had understood the whole of it.

But I needn't have wondered what Sparrow would do to top the Merrymen. When Sparrow is onstage, it's like Old Blue Eyes being back again. He has the kind of mastery that lifts the lucky few out of all categories. Sparrow can sing about having an overly active cock, marrying an ugly woman to get her money or missing his dead friends, then turn around and issue a serious and tightly reasoned plea for black people to act differently, and a few minutes later, debate equally seriously (or unseriously) the relative merits of Yankees and Englishmen when hiring one's girl out for money. All of this, of course, in lyrics even Noel Coward would be hard put to beat – proving once and for all that pragmatism, sexuality and intelligence aren't irreconcilable dichotomies.

And for all of you who didn't get a chance to see Sparrow moving about his rotating stage with the elegance of Fred Astaire and the effortlessness of Gene Kelley but who might pick up on his album, don't say I didn't warn you. Sparrow is easy to watch, but he's still easier listening.

Betty Davis
The Bottom Line
New York, N.Y.

By VERNON GIBBS

The feeble-minded walk out in disgust when Betty Davis wiggles her tush at them, the weakhearted go limp with despair while the lusty ready their sticks. Whatever the reaction, it was clear that Betty Davis' New York appearance scandalized enough people to assure her success. With so many admittedly uptight people calling on their Victorian morality to save them from this sexual phenomenon in an age of liberation, it was obvious to those of us who pride ourselves at always being at the forefront of foreplay that once again we were witnessing the birth of a coming phenomenon. The same people who thought Jimi Hendrix, Mick Jagger, Tina Turner and Linda Lovelace were disgusting are once again wagging their heads.

For those of you who may be ignorant of the facts, be warned. Betty Davis is not the kind of girl you might want to take home to mother. In fact if she's telling it straight, she might not even be the kind of girl you'd be able to take home, period. Straightness is definitely one of her faults, fact is unless you're a big freak who likes to get it with a turquoise chain, you just might be content to continue in the mundane way of life you presently exhibit by being ignorant of Betty Davis. If excitement is your game however, you might want to get acquainted by picking up her second album *They Say I'm Different*, because Betty Davis is in the process of taking funk to unheard-of extremes.

Borrowing heavily from Sly's rhythmic stance, she has come up with a bottom-heavy sound that at this point is absolutely her own. Vocally she owes more to Tina Turner than anyone else, but again her harsh grate is a thing that could only belong to an artist with her highly individualistic outlook. At her Bottom Line opening she displayed a band with the first true understanding of what Sly's rhythms are all about, the bassman possessed with a well turned Larry Graham bass feel, a guitar and clavinet that chirped along as happily as the Stewarts ever did and a rock-solid drummer. To such uninhibited accompaniement, Davis churned out the best of her unique repetoire including a new composition, "F*U*N*K", the self explanatory autobiography, "They Say I'm Different", the raunchy and suggestive "If I'm In Luck I Just Might Get Picked Up", "He Was A Big Freak"; dedicated to an ex-lover, "Steppin In Her I. Miller Shoes" dedicated to the memory of Hendrix's lady Devin and the greatest dance record of 1974, "Get In There".

She was magnificent.

If Davis doesn't become a big star it's because she scares off the weak and makes the insecure feel even moreso. It's that simple.

NATRA: Black Music in the '70s

by Edward Eckstine

Nineteen years ago a coalition of black radio pioneers formed an organization, known then as NARA (National Association of Radio Artists), to promote fair play toward their members in the entertainment media. Five years ago, NARA broadened its scope to include television personalities as well as radio, changing its name to NATRA.

The first NARA convention met in New York. The founding members included E. Rodney Jones (Chicago), Jack Gipson (Atlanta), Tommy Smalls (New York) and others now legendary in black media. Through the years, executive positions have been held by such eminent men as Dave Dixon, Edward Windsor Wright, Lucky Cordell, Del Shields, and Georgie Woods. With the able leadership of these and other black radio executives, NATRA has become one of the most powerful and respected organizations of its type.

Looking back to the birth of NATRA in 1955, it's truly impressive to take note of their many accomplishments, considering the nearly hopeless conditions under which they first met and tried to seek out solutions to their common problems.

Their goal was to achieve respect and dignity for black people in radio, to open the doors for more blacks to enter the business, and to correct the many injustices that existed. E. Rodney Jones, one of the organization's founding members and current officers, explains, "In the beginning NATRA wanted to establish a level of acceptance for the black broadcaster. We were more or less the outcasts of the industry, our music was called 'race music' it was stablized in one particular category. Our goal was to break down these barriers so that black music could reach its fullest potential.

"We made quite a few strides in the beginning," continued Jones, "but in recent years we've really gotten some constructive things accomplished. The progression of the times has broadened our scope as well as providing new problems, and we're now concerned with securing more important positions on network radio and television for qualified black personalities."

A far cry from these days, 19 years ago, when only a handful of black broadcasters existed in America. It's been a long climb for NATRA and for black radio. The first two decades of black broadcasting have paralleled, and contributed their part to the emergence of blacks in every walk of society, and it is in view of these developments that NATRA takes on its true significance.

NATRA is not a union, although it does seek to alleviate injustices in a unified manner. All members of NATRA are, or should be, members of AFTRA (American Federation of Television and Radio Artists) as well, and that organization functions as their union. NATRA, as Executive Director Richard Thomas explains it, "rides herd on them when it comes to pay scales and various benefits. We are in constant quest for fair play for black jocks and we feel that the only way we can gain fair play is by having the best qualified jocks to do the job. Therefore, we have a responsibility to make schooling more accessible, and after we get them schooled we must get them placed in meaningful positions. We want to break down the token integration system that exists in white radio."

Membership in NATRA is open to any black announcer in practically any medium. There are currently about 500 members, who each pay $50 in yearly dues. It's a totally democratic operation, in which all decisions of major proportions are voted on by all the members. The executive structure consists of a president, Cecil Hale (WVON), five vice presidents, a board of directors, and a salaried executive director, Richard Thomas. Delta Ashby, who joined NATRA as a secretary in the mid-Sixties, has become one of the organization's key figures, functioning as officer manager at NATRA's headquarters in New York.

E. Rodney Jones: "We wanted to be recognized as radio personalities, not as finger-poppin' fools..."

Beginning August 5, NATRA holds its 1974 convention in Los Angeles. These yearly conventions provide a means for everyone in black broadcasting to meet, compare notes, and discuss topics of relevance. In the course of the week-long convention, there will be seminars on everything from programming and marketing to the problem of bringing young blacks into the media.

It is in these workshops, at this convention and those that NATRA will hold in years to come, that the future of black radio and television will be determined. It's an exciting field, full of promise and opportunities, and the potential for spreading great awareness and enlightenment. As black music becomes the dominant form throughout America and the world, NATRA's activities can be seen behind the incredible growth of black radio in recent years, and surely we can all share in anticipation for what the future may bring. First, however, it is useful to be aware of the past, and how black radio came about over the past twenty years.

THE ORIGINS OF BLACK RADIO

Black radio is, of course, dependent on black music, so to discuss the origins of one we must trace the other. Black recordings – dixieland, ragtime, blues, gospel, jazz, novelty, etc. – go back as far as recording itself, but it wasn't until after World War II that they became a viable commercial proposition. Prior to that, blacks simply didn't have enough money collectively to support their own artforms.

The post-war economic boom brought with it opportunities for artists in the minority genres –– rhythm & blues as well as country & western –– to exist, to record and tour and make a living from their music. This was also the time when BMI, the maverick offshoot of ASCAP, was creating an alternative avenue for these minority styles to gain access to the media. In the late Forties, blues and r & b underwent a commercial and creative renaissance. Although their records were pressed on small, fly-by-night labels and were sporadically available at best, these artists survived on constant appearances on the so-called 'Chitlin circuit", and occasionally a blues record by a hot artist like Elmore James or Amos Milburn would sell hundreds of thousands throughout the South.

It was a large enough specialized market to support many small radio stations, and even the music industry establishment acknowledged its emergence when Billboard magazine began its "race music" charts in the mid-late '40s. It was a despicable categorization, and seemed so even to many industry spokesmen at the time; it was dropped in the early '50s in favor of "rhythm & blues", by which time hit records on that chart were regularly selling a million and more.

The big breakthrough came around 1955, when a few black records, such as "Gee"by the Crows and "Sh-boom" by the Chords began selling so wildly that they couldn't be kept off the mass, white-oriented stations. This era was a turning point anyway, with rock & roll becoming such an economic phenomenon that radio stations were beginning to program exclusively for teenagers, as the pop stations of the time had little room for rock amid the Rosemary Cloonys and Tony Bennetts.

Of course, rock & roll was a direct outgrowth of black rhythm & blues, but even the new rock stations were managed by people who disliked rock & roll and were against black music in particular. They believed, as did the record industry, that the songs needed to be cleaned up, thus they watched and when a record like "Hearts of Stone" (the Charms, 1954) was selling heavily to black kids, they rushed out a cover version by someone like Pat Boone or Gale Storm, hoping the white kids would accept it. That wouldn't work, though, and soon enough the real thing was on the air, and naturally Fats Domino, Little Richard, Chuck Berry and many, many others proved that their music was, indeed, commercial.

All the same, these records were never fully accepted by the white media (according to *Billboard*, Little Richard had only two Top Ten records, and never made No. 1. Nevertheless, his records sold millions. The inequities were obvious.), and it became clear that blacks had to develop their own media.

In the Fifties, there were no black-oriented radio stations in any of America's major cities – or if there were, their signals were too weak to allow them to reach their proper share of the market. Without mass airplay, black performers were forced to take their records on the road, selling them city to city as they made the rounds of endless small dives and record hops.

The late Fifties was an era in which disc jockeys became very influential, as block programming did not exist in those days and each jock had the freedom to play whatever records he wanted. Thus it was that pioneers like Allen Freed and George 'Hound Dog' Lorenz were able to expose white audiences in major cities to heavy doses of black music.

It wasn't until about 1957 that radio stations geared exclusively to young people and programming all-black music began to emerge. The Dynamic Broadcasting Co. had three such stations, WUFO in Buffalo, WILD in Boston, and WAMO in Pittsburgh. Porky Chadwick and Sir Walter Riley, two outrageous jocks at the latter station, used to sponsor record hops that drew thousands of white and black fans, proving the viability of this new format. All three are leading black stations today, although now independently owned via Sheridan Broadcasting.

Other trailblazers included WAWA in Milwaukee, now part of the Mutual Black Network, WNOV, also in Milwaukee, WVON in Chicago (owned by the Chess brothers, of Chess Records), and WLAC in Nashville, WLAC was a key contributor to the progress of black radio, with a 50,000 watt clear channel signal that can be heard everywhere east of the Mississippi, reaching even into Canada. Begun in the early '50s, the station was run by John Richberg, known on the air as John R., and remained a leader in the R & B field until Richberg retired a few years ago. One of WLAC's prime sponsors was Buckley's Records, which sold millions of records by mail, without radio exposure except through LAC. Thus another means of getting black music to the consumers was established.

Black music was on the air, black records were selling more widely than ever, but

still the profits went to whites, who owned and staffed the radio stations and record companies. The artists themselves rarely saw royalties in those days, and there wasn't much any of them could do about it.

Most listeners were unaware that, even on the black stations, most of the announcers were white jocks, trained to sound black – a practice that remained in effect through the Sixties and can still be found today. The few black jocks were often made to adopt degrading nicknames, and were treated as outcasts in the industry. They weren't entitled to benefits for illness, personal appearances, etc. as the white jocks were. It was to correct these injustices that NATRA was originally formed.

"We wanted to be recognized as radio personalities, not as the finger-poppin' fools they had stereotyped us to be," states E. Rodney Jones of WVON, one of NATRA's founding members. "Black jocks were given ridiculous names like "Okie Dokie", "Papa Rock" etc., and when they left the station, their replacement would assume the role of the guy who'd left. When I started out, I was known as the Mad Lad, not as E. Rodney Jones. This was one of the barriers NATRA broke down, because we wanted the jock to have the decision of whether he wanted to use the assumed name or his real one."

THE SIXTIES: BLACK RADIO EXPLODES

Black music received a serious setback at the turn of the decade as a result of the much-publicized 'payola' investigations. In the words of E. Rodney Jones, "when black music becomes the dominant force in the industry, there's always a payola scandal attached to it. I think that is basically to beat down the black artist from the pop charts and to give the white artist a chance."

Although it was chiefly white jocks who were indicted in the payola scandals of 1960, it was black music that suffered. More than 99% of the records made by black artists in the '50s were issued on small, independent labels, which by means of payola or other forms of persuasion were able to get airplay for their products. This was a direct affront to the big, monolithic record companies that had no interest in black music and no ability to market it, and it was these labels who, with their enormous monthly overhead, could not afford to see millions of dollars being spent on music without going through their hands.

Following 1960, radio was a lot less free-wheeling, jocks were afraid to play new records on independent labels for fear it would look suspicious, and most of the enthusiasm for rock & roll had faded away in any case.

But it was a turning point for black music. On the business end, blacks were moving into greater realms of artistic control and ownership, and on the musical end, soul was being born. Soul was a more sophisticated form of '50s r & b, taking advantage of improved recording equipment, more experience among the producers and performers, and an evolution of style. Sam Cooke, the Drifters, the Shirelles and others were becoming more polished, more versatile. Doo-wops and raunchy saxes were out; black music was getting ready to take some major strides.

Also, at long last, black music was becoming a business. In New Orleans, where producers from New York had been coming for years to cut hits, paying the musicians only session fees, the musicians formed their own record and distribution company, a valiant attempt that failed. In Detroit, however, Motown Records appeared, and soon became the first successful black-owned record label.

It took a few years for Motown to really hit its stride. Barrett Strong's "Money" and the Miracles' "Shop around" were hits in 1960, Marvin Gaye came along in '62, the Marvelettes struck at the end of 1963, along with Martha & the Vandellas, but it wasn't until 1964 that Motown exploded with the Temptations, Four Tops, Stevie Wonder, Supremes, Junior Walker and so on.

The Motown sound was universal, it was universal, it was black and soulful, but in a sense it was colorless, combining the innocence of white pop with the gritty roots of black music and a boldly original use of studio technology. Motown's creative output and commercial acceptance over the Sixties was astounding; at times they occupied as much as one third of the pop charts, and in a time when all forms of pop were undergoing equally great upheavals.

In a way, the Beatles and the pop mania they invoked had the effect of inspiring the music industry to accept more new things, and as soul music continued to improve and be heard more widely, it became a solid part of the pop mainstream, as it never had been before.

Suddenly other independent labels were sprouting up, offering more new black music. For the first time, the major labels were consciously developing black product of their own, whether through newly-created subsidiaries, or acquired masters, or even direct signings, as with Aretha Franklin on Columbia, the largest record company of all although they'd never had a major black artist before, unless you count Johnny Mathis.

Stax Records, another black-operated company, burst forth with Otis Redding, Sam & Dave, the Bar-Kays, Carla Thomas, Rufus Thomas, Booker T. and the MG's, etc; Atlantic, one of the premier r & b labels and largest independents of the '50s, emerged in 1967 as one of the new majors, largely as a result of supporting soul music.

By 1967 black records had established a pattern of 'crossing over' to the pop charts after attaining a certain level on the r & b charts. It was obvious that soul music had mass appeal, and that as many whites were buying the records as blacks, but the leading pop stations were unwilling to program soul records until they were proven winners in other markets.

Meanwhile the black market for black records was changing too. The black audience was becoming aware of itself, and seeking to establish an identity in social, cultural and philosophical terms, so it became of paramount importance that they have their own media, not only records but books, plays, films, etc. It was increasingly imperative that black radio serve the needs of this audience, not only keeping up with trends in the music but also being aware of needs and events in the black community and supplying the proper public services. The time was right for enlightened black radio leadership, and it was this era that marked the beginning of NATRA's greatest strides.

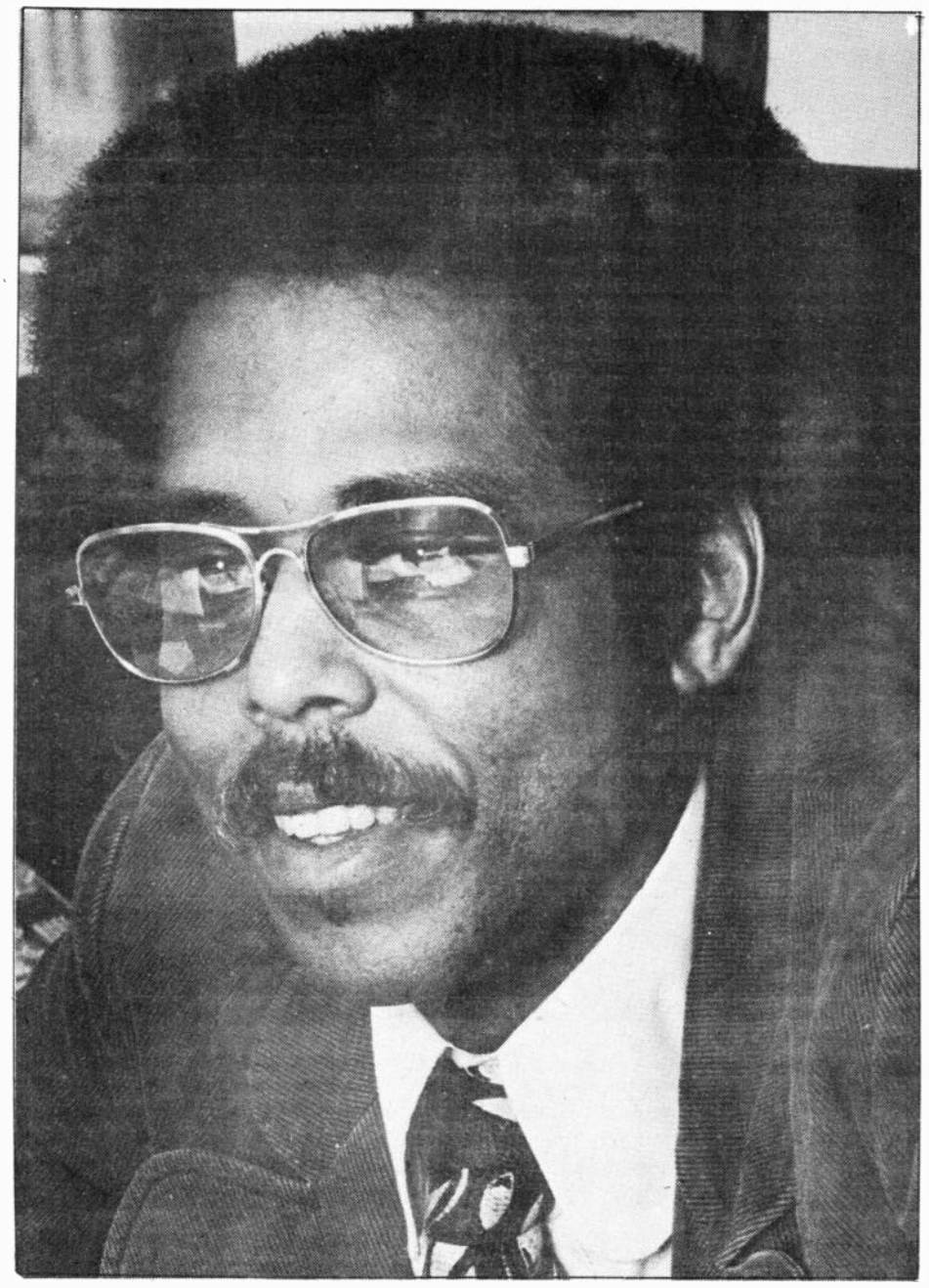
BLACK RADIO IN THE '70s

As the '60s drew to a close, black music leveled off, in line with the general malaise that was affecting pop around that time. But as 1970 got underway, although rock & roll continued its sad decline, soul bounced back strong with Sly Stone on Epic, War on UA, Curtis Mayfield now on Buddah, Bill Withers on Sussex, the Staple Singers with their surprising breakthrough, and, of course, Isaac Hayes, also on Stax, and Motown with the Jackson Five and the resurgence of the Temptations.

Gamble & Huff, who had worked with Jerry Butler, the Intruders and others for years, became the first black production team with an independent label (Philadelphia International) to sign a distribution/subsidiary deal with Columbia, the largest and most powerful of the established record giants. Columbia's decision to get involved in black music was not an idle one; at last they had recognized the mass potential inherent in soul, and that acceptance was enough to erase any doubts which might have lingered anywhere in the music industry.

Since then, the trand has snowballed, to the point where Stevie Wonder, Gladys Knight and Roberta Flack walked away with a truckload of awards at the 1973 Grammys, black records now occupy at least 40 of the top 100 chart positions, many go on the tightest Top 30 pop stations on release instead of six months later, and truly, black music can be said to have become the accepted mass pop music of the '70s.

With all this, it might appear that NATRA's goals have been accomplished, but not so. With each new advancement, new doors have opened, and new horizons have appeared. And there are still, after all this time, plenty of injustices in the field of broadcasting. The percentage of white jocks on black-programmed radio stations still exceeds by far the proportion of black jocks on white stations. And black-oriented radio receives hardly any national advertising, despite high ratings.



Edward Windsor Wright, NATRA executive.

E. Rodney Jones: "There are as many white folks listening to black stations as there are blacks. If all these white folks are listening to us, why can't we get those impressive commercial accounts like General Motors? More niggers drive Cadillacs than whites, yet we can't get those ads! That's got to be changed. It's time for us to re-evaluate our priorities."

Richard Thomas, current Executive Director of NATRA, elaborates further: "NATRA is principally directed toward strengthening the position of blacks in radio and gradually encompassing television and other communication forms. We have now begun to concentrate our interests toward community involvement, making young black people aware of what the communications media are and the opportunities that exist for young blacks. We have started community workshops, begun a scholarship program for black students who show an interest in communications, and excellence in their academic studies."

There's more to be done than merely supplying more black disc jockeys, obviously. Blacks should be involved totally in the media; there's no reason a white announcer should be heard on a commercial played on a black station, when black announcers are available. One of NATRA's current projects, according to Jones, concerns this directly.

"We have a tape bank that is in the process of being set up where we will have a log of recorded voices throughout the country that will be submitted to various advertising agencies. Unless blacks are made available they will not be able to get a job. Black announcers need exposure in the world of those who make the decisions in terms of commercial contracts; the commercials are there waiting, but the advertisers need to know who the qualified brothers are."

NATRA is also making a major thrust in the field of television. Since the "T" was added in the mid-Sixties, black progress on television has been impressive. One of NATRA's first actions with regard to television was to give producer Sheldon Leonard an award for *I Spy*, the first big network show to feature a black actor in a leading role, since the days of *Amos & Andy*. Now black announcers are a common fixture on most local TV news teams, (although NATRA is still battling for more network representation), blacks have their own televised music show in the phenomenally successful *Soul Train*, and black actors are seen with far greater regularity. But this is only the beginning.

Don Cornelius, the man behind *Soul Train* and an outspoken advocate of black progress in the arts, has some hard words to say about the whole thing: "Blacks are to blame for not really demanding a different trip as far as television is concerned. I think there should be a fourth television network for blacks, because the media certainly isn't gonna volunteer that 20% of their programming to black. Blacks don't even have a foot in the door in television; you see enough black faces to make you think something is happening, but it's a multi-billion dollar industry and, comparatively speaking, nothing is happening."

So for NATRA, and the emerging black entertainment industry, the job ahead is a big one. In addition to bringing more air-personalities into the business, NATRA is concerned with broadening the involvement of blacks on all levels of the executive structure so that, eventually, black people can occupy their full and rightful position in the world of broadcasting and entertainment, as well as in society at large – a day we can all look forward to.

FEEL GOOD

Lorraine Ellison. One of the finest voices of our time, Lorraine Ellison swoops from heaven all the way to hell in an album that's as fine as air and as real as dirt. Warner Bros. album BS 2780.

Cold Blood/Lydia. Named for the group's wailing lead singer, Lydia Pense, this album unites one of San Francisco's most soulful groups, Cold Blood, with powerhouse Memphis producer Steve Cropper ("The Midnight Hour", and a lot more). Warner Bros. album BS 2806.

Frankie Miller's High Life. A singer in the powerful tradition of Ray Charles, Frankie Miller met his match in New Orleans producer Allen Toussaint, who crafted this fine disc. Chrysalis album CHR 1052.

Chrysalis™

Lenny Williams. The lead vocalist for Tower of Power ("So Very Hard To Go") is also recording as a soloist, beginning with this strong record produced by the great Eugene McDaniels. Warner Bros. album BS 2797.

The Meters/Rejuvenation. A band and a half from New Orleans, The Meters have sung and played the year's best move-with-the-music album, with an assist from hit-making producer Allen Toussaint. Reprise album MS 2200.

MUSIC

SOUL & JAZZ REVIEWS

Perfect Angel
Minnie Riperton
Epic KE 32561

Stevie Wonder Presents Syreeta
Syreeta Wright
Motown M6-808S1

By EDWARD ECKSTINE

I guess I was about eleven years old, it was on a school night for I vividly remember having my little transistor radio firmly tucked under my pillow so I could drift into my sleep on the crest of some melodic wave, when I heard this screamer of a tune called "Fingertips Pt.1" by Little Stevie Wonder. I was amazed because this kid not only sang the tune but he played that fierce harmonica part and he also played the bongos. Then the DJ went on to tell me that this Wonder fellow was twelve years old, and seeing that I missed out on the Frankie Lymon craze, I thought that it was pretty amazing that this kid who concievably could be one of my classmates had a record on the radio. I have been a fan and devout follower of the man and his music ever since. I voiced my admiration to a friend recently and was surprised to find that she could arrange for me to meet Stevie at the studio where he was working on his next album. On that presumption I went to the Record Plant in L.A. and met the man, and also saw a lady that I had missed for a few years and found that he was working on a project for a very talented lady named Minnie Riperton.

Minnie was once a member of a Chicago-based group called Rotary Connection who made three albums for Chess in the 1969-71 period. The albums did relatively well in the east but they received very little airplay on the coast. After leaving Rotary she cut an album of her own "Come to My Garden", which was an artistic success at the time, but was a dismal failure commercially. Then she disappeared, and I had often wondered what had happened to her, so it really blew my mind to find that Stevie was producing her comeback (of sorts) album. Minnie has an extremely high voice, the record company hype says that she can go four octaves and I believe it, but the beauty of her voice lies in the crystal clarity and perfect pitch she carries. Combined with Stevie's excellant production and her superb songs (co-written with Richard Rudolph, her old man I'm told) *Perfect Angel* is the most important album by a female performer I have heard this year.

The album gets off to a great start with "Reasons" a fine uptempo tune where Minnie flies up and down the scale in a devastating manner. She hits some notes that I had previously deemed humanly impossible, they are so high that she sounds like an electronic instrument – amazing. I really like the laid back country feel of "It's So Nice To See Old Friends", where Sneeky Pete shines on pedal steel guitar, and the light heartedness of "Seein You This Way", where Minnie's overdubbed vocal parts sound great. My favorite cut is "The Edge of A Dream", where the lilting freshness is a beauty to behold. The clearness of Minnie's voice overwhelms me on this tune where again she runs up and down the scale in gazelle like fashion. Stevie contributes two new compositions "Take A Little Trip" and "Perfect Angel", as well as playing an array of instruments and donating the talents of his band Wonderlove.

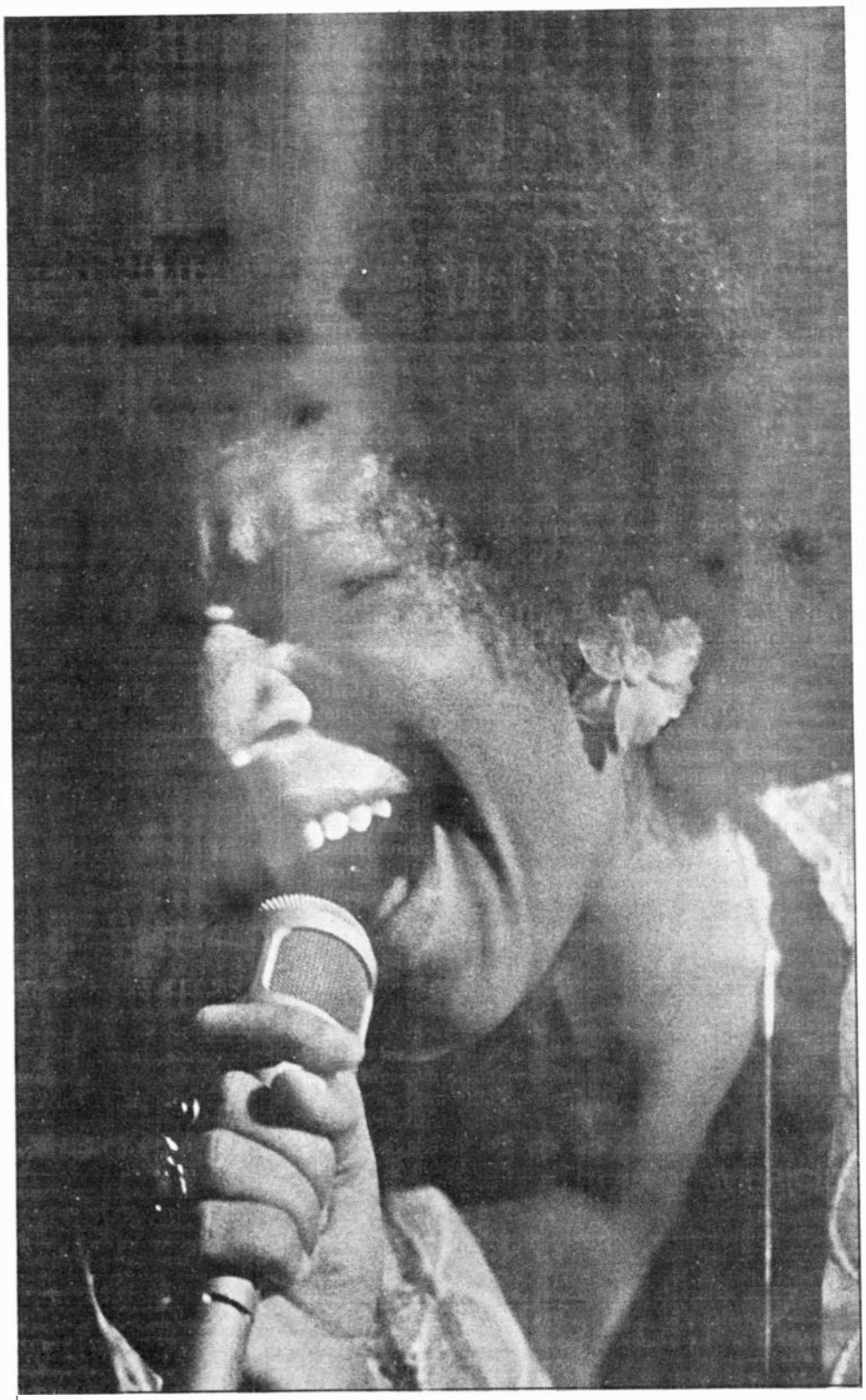
Minnie is on her first tour, and she is knocking people out wherever she goes. From all indications she is going to be the biggest 'new' attraction of this year, and if she isn't I will eat the paper in which these words appear, I believe that strongly in her.

Syreeta's vocal style is much like Minnie's in the sense that she has an extremely high voice and because Stevie also wrote, produced and arranged the album, there are definite similarities in the two ladies' styles. But the fact that there are concrete similarities should not lead you to dismiss the album, for Syreeta is an extremely talented singer/composer and *Stevie Presents Syreeta* is one of the best albums I have heard in a while.

"I'm Goin' Left" has an infectous chorus that I find myself constantly humming, "Spinning and Spinning" reminds me of a tune that would have been apropos in *Around The World in 80 Days*, but still seems to be funky in its waltzy manner. "Come and Get This Stuff" is the obvious candidate for a single and it should be an immense success, with its rocking bass line, patented Stevie Wonder clavinette, and a catchy vocal, it is a SURE HIT. "Heavy Day" is classic Stevie/Syreeta balladry, cut in the mold of "Girl Blue" from the *Music Of My Mind* album.

Side two is the mellow side of the record, led off by a beautiful ballad "Cause We've Ended As Lovers" which sums up the relationship that Stevie and Syreeta apparently have. She is his ex-wife, and this tune is the culmination of the lovers-now-friends syndrome that most of us have been through.

Stevie Presents Syreeta is an unequalled success, far superior to her excellant first album, and it firmly establishes her as a viable force in pop music. She should not be ignored.



Minnie Riperton: crystal clarity and perfect pitch.

Treasure Island
Keith Jarrett
ABC/Impulse AS-9274

By MICHAEL DAVIS

The arrival of a new Keith Jarrett album is always a welcome event; artists whom you can always trust to put out music that's worth listening to are few and far between and Jarrett is one of the few.

Of course *Treasure Island*, like the rest of Keith's recent work, is not something you stick on the turntable to get into one particular groove with; it's too diverse for that. You keep getting hit with so many different approaches to playing music that it doesn't work as muzak and you can't dance to all of it so you've got to sit down and listen...

...And when you do that, you're liable to get hooked. Jarrett's music demands a certain amount of attention, not because it's esoteric or particularly complicated but because he avoids flashy displays of his own virtuosity. His band of long standing (reedman Dewey Redman, bassist Charlie Haden, and drummer Paul Motian, augmented here by guitarists Sam Brown and a couple of percussionists) follows the same path. It's a mature unit whose purpose is simply to make music; no side trips are necessary or desired.

As with Jarrett's last few releases, there are a couple of numbers on *Treasure Island* that don't reach me. The opening cut, "The Rich (And The Poor)" gets bogged down in second gear while the closing "Sister Fortune" doesn't do much of anything. In between them, however, are some of the tastiest tracks the band has put to wax.

"Blue Streak" is probably the catchiest thing on the album. A brief 2:33, it starts off with a quick series of chord changes from Jarrett's piano which finally settles into a repeated riff, thus signalling the entrance of Redman's tenor sax. Redman typically plays in a bluesier vein with this unit than he does with Ornette Coleman or his own band but he still displays his own unique voice, rough but sensuous. "Blue Streak" should be one of those rare singles Impulse releases occasionally.

Fitting flip sides could be the medley of "Introduction" and "Yaqui Indian Folk Song" or the title tune. Both show off the melodic side of Jarrett; the former is content to state its case with great simplicity while the latter is highlighted by subtle interplay between piano and guitar.

Free-form directions are not eschewed either. Redman's most impassioned blowing can be found on "Angles (Without Edges)" but "Fullsuvollivus (Fools Of All Of Us)" is a more interesting construction. Jarrett thumps along, oddly accenting Redman's lines as Haden prods from below. They make a strange team, difficult to pin down and impossible to second guess, but unless predictability is what you look for in music, their records belong in your collection.

In Concert
Freddie Hubbard/Stanley Turrentine
CTI 6044

By VERNON GIBBS

There is something I don't like about Side One of this album and it's hard to say what it is. One thing I do know is that after listening to it the first time, I was in no real hurry to go back. Repeated listenings haven't changed my initial opinion too much except for a discovery of some handy work on the skins by Jack DeJohnette on Side two and a growing appreciation of the live version of Stanley Turrentine's "Gibraltar". But this recording in some of its aspects seems to lack spirit, in spite of the assemblage of such eminent names as Herbie Hancock, Ron Carter and Eric Gale. Part of the problem could be the fact that these are just sidemen who often record together but rarely play together on the same stage and the kind of interaction that usually exists in live jazz just doesn't seem to be there. On stage there are no chances for second takes.

Which is not to say that each member of the all-star jam does not execute his function with the usual flair on which his reputation is built, but it is often done in isolation as if each soloist was not listening to the other. With musicians of this calibre it usually doesn't matter, and in most cases the solos are done with the requisite amount of "feeling" that just borders on doing what is necessary and little else. But live jazz, especially in a jam session, can be one of the most exhilarting musical experiences in the world, witness the testimony of the same Freddie Hubbard weaving in out and around a duet with Lee Morgan in the incredible "The Night Of The Cookers" (Blue Note).

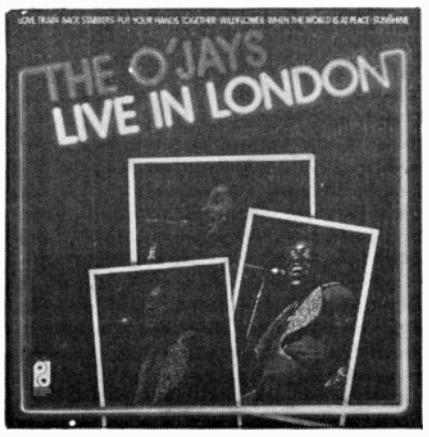
Part of the problem could have something to do with the audience. In the context of a nightclub, in this case a small club in the heart of Brooklyn's Bedford-Stuyvesant ghetto – to an audience absolutely in tune with the music, Hubbard called on the kind of fire he is more than

SOUL & JAZZ REVIEWS

capable of summoning at will. On the concert stage, playing to an apparently young and enthusiastic audience which in spite of its musical sophistication is quite willing to accept anything, the assembled stars are singularly lackluster in their treatment of Freddie Hubbard's "Povo", mechanical solos following each other in uninspired succession. Particularly at fault is Ron Carter, a bassist of unquestioned ability who refuses to do anything with the simple line Hubbard uses as the improvisational underpinning of his song.

If this kind of rebellion is indicative of the price we the audience must pay in acceptance of the new "popular" line of jazz, I suppose we will have to go along with it until the scene changes; because while this particular side does not represent the most extreme example, it *is* a fact that Freddie Hubbard, Herbie Hancock, Chico Hamilton and Michael White are now playing music that they would not have touched even as recently as four years ago, to say nothing of during the mainstream heights of the early and mid-sixties when Hubbard and Hancock were making their names. "Povo" is not the kind of song Hubbard would once have felt happy with, when he recorded "Breaking Point", just as "Chameleon" is not the Herbie Hancock of "Speak Like A Child". Hubbard's movement, even the string laden "First Light", toward popular acclaim has been more logical than Hancock's who could follow a densely laden album like *Sextant* with something as surprising as *Headhunters.* But as part of this new popularity jazz will suffer in that it will have to lose some of its searing emotional intensity, which usually was a reflection of personal experience.

Side One of this album is not the first indication I have seen of this, Hancock himself seemed to be having problems at his Carnegie Hall debut with his new band. But jazz musicians are only human, an occasional bout of laziness is acceptable especially from those who have displayed their wares with such alacrity in the past. Anyway there's always Side Two and on that side the assembled names vindicate themselves mightily. All's well that ends well, as they say!



Live In London
The O'Jays
Philadelphia International KZ 32953

Live In Europe
Billy Paul
Philadelphia International KZ 32952

By LEE HILDEBRAND

"The next stop we make will be England," Philly tune masters Kenny Gamble and Leon Huff wrote and Ohio harmony kings the O'Jays sang in the Seventies soul anthem, "Love Train." And that's just where the engineer dropped the O'Jays, Billy Paul, and the Intruders last December to give the ever-growing British rhythm and blues audience a live taste of what they've been digging and dancing to from the sound systems at local discos.

In the past there have been precious few live recordings by vocal groups, excepting from the Motown stable and gospel quartets, perhaps because it seldom works. Most groups aren't able to pull off in person what they do in the studio. To the average club or concert goer caught up in the excitement of the visual performance, defects in the audio go little noticed. In fact, many listeners through association hear the familiar record in their minds rather than what is actually coming over the P.A. If a group does new material or deviates greatly from recorded versions, the illusion is often destroyed. When the live performance is captured on tape, without separation booths, over-dubbing, punching-in or additional background singers, every flaw is exposed and the results often come out quite thin.

Could the O'Jays do it? Would they get over? After all, as the Mascots in the late doo-wopping Fifties and when dee-jay Eddie O'Jay hung them with his moniker, the group had five members. During the up and down Sixties they lost one, then another member. Could a trio, caught naked, triumph?

Sho' 'nuff they did. *The O'Jays Live In London* is a masterpiece and is certain to become a milestone for other groups to emulate. Principal singer Eddie Levert's shouting baritone swoops in and out, leading, then joining in rich three-part harmony. The arrangements by Dennis Williams for standard brass and reed orchestra are a perfect compliment; the strings and extra percussion of the studio are little missed.

The tunes couldn't be better for getting a crowd hand clappin' and foot stompin'. Titles like "Put Your Hands Together," "When The World Is At Peace," "Sunshine," and "Love Train" are pure revival material. Sure, the O'Jays go through the routine crowd rousing monologues, but little encouragement was needed because the audience was already in the groove. "Backstabbers" is included too, and so is one non-O'Jay song – "Wildflower," a Top Forty hit of over a year ago for the Canadian-American group, Skylark. Recently it has been a concert favorite for a number of black groups and did well as a single for New Birth. But the O'Jays cut them all. The three open with wordless moaned weaving; then Eddie gently reads the lyric before elaborate harmony and an orchestral cushion move in to build a seductive mood. Too bad they couldn't have thrown in a couple oldies like "Look Over Your Shoulder" and "Crack Up Laughing," but then the British probably wouldn't have been ready for that.

It's hard to believe the same band backed Billy Paul. They are terribly out of tune. Or is it Billy singing off key? His enunciation is often incomprehensible, but it makes little difference since his material lacks the universal quality that makes the O'Jays so magic.

Paul is basically a cult singer and his cult sure ain't in England. He needs a hip black audience to excel, as he did on the early *Feelin' Good At The Cadillac Club.* And when he hypnotically chants "black is so beautiful" to a young black crowd during "Ebony Woman," they know where he's coming from. Black college radio programmers were playing his records long before the freak monster, "Me And Mrs. Jones," thrust his unique warblings into commercial noteriety. That is the only piece on *Live In Europe* that elicites much response. A brief accapella scat during "Mrs. Jones" is the sole memorable moment on the album. Even a pulsating rendition of Elton John's "Your Song" failed to excite the Londoners.

Wonder how the Intruders fared?

Return To Forever
Chick Corea
ECM 1022 ST

Circle/Paris-Concert
Chick Corea
ECM 1018/19

By DALE HARDMAN

Communication. At essence that is what this music is all about. It requires only that you listen – that you be willing to respond to, as Chick Corea put it, "music...created out of the desire to communicate and share the dream of a better life with people everywhere."

Chick Corea, and the two different ensembles featured on each of these albums, manage to convey quite successfully the joy they find in life and music. On both albums, the ensemble passages are tight, yet flow with an unrestricted lyricism that is so much a part of Corea's work. One is at all times aware of a total group sound, in stark contrast to the "star" element focus that is so much a part of music today. Because of this interconnection, there is a constant exchange of ideas running through the music that at no time fails to grasp the attention of the listener's psyche.

Circle is the highly successful cooperative group that Corea first introduced on the Blue Note LP, *Song of Singing,* though at that time minus the services of reedman Anthony Braxton. This time however, Braxton accompanied the European tour and appears on a number of various instruments, including alto sax, contrabass clarinet, flutes, etc., all played in very fine form. An especially noteworthy exchange occurs in the composition titled "Duets", which features Corea on piano and Braxton on alto sax charting angular lines through the elliptical course of Corea's keyboard comping.

The other compositions present on this double album provide an ample showcase for the talents of Dave Holland and Barry Altschul. on "Song For the Newborn", Holland does an arco bass solo that is not merely random notes choked off in rapid fashion, but a real song, and one that is quite beautiful. "Lookout Farm", is Altschul's contribution and leaves no doubt as to his being a true percussionist, instead of merely a "time-keeper" or "skins" man. His solo is a total conversation on drums and his use of bells, wood blocks, sticks, and cymbals, only serves to illustrate the resourcefulness of his playing.

Return To Forever is the embryonic setting for an ensemble that explores totally different areas, specifically, in the manner that latin textures and sounds are more prominently featured.

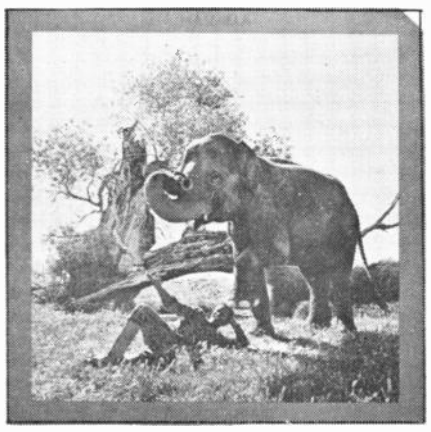
The first side features the title tune, a suite, that moves through several changes of mood and features some beautiful exchanges among Corea, Farrell on flute, and Flora Purim singing in a freespirited manner that utilizes her voice as a musical instrument; this type of singing is very natural and not at all extraneous to the music.

"Crystal Silence" is a duet with Corea on electric piano and Farrell on soprano sax. This introspective piece radiates a quiet child-like innocence of discovery that is very striking. Farrell's soprano sound is rich and deep, and compliments Corea's playing quite admirably.

"Sometime Ago" is the second suite and displays the joyful buoyancy so characteristic of this album. Working within a framework of Spanish textures and Latin sounds, the ensemble propels itself upward through passages of unresolved flight. The fleet, lucid piano work by Corea is matched by the soaring flute playing of Farrell, and the guitar-like plucks of the remarkable bassist Stanley Clarke. Flora Purim sings some beautiful lyrics by Neville Potter, that are refreshingly unpretentious in scope. Airto Moreira's long association with Flora Purim seems to add to the rapport in evidence here, as their carefully hewn percussion exchanges seem more exuberant because of their past shared musical experiences.

"La Fiesta" is the final explosive selection, set in a carnival atmosphere of joyous dancing and merriment so typical of Latin festivities. Farrell plays some of the most magnificent soprano (totally removed from the now cliche "eastern" sonances of most soprano players) he has ever recorded. Corea, too, manages to give ample credence to the belief that he is master of the electric piano as well as acoustic.

It is truly gratifying that ECM has seen fit to record these two remarkable groups led by Chick Corea, and if there are any regrets it is only that an American record company did not record these two albums, and therefore some may have trouble in obtaining it. Polydor is releasing some of the ECM catalog here in the States, and perhaps they might be persuaded to release the entire ECM line. Until that time however, they may be obtained directly from ECM at: ECM Records, 8 Munchen 60, Gleichmanstrabe 10, Munich, W. Germany.



I Am Not Afraid
Masekela
Blue Thumb BTS 6015

By BOB PALMER

Masekela – he has dropped the Hugh – is moving in the direction of a neo-African fusion style involving the polyrhythms of West African drumming and the lilt of South African pop. Most of the tunes on *Afraid* have English lyrics, written in a run-on manner without regard for meter or rhyme, and Masekela sings them in an adequate if unspectacular voice. In traditional African music voice quality and rhyme are of little consequence, but by Euro-American standards the vocal numbers have an amateurish quality. The instrumentals, especially "Jungle Jim" and "Night In Tunisia" (the Dizzy Gillespie opus), are strong and smoking. Crusaders Joe Sample and Stix Hooper add bizarre dissonances and straight-ahead funk drumming to the tight, complex rhythms of Hedzoleh Sounds and Masekela's trumpet is at its best. He combines an airy, legitimate tone with speech-like phrasing which sometimes recalls Don Cherry's work. "In The Market Place" features strange, shimmering tone clusters from Sample's electric piano and a marketplace soundtrack – vendors, camel bells – over surging Ghanian rhythms and turns into a kind of audio movie. The words, however, are decidedly Hollywood. All these elements haven't quite settled into place; as an album *Afraid* has more than its share of rough edges. But when it cooks it cooks, and when Masekela has had time to simmer his African soul stew a bit longer it will be a tasty dish indeed.

Inside Quincy Jones

Quincy Jones
Body Heat
A&M SP3617

By EDWARD ECKSTINE

These are trying times for the so-called jazz musician. At last the public seems to have opened their eyes to the true artistic credibility and validity that these artists have been trying to convince us of for the past forty years. But they are trying times because the once rigid lines and barriers that have been placed on different forms of music have been somewhat dismantled and restructured and although the traditionalist critic and listener holler of cop outs on the part of the musician, in his incorporation of contemporary idioms, the musician invariably and justifiably argues that he is only trying to make his music more accessible to the public, and that he has used contemporary styles because they are as valid as the "jazz" styles of years gone by. It is nothing new, for didn't Louis Armstrong go through those changes in the 1920's and Ellington and Basie had the same problems in the thirties where critics screamed of their music being chaotic and devoid of melody, but all three are now clearly recognized as classic composers, probably the best this country has ever produced. And how about Bird, Diz, Lester Young, and the Billy Eckstine band, they were all called pioneers of a trashy style of music known as "bop", which is now referred to as the most fruitful period of American music. The 1950's brought Miles Davis into the forefront with a style many called 'cool jazz' which was severely panned by many of the world's leading critics, and there was Coltrane in the sixties, and the cynics took offense to the mere mention of his name, for his spiritual explorations soothed the hearts and souls of many of his listeners, but to the deaf earred critics he was aimlessly blowing.

The point is that it is inevitable that the Donald Byrd's, Herbie Hancock's, Miles Davis's and in this case Quincy Jones stand directly in the line of traditionalist critical fire, every time a fender bass, electric keyboard, or wah-wahed guitar is turned on. The appalling thing to me is that the generally accepted definition of jazz is that it is a form of music based on improvisation and exploration, but still critics try to place a fence around an art form that can't be fenced in.

"Body Heat" is a multi-faceted concept album of sorts for Quincy; gone are the large forty piece orchestral settings, for they have been replaced by a strong, driving rhythm section and an array of guitars and synthesizers.The focus has been altered a bit for where there was total Quincy in his previous albums, the compositional as well as arranging chores seem to have a democratic feel about them this time around.

Quincy has gotten together with some of the finest writers in the Los Angeles area including Leon Ware, Bernard Ighner, and Bruce Fisher and has surrounded himself with the likes of Billy Preston, Herbie Hancock, David T. Walker, and Bernard Purdie. Consequently he has produced the finest album I have yet to hear this year. The album is so sensual it makes my spine tingle, "Body Heat" so funky that you just have to move "Boogie Joe the Grinder" and "One Track Mind", lush and pastorally beautiful "Along Came Betty". The title tune equals "Lets Get It On" in sexual philosophy, the intelligent incorporation of driving funk with historical and educational message as conveyed in "Soul Saga" is an interesting concept.

Bernard Ighner is featured on a splendid ballad of his entitled "Everything Must Change", where his bellowing baritone is highlighted by the ethereal syntesizer of Herbie Hancock. Ighner will shortly become one of the most important composer performers in the world, it will only be a matter of time and exposure. The same goes for Leon Ware who is featured on three of the eight cuts as composer and vocalist.

I don't think the vocalists of the world will shudder in fright when they hear Q's performance of "Just a Man" but it is so effective, adding a personal touch to a personal song, with some of the best choral singing heard anywhere.

"If I Ever Lose This Heaven is the single, a likely choice, although any seven of the eight tunes has hit possibilities, "Heaven" will certainly be a hit, with fine vocal performances by Leon Ware and the amazing Minnie Riperton.

If *Body Heat* isn't the album of the year I would like to see what is, for since its release it has loitered around my turntable, and managed to get played at least a couple times a day and *Innervisions* was the last one to receive that much attention around my house.

Quincy Jones
Body Heat
A&M

By QUINCY JONES

I had no set plans or ideas that I wanted to convey when I first entered the studio to cut *Body Heat* , I just wanted to cut a good album. The one thing that kept ringing in the back of my mind was that I would like to experiment with a smaller setting, for in the past all of my work had centered around large thirty piece orchestral settings, so I did have plans to use a smaller group, consequently the music revolves around twelve musicians.

Body Heat is a departure for me in the sense that it is very funky music, where my last album was Sunday afternoon, soft and sweet, the new one is Saturday night, on the street partying music. The tunes are collaborations between me and many of the new young writers who live in Los Angeles, notably Leon Ware, who has written songs for the Jackson Five as well as four of the songs on *Body Heat* , Bruce Fisher, who has written a great deal with Billy Preston, Bernard Ighner a really fine writer and singer, an unknown Canadian writer named Valdy and the standard "Along Came Betty" which Benny Golson wrote years ago. Bernard Ighner's tune "Everything Must Change" was recorded a few hours after he wrote it, I thought it was such a beautiful tune that I had to have it in the album and Bernard's vocal is so beautiful/eerie that it warms me every time I hear it. I have spent a large portion of the past year studying the history of the Black man in the old west and through my readings learned of the Buffalo soldier. "Soul Saga" is my ode to the Buffalo soldier an attempt to educate the listener through a music medium to a group of people who were important members of the pioneer days of this country. The Buffalo soldiers were black cowboys who got their name Buffalo because of their nappy hair they were probably the most feared group of cowboys there were in those days, but you would never know it by the accounts in our history books.

I was very meticulous in my choice of musicians for many of the parts and ideas were planned for certain people in particular. Herbie Hancock can be heard playing synthesizer on "Body Heat" as well as "Everything must Change", David T. Walker and Melvin "Wah Wah" Regin are the guitarists throughout most of the album. Grady Tate, Bernard Purdie and James Gadson are the drummers, and I don't think a finer trio of drummers can be found anywhere, they are my personal favorites. I really like the idea of having an album that people can dance to and two tunes in particular are intended for precisely that; "Boogie Joe the Grinder" and One Track Mind", which are propelled by the ever so funky rhythm section. Using the original premise of the smaller ensemble I plan to go on tour with a twelve piece band sometime in the fall. It should really be a gas for it has been quite a long time since I worked with such a small group.

IN THE SEVENTIES

Jazz

By ED WARD

Silver, Rolls-Royce-type silver in particular, is such a classy color. And in fact it was the classy silver color of the albums on the Onyx label which first made me pick one up and look at it. It was called *After Hours in Harlem*, (Onyx ORI 207) and featured Hot Lips Page, a bop trumpet player I'd been curious about. On the back, the liner notes said that the music was from the Jerry Newman collection, Newman having been a student at Columbia who owned recording equipment – a real rarity in 1940 – and dug jazz. The record turned out to be fantastic. Without the demands of the recording studio, just relaxing at house parties, blowing whatever came into their heads, these musicians sounded a lot more at home than I'd ever heard them sound before. The band starts up "I'm In The Mood For Love" and a cantankerous drunk wanders over saying "I'm not in the mood for love – are you?" "Hey," says a voice that could be Newman's, "get away from that microphone."

Of such moments is jazz history made. In fact, it is a tribute to the musicians that this music leaps out at you, even though the recording makes your stereo sound like it's dying. But that is just the sort of music that Onyx specializes in, and boy am I glad! Because some of the most searing moments of jazz that I've encountered have shown up on this label, and a whole era came to life for me virtually overnight.

I'm not totally sure where, besides the Newman collection, Onyx gets its stuff. A good part of their catalogue – or what I've seen of it, anyway – consists of what sounds like commercially-made recordings. But I don't care where they get them – they may well be in the public domain, for all I know – because I'm so glad they've got them.

Onyx isn't the easiest label in the world to find, although they aren't bootlegs or anything. They are part of the same company as Muse, which I mentioned last month while reviewing the fabulous Grubb brothers. I don't know quite what's in their catalogue, either, but here's a guide to some of the ones I've dug up:

Hot Lips Page After Hours In Harlem (ORI 207): Listening to this disc is almost enough to wear you out. Lips is ample proof of why jazz fans of the day called someone they liked "frantic". And his vocals on "Old Yazoo" are some of the best scat around. Young Thelonious Monk appears on a few cuts, too.

Lester Young: Prez In Europe (ORI 218): Recorded in a servicemen's club in 1956-7, no less, with a pick-up band that leaves a lot to be desired. But Lester, supposedly with all his greatness gone, sure sounds okay to me. In fact, the myth of his disintegration is given the lie by this record, which contains flashes of brilliance – especially in the two ten-minute tunes – as good as anything he did.

Charlie Parker: First Recordings! (ORI 221): (ORI 221): This one's worth it for the cover photo, but it's also a collection of Bird's early work with Jay McShann and in a blues band backing one Rubberlegs Williams, who seems to have a terminal case of bourbon. More interesting for the overall picture than for any Bird-ology, it's still a fascinating record.

Don Byas: Midnight At Minton's (ORI 208): Another triumph from the Newman files! Co-starring the lovely voice of Helen Humes, the odd trumpet of Joe Guy, and that Monk character on piano, this record throws light on one of the more obscure Basie alumni. Byas' tenor gets plenty of space to stretch out in, and the crowds at what was one of Harlem's more progressive niteries eat it up enthusiastically. The recording is amazingly clear – just like being there.

Tommy Flanagan Trio and Sextet (ORI 206): Not all the stuff Onyx releases is thirty years old. In this case, we have 1961 recordings of an overlooked pianist who assembled a fine group (including Kenny Dorham) to play some relaxed jazz one afternoon for a small British label that folded. The music flows beautifully, just as hoped, and it stands up very well against any similar session of the time.

Cafe Society (ORI 210): This is the sort of album Onyx does better than anyone else (but who else is doing it?) – three or four tracks by one band, three or four by another, and all united by a common theme; in this case, the Cafe Society where these performers played. Thus, we get J.C. Heard's bopping small band, Mary Lou Willimas fronting an all-girl band, an amazing four cuts featuring the red-hot clarinet of Edmond Hall, and some disposable cuts of Maxine Sullivan and an out-of-tune string section. Something for everybody, and a great cross-section of jazz talent circa 1944-6.

Central Avenue Breakdown Volume 1 (ORI 212): Three groups here all playing bebop. The remarkable Teddy Edwards in a band featuring Hampton Hawes on piano; guitarist Arvin Garrison and his wife, Vivan Garry, on bass, playing licks that would scare hell out of most guitarists I know; and Dodo Marmarosa, playing his first date as a leader. This one goes by so quick that you can't help but want more.

Tootin' Through The Roof, Volume 2 (ORI 213): This is part of a series commemorating the great trumpet players of the past, and features a whole side of forgotten Louis Armstrong cuts recorded in France. The backup band is a little hesitant, but that sure is Satch! Side two gives us two Bobby Hackett sides and four great Buck Clayton numbers with an all-star band including Slam Stewart and Flip Phil Phillips. Very nice, indeed!

I don't know what else Onyx may have available out there, but what I've seen, I've liked. No matter what anybody tells you, an understanding of all the eras of jazz is necessary for a complete understanding of jazz now, and I can't think of a more painless way to start your education as is contained in the abovementioned grooves. Start out with the contagious warmth of Hot Lips Page or Don Byas, and see if you don't agree.

ROOTS

By DEE DEE MCNEIL

The strength of black influence on American music, dance and drama is startling. Throughout the years of struggle it has always been obvious to creative black people that the rhythm and rhyme of their culture and contributions were either being sapped by those who chose to commercialize and plagiarize black talent, or the talent was completely ignored.

Perhaps we were forgotton simply because, as stated, those history books told "his story". This column has been created to specifically depict and explore "our story". For without our strength and beauty this land could not have blossomed or flowered or grown fruitful. You see, we are the Roots.

Minstrel: in medieval times, one of an order of men who traveled from place to place singing their musical compositions to the accompaniment of a harp. A poet, formerly in the U.S., a comedy performer (one of a group) usually blacked and otherwise imitating a negro.

This definition of minstrel stands as written in Webster's dictionary and is a sore spot with many blacks. However, it is interesting to note that our style and approach was mimicked by whites (even in those days) and that our influence commanded the respect of large audiences and even caused whites to paint themselves black.

It began as one time slave entertainment for plantation bosses, but later blossomed into a rich and rewarding life style for many fine, talented, negro musicians.

A typical minstrel show was divided into two parts generally consisting of seventeen costumed men in a half-circle, opening the first half of the program. There would be the interlocutor (the fellow who engaged other minstrels in conversation, feeding them lines so to speak, similar to a master of ceremonies) who stood in the center of the group. Singers and dancers made up the rest of the troupe along with two so-called "end men" who were the main comedians, usually referred to as Mr. Bones and Tambo. The second part of the program was akin to a theatre performance. It was more dramatic and included specialty songs, dances, skits, and monologues. Perhaps Flip Wilson was inspired by stories of early minstrels when he created his famous character, 'Geraldine'. You see, minstrels were all male, as was most theatre until the late 1800's. If the need for a woman arose, a man simply dressed and acted the part. One of the comedy men usually played a wench in bustle, wig and swishing skirts very similar to 'Geraldine'.

Early minstrels were excellent tamborine players. Shows were loud and lively, including rousing choruses, comedy songs, vocal combos, banjo solos, sentimental ballads, jokes and dances. Each person usually broke away from the semi-circle of the group and danced his own special solo until sweating and out of breath he would retire to the line, followed by great applause.

As early as 1839 there were smaller bands of black minstrels who performed with only three or four people in their group. They were featured playing banjo, triangle, tamborine and violin while also singing and telling jokes.

Their attire was colorful and flamboyant. Minstrels wore top hats and hats looking very much like today's 'apple hat'. They were stylish in top coats and sometimes tails, suspenders and often stripped socks that reached from toe to knee to compliment knicker-type pants. There was often a bone player or a cymbalist included in the show. Check out the Soul Train Dancers and their costumes. Their dress is very much like the minstrels of long ago.

Although minstrels was a distasteful path for many aspiring musicians and black actors, early blacks in entertainment had to be strong and beautiful enough to side-step contempt. They were never allowed to forget that they came from a people in bondage, but that strength of character and the unalterable course of action they assumed to survive, has left an indelible impression on this country that can never be erased or forgotton.

The earliest minstrels were all former slaves. A few were freedmen who migrated away from unpleasant memories and environments seeking greener pastures elsewhere. Never did they forget their plight, in spite of their clowning and happy-go-lucky songs and dances. In fact, in many cases black performers used their art form as a means to demonstrate that they wished to stand as witnesses for freedom.

An example of this courage and dedication was presented in early black pioneer musical troupes. One in particular was composed of a family known as Luca, who performed at the anniversary celebration of the anti-slavery society in New York as early as 1853.

Another family featuring James Bohee of the Bohee Brothers grew famous dancing the soft-shoe to the accompaniment of their own banjo playing and were so celebrated that they gave command performances to European monarchs.

Then there was James Bland who gave banjo lessons to an English King and in 1881 found great personal and professional success when he gave a command performance for Queen Victoria of England.

James Bland was born free in Long Island, New York in 1854 and lived to be 56 years old. He left a legacy of beautiful songs to remind us of his life here and was a famous composer in his early twenties. Some of his big hits were, "Oh, Dem Golden Slippers", "In the Evening By the Moonlight", "Pretty Little Caroline Rose" and certainly scores of others. Strangely enough, James Bland was not just another songwriter/minstrel. He was a self-made professional whose family had an upstanding name in the community. Allen Bland (his father) was a graduate of Wilberforce and Oberlin Colleges. James himself had a degree from Howard University Law School.

James had always been musical. At fourteen he was busy singing and playing for parties and weddings. His father was upset with the idea that James was going to pursue an artistic career and sent him to Howard University to try and arrest his mind from thoughts of singing groups and instruments. However, once enrolled, James Bland began to organize glee clubs and minstrel groups. Still, finishing college courses at a mere nineteen to the surprise of friends and family.

In 1878 James published "Carry Me Back To Old Virginia", which turned into an instant success. It was so successful in fact, that it was made the official song for the State of Virginia inspite of the fact that credit was given to a black composer. Fondly recalled as 'Prince of Negro Performers', James Bland was earning as much as $1000.00 weekly at one point in his career.

When the civil war began, masses of blacks in northern areas gave vocal, musical support of the union and its war aims under the protective guise of minstrels.

Of course by 1860 some white folks were painting their faces black and exploiting the songs and dances of slave performers for commercial gain. It is true that terrible damage was done to black imagery in theatre by white minstrels, but it is also true that so-called negros used their stage presence and power to communicate their feelings, aspirations and politics to the people. The commercial misuse of the black, minstrel image also caused deep-rooted hostility in the community and provoked blacks to prove their talent by creating new and different visual means of entertainment.

Surely the step from from minstrel to black musical plays with well-written plots and superb characterization occured to counter the white minstrel side shows. This retaliation to the humiliation black entertainers felt at being copied and exploited only served to raise us higher up the ladder of success. The fruit of our labors hang in plentiful clusters from many strong branches of our national tree, but trees can not stand without strong foundations, and we are the ROOTS!

HOLLYWOOD

By WALTER BURRELL

In recent months this town has been witness to a profusion of top flight concerts and it almost appears as though big-name artists have suddenly discovered that Los Angeles isn't such a hick town after all. The opening of a couple of new, well constructed clubs (especially the Total Experience, run by a young Brother named Lonnie Simmons) has probably contributed to the recent surge of super Black talent gracing the dusty shores of our previously arid (at least in terms of good performances) town.

One of the most recent super-groups to appear at the Total Experience was Blue Magic, five guys (Richard Pratt, Vernon and Wendell Sawyer, Keith Beaton and lead singer Ted Mills) who weren't even a group until they were pulled together a year and a half ago by manager Alan Rubin to appear on a program with War in Philadelphia. Sporting dance steps reminiscent of the mid-50's and suits straight out of an Eleganza catalog, Blue Magic conjured up images of early day Platters and fit neatly into the ever continuing Do-Wop Renaissance promulgated by them and such other groups as The Ojays, The Spinners, Harold Melvin and The Blue Notes, et al. One would think that the gargantuan human vacuum called fans would have sucked in their fill of falsetto-voiced lead singers, lapel holes filled with neatly cut carnations, pastel-colored suits and dance steps patterned after Jim Kelly's karate classes, but not so. Groupies and matrons alike squealed with unmitigated glee and newly found abandon as Blue Magic attacked beginning stanzas of such hits as "Welcome To The Club," "Spell" and "You Make Me Feel Brand New," their soft pink suits clinging in fluffy desperation to their bodies as the young singers bounced through their choreographed exercises like an overdressed group of gymnasts.

Once the imagery of the wardrobe and choreography are tucked into the back of one's mind, however, their music becomes tantamount and it is here that Blue Magic is undeniably captivating and thoroughly enjoyable.

Then there was the sensational opening of Lady D., Diana Ross, at Universal Studios' Amphitheatre which proved to be both the most lavish and the most enjoyable concert to hit L.A. in a long time. Motown did it up regally for Lady D. .and she responded in kind with one of the finest performances of her career. The fact that she is the reigning superstar of our lifetime was given visable testimony by the uninhibited adulation poured on her by a packed house of doting admirers, this writer included. Some of the lucky first nighters included Helen Reddy, Barbra Streisand, Telly Savalas, Billy Dee Williams, Stevie Wonder, Berry Gordy (and the whole Gordy clan), Jonathan Winters, Cher and Chastity Bono, Leon Isaac and wife Jane Kennedy, Smokey Robinson and Don Mitchell and his actress-wife Judy Pace.

The warm-up group, a new Motown act called The Devasting Affair were, to be kind about it far from devastating. Granted, they had terrible problems with the sound system, an unpardonable occurance on the part of the lavish new Amphitheatre, but that didn't detract from the fact that the three less than exciting and totally unoriginal (to say nothing of overweight) singers were only so-so as performers and verged on dull when it came to visual performance. One really classy part of their act, however, was their clothes: the lone male singer wore a pleasant, medium green suit with a light green shirt, while the women sported dresses of matching light green. One of the ladies was, to say the least, overly endowed in certain areas, but designer Harold Evans was able to camouflage her far-from-pixie-like countenance with great taste. It's too bad Motown didn't get the same designer to do Lady D's wardrobe. The floor-length, deep blue dress with the ever present sequins and trimmed at the bottom with fur (on a July night?) might have turned the nostalgia freaks on, but this fabulous lady certainly deserved better.

As for the lady's performance, she easily captured the audience from the first moment her voice was heard off-stage offering up lilting phrases of "Love Child" until she closed 15 tunes later with "My Man" from her movie, "Lady Sings The Blues" (she told the audience that this song was her favorite). Her satin voice is so distinctive, so very much her own, so pure and easy to listen to.

Added to this was the unmatched talent and unbelievable energy of Soul Train dancers Little Joe, Pat Davis, Easy Eddie and Domita Jo Freeman, who does the choreography. But it was the thin, delicately desirable frame of Lady D. which remained the center of attention throughout the entire evening. Young comic Franklyn Ajaye, sandwiched in between The (less than) Devastating Affair and Lady D., was very well received by the mostly white audience, poking fun at everything from James Brown ("He's a genius: he took six words and wrote 50 songs with them") to himself ("I've been a comedian since March 14, 1972 – when I flunked out of law school").

Another well-received concert was that of The Main Ingredient, who preceeded Blue Magic's engagement at the Total Experience. Their warm-up act, three male vocalists called Nature's Love (Eugene Sharp, lead vocalist, was fantastic; baritone Leon Green had his musical thing together, too; the third Brother was so off-pitch that it appeared he was singing a totally different song all the time), turned in a good, theatrical show.

But it was The Main Ingredient everybody was waiting to see and no one in the audience was disappointed. Their selection of songs was refreshingly varied and drew cheers from onlookers Raymond St. Jacques, Ricky Sylvers, Richard Roundtree and the Temptations' Otis Williams. Lead singer Cuba Gooding managed to conduct the band between solos without missing a single vocal or dance beat. Toward the end of the show the group were presented with a gold record for "I Just Don't Want To Be Lonely."

Over at the Whiskey in Hollywood The Sylvers followed the raw, distinctively different and daring humor of Black comic Rodney Winfield with a breathtaking exhibition of stunning choreography and dynamic vocal arrangements. Olympia, Leon, Edmond, Ricky, James and Charmaine were even able to stop the clanking of glasses and idle chatter so common in nightclubs when they let loose with their totally acapella version of "Yesterday," which drew a standing ovation. The Sylvers shine on the slower material, which is indicative of their real ability as musicians. Their whole act is very polished, especially the choreography, which is more than mere dance steps; it creates an entire visual portrait of designs and forms which compliment their overall act greatly. Their "Wish That I Could Talk To You Baby" was barely audible over the squeals and cheers. Their new single, "I Aim To Please," was equally liked.

Then there was Barry White over at the Greek Theatre with Love Unlimited (including, naturally, his new bride, Glodean James). After 45 minutes of a boring light-and-water show, the deep-voiced Barry made his entrance in his familiar white suit. The guy is admittedly a musical genius, but his live performances leave a lot to be desired. The show moved slowly, at times laborously, and the evening proved to be a long one.

Steve Gold, president of Far Out Productions, the company formed five years ago to manage War, made a statement in an entertainment publication recently to the effect that the seven-member group were leaving United Artists Records and setting up their own label. Within hours United Artists released a statement declaring that War was, indeed, signed exclusively "through August of 1977".

By VINCE ALETTI

To make note of an obvious trend, more and more singles are being released with what I've come to think of as a discotheque format: the A side, often "Part 1," primarily vocal; the B side either a largely instrumental, riffing continuation marked "Part 2" or something labeled "(instrumental)" which may be nothing more than the backing track on the first side with the vocals dropped out. What probably started out as a cheap production move (who wants to bother with a whole other session for the B side?) has gradually turned into one of the most interesting, if not more creative, developments in 45 format. If the A side is hot, chances are the B side will get hotter; you double your pleasure or something like that and your favorite club disc jockey gets to make some tasty Part 1/Part 2 segues. But even if the A side is dull, more often than not, the B side will prove to be the record's saving grace, especially in discotheques. So B sides are being refurbished and expanded (in some cases two or three minutes beyond the A side length) and trotted out by promo people as the "discotheque sides." Of course, many of these Part 1/Part 2, vocal/instrumental 45's remain cheap production moves, but a few are among the best new records each month (like "Be Thankful for What You've Got" and "Rock Your Baby").

This month's winning variations on the discotheque format: Willie Henderson's churning "Dance Master," a former British import selling for up to $6 in New York solely on its discotheque success, now available on Playboy Records (50057). Not exactly the most *inventive* song around – a bunch of girls scream, "Get on *down* with the dance master," and Henderson mumbles nastily – it survives on beat alone and survives beautifully. "Hanna Mae" by Deep Velvet (Aware 034), a narrative song so effective that a movie is being planned around it, has been out since late last Fall but its recent "discovery" by some radio stations may lead to a revival on the discotheque level. As with "Dance Master", the format here is basic vocal/instrumental, but while "Hanna Mae"'s track stands up well enough on its own, it's the vocal, with its story of a woman who fought slavery in the Old South and pioneer West, that's most successful.

Malcolm Cecil and Robert Margouleff, listed as associate producers on Stevie Wonder's last few albums, take the same credit on the Isley Brothers' "Live It Up" (T-Neck ZS8 2254) and their fluid synthesizer touch more than makes up for the Isleys' usual leaden lyrics. The lyrics are dispensed with on "Part 2" and the music chugs along unimpeded for as long as you can stand it (about 3:30). Masterfleet's "Well Phase I" (Sussex 516) is a Hendrix/Sly Stone derivative with lines like "I hear the babies crying" and a lot of nervous guitar. But flip it over to "Well Phase II" and you've got a terrific, violin-swept instrumental (reminds me of Isaac Hayes' fine "Theme from 'The Men'") so good you don't mind the black hippie rhetoric at the end. Record of the moment, however, is Choice Four's "The Finger Pointers" (in two parts, RCA 0315), an energetic, upbeat Van McCoy put down of people who take credit for your success but let you lose alone; stand aside, "Back Stabbers" and "Newsy Neighbors."

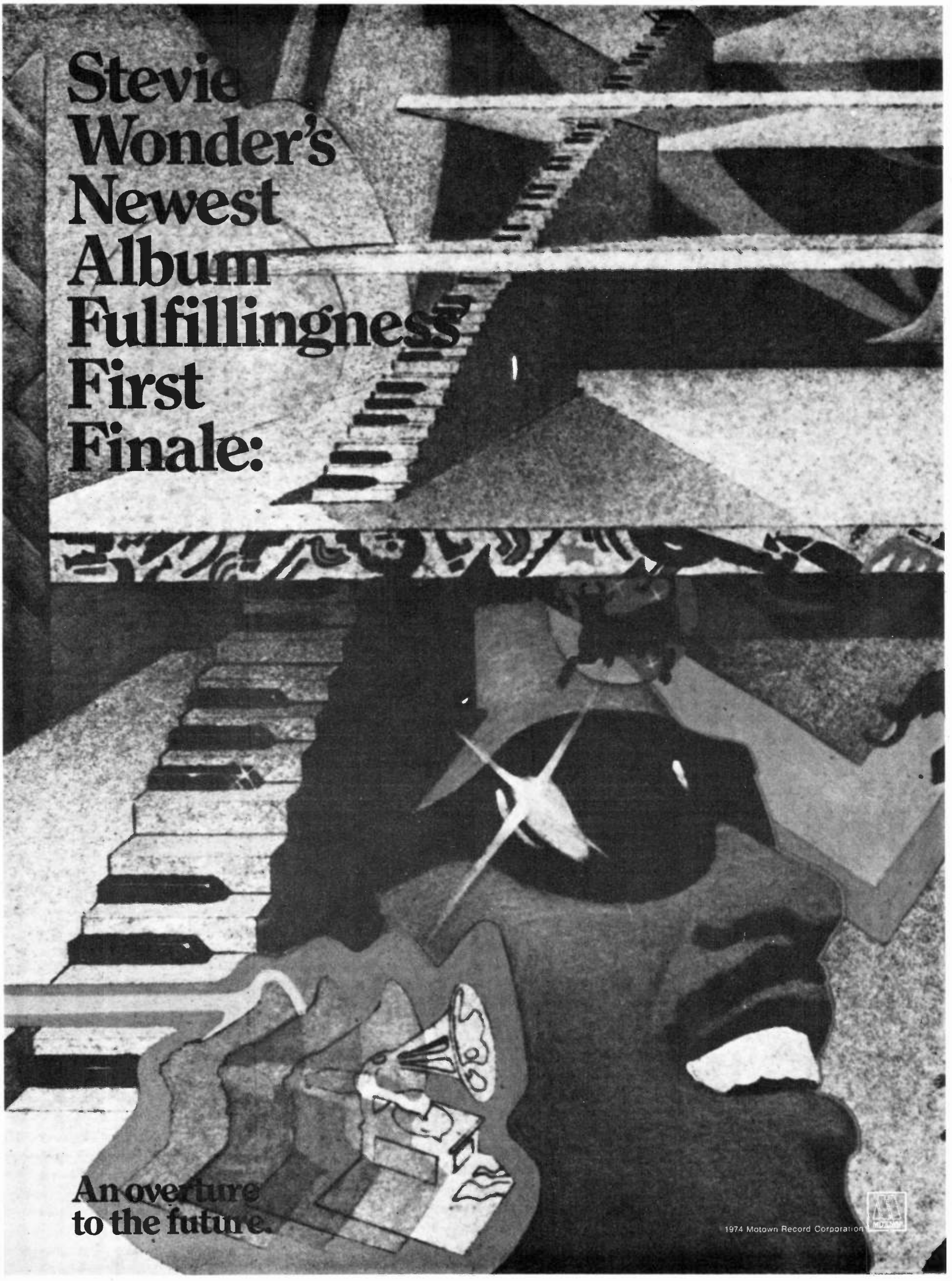
Just for the record, there are a number of other recent releases worth noting which follow this double-sided format with varying degrees of success. In descending order, from better to worse, they are: Karen Pree's lovely "Make Love Last Forever" with a Barry White-inspired instrumental flip side that runs more than five minutes (Casablanca 0012); "Do It ('Til You're Satisfied)" by B.T. Express, with an extended "discotheque" side of nearly six minutes (Scepter 12395); Rita Fortune's "Sisters and Brothers" (Columbia 4-46077); General Crook's fevered "Fever in the Funkhouse" (Wand 11276) and Africano's jumbled "Open Your Hearts" (Hi 2268).

There were a lot of big names on the new 45's this month. Unfortunately, most of their releases were so predictable you could only shrug – Billy Preston's "Nothing From Nothing", appropriately titled; "City in the Sky" by the Staple Singers; Isaac Hayes' "Title Theme" from *Three Tough Guys;* Love Unlimited's "People of Tomorrow Are the Children of Today" (with a title like that, what could you expect?) and "My Thang" by James Brown who is now calling himself both The Godfather of Soul and Minister of New New Super Heavy Funk on the label copy – or had already been well absorbed as excellent album cuts – Earth, Wind & Fire's delicious "Kalimba Story," the Main Ingredient's "Happiness Is Just Around the Bend" with one of the best introductory passages this year and Bill Withers' biting, intelligent and involving "You." But this elimination still leaves a few star entries deserving comment.

The best of them, and the surprise of the month, is "Then Came You" by Dionne Warwicke and the Spinners, an inspired combination (on Atlantic 3029). The Thom Bell production style is beginning to sound awfully readymade, but Warwicke revitalizes the formula and she soars joyously, trading riffs with Phil Wynne that you hope will never stop (so even at 3:53 the song seems short). Another inspired combination, Ashford and Simpson, come up with a strikingly similar sound in their bright and bouncy "Main Line" (WB 7811). I'd probably be more comfortable with it if it weren't about God, but I never complain when I'm on the dance floor. Sly & the Family Stone sound hopeful in "Time for Livin'" (Epic 5-11140) but even while they chant, "Time for changin', rearrangin'," much of the old inspiration for change, and certainly most of the energy, seems gone. But the strings are used beautifully and the B side, "Small Talk," with assistance from his baby son, is delightful. Roberta Flack's sweetly sensuous "Feel Like Makin' Love" (Atlantic 3025) is her most attractive work since "Killing Me Softly;" sophisticated and sexy, it may be the love song of the summer. (But the song that captures my mood this month, this whole goddamn nonth, is Etta James' torchy, wordless, brilliant "Feeling Uneasy" – not yet a 45, but a cut from her *Come a Little Closer* album and worth the price.)

While we're on the subject of love, two of the hottest disco records out are MFSB's "Love Is the Message" (Philadelphia International ZS7 3547) and "Love Is the Answer" by Van McCoy & the Soul City Symphony (Avco 4639). "Message," featuring the wonderfully raucous voices of the Three Degrees, is unsatisfying when compared with the original album cut – both because it's ridiculously short at 2:40 and because it picks up the beginning rather than the more exciting second half of that cut. But the addition of the girls, just screaming their hearts out, makes it irresistible in spite of its flaws. "Answer" comes off the new Stylistics album and is heavy-handed movie soundtrack-type stuff and I hated it until I heard it very loud at Le Jardin where it sounded surprisingly crisp and almost uplifting. Then there's "Love Dance," a light and infectious instrumental by Big City (20th Century 2105) that I haven't quite made up my mind about. And love is the subject of Betty Everett's "Try It, You'll Like It" (Fantasy 725), a very Dionne Warwick performance with a classic sixties feel I find hard to resist.

The following are too good to be mere leftovers; all are highly recommended, so use this as a shopping list: "Tom the Peeper" by Act I (Spring 140); "Do It Baby" by the Miracles (Tamla 54248); Johnny Bristol's "Hang On In There Baby" (MGM 14715); Syreeta's Stevie Wonder presentation, "Come and Get This Stuff" (Motown 1297); "Dance Girl," a Fatback Band cover and improvement by the Rimshots (Astroscope 118); "Doctor's Orders" by Sunny (who sounds like Dusty Springfield on Epic 5-11112); "I'm a Fool for You" by Undisputed Truth (Gordy 7139); Diane Steinberg's fine version of Carla Thomas' "Gee Whiz" (Atlantic 3042).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8 TRK. BN-EA140-G

L.P. BN-LA047-F
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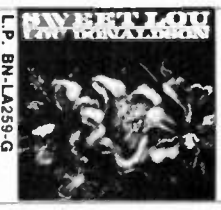
Clifford Brown

L.P. BN-LA267-G
8 TRK. BN-EA267-G

Lou Donaldson

L.P. BN-LA259-G
8 TRK. BN-EA259-G



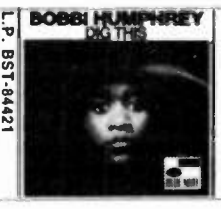
L.P. BN-LA109-F
8 TRK. BN-EA109-G

Herbie Hancock

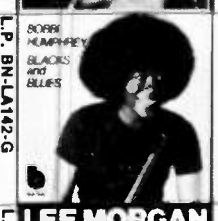
L.P. BST-89907
8 TRK. 04060

Bobbi Humphrey

L.P. BST-84421
8 TRK. LTR-8183



L.P. BN-LA142-G
8 TRK. BN-EA142-G



Lee Morgan

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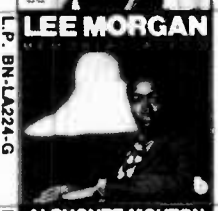
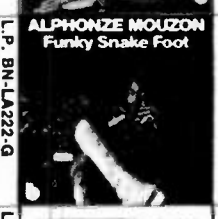
8 TRK. BN-EA224-G



Alphonze Mouzon

L.P. BN-LA222-G
8 TRK. BN-EA222-G



Moacir Santos

L.P. BN-LA260-G
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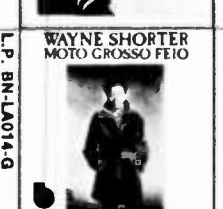
Wayne Shorter

L.P. BN-LA014-G
8 TRK. BN-EA014-G



Horace Silver

L.P. BN-LA054-G
8 TRK. BN-EA054-G

L.P. BST-84325
8 TRK. LTR-9009

McCoy Tyner

L.P. BN-LA223-G
8 TRK. BN-EA223-G

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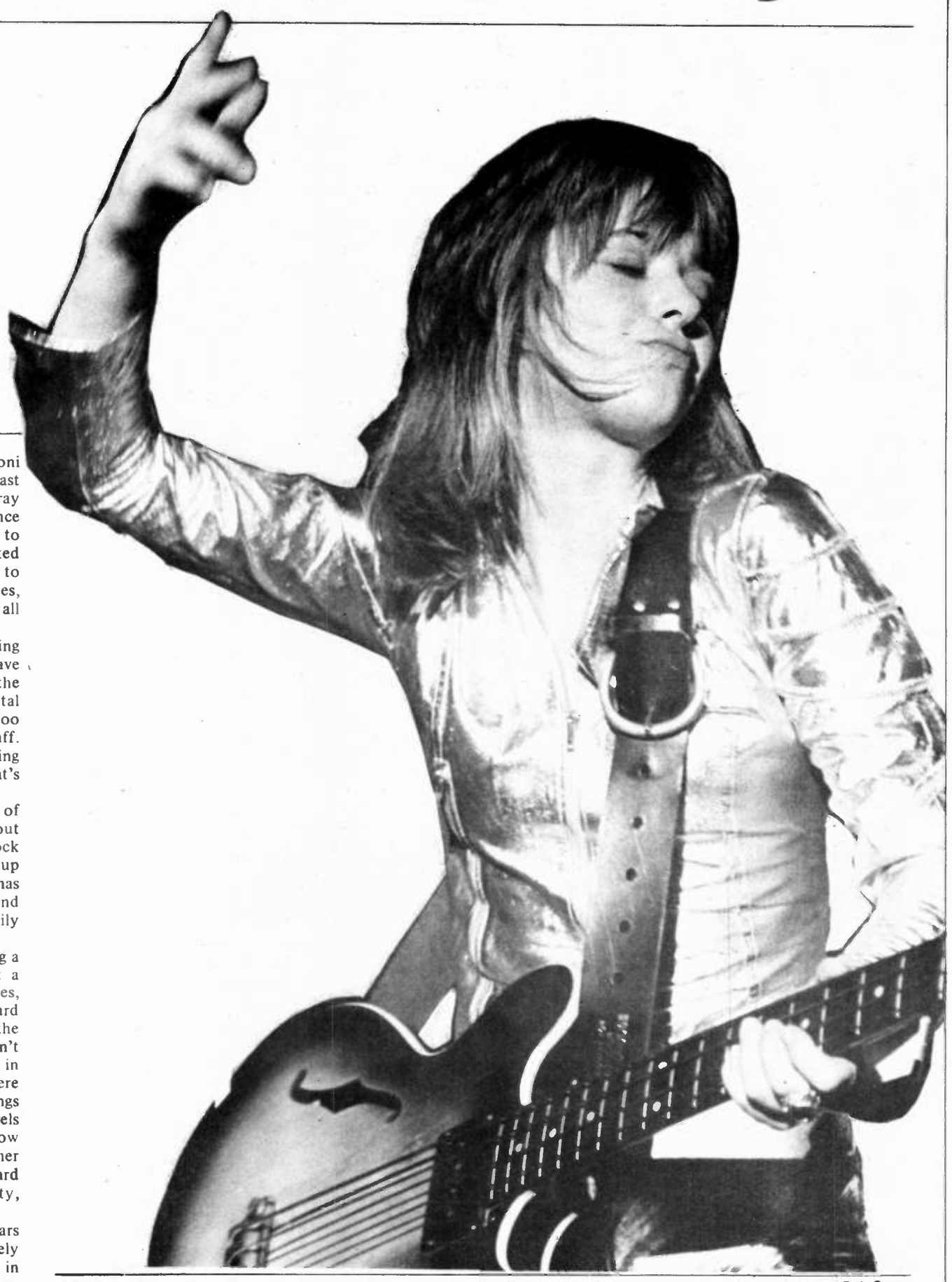
ON BLUE NOTE RECORDS & TAPES

"We need more wayward girls"



What unexplored valleys of the dolls has this girl opened the doors to? Bob Gruen

been as groupies or through canyon ladies like Joni Mitchell. But all that's been changing over the past few months. Hip pop princesses from Anne Murray to Patti Dahlstrom and Harriet Schock are once again bringing the female pop mentality back to prominence, opening up all the avenues that existed in the '60s for a girl singer and a good producer to make a lot of noise. For that matter, the Ronettes, the Chiffons, the Angels and the Crystals are all back on the road.

More significantly, certain women are doing things within the structure of rock & roll that have never been done before. Suzi Quatro of course is the first to belt out hard rock with an all male metal band—you can't really count Joplin, who loses too many points for blues and flowers and all that stuff. Anyway, Suzi is the first to do what she's doing without appearing to be a total degenerate. That's interesting in itself.

Along with Suzi Quatro, and possibly because of her, other women are pioneering what may turn out to be a revolutionary new approach to female rock in the '70s. Fanny, once the token female group that everyone said played just as good as boys, has stepped out since the addition of Patti Quatro, and is currently assaulting America with a heavily costumed satirical attack on rock & roll sexism.

Three girls called the Stilettos has been causing a lot of furor in New York lately, appearing at a greasy bar in the Bowery singing Ronettes, Shangri-Las and related songs, backed by a hard flashy rock band, and dressed to the teeth in the most trendy of New York trash attire. They don't just perform the songs, though—they enact them in the same melodramatic fashion in which they were originally sung, simultaneously reducing the songs to vehicles for parody and elevate them to new levels of teen culture relevance. The highlight of the show is when the lead singer whips a stiletto from her cleavage and threatens a rumble. This isn't Richard Nader stuff, it's honest female New York reality, absent from rock since the days of Murray the K.

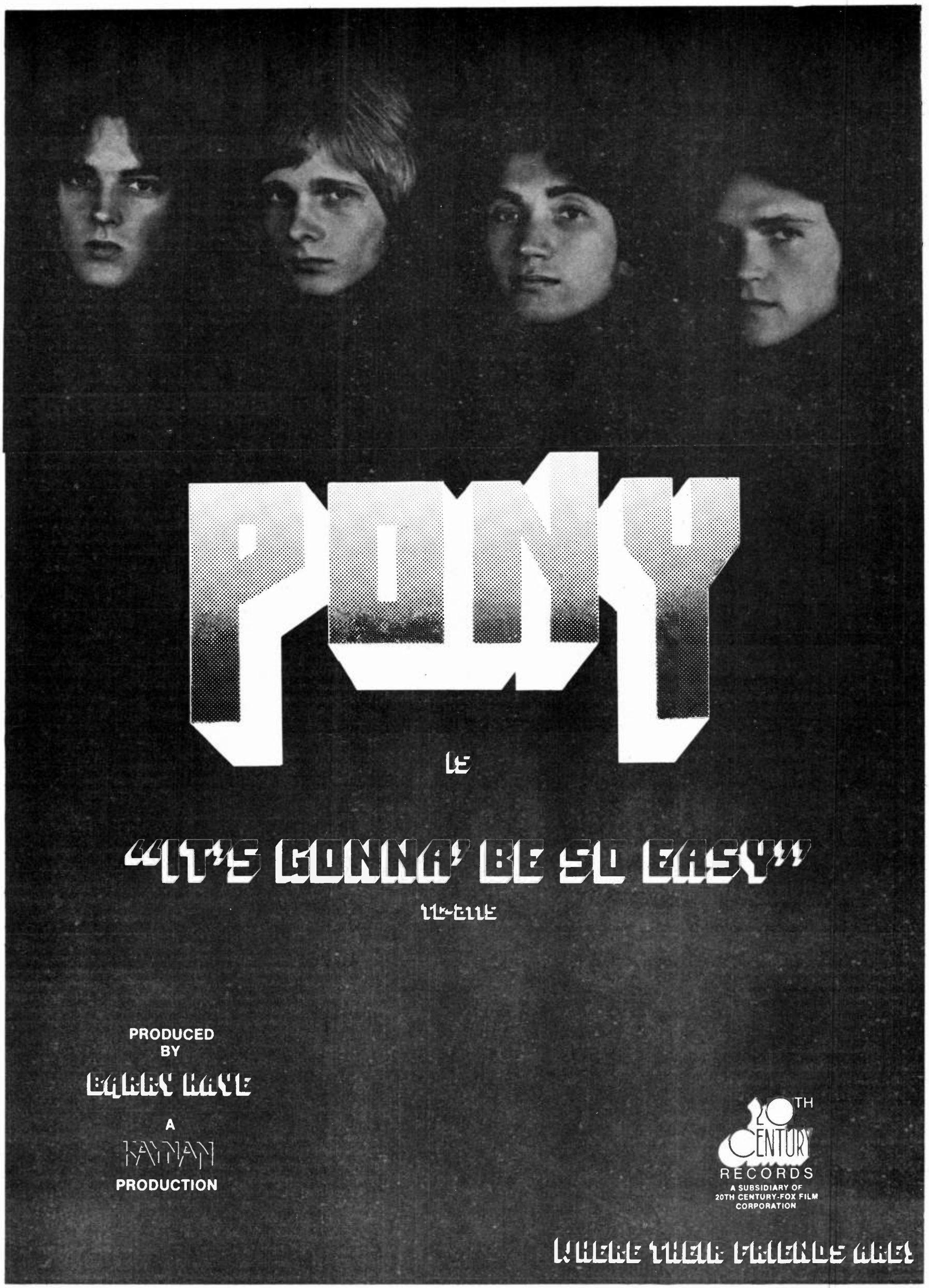
With the right breaks, the Stilettos will be stars soon. Which in turn will lead to things barely imaginable. There's so much brewing . . . it ties in with girls like Linda Lovelace and Marilyn Chambers becoming idols by publicizing activities which no girl previously liked to admit having done. With strippers joining rock bands. Even with male centerfolds. Sex is coming out into the open again throughout the pop culture—not that it was ever censored, but during the hippie years it was definitely uncool to use it in a commercial context. Not so any longer.

Which is not to say that Suzi Quatro has anything to do with anything except her own rock & roll. But she has opened a lot of doors that others have been and will be coming through—if you'll pardon the expression.

One of the first will be Patti Smith, who strikes me as one of the truly gigantic natural talents of our decade. She started as a street poet, and because the meter of her poetry and her thoroughly punk-oriented classic girl group rock & roll aesthetic lent itself to it, ended up with a small rock band behind her. She performs now at colleges around the East, pouring incredible intensity of feeling into her extemporized rock & roll poems, moving and emoting on stage with such power that audiences come away spellbound. Seeing her 20-minute adaptation of "Hey Joe" with impressions stemming from the latest Patty Hearst headlines threading through it as a corrolary theme, you know you're witnessing a true artist in the throes of a genuine rock & roll experience. Besides which, she's got a great image—a scruffy beatnik with lank jet-black hair, waving her hips with the instincts of a former street slut.

Yeah, there's a lot waiting in the wings, and it will all be coming out in the open soon. In a sense, Patti Smith is only a Suzi Quatro without a producer. But in another sense, she and other women with radically new approaches to rock will find easier acceptance thanks to Suzi Quatro's trailblazing. There will be others, too. There'll be the Nancy Sinatra's of the '70s, bands of tough sexy girls not afraid to threaten. Only this time they'll really mean it. "Don't gimme no lip or I'll kick your balls in." And maybe there'll even be Alice Cooper inspired girl groups performing mock castrations on stage—who knows? There are so many possibilities ahead that can be extrapolated from current trends, and beyond that still further unexplored valleys of the dolls.

Only one thing for sure we can say now, and that is that whatever happens, posterity will have Suzi Quatro to thank for making all of it possible. It took a lot of balls for her to do all she's done, and whatever she does next will, I'm sure, be no less revolutionary. In my book, Suzi Quatro, you're the first lady of rock.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Charles Nicholls, Rolling Stone.

"Tangerine Dream is like nothing you've ever heard. It is the creation of three young Germans—Edgar Froese, Christopher Franke, and Peter Baumann—playing synthesizers and assorted keyboards. Their albums have outsold every other import, including Americans, in England during the last year."
Melody Maker, April 6, 1974.

With "Phaedra," their newest album, Tangerine Dream is now available in the U.S. Once you've listened to it, music will never be quite the same again.

PHAEDRA by TANGERINE DREAM

On Virgin Records and Tapes
Distributed by Atlantic Records

PRM REVIEWS

Norman Seeff

Sly's Guide For the Married Man

Small Talk
Sly and the Family Stone
Epic

By TOM NOLAN

This record is more to be appreciated in the mind than enjoyed by the ears – at least when this particular mind and set of ears are employed. I have been having a schizophrenic dialogue with myself about *Small Talk*. Here's how it goes:

CON – "I have listened to *Small Talk* this way and I have listened to it that way, and I cannot find much that is of musical linterest at all. I would have a hard time describing this music that eludes me! The most that I can hope to do is explain what I think is Sly Stone's attitude, as reflected in the words and spirit of *Small Talk*.

"It's obvious: Sly has become domesticized. Pop's Peck's Bad Boy has gotten married (very publicly). He and his wife and their baby boy are an instant family (see happy cover of album). What seems to come across on the record is a more relaxed state of being resulting from/in a re-evaluation of priorities. From this new perspective, personal happiness and peace of mind are more important than the pursuit of a public stance or a creativity that can be insanely demanding. Sly now cares more about his self and his loved ones than in some concept of musical brilliance that's urging him higher and higher.

"His lyrics are not explicit – in any sense! – but a few quotes hint at the feel. 'Time for livin' – time for givin'/No time for runnin' over anyone/Time for livin' – time for givin'/No time for passin' tons of fun.' 'Livin' while I'm livin'/Smellin' the flower/Is tellin' the hour' 'Can't strain my brain/I know how it feels to worry all the time/Can't take the pain/I know how it feels to hurry for just a dime/ This pleasure was made for us to see...'

"That's it: *Can't strain my brain.* And really, that makes a lot of sense. Why should we insist our superstars burn themselves out for our entertainment? The only thing is, when you don't strain your brain the music can get sort of vapid.

"*Small Talk* is drenched in a casualness and whimsy that even at its most accessible is unsatisfyingly eccentric. An uncompromisingly personal approach coupled with lackadaisical content produces sounds that are strikingly odd: both unfamiliar and bland. Things are informal to the point of self-indulgence, yet rigidly structured to exclude all but those who are determined to stay and listen."

PRO – "What are you saying? The only grudge you can possibly bear this record is that it's not some other record that was easier for you to 'get into.' It hasn't got the 'ass-kicking funk of *Stand'* (Steve Lake, Melody Maker) or the ambitiousness of *Riot Goin' On*, which 'upended popular music' (thanks again, Steve). But this is far from being Sly Stone's *Self Portrait*. (Which we both happened to like, anyway).

"Here is music that is completely functional, rhythm in a pure state. Repetition as a machine containing tension. Small talk: few words. The voice as basic communication, maker and conveyor of moods, saying its sense through inflection – grunts, chants, chortles – rather than diagrammed thoughts. Humor. Echoes of Ellington, even. This is magic FM music on a station found by chance then lost forever, slipped through an invisible crack between frequencies. A conversation conducted through gesture, in code.

"Charlie 'Bird' Parker to his sideman, after a hectic, brilliant, obscure flight on a nightclub stage: 'We've pleased ourselves; now – ' (gesturing towards the customers)' – we must please the public.'

"Bird exonerated; Bird extinct. Soundtrack for the movie, discotheque, occupation of your choice. The sound of the future."

CON (conciliatory) – "Hold it, Cocteau. You've made your point. Perhaps we can reach some kind of compromise. Maybe I went kind of overboard at first."

PRO (professionally) – "Maybe I did, too."

The music here is "pure" in that it makes few concessions to those who need hooks. It's musicians' music: complex within a "monotonous" framework of bass solos, one-note riffs, unceasing choruses. It must sound great through those big recording studio speakers. On the title track, a baby's coos and gurglings are counterpoint to the melody; it works, but three and a half minutes can seem a long time. On the final track, a half-camp shoo-bob oldies choir and soppy strings help Sly to sing, "This is love, I might as well admit it" – it doesn't work, for me; I wish he had taken the time to say it "properly," i.e. differently. That's my problem with the whole album: I wish it were different. I can appreciate it intellectually, but I don't especially like to listen to it. Maybe in two years it will sound wonderful; maybe after today I'll not feel the need to hear it ever again.

End of a mixed review. 30-

Waterloo
Abba
Atlantic SD 18101

By GREG SHAW

Sometimes it takes so long for greatness to be recognized that when it finally happens, most people wonder how such a highly-developed ability sprang into being, seemingly from nowhere. Abba, whose "Waterloo" is one of 1974's most fully conceived pop singles, is such an act. For "Waterloo" was by no means their first release. Under another name, they had four singles last year that were nearly as good. And, under yet another name, they endured for years as one of Scandinavia's top pop groups, going back as far as 1965.

Actually Benny Andersson was the only one who enjoyed those years of hits with the Hep Stars. It wasn't until 1971 that Benny left the group to join up with Bjorn Ulvaeus to do pop interpretations of Swedish folk tunes that the duo of Bjorn & Benny was formed. From the start their wives Anna & Frida joined them on record, and by their fourth American single it was "Bjorn & Benny with Anna & Frida" so they shortened it to Abba and went on to win the Eurovision song contest and sell millions of copies of "Waterloo" all over the world. And that's where Abba came from.

Even if you didn't know all that, it would be easy to deduce this was a group with some roots by listening to their music. It takes a few years of making great records to know how to put together a song like "Waterloo" – just ask Roy Wood. At the same time, they've been refining their music all along, making strong advances with each new release. Their best move was letting the girls take over nearly all the vocals, as their strong harmonies augmented by Benny's Roy Wood-inspired moog & mellotron made for a more distinguishable sound than Bjorn & Benny's merely adequate singing. And there's little doubt Roy Wood, his eclecticism as well as his dynamic approach to sound, has been a strong influence. Abba listens to and absorbs a lot from other rock pioneers, and their taste is faultless. Even the Hep Stars were known to cover obscure Who B-sides and unknown Curt Boettcher tunes in their time.

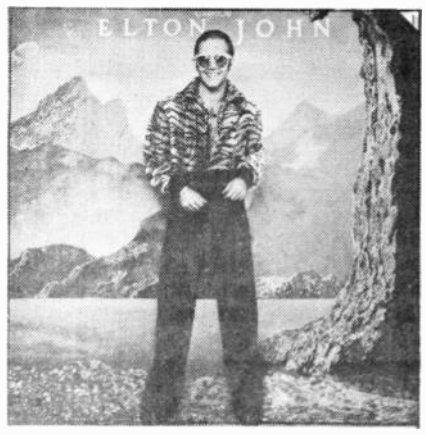
Abba's album not only lives up to all expectations, it surpasses most and might just turn out to be one of the classic debut LPs of the '70s. There are six songs of "Waterloo"'s general caliber, two or three of which will probably become camparably big hits. Taken with the other songs, the album shows a real diversity of styles and an overall sense of excitement and expanding creativity that is the mark of an emerging phenomenon.

The first side consists of six completely different types of song. "Waterloo" we've all heard, "Sitting in the Palmtree" is an adequate pop-reggae tune. "King Kong Song" is a good try at the Chinn-Chapman sound, "Hasta Manana" is a ballad with a pretty melody that Astrud Gilberto would be proud of, "My Mama Said" is a strikingly unusual type of tune, not unlike some of Sly Stone's experiments, and "Dance (While the Music Still Goes On)" is a pop anthem, very much like Bjorn & Benny's "Rock and Roll Band", the theme of which was we should all dance because it's a beautiful world and you're only young once. This one doesn't have quite a as strong a hook, but it makes me feel good and that's what counts.

Side two is the killer. "Honey Honey" leads off, and if you thought "Sugar Sugar" you're right, this is the essence of Jeff Barry mass-level pop irresistibility, with the addition of a stunning, sparkling production sound, a joyously bouncy vocal, and even a couple of short heavy breathing segments. "Watch Out" sounds like the Hollies' "Long Cool Woman" combined with the Sweet's "Rock and Roll Disgrace", that kind of flash. "What About Livingston" is another Woodsily cheerful pop ditty, not one of their strongest tunes but good enough for a single. "Gonna Sing You My Lovesong" could establish yet another image for Abba, with this slushy, Carole King-like ballad, although with the full mellotron production sound it becomes rather enjoyable.

The album closes with two of its strongest cuts. "Suzy Hang-Around" is highlighted by a strangely attractive echoed "Bells of Rhymney" 12-string droning throughout, joined on the choruses by moog and double-tracked vocals to create a dense, powerful effect. "Ring Ring", likely to be the next single, has a pounding impact equal to "Waterloo" or "Honey Honey" and could turn out to be the most lastingly fulfilling of the three.

Clearly, any group that can present this many brilliant songs on its first American album, when most of our leading acts are lucky to have one listenable track these days, is cut out for big things. If I were Playboy Records, I'd rush out "Rock and Roll Band", which still could be a hit. And if I were you, I'd rush out and buy this album while you're young enough to enjoy it.



Caribou
Elton John
MCA-2116

By BUD SCOPPA

For an artist with distinct limitations – vocal, compositional, and stylistic – Elton John makes awfully good records. One of the reasons is his avowed love of rock & roll records and parallel need to make recordings that fall naturally into the historical stream of classic rock & roll. Another is his unerring instinct for the grabbers, twists, and punchlines that turn good records into irresistible ones. Still another – just as crucial – is his organizational shrewdness: John has gathered together a team of experts to help get the best possible results in the studio. His band – especially rapidly growing guitarist Davey Johnstone – is excellent, and producer Gus Dudgeon knows Elton's moves by heart after eight albums. Even Bernie Taupin, whose lyric contributions have been the most inconsistent aspect of John's music, has lately been able – through holding his literary aspirations in check – to deliver the goods with a minimum of messiness.

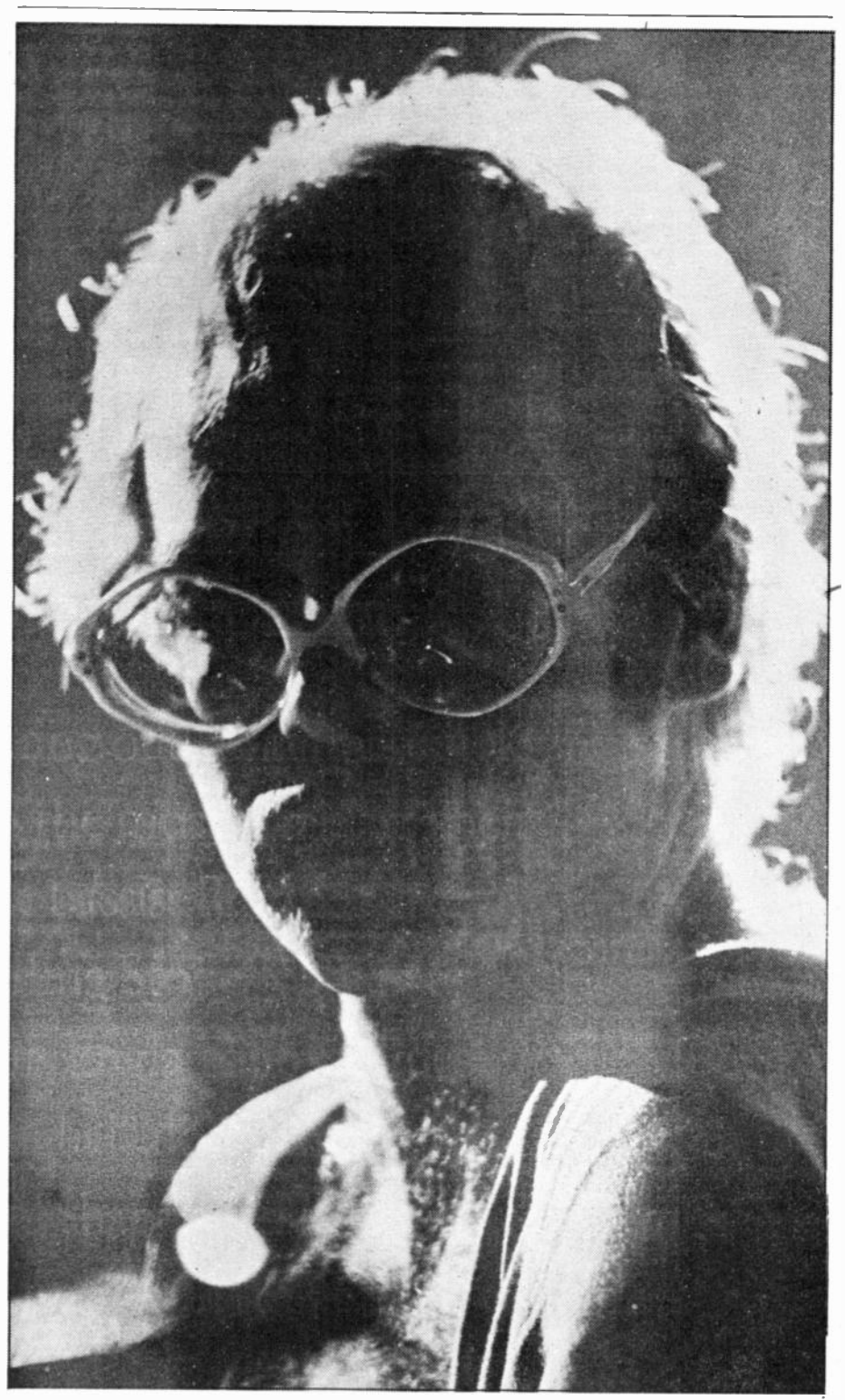
The present Elton John creative organization – together intact through four albums, including *Caribou* – is a coolly efficient one. They might not ring the bell with the awesomeness or consistency of earlier record-making giants like Lennon-McCartney, Holland-Dozier-Holland, Jagger-Richard, or John Fogerty, but they know their craft and they produce results. Like the three albums before it, *Caribou* is constantly listenable, and while it places no demands on the casual listener, there's still some meat under the surface for those looking for meaning or structure. Elton pulls off a difficult stunt: he manages to be both intelligent and lighter than air.

As usual, John's performances and those of the band are so consistent as to be monolithic; consequently, the album rises and falls with Taupin's lyrics and the degree to which Elton can personalize rather than merely perform them (although before *Honky Chateau* and "Rocket Man," solid performances appeared to be all that could be expected of John in relating Taupin's lines). *Caribou's* lyrics touch on Taupin's ongoing concerns with character studies, mood pieces, instant Americana, and stilted narrative to the extent that many of the songs seem like sequels. "The Bitch Is Back" and "Stinker", for example, recall "Saturday Night's Alright for Fighting" in the aggressive demeanor of their first-person subjects; and like the earlier lyric, "Bitch" and "Stinker" characters clearly separate from either the writer or the vocalist. "Dixie Lily" revisits the historical fantasies of *Tumbleweed Connection*, "I've Seen the Saucers" returns to the chilling sci-fi desolation of "Rocket Man", the nonsense pseudo-French of "Solar Prestige a Gammon" is another example of the low-comedy wordplay Taupin enjoys when he has nothing weighty to say (he seems to have only two moods as a writer: terribly intense and giggly), and the seven-minute narrative, "Ticking", explores the character of an abnormal personality a la "Levon", albeit at greater length. Generally, in these revisitations of the familiar, Taupin does rather well, even – as in the case of the last-mentioned song – when dealing in an era that's been troublesome for him in the past. The only real dud is the nonsense song.

Taupin has made some advances in other areas as well: he's written a pair of convincing love songs, "Pinky" and "Don't Let the Sun Go Down on Me", and John's wonderful vocals on both suggest great pleasure at being able to dig in, for a change, to a classic romantic theme. Then there's "Grimsby", an atmospheric ode to an English coastal town that even reads well. Instead of overinflating the poetic intent of the song with a similarly atmospheric arrangement, Elton and the boys play against the grain and turn "Grimsby" into a joyous rocker, and as affecting a moment as the album provides. John's approach to "Grimsby" provides a vivid example of his bonded intuition and craftsmanship.

On *Caribou*, as on every Elton John album, part of the fun is watching Elton escape from the traps Taupin sets for him. Maybe Bernie's mellowing, because this time, the traps aren't quite so treacherous. Still, as always, it's ultimately not the content but the form that provides the lasting pleasure.

Elton's latest: lighter than air.



The bulldog's back, like Judy in disguise, with more of the same. Andy Kent

PRM REVIEWS

American Tears, left to right: Gary Sonny, Mark Mangold, and Tommy Gunn. A group to watch.

Branded Bad
American Tears
Columbia BL-33038

By GREG SHAW

There's something intriguing about a new group that manages to make a powerful impression without falling into any easily defined category. That's how I feel about American Tears, whose first album has importance written all over it, yet eludes my attempts to pin down what makes it so special.

The group, which made two albums as Valhalla a few years back, consists of Mark Mangold, Gary Sonny and Tommy Gunn. Mangold writes all the songs, sings all the leads, and plays keyboards, ARP and minimoog. Not surprisingly then, American Tears is built heavily around the keyboard sound. The particular keyboard sound which dominates the album is not that of Keith Emerson, nor of Leon Russell or Uriah Heep. The most striking similarity is to Procol Harum, with classically-influenced piano figures augmenting full Hammond B-3 chording. The similarity is strongest on "Take Me Lord", which also features early Trowerish guitar and a rather fervent religious theme.

This resemblance to Procol Harum is primarily one of instrumentation, however, and should be taken only as a point of reference. Lyrically and thematically, American Tears are clearly on different ground, with none of Keith Reid's ornate wordplay. There's more of the gospel approach in American Tears; short suggestive phrases, often repeated, and made meaningful by their interpretation rather than their overt content. Mangold is a born vocalist, with a strong rich voice that can draw words out until they become an extension of the music.

Even the most explicit song, "Dr. Abreaction" means very little if you merely read the lyrics. Yet listening to the track, you get caught up in the heat of what sounds like a jam between early Lee Michaels and the young Stevie Winwood, and come away feeling as though you've just heard a heavy meaningful statement.

Based on this, I would suspect American Tears to be a tremendously exciting group live, for it is rare enough that a group with this kind of approach can pull it off successfully live, let alone on record, and American Tears has already proven its ability to create an album that is as alive as any record could be. This is a band to watch out for.

Here Come The Warm Jets
Eno
Island ILPS 9268

Another Time, Another Place
Bryan Ferry
Island ILPS 9284 (Import)

By RICHARD CROMELIN

As expected, Eno's first solo album is a sonically innovative and adventurous thing, boldly experimental in its employment of phasing, drones, repetition, shifting of layers, and so on. Yet for all his avant-garde leanings, it abounds with such mainstream virtues as variety, catchiness and entertainment value. And though he claims to be primarily a theoretician, *Here Come The Warm Jets* floods you with a decidedly non-intellectual approach, a playfulness that's a stark contrast to Bryan Ferry's second non-Roxy collection – a difficult and perversely fascinating affair.

Eno is a funhouse mirror, and standing in front of it most often is the Velvet Underground. "Needles in the Camel's Eye" opens the album with a rasping, yet somehow mellifluous assault, an ingenious paradoxical sound construction in which everything seems to be packed to the limit yet at the same time roams with amazing freedom. And the main riff is a great hook.

That's the thing about Eno. He's in rock 'n' roll because contemporary "serious" music is a cemetery, and so almost as if by definition he's going to make sure that it *is* rock 'n' roll. Even "Driving Me Backwards," the most unorthodox, meandering track, throbs with *the pulse*, much as Captain Beefheart's seemingly unanchored explorations did.

Eno is the conceiver, the chemist, throwing together such diverse players as Robert Fripp, Chris Spedding, Bill MacCormick and Simon King (both Hawkwind) and John Wetton, manipulating the unpredicted outcome into an expression of mood and atmosphere. Maybe alchemist is a better term, less dry and scientific, more suited to the feel the album exudes.

The album's feeling is more important than its concepts and subtleties. It's mysterious, non-specific, it keeps you off balance with an elusive focus that slips from your grasp like quicksilver. Songs like "Cindy Tells Me", "On Some Faraway Beach" and "Some of Them Are Old" are evocative, touching pieces, much more genuine and sincere than we'd expect from an artist who is generally portrayed as a flippant soul. Here the John Cale influence dominates, – dreamy atmospheres, augmented vocals, simple, supremely lovely melodies, involved, spacious arrangements.

Then there are "Baby's on Fire" ("Throw her in the water," goes the second line) and "Blank Frank", with its stuttering, modified Bo Diddley beat and psychotic ambience, to round out the picture. Crazy, lurching music, again with that rock steady spine (check out the extensions of the rhythm section concept on "The Paw Paw Negro Blowtorch.")

Eno's music involves variations on sound rather than theme, juxtapositions both harsh and subtle. There's an incomplete feeling about some of the tracks, but that's only because Eno has made the concept of being "finished" irrelevant.

Here Come the Warm Jets is involved and intriguing on its many levels, but if it's rock 'n' roll it's the feeling that must come first and foremost, and the exotic Eno has pulled it off with aplomb, knocking sceptics off their feet with a completely unexpected weapon – innocence or perhaps it's Enocence.

Now for Ferry. Weird, weird album. Here are some track-by-track notes:

– "The In Crowd": The single. Tremendous jet-propelled guitars on the intro. Beyond parody. Brings to the front all the false self-inflation, the insecurity behind the boasting, that Dobie Gray's implied. Filled out by a nifty horn arrangement. Like Eno, Ferry seems to be fond of repetition. Very cold and even (he never smiles in his pictures), but not insincere.

– "Smoke Gets in Your Eyes": He croons this one; he really is a great singer, isn't he? Does he want you to laugh at the singer's pain instead of share it? Roll over, Jerome Kern.

– "Walk a Mile in My Shoes." Joe South – great. Third sad song in a row. The folk-rock sound (spearheaded by organ) is very funny. Obviously, song selection is as important as execution.

– "Funny How Time Slips Away": Opens with a soft vocal; it's a relief to hear nuance and dynamics after the sameness of level on the preceding songs. Oops – back to crash-bang again. But it's OK.

– "You Are My Sunshine": Apparently Ferry wants it to be something more than the larf it is when the Kinks do it. Nice slide guitar touches. Tuba; here comes the Salvation Army band, but it sounds like they've been practicing. This album is hard-edged and vivid, and maddeningly

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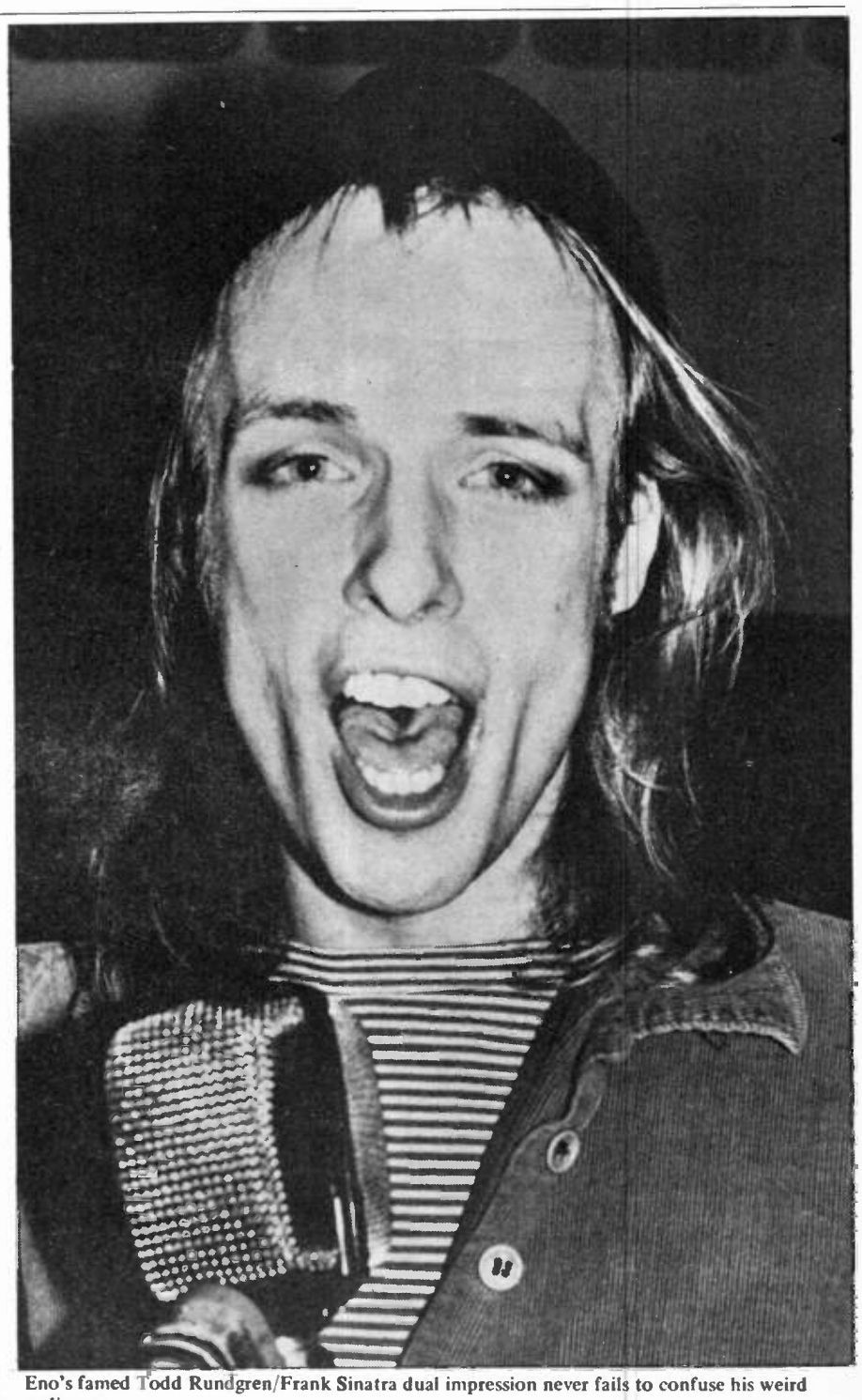
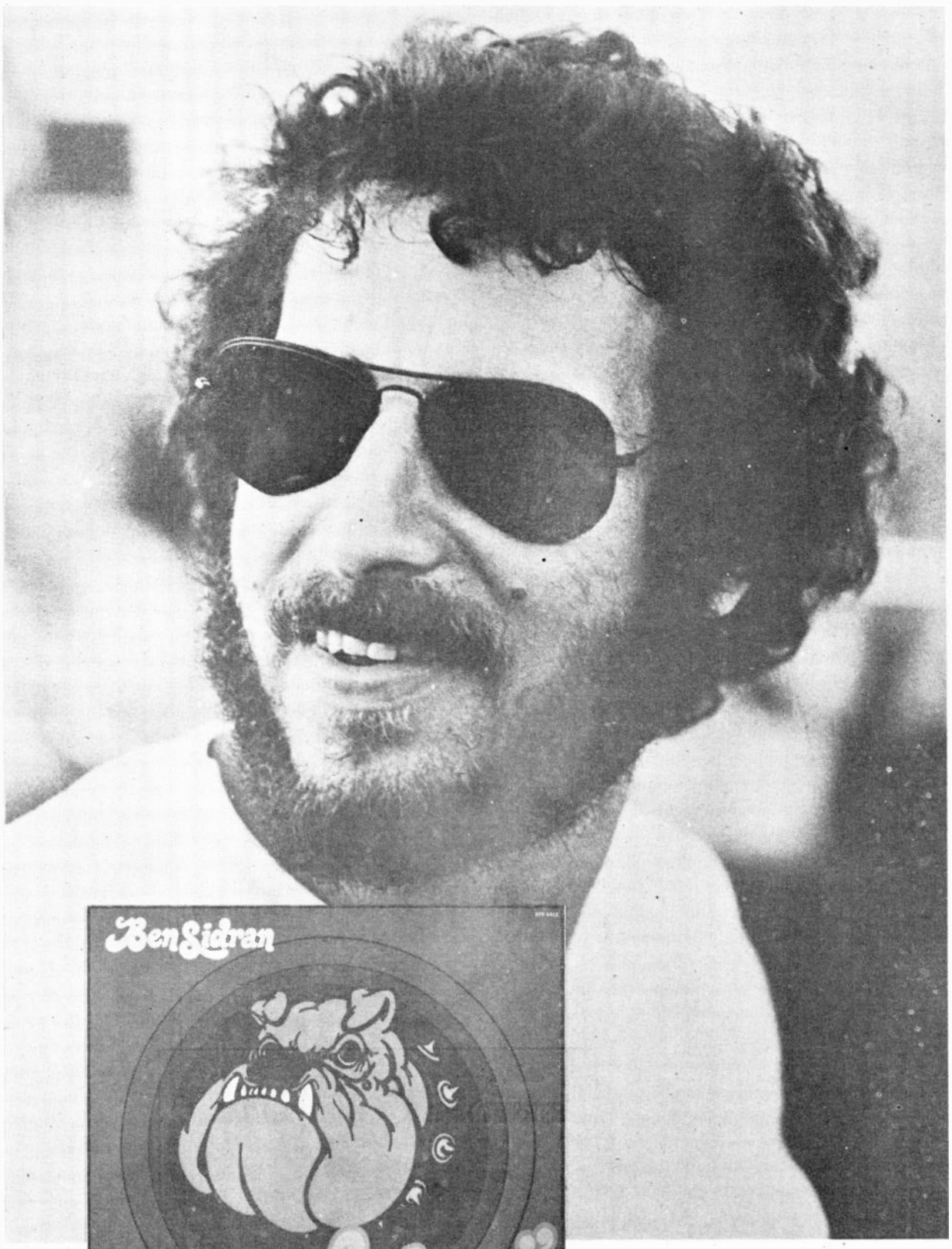


Eno's famed Todd Rundgren/Frank Sinatra dual impression never fails to confuse his weird audience.

BEN SIDRAN

I GOT MY PHd IN AMERICAN STUDIES FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF SUSSEX, BUT I GOT MY REAL EDUCATION AT THE UNIVERSITY OF BOB DYLAN AND MOSE ALLISON.



BST 6012

Ben's newest release, "DON'T LET GO," has strong balanced ingredients to make this his most popular album and garner him the vast public recognition he deserves.

ON BLUE THUMB RECORDS AND AMPEX TAPES
BLUE THUMB RECORDS, INC.
A Subsidiary of Famous Music Corp. A Gulf+Western Company

(continued from page 42)

even. If you played this one and Eno's at the same time maybe you'd see God or something. This song is getting lugubrious. Ferry is a strong, inescapable presence. He makes you feel helpless and manipulated; it's not fun, but it's gripping. He's trying to get away with something and he knows he can do it. This song goes on and on. The more you listen to this album the less clear it becomes.

Side Two.

– "Wonderful World": Side one almost made you forget he can have fun. This one's a delight. Love the accent on "the French I took." Great 60's rhythm guitar chord chops. Most extreme example of distance between singer and material – he doesn't seem to want you to *believe* it; what does he want?! And why is it so good? It's wistful, which is the farthest he gets from sad.

– "It Ain't Me Babe": Ferry should do the next Dylan album. This one you can believe. His monotony is a means of levelling and declassifying (that's part of the manipulation). Very jolting. Emotions are reduced to one burning pinpoint, and you feel like an ant being turned to a shell of ash under sunlight focused through a lens.

– "Help Me Make It Through the Night": Kristofferson. This is such a weird album. Perversely compelling. It's sure not fun. I'm not sure that I like it at all.

– "Another Time, Another Place": Ferry composition. Jesus, the whole album has been a dream! This song is a triumph. Wake up. Click. I love this album.

Mathew Fisher
I'll Be There
RCA APL 1-0325

By ALAN BETROCK

On *I'll Be there*, Matthew Fisher proves not only to be a gifted songwriter and vocalist, but a dazzling producer as well. In theme and mood Matthew's second solo album is quite similar to his first, *Journeys End*, although Fisher has evidently worked hard at perfecting and expanding his crafts. The first out and out rocker of Fisher's solo career opens up the album, and "It's Not Late" is a vibrant pulsating track, much heavier than anything previously attempted by Fisher.

On *I'll Be There*, Fisher relies upon the drumming of James Frank, and the bass of Jim Ryan. The rest of the chores, and there are many – piano, organ, guitar, harmonica, vibes etc., are all handled by Matthew. Fisher's technique is not one of virtuoso showmanship, but rather a moving ethereal quality which exudes warmth and sincerity.

The production on *I'll Be There* makes all the tracks worthwhile. The mixing is perfect, molding all the instruments together so they all retain their characteristic purpose, yet work as a totality to aid the melody and lyrics. The drums especially are recorded in such a way as to give them a full expansive sound with valuable tonal qualities. "She Knows Me" and "Not Her Fault" are the standouts on side one, moving songs with tender intensity and memorable melodies.

Side two starts off with another rocker and one which Fisher interjects with driving Beatlesque harmonies and guitar riffs. (This would have to be the choice for a single, if desired). This album side is a bit less together, with the songs elongated and the melodies striving for cohesiveness.. "Do You Still Think About Me" and the closing "I'll Be There" (despite its intense Spector-like finale) carry on a bit too long, and the intricacies get lost along the way. "Cold Harbour Lane" is the catchiest and most readily visible example of Fisher's talents. The melody bounces and struts, hesitating every so often to let the drummer fill in the empty spots. Matthew's cryptic lyrics soar above it all, while sparse guitar and harmonica fills flow all around.

Some may declare that Matthew Fisher's melodies and lyrical themes are repetitive and rehashed too often. But Fisher merely has a distinctive stylistic genre that he is comfortable with, and he sticks close to it. Each song is worked on so dilligently that every track can be accepted on its own merit – that they are all interchangeable is not of importance.

The Cats
Love In Your Eyes
Fantasy F 9449

By ANDY ZWERLING

Any time that you see an album that has production by Al Capps, Wes Farrell, Snuff Garrett, Bobby Hart, and a whole host of others you'll know that there are going to be some hit songs on it. It doesn't really matter whether you ever hear them on the radio or not. If you don't, just blame the record company or radio stations. Because Capps, Farrell, and Garrett don't fool around. The idea is that songs are more important than acts. People hum "Unchained Melody", not Vito and the Salutations.

No offense Vito, but it proves my point, as does "Rip Van Winkle". My point is that I don't even remember the name of the group, but I do remember the bowling pins and high shrill voice and "Rip Van Winkle, Rip Van Winkle, Sleep, Sleep, Sleep." There's a very non-artistic premise at work here. Give the public what it will accept, even if it's not what it wants. Make it palpable enough so there are no uprisings.

It really *can* work out into something great sometimes. All I'm trying to say is that we only get a group like the Beatles or a guy like John Fogerty when the particular person or group knows that *songs* come first. Once a person is a hit he/she/they can expand the limitations of AM radio and get more great songs on it. Not just hit songs but songs to dance and romance to forever.

The Cats, a Belgian group, have had hits everywhere except England and the USA. Somehow they've ended up here on Fantasy. They don't even play their instruments on the album, just like the Monkees. All they do is sing. Especially one guy with a great deep voice.

What they *do* have is Al Capps, which means L.A. studio men and a *lot* of great songs. The music is always out of the way and the songs have great hooks and melodies and are about subjects common enough to have everyone think they were written just for him/her. "A Clown Never Cries" is the old tears-under-greasepaint bit with some horns accentuating the chorus. "The Love in Your Eyes" ought to be an official on-every-station hit. Girl you're too young but "When I see the love in your eyes I start falling, I start falling". A great singalong melody of course. Then "Saturday Mornings and the Western Show". Who is going to resist Roy Rogers and ultimately having to give up westerns for the 'real life' of being a rock 'n' roll star? Clop clop drums for horses. Steel guitar for realistic sagebrush atmosphere. Why not a cactus?

The fact that there is a calculation about the whole enterprise might offend you, but it shouldn't. Sure it's a professional product. But there isn't anything wrong with that when it means great songs with good voices.

"ANOTHER RADAR LOVER'S BACK"

Coming On Strong
Brenda Lee
Decca 32018

Radar Love
Golden Earring
MCA 40202

By MARTIN R. CERF

"...and the radio plays that forgotten song ...Brenda Lee's 'Coming On Strong'...."

It has to be the work of inspired musicians, only the purest pop proletarians could be perceptive enough to include (at last) Brenda Lee among the exalted heroes of pop legend. Whether chosen specifically or included as mere generic example, "Coming On Strong" (No.11, Jan '66) was one of the finest recordings this Hollywood swinger turned Nashville hairdresser ever produced and its omission from rock's hall of fame is inexcusable. Hopefully, as soon as the fans begin deciphering the "Radar Love" lyrics, Brenda Lee will experience some long overdue premiums and perhaps a little plundering of the vaults will belatedly take place.

No doubt there are still those unaware that our Dutch friends had a number of specific motivations behind the "Radar Love" theme. There must be thousands who for the Who-boogie find the title a '70s delight. But the lyric concept is what truly penetrates. *Radar* love is *radio* love (pop has long been a metaphor for sex). Golden Earring were as unlikely an act for "Radar Love" as Don McLean with "American Pie". They've been electronic sensations on the Continent via the Hawkwind-Tangerine Dream avenue for years. It's amazing when Europeans experience so accurately an essentially American phenomenon such as car radio intercourse. "She (Brenda Lee on the radio) sends me comfort coming in from above... we've (Brenda & horny hotrod commander) got a thing called Radar Love." And he's not the only one, you better believe.

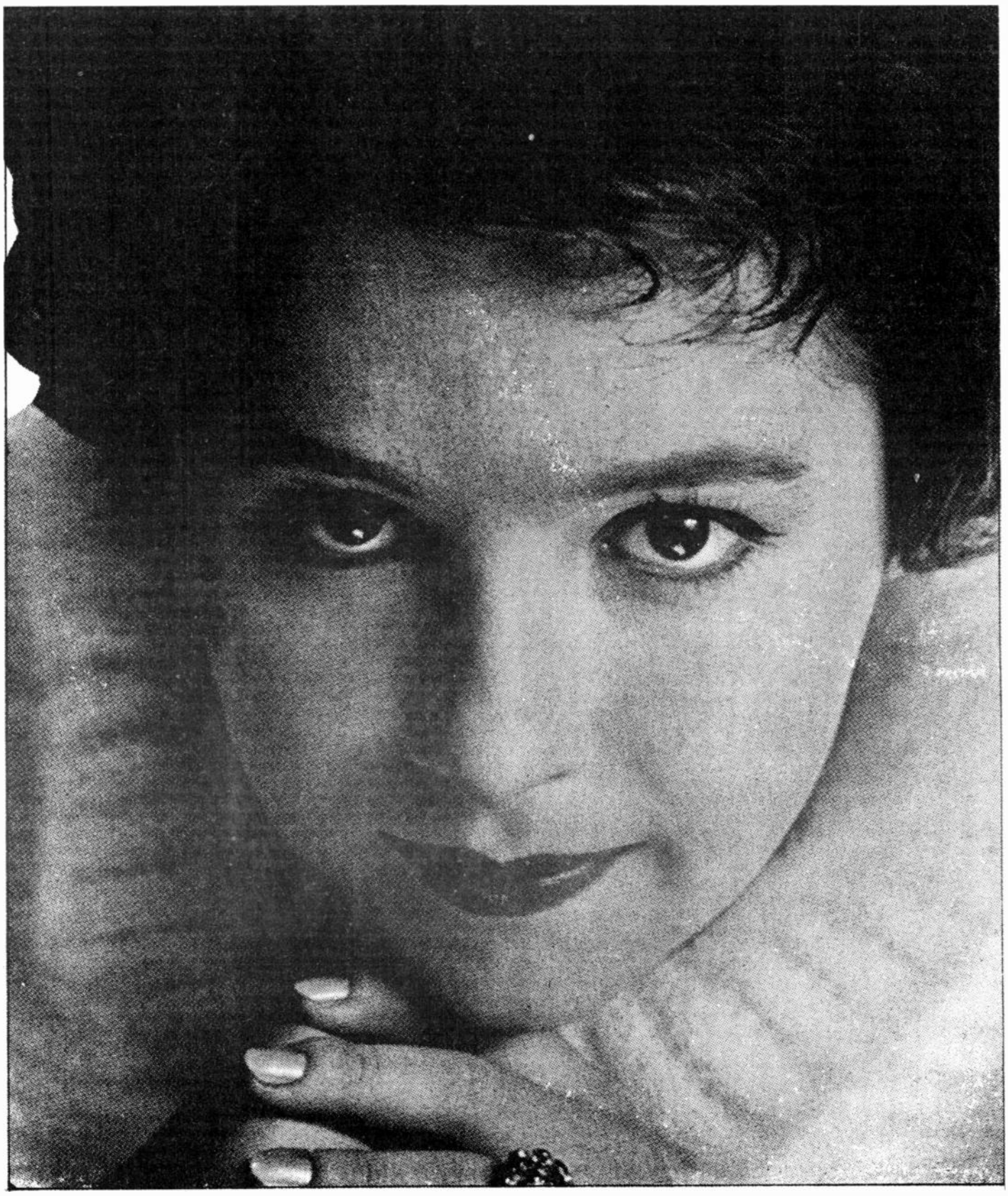
But for the purpose of this review, "Radar Love " will serve as means to an end. It's Brenda Lee who is specifically the cause of Golden Earring's audio erection.

Brenda Lee has been turning out hits (both on and off the charts) for more than seventeen years now, and the past few years have been much too transparant on the public's part. While she's no longer whispering Sweet Nothings, or Rockin' Around the Christmas Tree, or even Dum Dum a Diddly Dumming, recent Brenda Lee recordings contain more pleasure than any ten titles in the current top thirty you could choose to name.

Investigate, for instance, "Sunday Sunrise", written by Mark ("Hooked On a Feeling") James. Released just over a year ago, like most of her records from the last half-dozen years it found a proud position in the country charts. Then the record crossed over with a little pop action, but failed to move the gargantuan leaps lesser recordings do all the time en route to the top ten. "Sunday Sunrise" is like "Coming On Strong", a classic pop-country standard whose time is coming around again. "It's such a beautiful day that the sky seems to say good morning..." No super-flys, no incest, country roads or even radar love, just pure and simple Brenda Lee, singing about the kinda stuff your parents care about.

You'd never know it to look at her, but Brenda Lee is the sexiest lady any boy could aspire to – with titles like "Break It to Me Gently", "Emotions" and "All Alone Am I", more than tears have been jerked from her fans. If she'd looked like Donna Loren in 1963, Golden Earring's esoteric language would be common knowledge today.

Brenda Lee gets points in every category. She consistently employs the nation's finest musicians, producers, arrangers. She always had the best material, whether ballads, rock and roll, or bluegrass. Take a look at some of the writers who've contributed to her career: Ronnie Self, John D. Loudermilk, Marijohn Wilkin, Jackie de Shannon, Sharon Sheely, David Briggs, Dan Penn, Carl Sigman, Jerry Reed, Arthur Alexander, Johnny Marks, Kris Kristofferson, Toni Wine & Irwin Levine, Harlan Howard, Dallas Frazier, George Jones... no Nashville shortage here!



Feast your eyes on that foxy face.... no wonder Golden Earring were inspired by her!

The zenith occurred in October 1964 when the team of Carter & Lewis wrote "Is It True" and proved to Brenda that England really does swing, as Roger Miller later discovered. She recorded "Is It True" in the UK and it remains the hottest forgotten English Invasion master ever. It peaked on the American charts at the No.17 position. Brenda Lee had never come to terms with the Dave Clark Five previously and she never attempted another fuzz-tone rocker thereafter, much to our loss.

It's significant that Brenda Lee began her career at the age of 9 with a belting sandpaper woman-hunk of a voice that could even pit itself against Timi Yuro or Jackie deShannon. The stylistic phrasing and nasal affectation which underline her uniqueness have only matured in subsequent years. Still under thirty, she remains a double threat on today's music scene. The more loyal country market has consistently realized this, but the pop people will be caught off guard as they always are when Brenda aims her sights at WABC again. And when it happens there will be those who scream "comeback" or "has been, got lucky" but beware, these are unsophisticated, ignorant consumers.

You rarely find Brenda Lee records in bargain bins, and the majority of her great singles are long since out of print. There is an adequate 10-year anniversary LP available on MCA which includes "Coming On Strong" and will serve as openers for the newcomers.

Brenda Lee commands respect from those musicians and artists who've had the opportunity to work with her, or see her perform, or hear her recordings, because of her sheer dynamic nature. Underneath that withdrawn suburban character is a devil-woman who can butcher anything she so chooses. There will be no Brenda Lee revivals, only seventeen years of current hits. Golden Earring will be remembered for this reason, Jackie deShannon still pays her rent from "Dum Dum" royalty statements and Nashville's Hall of Fame will have to build an entire west wing someday in which to celebrate and house the rewards due Brenda. I owe her more than I'll ever be able to deliver, for the denominations these dollars assume can't be earned in two lifetimes. Thanks for that, thanks for "Bring Me Sunshine", "Sunday Sunrise", "Coming On Strong" "Is It True", "Radar Love" and continuing to bring pleasure to thousands in 1974, Brenda. Whatever Golden Earring says, you'll never be forgotten.

Sparks vs. Sweet: The battle for Britain

Sweet Fanny Adams
The Sweet
RCA (Import)

Kimono My House
Sparks
Island ILPS 9272

By RON ROSS

The current success that both Sweet and Sparks are enjoying Over There has not only served to restore the respectability of the pop single, but also to redefine the self-consciousness of rock stardom in terms that mesh nicely with the more mod fantasies we've retained from '65 and '68 when teen timeliness was an end in itself. The standard bearers of glam like Bowie, Elton, Mott, Bolan, and Reed that have already been accepted by Americans are flaming artistes compared to singers like Russell Mael of Sparks and Brian Connolly of the Sweet, whose self-satisfaction as SuperKids is their greatest asset. Inherent to both groups is the assumption that rock and roll is most essentially a sublimation of the heartaches any teen must feel are his birthright. Trends are only the means by which punk self-celebration seeks it's own level, the icing on a cake that already hides a file for escape from adolescent self-doubts.

But Sparks are most definitely their own bosses, in full command of a dream spawned in Southern California and realized with the help of Island Records in England, while Sweet for all their new moves toward independence from Chinnichap seem hardly to appreciate their own best points. Like a Frankenstein in search of true love, Sweet labour under the delusion that pop stars *should* be heavy musicians and cite Deep Purple and the Who as more significant sources of inspiration than hit-mongers Mike and Nicky. For a group that long suffered the same studio musician stigma that plagued the Monkees, Sweet have taken significant steps to control their own musical destiny.

Sweet Fanny Adams should find a much wider audience here than Sweet's first Bell LP which offered three Chinn-Chapman smashes and not much more. So determined were the boys to stand on their own that "Ballroom Blitz" and "Teenage Rampage" have been left off of *S.F.A* to leave more room for originals. When these are good, like 'Heartbreak Today" and "Into the Night", they're quite good, if all too obviously derivative from Slade, Purple, and C.C. themselves. Guitarist Andy Scott and drummer Mick Tucker hold up their end well enough, while Sweet's vocals are produced by the under-rated Phil Wainman with a facility for filters, phasing and echo that lends texture and surface interest even on the thinnest material. Not the least of Wainman's gifts is a drum sound that even the best produced stateside rockers would kill for.

In trying to justify themselves as self-sufficient musicians Sweet have hit upon an alternative to the Chinn-Chapman whiz-bang singles formula that should make their stage act immediately accessible to Americans who can't get enough of that heavy metal stuff. Despite cloyingly conventional (even plagiarized) lyrics, Sweet's high clear harmonies fit their big beat arrangements like a glove and no Yank contender such as Aerosmith or Kiss comes even close to this vocal versatility. If Sweet can sing on stage anything like the way they can sing in the studio, they may well wind up being special in spite of their own best efforts to sound like everybody else.

Sweet Fanny Adams also includes Sweet's first full scale attack on an oldie but goodie. Joey Dee's "Peppermint Twist" is whipped into a fascistic youth anthem, the kind that sets fans to ripping apart theatre seats: "You're *gonna* learn to do this, the Peppermint Twist." Sweet's mindlessly teenage enthusiasm helps to erase memories of Jackie twisting the night away with Peter, Paul, and Mary, exposing a hard core you can't sit down compulsiveness that is much more to the point.

Even Chinn and Chapman's own "No You Don't" is far more ambitious musically that their previous pop tarts. The most blatant Who rip in recent memory, "No You Don't" finds a way to blend Happy Jack drums with a synthesizer lifted straight from "The Song is Over" and an acoustic guitar that even a deaf, dumb, and blind kid could recognize. Sweet are more than adequate instrumentally, and Connolly's treatment of a deceptively simple lyric carries a vicious conviction shared with such venerable Who blasts as "Anyway Anyhow Anywhere" and "I Can See for Miles". Surprisingly, other Chinnichap odes to teenego run amuck like "Teenage Rampage" come off gimmicky next to this relatively musical burst of outrage.

And then there's Sweet playing it safe by writing their own Chinn-Chapman stomper in "Rebel Rouser," in which a hellraising pop boy puts a ray gun to Eddie Cochran's head before throwing every nouveau psychedelic trick in the book into a competently exciting but altogether predictable single. Unfortunately, side two's over-long "Sweet F.A." and "Restless" are merely predictable and give rise to unpleasant misgivings about Sweet's ability to discriminate between their arse and their elbow. Sweet's own teen vision is narrow and anything but clever, striking clumsy Saturday Night's All Right for fighting poses against arrangements that indulge the band's tendency to dampen their own powder for a less than blinding flash.

C.C.'s streamlined "AC-DC" on the other hand, gets Down To Kill with a hook that makes their Quatro hits sound male chauvinistic: "She got AC-DC, she got some other woman as well as me." Or how about: "Lez be in together, I guess she'll be in forever, she's got to make it now or never – AC-DC, etc." Sweet always hit you right between the eyes, and sometimes you even see stars.

Sparks meanwhile have catalyzed the English press like no other since Roxy Music, even prompting indirectly a backlash against Chinn and Chapman's showaddywaddy superficiality. Since their first incarnation as Halfnelson on Bearsville, when they were produced by Todd Rundgren with the encouragement of the late great G.T.O. Miss Christine, Sparks have been disturbingly surreal at the same time that they were delightfully attractive to those who admired the stylish Mael brothers Dave/Ray whimsy. As Todd once said of them, "Sparks make you feel stupid because you can't pin them down at all. Their music relates a little to the real world, but their lyrics don't relate at all to anything that's real."

Poor Sweet—no Cardin suits, only a backlash against showaddywaddy superficiality. If you think they've had a hard time in America, you should see how the press treats them in England!

But Sparks are a real enough overnite sensation in their adopted land, with a smash single and their first album for Island, *Kimono My House*, in the top five. All but two songs were written by Ron Mael, whose vivid and visual lyrics create sonic films riddled by jump cuts and performed with new sock by a new band. Their first top five chartbuster, "This Town Ain't Big Enough for Both of Us", casts Alan Ladd and Gloria Grahame in a stranded in the jungle shootout. Muff Winwood's production welds a muddy dense bottom to a sparkling subtle high end that gives Sparks' latest hook-laden lovelies a new improved energy. The wind-up toy sound Sparks favored on their first two albums has given way to the searing precision of Adrian Fisher's lead guitar and Dinky Diamond's non-stop drums. And what Ron's lyrics may have sacrificed in sheer eccentricity they've gained in infectiousness.

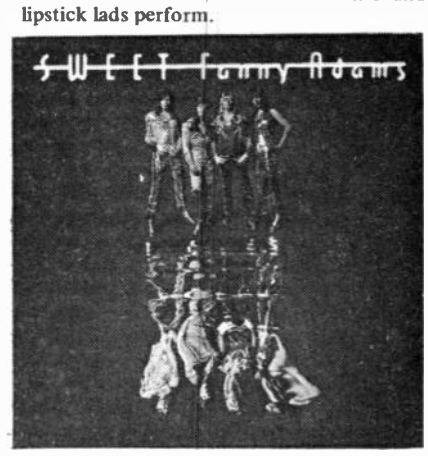
Who else would write a song about Albert Einstein's paranoid parents, with a catchy chorus like "(Go away) Everything's relative/(Go away Albert's mother does say to me) We are his relatives and he don't need any non-relatives." And all this keeps company with a tune fully as charming as "Maxwell's Silver Hammer" crossed with a Gilbert and Sullivan patter song.

There's self-parody in "Falling In Love With Myself Again," with its thunderous bravura intro, hotter than Arthur Brown and cooler than Alice Cooper. Russell yodels in his characteristic sing-song, and no sooner does he sing a line like "I can't hear myself think with all that music blaring, blaring" than the band shows and tells exactly what he means. "Here in Heaven" and "Thank God It's Not Christmas" are cynical tales of jilted love and jaded tastes, the former recalling John's Children in its late '68 Rael grandeur, while the latter writes off a life spent "meeting fancy things at bistros and old haunts/trying very hard to sin."

Since it's well known that Sparks like girls, there are words to the wise in "Amateur Hour": "Choose your partners everyone, if you hesitate the good ones are gone – Amateur hour goes on and on, when you turn pro you know she'll let you know." And as if Russell hadn't had enough trouble with the "Girl From Germany" last time out, now he's left "with a Michelin guide and a half empty foreign bed" in "Hasta Manana Monsieur," a laugh a minute bit of MeShell Ma Bell with an international feel. "You mentioned Kant and I was shocked," warbles the impressionable Russ. "You know, where I come from, none of the girls have such foul tongues."

Sparks are even looking better than ever, as photographed by the incomparable Karl Stoeker whose touch of class graces Roxy's covers. Indeed, Island's massive and tasteful promotional campaign began with Russell on the cover of Melody Maker two weeks before the single was even available. Ron's new shades-and-brylcreem look has caused English writers to describe him variously as a child molester and an accountant, depending on how intimidated or entertained they've been by his witty if disconnected interviews. In fact, interviewing Sparks has become the thing to do, because the Maels can be counted on to go right to the heart of the matter. Thus: "Russell's chipped tooth is the best thing we've got going for us. Everyone thinks that the reason English rock stars are so fab is their clothes or their accent. Well, we put it down to bad dental health."

Poor Sweet. Instead of Cardin suits, they sport chains and silver lame garnished with a sticky fingers tongue. Their idea of a hot line is "I'm a supersonic razor laser from the sky." If only they'd stop trying to chew gum and walk at the same time, Sweet could be right on the money, so maybe it's a good sign that their newest single is Chinn and Chapman's "Six Teens," a narrative ditty that hopefully sounds nothing like "Smoke on the Water." In spite of its glaring lapses, *Sweet Fanny Adams* must come close to the Sweet live and that makes me more anxious than ever to see the leather and lipstick lads perform.



As for Sparks, they're well on their way to challenging Slade, Sweet, and even Roxy and Bowie for headlines in Britain, and with Island building up an aggressive independent operation in America, Sparks could become the biggest thing since white bread. They're faster than a speeding bullet anyway, having already cut a new single to follow up "This Town" as well as changing bassists and adding another guitarist. Sparks are mod, mad, musical, and mysterious. I hope they're so huge that someday even Brian Connolly will cut his bangs, buy a tie, and give up rouge forever. Wouldn't that be kinky?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Cliff Hanging

Struggling Man
Jimmy Cliff
Island SW9343

Music Maker
Jimmy Cliff
Reprise

By KEN BARNES

Last year, "the word" was that reggae was all set to become the next big thing. Once radio program directors and listeners heard that irresistibly jerky Jamaican beat, reggae was bound to explode. But somehow this sureshot pick-to-click of the music press pick-clique never broke through on a mass level. Nowadays, reggae looks like a dead beat.

Or is it? You've got your Eric Clapton singling out the Wailers' "I Shot the Sheriff"; and Jimmy Cliff's magnificent "Many Rivers to Cross" has been cut recently by Lorraine Ellison, Martha Reeves, and as a forthcoming 45 by Harry Nilsson. While it's not about to make it on its own, reggae has been successfully co-opted into the worldwide pop mainstream. And Jimmy Cliff's getting attention again; he may still grab the brass ring.

At least two labels think so – Cliff's current affiliation, Reprise, and newly-independent Island. Island's uncanned some vault material from a few years back and rushed it out ahead of the second Reprise LP. Side one is all pretty straightforward Cliff-style reggae – Cliff's music, it should be noted, even the *Wonderful World, Beautiful People* material on A&M from 1969, is vastly more sophisticated and slicker than the raw home-grown product. But at its best (that A&M album, but even more the *Harder They Come* soundtrack material on Mango), it's the most immediately appealing Jamaican export. Cliff's seemingly effortless knack for catchy melodic hooks combined with the built-in rhythmic hooks of the reggae form and his marvelously fluid vocal stylings give his records the most widespread crossover potential of any reggae product. The five songs on *Struggling Man*'s first side are all inspirational/political in theme, they're all infectious, and they make a very pleasant 20 minutes or so, although they're not quite up to his best stuff.

Side two is unfortunately rather wasted, low points being Dave Mason's "Can't Stop Worrying", a painful devotional dirge; and the bizarre "Let's Seize the Time" (formerly an A&M B-side), where Ketty Lester cocktail piano masks incongruously hard-line revolutionary lyrics. Still, *Struggling Man* is overall a pleasant compilation.

Music Maker is thankfully a step up from last year's disappointing *Unlimited*. But there are still disturbing elements – an overdependence on girl backup choruses and horns (a fault of the Island material as well), and a general air of complacency. There's nothing as impassioned as "Many Rivers to Cross" or "The Harder They Come", and most of the material seems a bit sluggish. But Cliff's singing is still delightful, and his melodic knack remains basically unimpaired, if not quite as inspired as could be hoped. "House of Exile", "Look What You Done to My Life, Devil Woman" and "Money Won't Save You" are all sparkling. "I've Been Dead 400 Years" is an oddly compelling slower number. "Music Maker" is very catchy, with some sharp rock & roll casualty lyrics – "I'm just recovering from that psychedelic shock; I've had an overdose of that rock & roll stew" . And "No. 1 Rip-off Man" really jumps, a lively uptempo tune with an obvious rip-off from Elvis' "Burning Love" – but no matter, it's a standout.

Meanwhile, reggae in its more authentic form hasn't exploded; the Maytals sadly haven't happened; and in Jamaica itself the music's mutating once again. But co-opted mainstream pop-reggae may still have a chance, and Jimmy Cliff fits right in there with it. He still hasn't made the album he's capable of. But his earlier material and these two albums give obvious evidence of his great talents, and I hope he gets his shot.

BLIND DATE

Each month Flo & Eddie (Mark Volman & Howard Kaylan) submit to a blindfold test in which they're required to identify and respond to selections from several new albums.

Abba – "Honey Honey", "Ring Ring" (Atlantic)

Already I like this. Bubblegum is back. Sounds like "Jingle Jangle" by the Archies. Marie Osmond? Sounds like a hit record. Not Bobby Goldsboro's wife, right? "Do your thing"? "Dizzy"? "Honey Honey"? Sounds like a pop record. What *is* it? Patti Dahlstrom sings with Paul Williams! I was going to guess it was Maggie Bell and Gilbert O'Sullivan. I think this is cool. "Obla-Di" beat. Bouncy little item. Mouth & MacNeal, huh? Definite Dutch overtones – owned by Mercury. This could be my favorite album. It's a group? But they're not American. Not the Shocking Blue. It *is* Abba again. I *love* Bjorn & Benny! I still love them. They tolk the "J"'s out. Wow, it's great! Uh-oh. They dress like the Fool gone funky. This is really a turn-on. Do you say the name Bjorn with one syllable or two?

Chris Jagger – "Fingers In Your Pie" (Asylum/Elektra)

So far everything's been good. Good month. I know what this is. It's gotta be Boz Scaggs. Tony Christie. Oh, Chris Jagger! I hate this! How did I know that? Because he sounds *awful* and there's just a little bit of that lip action but not enough, and I hate it. Take it from my house. No future. He should get another delivery job or whatever he was doing before he decided to really be Mick's brother. I really dislike the album package, too. "Fingers In Your Pie" is OK, sounds a little like the old Stones, but the rest of the album – why doesn't everybody buy an album of the *old Stones*, then? He sounds older than them because he sounds so strained. It's not one I'd spend my $2.98 on this month. Chris, I hope we didn't spoil your future here. I think he ought to record with a girl named Rita and really confuse everyone.

Wendy Waldman, excerpts from Gypsy Symphony (WB)

Tim Weisberg. Ray Manzarek. Larry Coryell. Sounds like Sandy Nelson playing bass drums. Wendy Waldman! I got her down. She sounds like she's half Laura Nyro and half Joni Mitchell, and it's either Wendy Waldman or... Chris Jagger. No, I like her. I don't think she's found her niche yet. She looks like Mark was mated with an Indian princess. I think she's good, you know, for soft-rock. She's got it. Wendy Waldman could be a big future star this year. She could be, but she won't. She's no Lynsey DePaul. Oh come on, she bites. No, I think there's a future in beauty marks. The Anne Francis look is here to stay. This is where we split opinions – I don't think this is the Year of Wendy Waldman. I don't either, I've guessed wrong before. I thought Sue Thompson was coming back.

Jackie De Shannon, excerpts from Your Baby Is A Lady (Atlantic)

Jackie De Shannon! Sounds great! She writes good songs. This is a good song. They've got her looking good, too. I'd like to hear the single. I liked "Put A Little Love in Your Heart". She has a billion great records. I'll tell you, whoever else's year it is, it's also the Year of Neil Sedaka. He wrote this song. I can't wait to hear something by him. He's all over the resurgence, with Roy Wood and everything. I get the feeling someone is telling Jackie what to record in an effort to get a hit out of her. I like her when she sings higher. She sounds like she's Aretha-ing herself out. They fly her to some Southern city and say here – they give her to Tom Dowd or Arif Mardin and say "make her sound like everybody else". Blackberries singing. Isn't this the same track they used on the entire Lynyrd Skynyrd album? They just get Southerners together and they sound the same. Recorded in New York? That's what I mean! She'll have a cooking show one of these days. Wrong kind of single for her. She should stay close to folk-rock. This is soul/Bobby Gentry stuff she's cutting now. Listen, Helen Reddy got a star on Hollywood Blvd. If that's possible, *we* can get on Hollywood Blvd. Of course I'm not married to Jeff Wald.

Bill Wyman, excerpts from Monkey Grip (Rolling Stones)

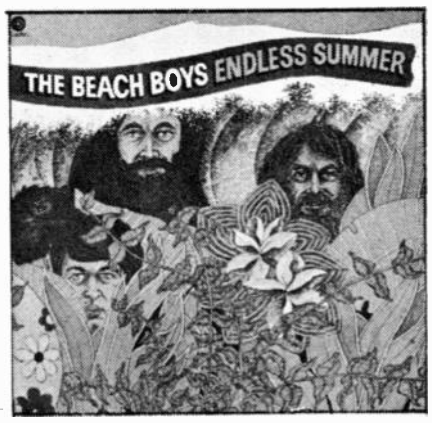
Oh, Atlee Yeager lives! Give us a hint. Very famous? Jewel Akens. It's not the Peter Noone comeback yet, right? Uh-oh, soul choir! It's Southern, right? I hate the background singers. Big group member? Robbie Robertson's solo album. It's Norman Greenbaum! It isn't a Jacobsen-produced record, is it? But it has no middle range, so it could be. I can't imagine this guy being big, unless he's from Roxy Music. Boy, that song sounds like a Greenbaum song. He's English and he's big, but I don't know why. This isn't Wyman, is it? I just had a whole different picture of how he was going to sound. Why does he sound like that? I'll tell you – Kootch, Mac Rebennack, Dallas Taylor, Leon Russell. How come he doesn't sound mean? Nice cover. I was all set to really like this, too. He does sound like Norman Greenbaum and that's a plus, but why does Bill Wyman sound like that? The production is lacking; there's nothing to latch on to. It's gonna be weird to a lot of people who are expecting to hear Rolling Stones type music. I'd like to hear it again... some other day.

Cheryl Dilcher, excerpts from Magic (A&M)

John Fahey. Pentangle. No this is side 2 of *Journey Through the Past*. Hookfoot! Is this the overture? This is... Patto! Another Isis album. Is this Fanny, the rock opera for Women's Lib? All the tracks sound the same, exactly. I don't like that. Who is it? Don't tell me. No, tell me. Cheryl Dilcher? Who's that? Purple hair. God, she's just Veruschka. Poorly produced record from what I've heard. Who produced it? My best friend, right? Jeff Barry! Let me see her gams on the back there. Cheryl Dilcher plays acoustic 12-string. That's why everything sounds the same. She wouldn't know the Captain of Rock & Roll if he made love to her in a closet! It's not going to be her year. A turkey, a real turkey. Roller Maidens From Outer Space. Jeff Barry, what happened to the Archies, man, you were on the right track. He should hear Abba.

Cleo Laine, "Make It With You" (Stanyan/Buddah)

Dinah Shore. Is this the right speed? Morgana King. It's got that Playboy Club sound. This is definitely stewardess music. This is absolutely Veal Cordon Bleu and String Beans Almondine. It's Gladys Knight. It's Mercedes McCambridge. Sandie Shaw. The girl who sang "Casino Royale". It's real good boredom competition with Roberta Flack. Can we hear something else? I like Bread better. This is like a bar, I need a drink just to get to cut No.2. It could be the Bee Gees. Petula Clark orientation. I would rather listen to Shirley Bassey sing. I'd rather see Shirley Bassey strip. She's got a cool bod. Cleo Laine? I've never heard of her and never want to hear her again. Stanyan Records? Don't you send away to Santa Monica Pier for Stanyan Records? Records pressed out of sand and seaweed. Rod McKuen's label. It reconfirms my opinion that no one has less taste than Rod McKuen. That's why he dedicated a poem to Flo & Eddie. Anyone who sleeps with a sheepdog is no friend of mine.



Endless Summer
The Beach Boys
Capitol SVBB-11307

By GREG SHAW

No summer would be complete without a Beach Boys reissue. These last couple of years, with Warner Bros. working on the post-*Pet Sounds* material and Capitol continuing its search for new combinations of the early hits, have brought the greatest bumper crops yet. *Endless Summer*, as its title might indicate, is the first Beach Boys repackage to seize upon the essential concept underlying all previous albums titled "California this" or "Summer that" and attempt to elevate it to a truly sublime plane of elemental mythology. A noble aspiration and, like most mortal attempts to toy with the works of the Gods, one doomed to failure.

The Beach Boys came closer to embodying the essence of being young, free and looking for fun than anyone is likely to equal in the rock & roll idiom. In listening to Beach Boys records it's always summer, we're all tanned and blonde and 18, and Redondo Beach is never more than six miles away. When something as ordinarily ephemeral as a rock & roll record retains this kind of potency even after ten years, you know you're dealing with something important, and with each new year the opportunity to reaffirm and re-evaluate whatever magic still lingers there is one that none of us should want to pass by.

Which is why, in view of all the possibilities that abound, *Endless Summer* represents such a tragic failure of imagination. Beyond the concept and the title, there is no indication those involved had any inkling of what they were dealing with, or what they might have been able to accomplish. Let's start with the songs. There are enough great Beach Boys summer songs to fill two albums like this, and it's impossible to quibble over the choice of one as opposed to another. "Little Deuce Coupe" instead of "409", "You're So Good to Me" instead of "Barbara Ann" – fine, they're all great. But only five songs on a side? Five?? And this is a full list album, not like the 20 budget albums you can get with the same hits, don't forget. The Gods do not smile on such petty scrimping by those entrusted with the building of a Myth.

There are other shortcomings. In some 40 albums, there has never been one with an entire side that reinforces rather than interrupting the prevailing mood. I don't mind "In My Room", but I've never wanted to hear it in the middle of a set of exciting car songs, and I can't imagine who would. Of the four sides on this set, none passes the test, with the possible exception of Side Four. I get the impression "The Girls On the Beach" and "The Warmth of the Sun" were included only *because* somebody felt a slow song was needed to balance four up-tempo ones. That's part of the problem, and the rest is that a similar lack of thought can be found behind each inclusion. Why "Let Him Run Wild" and "Catch a Wave"? These were fillers to start with, and couldn't possibly have been chosen by someone with the clear goal of trying to create the quintissential Beach Boys summer album. This sloppiness carries through even to the mastering, where nobody cared enough to ensure that the single versions of "Help Me Rhonda" and "Be True to Your School" were used, instead of the slower, more restrained, less embellished album cuts that are far more commonly available.

In all these respects, down to and including the glaring lack of liner text and recording data (in favor of an admittedly summery water painting) *Endless Summer* more closely resembles the ordinary run of cheapo Pickwick $1.98 drugstore albums that come out like grunion each June. Don't be deceived by the cover; the proper Beach Boys tribute has yet to be conceived. Oh well, there's always next summer...

From The Mars Hotel
Grateful Dead
Grateful Dead 102

Garcia
Jerry Garcia
Round 102

Tales of the Great Rum Runners
Robert Hunter
Round 101

By GERRIT GRAHAM

Though there's no one song the quality of "Eyes of The World", *From The Mars Hotel* is a much better record than *Wake of The Flood*. It rocks more, and a lot of *Flood's* histrionic poses have been dropped. "U.S. Blues", the first cut, is essentially a barrelhouse boogie – a very basic note on which to open. In it, Garcia sings, "I'm Uncle Sam/That's Who I Am/Been Hidin' Out/In a Rock 'N' Roll Band", and he's brought 'em back alive and fairly kicking. The other rockers are "Loose Lucy", built around a very catchy tumble-down riff; a bumpy, syncopated thing called "Scarlet Begonias", with another nice riff; and Bob Weir's "Money Money", the grittiest item on the menu – an extrapolation of the Berry Gordy chestnut. Phil Lesh has a couple of tunes, one a pretty if predictable country-truckin' number, and the other "Unbroken Chain", which he puts through some interesting rhythmic changes. His deeper, huskier voice is a pleasant change from Garcia's. There are two ballads, "Ship of Fools" and "China Doll", of which the latter, in its mixture of acoustic and electronic instruments and general looseness, harks back for a second to the tipsy weirdness of *Aoxomoxoa*. In fact, the record as a whole feels like a move away from the verse-and-chorus song format that The Dead have been into for some time. I don't mean the endless guitar-flogging that passes for improvisation in heavy rock, but rather an alteration of feeling in mid-song, a way of playing with the components of a tune without changing the structure, even in the rock things – in short, a jazzier improvisational style, more like what they used to do. It isn't a regression, though, because this is a different band from the one that played that old stuff – less crazed and more skillful. They may yet wail off into space the way they used to, but from a different launching-pad, in a later-model machine. I'll admit that *Anthem of the Sun* remains my favorite Dead record, but it's a sentimental mistake to relate everything the band has done since to that point six years ago; The Dead are transients, as are we all, and they must be appreciated relative to the times. *Hotel* is a good record for these parlous days, and a better Dead record than we've had in months of drugged Sundays.

Grateful Dead Records means just that; they've set up Round Records for whatever else they want to unleash. The first two Rounds are Garcia's second solo shot and a set by Dead lyricist Robert Hunter. *Garcia* is better by far than the 1972 one. Some classy oldies: "Let's Spend The Night Together" (he makes it sound cozy); Van Morrison's "He Ain't Give You None", from the Bang album; a spiffy acoustic job on Irving Berlin's "Russian Lullaby", complete with clarinet – a good reminder that Garcia

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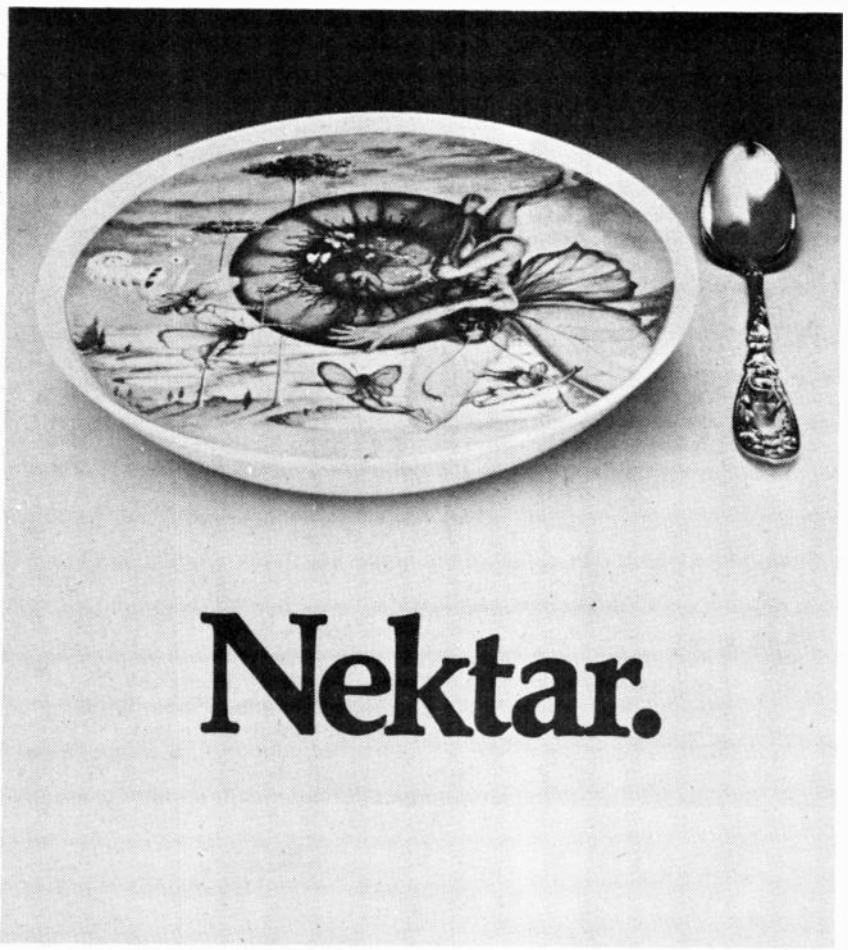
The Recipe For Immortality.



Ingredients

Four Englishmen now famous and thriving in Germany. Roy Albrighton (guitar, vocals), Derek "Mo" Moore (bass, vocals), Alan "Taff" Freeman (keyboard, vocals), Ron Howden (drums).

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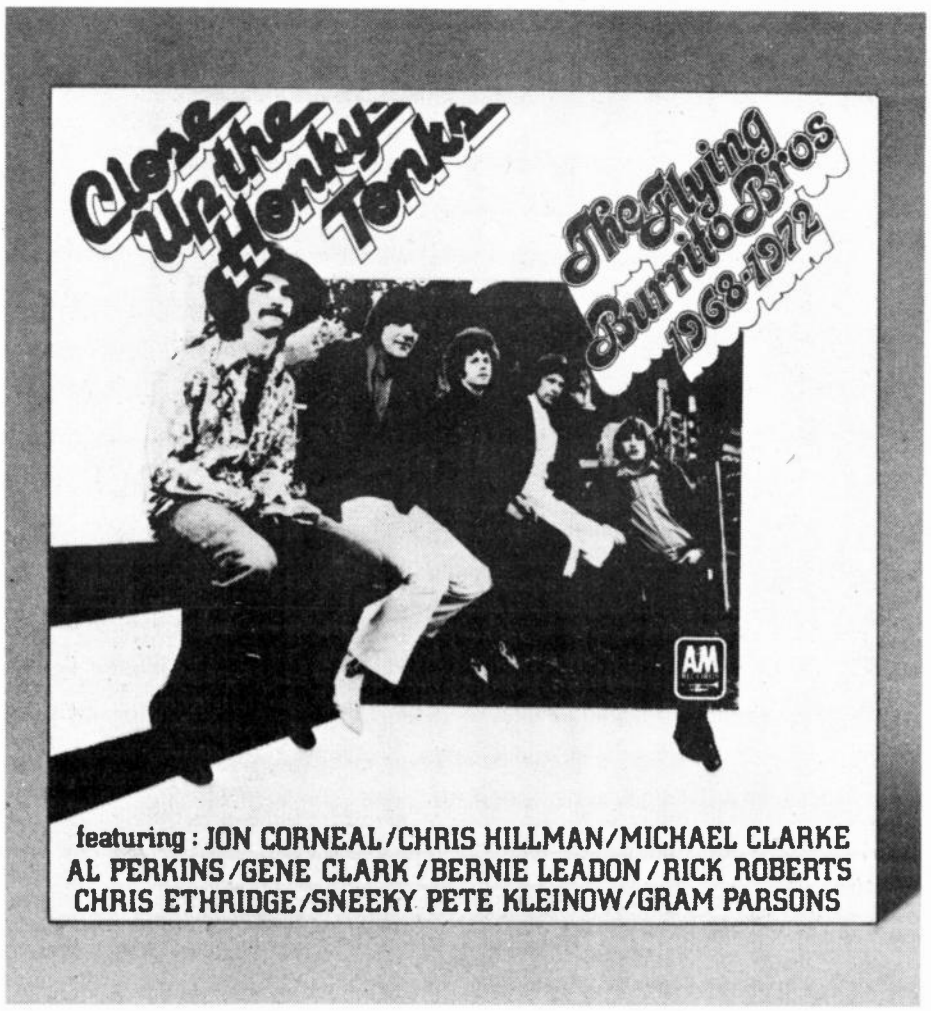
"Close Up The Honky Tonks" is a two-record retrospective that includes their most popular numbers including "Hot Burrito #2," "Christine's Tune" ("the devil in disguise"), and "Wild Horses," along with many previously unreleased songs and in-depth information about the group and its members during their entire evolution. It's a final tribute to the original bad boys of country rock.



"CLOSE UP THE HONKY TONKS" THE FLYING BURRITO BROTHERS ON A&M RECORDS

JUKE BOX JURY

POP SINGLES FOR THE '70s

By GREG SHAW

I'm feeling expansive this month. The weather's been good, the radio hot, and plenty of exciting new records. Mott the Hoople's "Roll Away the Stone" (Columbia 4-46076) is one of the most inspirational things I've heard, their best since "Dudes" and maybe better. And Ian Hunter displays the best rock 'n' roll laugh since The Big Bopper. Too bad about the George Harrison guitar and Leon Russell title, but who cares? The way things are going, those two may even do something good soon. After all, who would've expected the Eagles to make a record as listenable as "Already Gone" (Asylum 11036)? If they can keep it up, I might even invite 'em to my next rockabilly party...

Nobody's playing "Rebel Rebel" (RCA 0287) anymore, and I'm not surprised with the crappy version that's out here. They should hurry up and issue "Diamond Dogs" while Bowie's still hot. So many great records crossing over from England lately. We haven't had the Wombles or Shawaddywaddy yet, but the Rubettes are on the charts with "Sugar Baby Love" (Polydor 14089), the spiffiest piece of pop since "Waterloo", and First Class is moving up fast with "Beach Baby" (UK 49022) a heavily produced tribute to those Beach Boys summer days of yore, written by none other than John Carter of Ivy League fame. Now if only they'd put out the new Ricky Wilde single, it would be rock & roll heaven.

The American Invasion is coming along nicely, too. "Dancing in the Street" by Sweet Pete (RCA 0326) is a great mod recreation, with glittering guitar and Bob Seger vocals; not bad for a guy from Pittsburgh... Pony is a new group, half of which hails from Minneapolis, and that could be one reason their debut single has that Midwest grasp of Byrds, Mersey and mid-sixties pop we all love so much. For those who liked Blue Ash, Pony has the potential to take that sound all the way with "It's Gonna Be So Easy" (20th Century 2115).

Still in the Midwest, moving up to Milwaukee, we find Creme Soda, with "I'm Chewin Gum" (Trinity 113, available thru Kiderian Record Dist., 4926 W. Gunnison St., Chicago, Ill. 60630). Now this is one of those records that drops out of the twilight zone every two or three years to totally unnerve anybody who thinks he knows what's happening. If you remember Instant Ralston, the Legendary Stardust Cowboy, the 13th Floor Elevators, the Godz – this is one of those records. I love everything about it except trying to describe it. Imagine the Trashmen, back in their garage playing a two-chord "Jailhouse Rock", a singer who sounds like the Sweet on acid hurling blood-bending shrieks into an over-miked echo chamber, with every kitchen sink noise available in Wisconsin thrown in at one point or another.

And just so you'll be sure where they're coming from, it's got an eye in a pyramid on the label! For hardened psychotics and fans of psychedelic rockabilly only.

Which brings us to Lance Romance. You read about the glitter boys of Hollywood, you've seen 'em in their green hair and 9-inch platforms, now they've got their own recording idol who sings about the life of a Rodneyette, commiting the Hollywood mystique to wax just as the Dolls did for New York. Masterminded by Kim Fowley (naturally) and dedicated to Rodney Bingenheimer (inevitably), "California Summertime"/"Hollywood Nites" (Now N-8) has the usual surplus of outrageous lyrics and unexpectedly keen perception. Musically, it's a bastard breed of Velvet Underground guitar punch and Bruce & Terry surf harmonies. It's getting airplay too, as far away as Texas, and would make a good minor hit. I somewhat prefer the flip, which examines the sociology of a Hollywood street punk looking for action on a glitter Saturday night. Anyway, not one to miss, so send your buck to Original Sound, 7120 Sunset, Hollywood, Ca. 90046.

With those monsters out of the way, we've still got a respectable load of also-rans. Like Mahogany Rush, with their first American single "A New Rock and Roll" (20th Century 2111). Canadian Frank Marino thinks he's the reincarnation of Jimi Hendrix, and if he thinks that's "a new kind of rock and roll" he's got another think coming. He is good, though, and I guess there's a market now that the flood of posthumous Hendrix albums has dried up.

It's good to have Don Fardon back (remember "Indian Reservation"?) but he'll have to come up with more than this ho-hum rendition of "Lola" (Capitol 3929) if he hopes to stay around this time. Same for Barry Blue, who has some great records out in England, of which "School Love" (Bell 480) is not one. But it's always nice to hear a new one from the Bay City Rollers, of "Keep On Dancing" fame. This time it's "Shang-a-Lang" (Bell 481), a bubbly pop rocker that's also out in a competing version by Tinker's Moon (Polydor 1509). One of them should definitely make it.

Certain people will want "4th of July" by John Christie (Capitol 3928) if only because McCartney wrote it. I wanted it because Dave Clark produced it. Either way, it's rather a disappointment. As is David Essex's "Lamplight" (Columbia 4-4604), an old cut that was a hit in England months ago and is long overdue here. David tries to sound like Dr. John, a foolish mistake – he should learn to imitate people who know how to sing! Further disappointment is in store for those who buy "Central Park Arrest" by Thunderthighs (Mercury 73497) for the name and the fact it's a smash in England. Kind of an oddity, actually, for those who'd care to hear a glam soul record.

Of course you've already bought 10cc's new single "The Wall Street Shuffle" (UK 49023) but in case you didn't notice it has a flip, "Gismo My Way" that's not on either album. It's only an instrumental, but you know how collectors are... And if you go "ugh" when you see the name If, you're in for a surprise when you hear "I Believe in Rock and Roll" (Capitol 3932). Yes, they're all coming around, this one's heavy metal verging on pop, with only a hint of horns.

Looking for oldies? This isn't the best month for it. Freddy Cannon's "Rock 'N' Roll A-B-C's" (MCA 40269) won't save your soul, Gary & Dave's remake of Carole King's 1962 hit "It Might As Well Rain Until September" (London 207) hardly does justice to the song, and Gary U.S. Bonds is barking up the wrong tree with "My Love Song" (Bluff City 221); he never made a good record without Gene Barge and everybody knows it. Most interesting oldie of the month is "Time of the Season"/"Imagine the Swan" (Epic 11145), just as I was beginning to fear there'd never be another Zombies single. If Epic could do it with the Jamies I wouldn't be surprised if they got this on the charts again... wouldn't it be nice?

It's been a long time since ol' Don Everly sounded as commercial as he does on "Warmin' Up the Band" (Ode 66046) and my, hasn't he gotten funky! I could see this becoming a hit song. Already a hit is Paul Anka's "(You're) Having My Baby" (UA-454), a strong, smooth pop-MOR ballad with heavy housewife appeal. I like it, too. Hell, I even like Bobby Goldsboro's latest, "Quicksand" (UA 451), one of his best ever. Sam Neely should've been up in that If paragraph, as another example of somebody I've always hated without hearing. Now that I've heard "Sadie Take a Lover" (A&M 1523) I can see why some people like him. You know, I think I just figured out what happened to the hordes of leftover singer-songwriters from 1970-71. They all became MOR singers! Sometimes I can only shake my head in awe at how the pop process metes out justice to its failed mutations... something for us all to ponder, indeed.

(continued from page 50)

can actually *play*; a soulful, sweet-and-sour "When The Hunter Gets Captured By The Game"; and C. Berry's "Let It Rock", in a terrific new arrangement – the guitar, piano, and vocal hit the usual Berry-woogie groove, but the rhythm section is half-timed, giving the song an irresistible, swaggering gait. Plenty more, including lots of R&B, and a fine, funky band. Garcia put a whole other album in the can at the same session – look for it around Xmas. *Tales of The Great Rum Runners* is Hunter's words, music, and, unfortunately, voice. He just isn't a singer, and he ain't Rex Harrison either, and that makes it pretty hard to enjoy this record. The band is good, most of the songs deserve another chance, there are some nice, if curious, moments, and some swell lyrics ("You can catch the drift but not the drifter"); but pass on this one, unless you're so gone on the Dead trip that you snatch up everything with a skull-and-crossbones on it.

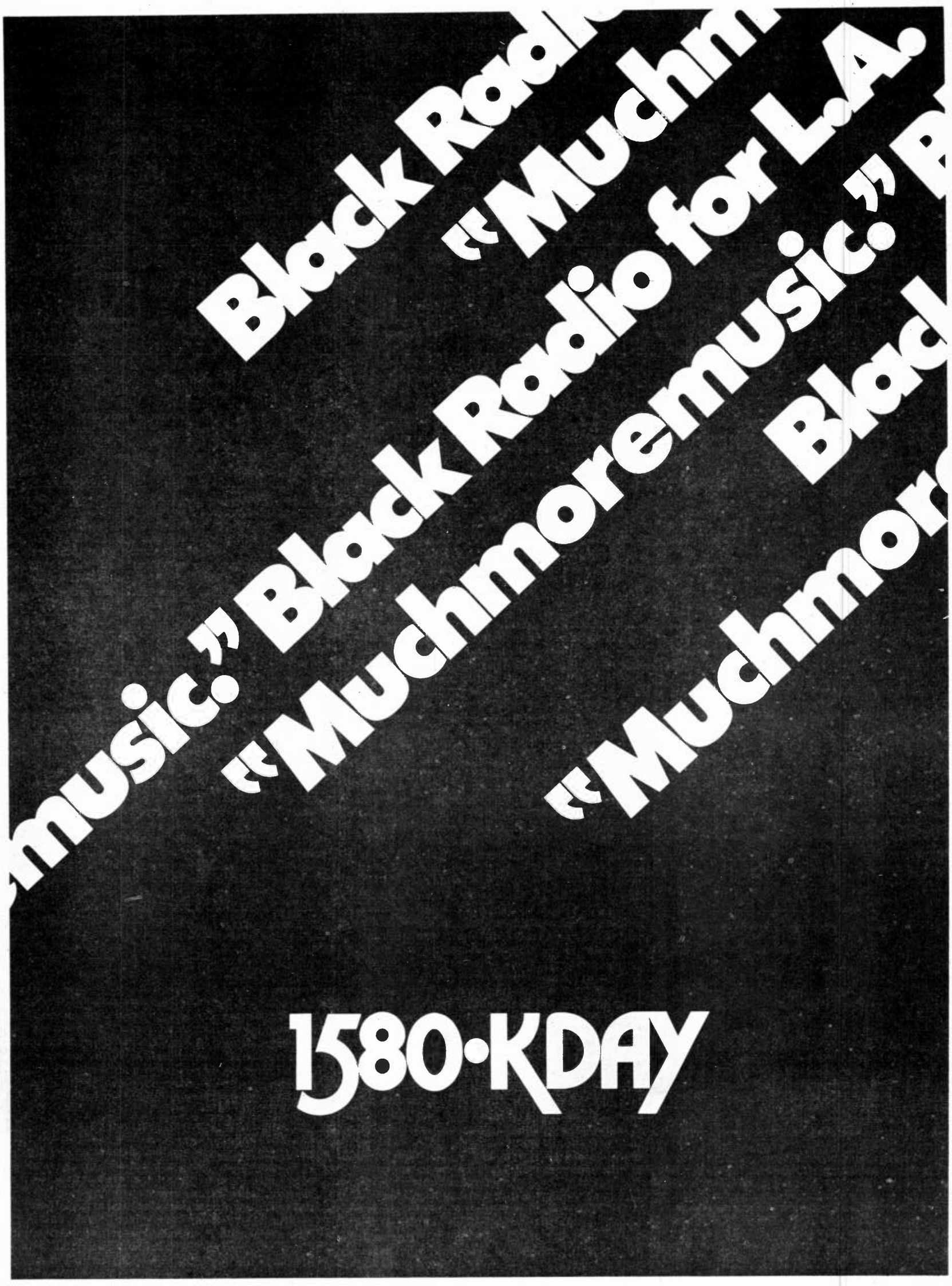
Your Baby Is A Lady
Jackie De Shannon
Atlantic SD 7303

By KEN BARNES

Jackie De Shannon is one of the greats. Writing memorable hits for Brenda Lee and the Fleetwoods ("Dum Dum", "Heart in Hand", "The Great Impostor"), then writing and singing brilliant numbers like "You Won't Forget Me" and "When You Walk in the Room", her track record is monumental. She sang pure girl-group ("Should I Cry") pure folk ("Little Yellow Roses"), or re-rocked Buddy Holly ("Oh Boy"). "When You Walk" and her searing performance of "Needles and Pins" influenced the Searchers, the Byrds (for whom she also wrote the sparkling "Don't Doubt Yourself Babe") and folk-rock in general. Besides the Searchers, her songs were covered by numerous British Invasion groups, the Paramounts (Procol Harum's predecessors) and Marianne Faithfull's dazzling "Come and Stay With Me" among them. After an MOR phase initiated by "What the World Needs Now Is Love", she captivated millions all over again with the self-penned "Put a Little Love in Your Heart" in 1969.

There's no doubt as to her glorious niche in the rock pantheon, but on her new album Jackie's unfortunately a victim of the "Atlantic Homogenization Syndrome". Seems like ever since *Dusty in Memphis* (a good album though not up to Dusty Springfield's stunning early Philips waxings), Atlantic has marched all their white girl singers (Lulu, Cher, Maggie Bell, now Jackie, etc.) down South to get that funky grit, or else imported the same types of musicians and gospelish back-up singers to get the same result. Obviously the aforementioned artists sound different enough intrinsically so the records don't really sound identical. But they have in common an uncomfortable sense of being forced into an artificial assembly-line soul mold. Another common factor is that the resultant discs come out decidedly inferior to the singers' previous recorded works.

Your Baby Is A Lady is quite homogeneous on its own terms, those terms being a heavy gloss of strings (even if Michael Brown's father is among the violinists) and general bland middle-of-the-road direction. Jackie wrote only three songs (another disappointment), which ("You Touch and You Go" in particular) contain nice melodic hooks and stand out clearly. Neil Sedaka's "The Other Side of Me" also stands out; class will tell. Otherwise it's a sadly unexciting, though pleasant, album by an artist deserving much more sympathetic direction.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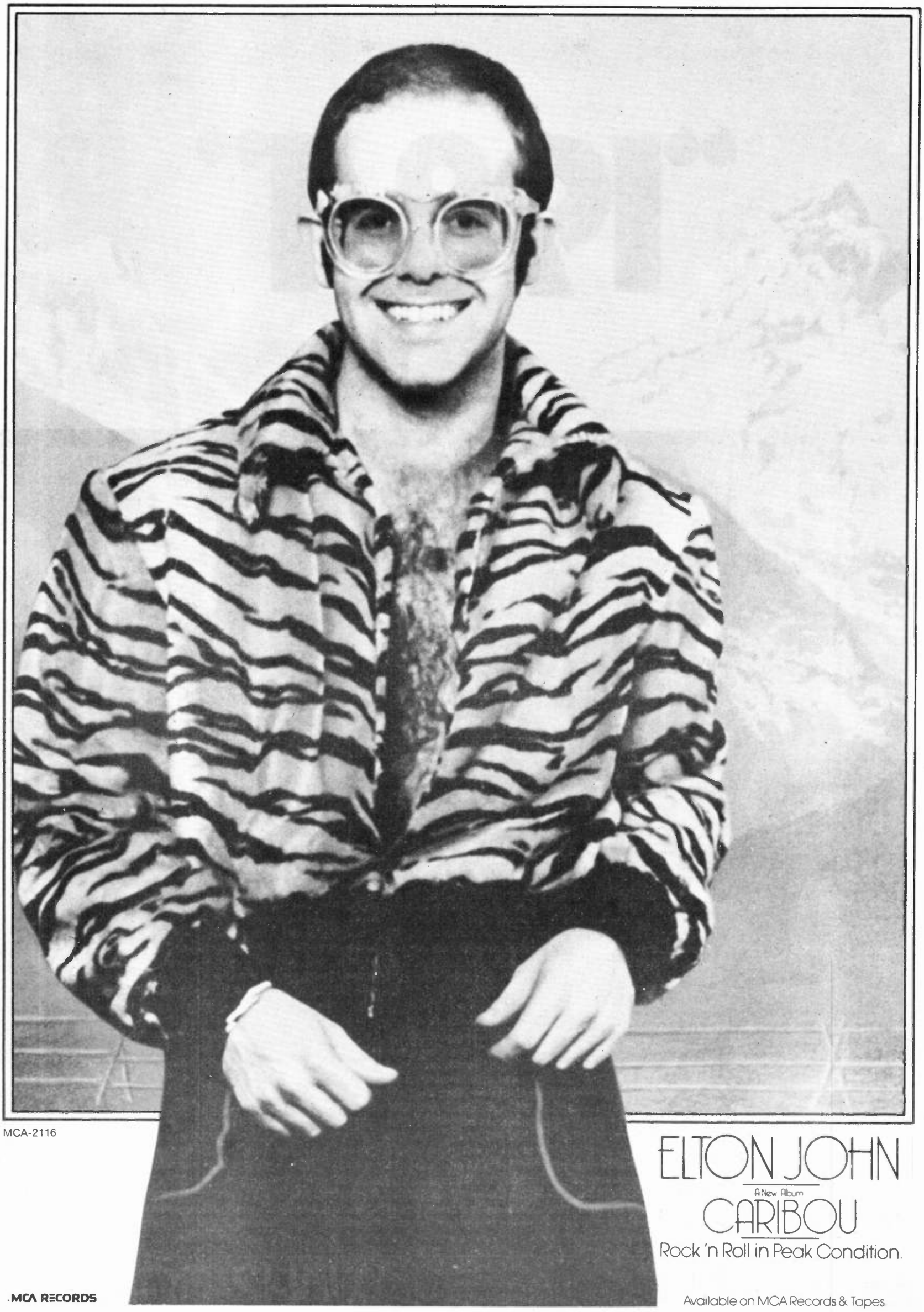

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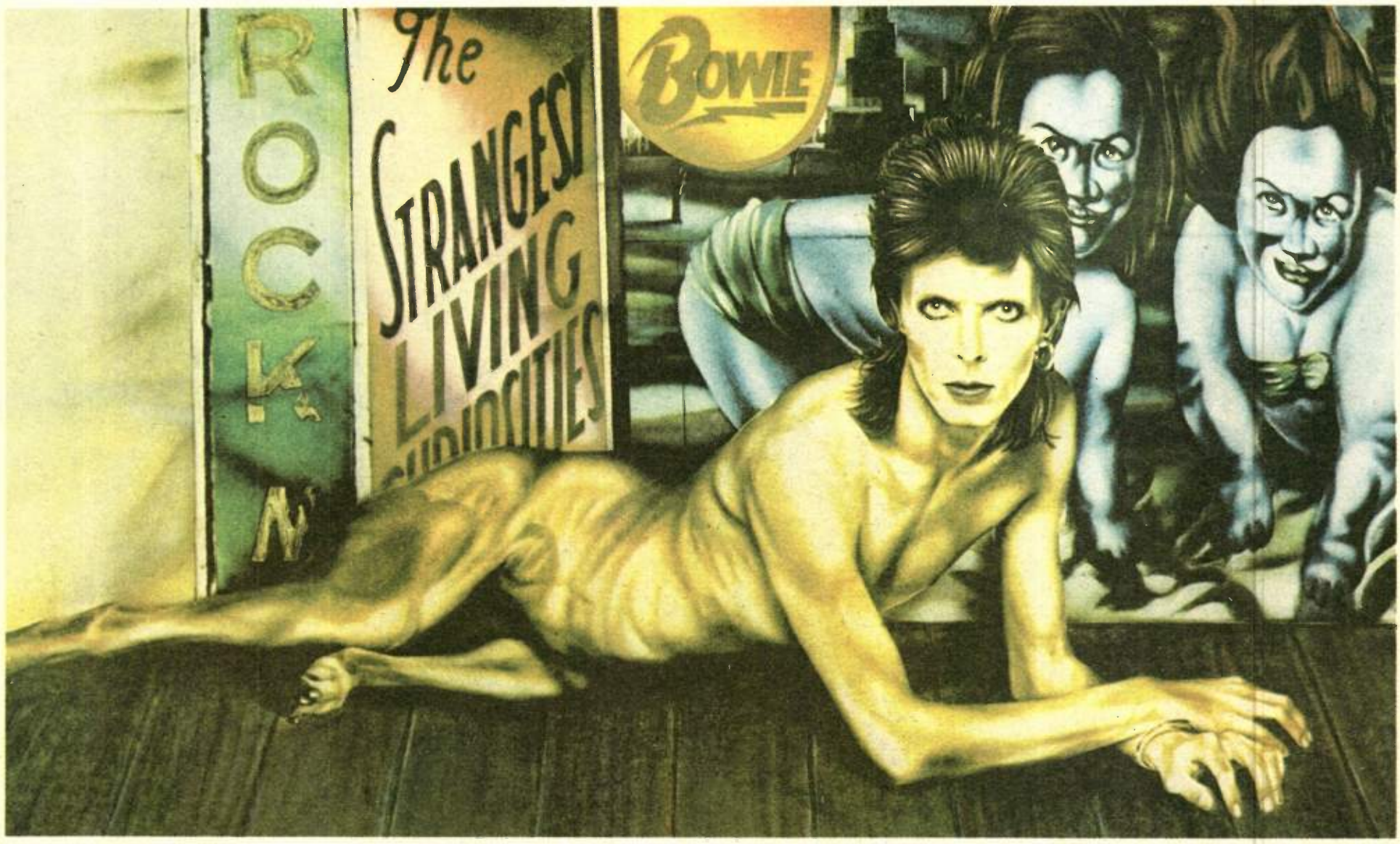

From his smash album, "Diamond Dogs."

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