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RECORD MAGAZINE 4

Jan. '75 Vol.5

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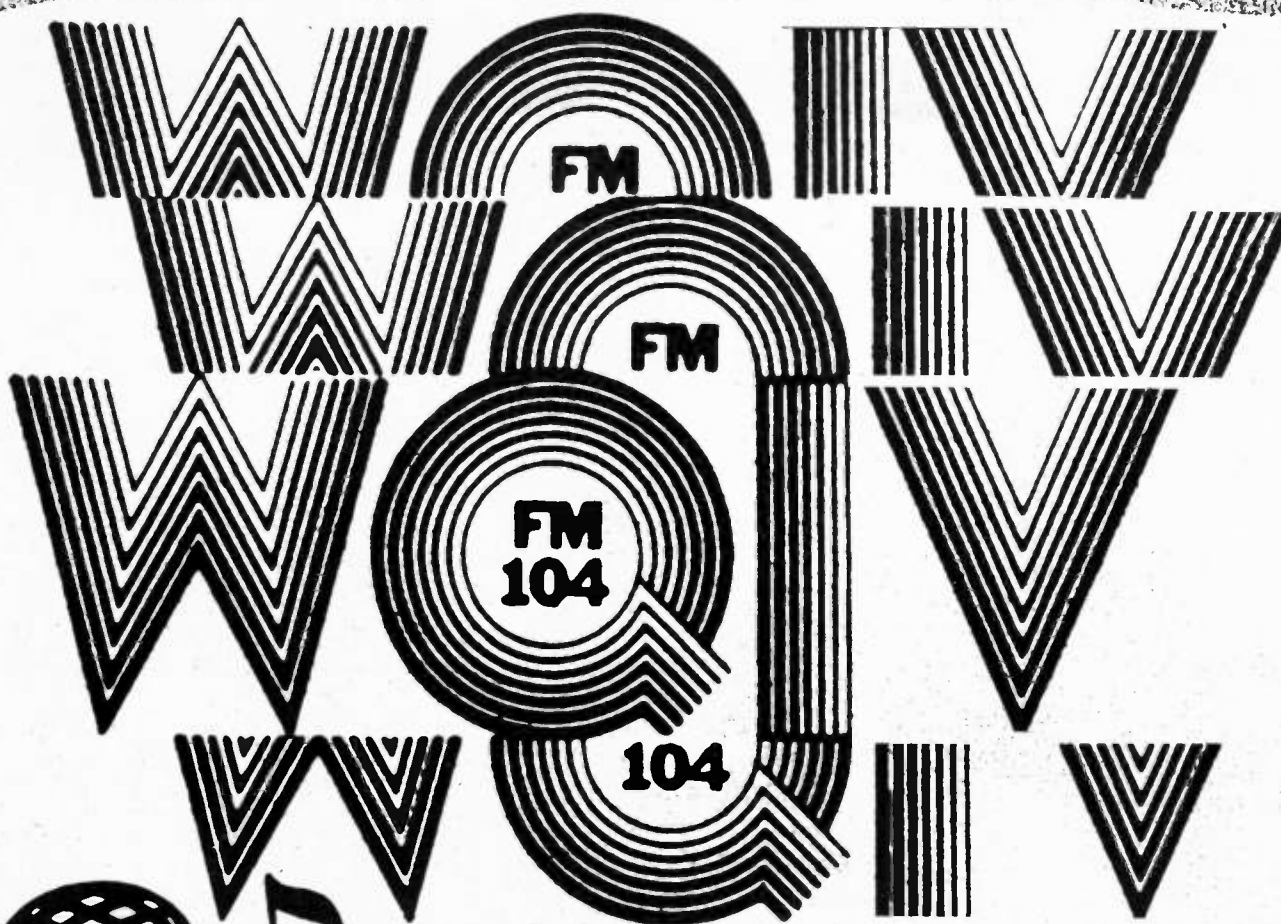
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Wednesday	1/8	12 noon	"Bless Its Pointed Little Head" - Jefferson Airplane
Thursday	1/9	9 pm	"Six Wives of Henry VIII" - Rick Wakeman
Friday	1/10	12 noon	"John Sebastian Songbook" - Loving Spoonful

Monday	1/13	8 am	"Ride the Wind" - Youngbloods (live)
Tuesday	1/14	3 pm	"Twelve Dreams" - Spirit
Wednesday	1/15	12 noon	"Mother Lode" - Loggins & Messina
Thursday	1/16	9 pm	"War Child" - Jethro Tull
Friday	1/17	12 noon	"Aerial Ballet" - Nilsson

Monday	1/20	8 am	"Future Games" - Fleetwood Mac
Tuesday	1/21	3 pm	"Walls & Bridges" - John Lennon
Wednesday	1/22	12 noon	"Mark Almond I" - Mark Almond
Thursday	1/23	9 pm	"Odds and Sods" - Who
Friday	1/24	12 noon	"Desperado" - Eagles

Monday	1/27	8 am	"Flowers" - Rolling Stones
Tuesday	1/28	3 pm	"Dragon Fly" - Jefferson Starship
Wednesday	1/29	12 noon	"The Band" - The Band
Thursday	1/30	9 pm	"Greatest Hits" - Yardbirds
Friday	1/31	12 noon	"Waitress in the Donut Shop" - Maria Muldaur

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THIS MONTH

The Hudson Brothers

You've seen them on TV, you've heard them on your radio, but you've never been sure exactly what the Hudson Brothers were all about. We weren't either, so we sent a couple of our most enquiring reporters over to talk with them. What they found out should provide a few surprises--and of course a lot of laughs.
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The Cover:

Alex Harvey is the first to appeal to the '70s mod audience without being effeminate. This month's cover story examines the history and philosophy of this tough character.



Cover illustration by John van Hamersveld.

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PERFORMANCES

MANFRED MANN'S EARTH BAND
SOUTHER-HILLMAN-FURAY BAND
HUDSON-FORD
The Fox Theatre
Atlanta, GA.

By GREGG BIGGS

The Fox Theatre in Atlanta is perhaps the finest concert hall in the city, what with its charming Arabic architecture, excellent acoustics, intimate atmosphere, and excellent visibility even from the back of the hall. Despite an element in the city that would rather see this relic transformed into a large office building, the Fox continues to rock on, and this concert was just another of the many fine shows that have graced its stage.

Richard Hudson and John Ford, Strawbs alumni both, have put together a fine band, playing perhaps some of the year's best music. They came on to cordial applause, and quietly went to work. Due to the fact that it was a midnight concert, Hudson-Ford weren't able to really extend themselves; consequently they left the stage some twenty-five minutes later. Their set ran from "Pick Up the Pieces" from their *Nickelodeon* album to "Don't Wanna Be a Star" from their just-released *Free Spirit*. Virtual unknowns at the start, the strength of their music convinced many people by the end that their records were worth obtaining. Hats off to a fine band.

Next on the ever-growing list of super-groups is the Souther-Hillman-Furay Band, who are some of America's top rock musicians. Their performance however left a great deal to be desired. I admit to not liking country-rock all that much, but there are some bands in that genre who are quite competent, such as Poco, Pure Prairie League, and even the SHF Band--on record at least.

The two biggest things that hampered their set were a poor sound mix and a lacklustre, devil-may-care attitude. They seemed to be devoid of feeling for their music, and they performed it as if it were a duty that had to be done rather than enjoyed. The exceptions were Chris Hillman and Richie Furay, who at least attempted a professional approach. Furay did a version of the Poco fave "Good Feelin' to Know". Gone were his handclapping antics of the past, but it was an effort. He tried again with "Fallin' In Love", but still could not generate any excitement in the crowd. Hillman and the rest just kind of followed along with Furay, but during the entire set, Souther seemed to be totally bored.

Musically, by contrast, they were quite competent, with the Hillman-Jim Gordon bass-drum section holding down a firm bottom. Rhythm guitars were supplied by Furay and Souther, and the steel and lead guitars rotated between Souther, Hillman and Furay--and they were first-rate.

The SHF Band will have to take stock of themselves and polish up their live shows if they expect to remain an act of good drawing power. Their musical department is in very capable hands, and they at least have that to be thankful for.

The best was yet to come. For many years, the name of Manfred Mann has brought much respect from peers and critics alike, thanks to his abilities at keyboards and synthesizer, putting together sound bands, be they pop, rock, jazz or progressive, and for his interpretations of Dylan songs. His current ensemble, the Earth Band, and the shows they put on, will see to it that the respect is never lost.

Formed a couple of years ago, the Earth Band has progressed from a first-rate rock band to a first-rate progressive band that plays avenues of swirling sound and searches for new frontiers. The membership remains the same, with Mick Rogers on guitar and vocals, Colin Patterden on bass, Chris Slade on drums, and of course, Manfred Mann on keyboard and synthesizer.

They came out to a rather ecstatic reception, and after the preliminaries, launched their set with "Mercury--the Winged Messenger." Mick Rogers admitted that the band was suffering from jet-lag, but if they were they never showed it. Their perform-

ance was flawless, and it ran the gamut of a rearranged "Messin'", "The Good Earth", "Father of Night, Father of Day", "Captain Bobby Stout" as well as a long number from their current album, *The Good Earth*. They encored with a substantially altered "Mighty Quinn."

Mann's work on the keyboards definitely places him among the forefront of rock ivory ticklers. Patterden's bass was solid and always there to urge things along. The guitar work of Mick Rogers was tight and very to the point, with little straying from the context except for his virtuoso solos. And of course there's Carl Slade's drums. On the basis of this concert, Slade has achieved a well deserved berth on my list of great drummers. He was outstanding. This musical aggregation gave the attentive audience a performance they won't soon forget, and the crowd reaction was the warmest of the night, despite the fact that it was quite late by the time they finished.

intelligence-insulting performances. As to her musical offerings, they are uniformly mediocre, with her five-piece backup band providing the few minutes of enjoyment that exist during the entire set. Her lyrics are banal, and what's worse often consist of patently contrived "naughtiness." Her voice is adequate, but rarely surpasses that level.

As to her act, it's just that, an act. It is nowhere as bizarre as the masters like Iggy Pop or Wayne County, nowhere as searing as the Velvet Underground, and not even as risqué as the tired old Lenny Bruce performances. Dana takes the time between songs to talk to the audience, mainly about sex, always throwing in references to bondage, pulsing 9-inch meats, cleavage and leather torture. But the whole thing is so forced and unnatural that it falls flat on the floor.

Nothing in Dana's show can be described as sexy. Perhaps the very same acts performed by someone more capable would



ROBERT FAILLA

Manfred Mann introduces the tambourine to progressive rock.

DANA GILLESPIE
Reno Sweeney
New York City, New York

By ALAN BETROCK

Mainman is no innocent babe when it comes to the procreation of hype. For the last three months the music scene had been flooded with scantily clad pictures of one Dana Gillespie, bountifully endowed and seemingly alluring in her black stockings and six-inch heels. But despite the *Penthouse*-like blitz of image-making, the first album (even blessed with some Bowie-Ronson aid) flopped. Now with a second album to move, it seemed only natural for a live tour to be bestowed upon the public.

If her print image was one of sultry manipulation, her live act downgrades that into a pastiche of dull, obvious and rather

have worked, but on bulging Dana it was all a wasted effort. In fact Dana may just coin a new rock style to rival males with prodigious groin growths; Bulge Rock. Except in Dana's case, it will consist of midriff-bulge.

Dana showed her stocking tops, she bent over backwards, she had the guitar player search for a pick in her bra, she sat on a stool open-legged, she carefully rested her right breast upon the curve of her acoustic guitar, and tried to shake everything at once. This may sound appealing, but when it is performed by a pretentious female who looks like a middle-aged housewife it is merely a sad, bad joke.

On the same night that Dana Gillespie was debuting her act at Reno Sweeney, Wilbur Mills' honey, Fanny Foxe, was closing her show at some Times Square Emporium. One got the strong feeling that Ms. Gillespie should have been booked in as her replacement.

ORPHAN
Herter Park on the Charles River
Cambridge, Massachusetts

By DAVID W. JOHNSON

Orphan is New England's very own band on the run. Crucified recently in the national rock press upon the release of a third album (*More Orphan Than Not*), the highest word of praise this group seems to earn, even in the eyes of local critics is "ubiquitous." Which means they play a lot. But to those hard-core fans who are sympathetic after seeing Orphan criss-cross the East Coast about four hundred times, another word that suggests itself is "under-appreciated."

On a sunny summer's day by the Charles River, the four members of Orphan acquitted themselves admirably in what was their biggest New England engagement to date. All duded up for the occasion in white suits and contrived shirts, Orphan's two leaders, Eric Lilljequist and Dean Adrien, were in high style and good voice as they provided the warm-up for what was a free London Records promotional outing for themselves and more successful label-mates Z.Z. Top.

True to form, Orphan did *not* steal the show. What they did *do* was deliver the erratic blend of country, blue-eyed soul, Beatles and Youngbloods that their followers have grown to love/hate/ignore. This writer finds their music pleasing and enjoyed every minute of it, from the opening notes of "Don't Make Excuses for a Lonely Day" (the single off the first album that never made it because it was "too country") to a closing workout on the traditional "Midnight Special."

Always a flashy performer on guitar--either acoustic or electric--Eric Lilljequist was able to squeeze out a solo of true brilliance on one of the newer numbers. Claiming to have been influenced by everyone from Django Reinhardt to a lot of anonymous, tasteful session men, Lilljequist's style tends more toward fast country picking than anything else. On this occasion he was both fast and fluid, abandoning the attempts at heaviness that seem to have landed the group in critical deep water.

Vocally, Eric and Dean employ the kind of high, keening harmonies that they like to compare to the Everly Brothers; however, they can't get rid of a certain youthful whine that again separates the fans from the tomato-tossers.

At his best, on his own material, Eric can communicate a desolation that is downright country sad. Hopefully, they can stay together til they get the hit single that will bring them the success and audiences they deserve.

JEFFERSON STARSHIP
FLEETWOOD MAC
TRIUMVIRAT
Shrine Auditorium
Los Angeles, California

By JOANNE RUSSO

With the exception of Triumvirat, this show could have easily occurred half a decade ago. The Starship, with their resurrection of late '60s consciousness, inspired the crowd to don their oldest jeans and their aged incense and dope-stenched Indian embroidered shirts, as if the Summer of Love was still happening.

The audience arrived determined to enjoy the evening. But while the show was good, it was unfortunately so long that half the audience was snoring by the time of Jefferson Starship's encore. Nearly six hours had elapsed from the start of the concert to the final curtain.

After Fleetwood Mac's over-long two-hour set, Jefferson Starship appeared. As Grace Slick opened with "Ride the Tiger" from their new *Dragon Fly* album, the audience simmered just below the boiling point.

It took a few songs for Grace's voice to warm up to the fine fullness she's known for. In her black dress, with long oriental robe,

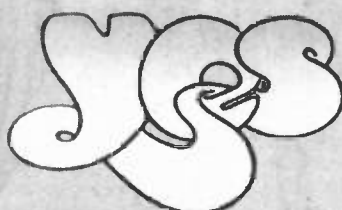
*Snakes are coiled upon the granite.
Horsemen ride into the west.
Moons are rising on the planet
where the worst must suffer like
the rest.*

*Pears are ripe and peaches falling.
Suns are setting in the east.
Women wail, and men are calling
to the god that's in them, and to
the beast.*


*Love is waiting for a lover.
Generations kneel for peace.
What men lose, Man will recover
polishing the brains his bones release.*

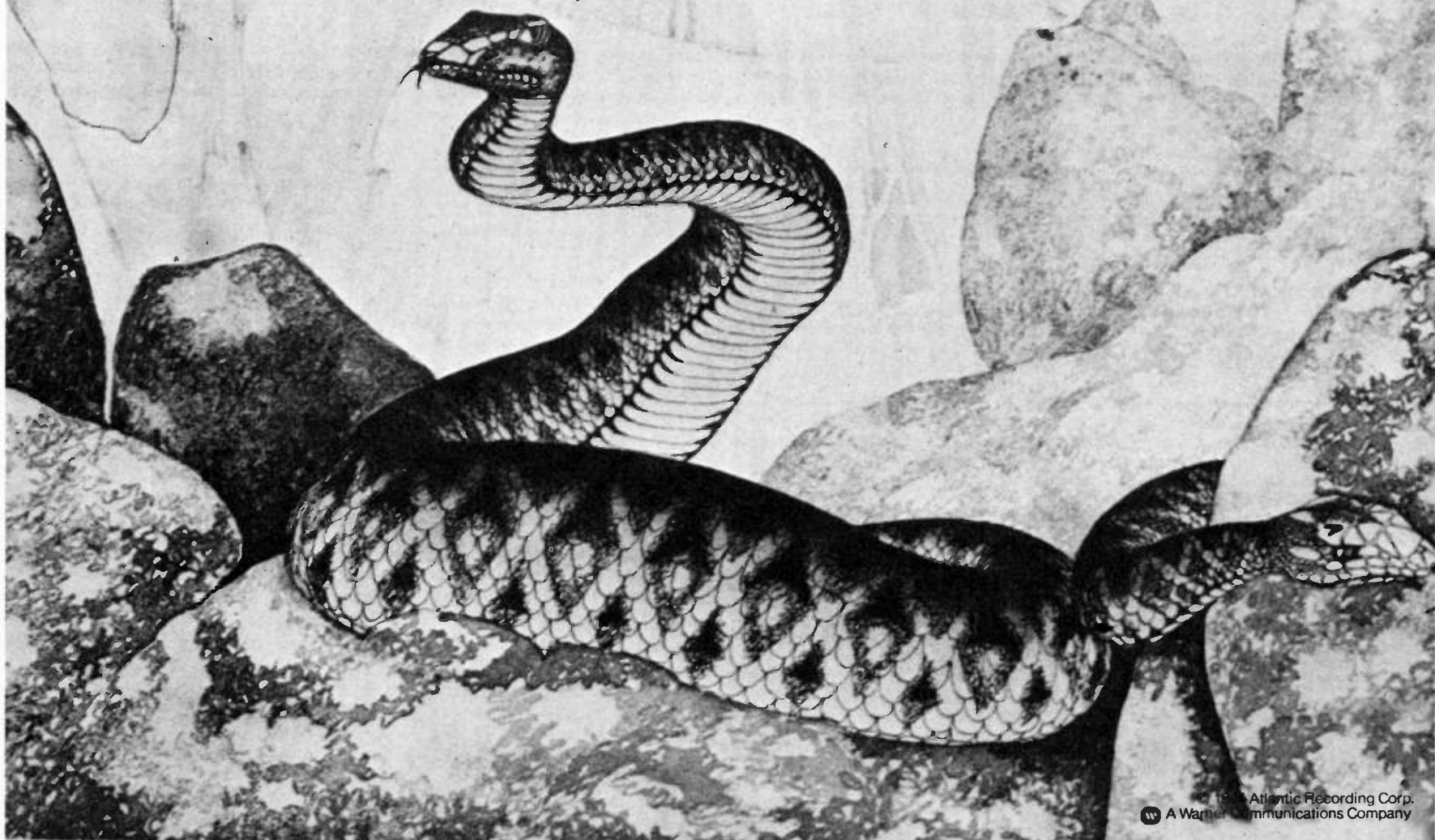
*Truth conceals itself in error.
History reveals its face:
days of ecstasy and terror
invent the future that invents
the race.*

*Donald Lehmkuhl
©October 1974*



Relayer

On Atlantic Records  and Tapes
Produced by YES and Eddie Offord.



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A Warner Communications Company

PERFORMANCES

added pounds, and shorter curlier hair, the 35-year-old Grace looked ages away from the flower princess of "White Rabbit."

Most of the set was from *Dragon Fly*, which while enjoyable in its own right, couldn't match the *Surrealistic Pillow* and *After Bathing at Baxter's* songs the audience was calling out for. Prior to the encore, the only old song performed was a beautiful arrangement of "Wooden Ships".

The encore at last fulfilled the obligation that the Starship had to its audience. They started with "Somebody to Love" and went into "Volunteers." It should have been where the set began.

Fleetwood Mac has probably had more shifts in personnel than tours. After all the changes, the lineup now lists four longstanding members: John McVie, Mick Fleetwood, Christine McVie, and Bob Welch, plus an unnamed organist friend.

With their unique knack of combining just the right proportions of country, jazz and blues with rock, Fleetwood Mac are comfortably unpredictable from song to song. Instead they stressed extended instrumentals and story-songs with narrative inserts. The two big oldies they did were "Oh Well" and "Black Magic Woman".

Triumvirat, the opening band, is constantly compared to Emerson, Lake & Palmer. And although there are blatant similarities, there are also substantial differences. Like ELP, Triumvirat is a three-man, keyboard-synthesizer focused band that applies electronics to classically styled music. However, the anti-theatric Triumvirat emphasizes an overall tight group sound, rather than each individual's proficiency as a soloist.

Their extremely well received set was highlighted by "Mr. Ten Percent," a conglomerate of tunes and songs dedicated to rip-off band managers.

All of these acts are fine in their own right, but this would have been a more successful show if each group had played a shorter set, or if any two of them had shared the bill. Six hours of anything is too much.



Don't look so freaked out, Gracie; we've all got to get old sometime

ROBERT FAILLA

Beatle Reunion?

NEW YORK - The excitement buzzed in the air, fueled by memories of the last Harrison appearance (the Bangladesh Benefit) where Harrison was joined on stage by several luminaries of the music world. So it only seemed natural that George could work the magic to get a whole bunch of egotistical artists together for a grand finale to his tour, which had been a disappointing failure up to now. A spectacular closing in New York would serve to eradicate all the negative comments about his stature as a performer.

The first name to come up was good old reliable Ringo. Ringo had played at Bangladesh, the only other Beatle to do so, plus he seemed to still take his career as a musician seriously. Though he was currently in London making a film, reliable sources claimed that he would fly over for the Christmas holidays and take the stage when the curtain went up.

With a 50% base to build upon, speculation was rife that the other two would also make an appearance. First was Paul. People close to the scene reported that, with the official legal dissolution of the Beatles, Paul no longer felt the hostility he once had toward his former comrades. Not to be left out, John immediately let it be known that he too was getting into the act, if he could get his legal situation straightened out.

By now, people in New York could hardly contain themselves. Imagine, the Beatles, together again. It was a Christmas wish come true in an otherwise bleak year. And it made sense. Hadn't several other reclusive artists been on tour in the past twelve months? When one deals in fantasy fulfillment, generally all hell breaks loose. This was no exception. By midweek, the stories were flying fast and furious. It was confirmed that Bob Dylan would appear, if part of the money was donated to the United Jewish Appeal (this after all was a benefit for Unicef and other assorted charities). Elton John, riding the top of the charts with his updated version of a great Beatle classic, "Lucy in the Sky with Diamonds," saw the opportunity for a great publicity coup if he would join the Fab Four for this one number, a cut they had never before performed live. People remembered that in 1965 Mick Jagger sat in the dugout at Shea Stadium during the Beatles concert and they just assumed that he would have to be there also, for he is one to never miss a social event, and this was becoming THE EVENT of the year, if not the decade. Clapper of course would be there, if only to squire Patti, and sparked speculation that another re-union would take place--Jimmy Page would be joining Clapton and Harrison on stage for a monster guitar jam.

Alas, all this was just the pipe dream of some unremittent dope smokers. Curtain time arrived in New York, and there was George all right, but sharing the stage with him was merely Billy Preston and Tom Scott, certainly not the superstars we were awaiting. Nor was this feeling of letdown abated by the actual concert. I believe we can safely skip over the Ravi Shankar portion of the show, merely noting that it was dull, dull, and duller. The shame of it all is that Shankar isn't even the best at this sitar game. My personal favorite is a guy named Dr. D.H. Deodam. George opened with "Hari's on Tour," an instrumental like every other instrumental you've ever heard. Some Beatle gold followed, "Something" and "In My Life" and then, sensing the total boredom of the crowd, he allowed Billy Preston and Tom Scott to get the crowd on their feet by playing boogie music with lots of wah-wah.

I could go on listing song titles, but what for, it's an exercise in futility. For the reader who still likes George Harrison, be advised to stay home and listen to the material you like, and keep your illusions--the man has totally lost his voice and his feel for rock and roll.

Florida Time

BANJO PICKIN' MARATHON
Big Daddy's
Ft. Lauderdale, Fla.

By MARTIN R. CERF

Not one, nor two, but 26 were there on stage pickin' and strummin' simultaneously, each to a different tune while hundreds looked on attempting to decipher one from the other. It was WSHE's First Annual Banjo Pickin' Marathon, a competition sponsored by the radio station in conjunction with The Nitty Gritty Dirt Band and United Artists Records. Mind you, this was not a test of talent, but of perseverance, as the winner was to be the person who could play the longest consecutive set, not the best.

It was probably the most unlikely group ever assembled on one stage, with participants ranging in age from 18 to 61. We heard "Foggy Mountain Breakdown", "The Ballad of Jed Clampett" and "The Ballad of Bonnie & Clyde" at least forty times and needless to say, both the audience and the performers were burned out when that last riff was inevitably knocked out.

But the show was a true phenomenon, in the sense that it could actually take place. In any other town I'm not so sure what the response would have been, but the Ft. Lauderdale-Miami pop population is atypical of any other. This is a Disneyland geography, and while December is a cruel, hostile month throughout most of the nation, it's the beginning of Ft. Lauderdale's transformation into fantasy land as the exodus from the Northeast, particularly New York begins--people in search of a winter world of fun!

Listening to WSRF, or "surf" radio as it's known here, fun is definitely this town's chief resource, and you needn't listen more than fifteen minutes at any given time to hear "Fun, Fun, Fun", "Surfin' USA", "Ride The Wild Surf", "The Little Old Lady From Pasadena" or any other Jan & Dean/Beach Boys celebration. There's no hint of inflation city that the rest of the nation's communities have become, and the streets are packed with thrill seeking boys and girls who only wanna dance, drink and have a good time.

Big Daddy's is the mecca of honest good times and fun, with more than seventy clubs throughout the state. Big Daddy's has propagated itself into a corporation that not only encompasses the night clubs, but liquor stores as well that stock Big Daddy's booze. Big Daddy himself, is Joseph Flanigan, a jolly lumbering gray headed man and a number one celebrity throughout the state. As a business man, he's one of a kind allowing all of his hundreds of employees to share in the profits of the individual clubs and retail outlets for which they work.

The Big Daddy's club in Ft. Lauderdale on Commercial Blvd. can hold 500 or more and during the days of the contest it was the scene for a passing parade of regional fans probably numbering in the tens of thousands. The contest was front page news in the local papers and on the spot live radio reports of the latest to drop out of the competition from a lack of sleep or pure exhaustion occurred hourly over WSHE-FM and WSRF. Needless to say, there were few living in the territory unaware of the event as it progressed.

The final body left on-stage was John Reynolds who played for a consecutive 82



82 consecutive hours of banjo picking? What will those teenagers come up with next!

hours, with just a five minute break on the hour. He began at 8PM on Friday, December 13th and finished a winner at 10PM on Monday the 16th. Needless to say, the local amphetamine franchise was doing a record business.

For his efforts, Mr. Reynolds (age 22) was awarded a Gibson Mastertone Banjo (worth \$1000) and his name will be entered in the Guinness Book of Records for 1974.



"Encore." The New Argent Album That's Larger Than Live.

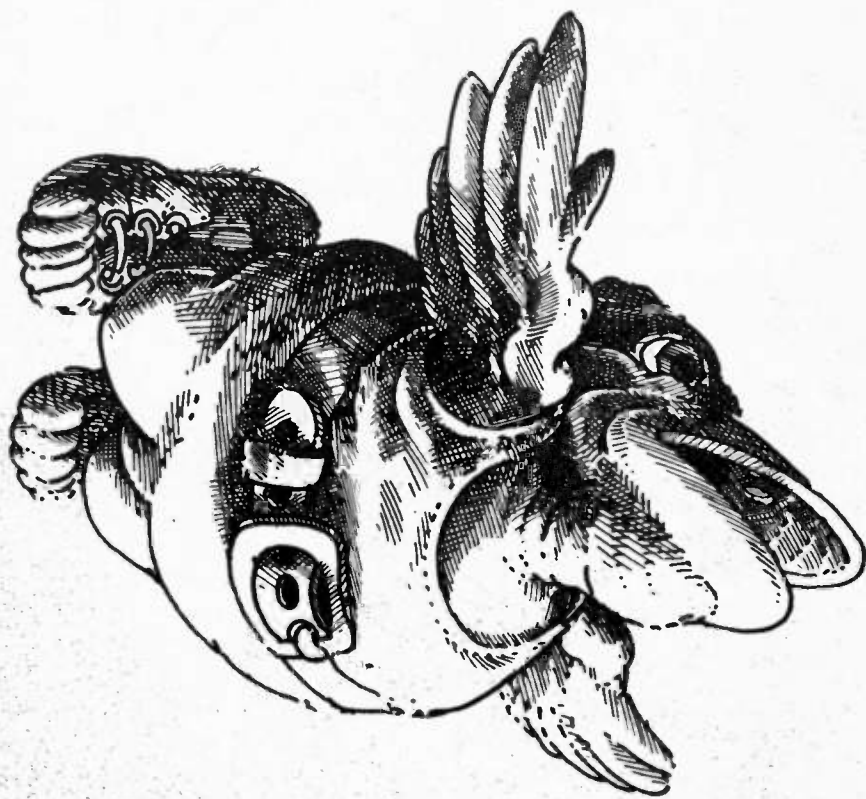
About the only place a band can really stretch out these days is on stage. And nobody knows it—or plays it—better than Argent.

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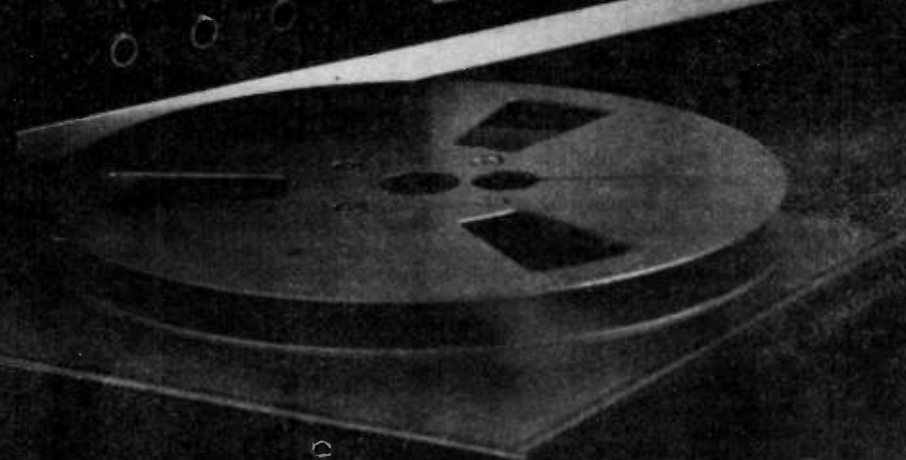
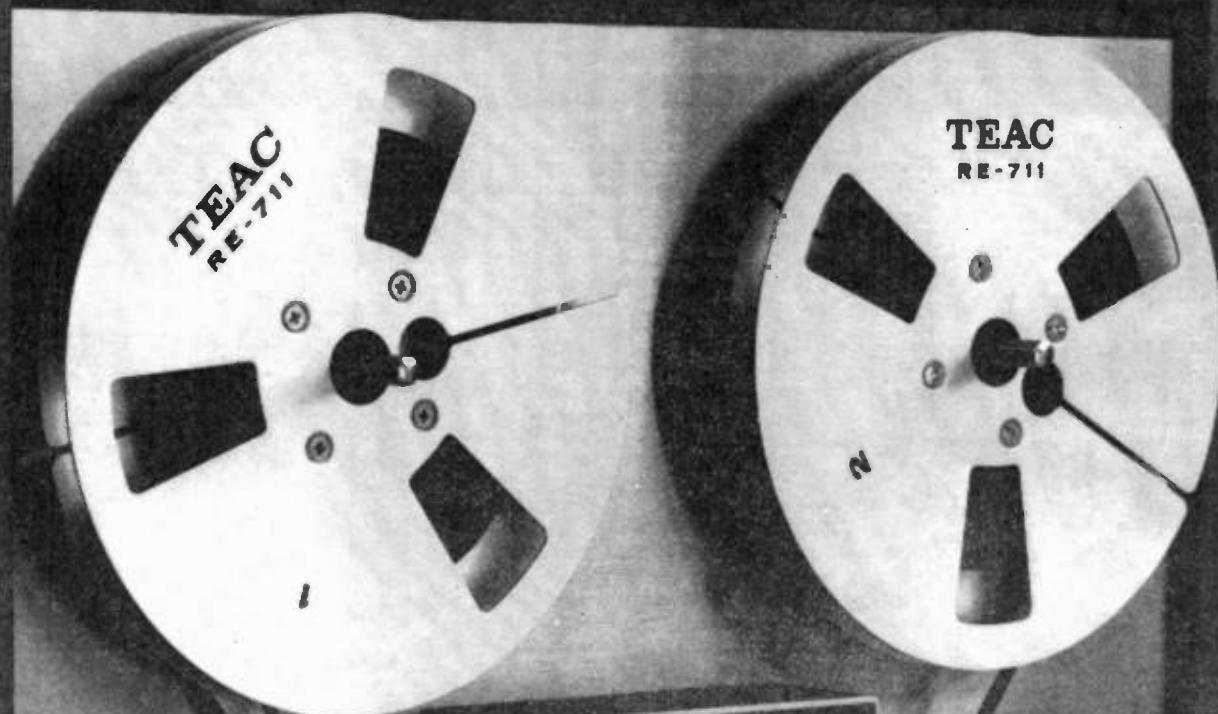


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JANUARY 75: PHONOGRAPH RECORD

by Ken Barnes



SUZAN CARSON

Keep your eye on the Hudson Brothers. They're probably the most exciting new act of the year. Out of thin air, they've presented us with not-one-but two albums of sparkling new music, truly irresistible stuff.

That's an opinion, of course, but just lend an orb to these supportive raves. (1) "The Hudsons display exceptional polish and assurance, with crisp, concise arrangements, superb harmonies and strong material" --Ken Barnes (an unimpeachable source), reviewing the Rocket LP, *Totally Out of Control*. (2) "The Hudsons [are] America's first out-and-out pop group of the last half-decade...*Hollywood Situation*...remains one of the more promising American debuts of the last few years" --Alan Betrock, reviewing the Casablanca LP. (3) "The whole album gives a feeling, and there's some really nice things on it. Some really good material and some interesting recordings" --Bill Hudson, reviewing *Totally Out of Control*.

Anyway, not only are their records great (with the haunting "So You Are a Star" hitting Top 20, too), but the Hudsons have a weekly Saturday morning kiddie show, and had a prime time summer replacement variety hour that stands a good chance of landing a slot in next September's TV lineup. Which means they have a tremendous shot at perpetrating a massive multi-media blitz (don't forget heavy coverage in *16*, *Tiger Beat*, etc., a far-from-insignificant phenomenon), the biggest since...the Monkees. And, they're a self-contained vocal/instrumental/compositional unit, which means they can create music comparable to the often-brilliant Monkees' best, while avoiding the aura of mechanized manipulation. As the old saw has it, this could be start of something big.

1. SETTING THE SCENE

Involved both with records and television as they are, the Hudsons obviously must strike some kind of balance between music and comedy. There are treacherous image problems that develop in such endeavors, and the Hudsons seem fully aware of them.

Our conversation covered a variety of subjects, beginning with, conveniently enough, variety shows on television and their music and comedy approaches. Bill (the eldest Hudson at 24) did most of the talking during the early portions, with Brett (20) interjecting periodic sardonicisms. Mark (22) was delayed telephonically gladhanding FM jocks, but once he arrived threatened to take over the entire affair. Speaker identifications are approximate, but hopefully the right Hudson is credited most of the time.

Opening, *Bill*: "Yeah, I think mixing comedy and music can work...People like Sonny & Cher and Glen Campbell came close to it."

But they didn't exactly slay a young, rock-oriented audience...

Bill: "Exactly. Roger Miller did it, but once again you're talking about a 'good music', a MOR kind of thing. It hasn't been done."

"I think it can be done...We intend to do some more nighttime variety shows; we think variety is kind of stale. It reached a level with Sonny & Cher. That was new and everybody said, wow, that's kind of different. But it's just stayed on the same plane.

"The people involved in the variety shows weren't

"Our goal is to put rock back on prime time television"

initially musicians or musical writers. They were entertainers, they were more visual than they were creators. They were creative comically, maybe, but the musical end was lacking. I think television tends to make things unrealistic. The way we'd like to approach variety is from a more realistic standpoint."

Such as...?

"My brothers and I feel that the center of anything should be the people involved. What we would like to do is come on and be more what we are instead of what television would like us to be.

Bill: "For television, the 50's is a great visual thing; that's the only reason we were into it on TV."

Mark: "And also we were limited in our own material, because it wasn't known what we had at that time. They would rather pick something out for us. We said, 'Christ, instead of letting us do the Top 40 which was "Billy Don't Be a Hero," I'd rather go way back and do something from the '50's.' But once again when you're doing someone else's show and they say 'Please do this,' it's pretty hard to say 'forget it.'"

Bill: "We want to do some of our own stuff. And as people get more acquainted with our music, then we'll be able to do it. That was the whole problem with the music we had to do on television--nobody was

Mark: "I'm glad we did the show, though. We got good ratings and on top of that gave the producers and the networks a chance to see what we were all about. Although some of the Top 40 songs we did were--well, they said, 'do these and on the slow section you can do one of your own songs.' And all mail we received, not one of them mentioned the Top 40 songs; they all mentioned the new tunes, the fact hearing something new was really nice.

"And also, the Chucky Margolis thing, they didn't discover Chucky till the fourth show. We were in the middle of it and they were short, and asked us if we anything of our own. And Bill said, yeah, we've got this character Chucky Margolis, and we went into the things we'd written and they liked it. So we ended up going back and taping him for the show, four different ones."

Bill: "There were a lot of writers on the show. We changed a lot of the stuff around, but they give you a basic script. My brothers and I have schtick and things we like to do, and we just added it to the things they gave us. In variety, there are a lot of throwaways. They'll give you a lot of stuff that's just funny, that just plays because it looks good on TV. We're not into that. We did a Marx Brothers skit and it wasn't funny."

Mark: "Like the fourth brother, Karl Marx, was a great idea."

Bill: "But the material was just not funny. That's another problem with variety. It's gotten into this 'pump out material' thing, just put it on if it's OK. And I would rather spend the time to make it what we thought was funny. At least if it hits or misses we'll know where we're at, as far as the comedy is concerned, with the public."

"We'd like to do something that has more of a live appearance. You know how the Ed Sullivan theater was in New York. It looked like you were there doing a concert. Instead of making it look like a TV variety show, come out and play. Do the music, make it exciting, do it live if you can--but that's hard on television, making it sound good live."

Brett: "Remember the old Jackie Gleason show? He used to walk out--Red Skelton, too--and there used to be a stool and a curtain and that was it. He didn't have Tijuana in a backdrop."

Bill: "So that way the audience could only concentrate on him. They couldn't say, 'Ooh, Henry, look at that beautiful set.'"

Brett: "And I think variety lost that."

Enter Mark: "What are you talking about?"

Brett: "Variety."

Mark: "It's a good magazine but I don't read it."

2. THE VENTURE OF CHUCKY MARGOLIS

Although the interview was going swimmingly the touchy topic of Chucky Margolis had to be broached. Chucky was the Hudsons' first attempt to mix comedy with music on vinyl, in the form of a 6-minute 45-second comic routine plugged in the middle of their Casablanca LP. Reactions I'd heard (including mine) had been less than entirely favorable, and the Hudsons' viewpoint might be illuminating.

Bill: "Chucky Margolis can appeal to anybody, just depends on what he does."

Mark: "Even the people who read rock magazines were kids once."

Bill: "It's not a matter of Chucky being heavy. Chucky's a kid who thinks like most kids thought. He can give adult messages, say things adults will laugh at. It's a surrealistic situation with this kid who's violent, who beats up his best friend, and feels like he wants to be the center of anything. Just take that general description of Chucky and you can apply it to people of all ages."

Specifically, though, what kind of reaction would you expect from people who liked your single and are playing your album and come to side 2, cut 2 and run into Chucky Margolis?

That's what I wanted to ask, but the conversation became entangled in a more general discussion of comedy.

Bill: "Comedy is definitely a more serious business, because comedy is on the borderline of tragedy. I mean if you think about a little kid like Chucky Margolis who has nobody and feels that he's all alone in this world and has this friend Allan who looks up to this kid who feels he has nothing, that's really sad from a realistic viewpoint."

Mark: "It's the old Chaplin syndrome. He was so pathetic he was very funny."

The problem is, even if Chucky is close to the borderline of tragedy, on vinyl he approaches the borders of travesty as well. With no visual input

(essentially the key to the skit's success), Chucky has to stand or fall on his lines alone, and the bit on the Casablanca album sounds sophomoric and irritatingly unfunny to these jaded ears. It seems endless on record, and just doesn't coexist harmoniously with the Hudsons' stellar musical contributions. Hopefully future musicomic combinations will be better integrated; comedy dialogues in the midst of music are irritating even if brilliant.

Chucky comes off more successfully on *Razzle Dazzle*, the Hudsons' Saturday show, where Brett (Chucky) and Mark (playing the hapless friend Allan can mug outrageously. *Razzle Dazzle* itself is very fast, enjoyably chaotic and although obviously aimed at kids has plenty of sharp lines scattered throughout. The Hudsons do a song, too, and all in all it makes a highly entertaining half-hour for anybody.

3. TELEVISION TRAVAILS

The Hudson Brothers' perceptions of TV's behind-the-scene realities are no less entertaining. It's a subject they're well-equipped to discuss, and they were not reticent.

Bill: "Television plays to people who are two years behind, who just sit there waiting to gawk at the TV set. I don't think that's necessarily the case."

Mark: "They think that the audience is their age, but the kids our age are now middle class America, from the 20's on up. They're sitting at home, they don't want to see--"

Brett: "Variety couldn't be like *In Concert*, you'd fall flat on your face. You couldn't bring on your Deep Purples and your yodelling bands."

Mark: "The Smothers Brothers, though, used to bring on the Who and all that stuff. I remember it looked and worked great. I think that could be done again."

Brett: "If we could pull that off, that'd be really great."

Interposing, how are the prime time prospects for yourselves?

Bill: "In fact, there was a meeting about it yesterday and it looks real good."

Mark: "This time we'll have a bit more control, and that'll be good for us. The first show we did, we were totally green. We walked in and they said, 'there are four cameras.' We knew nothing about looking at Camera 4..."

Bill: "Also the producers of the show didn't really know what we were capable of doing, and they put us in a semi-Sonny & Cher/Smothers Brothers format, which my brothers and I aren't. But through taping of the summer show they found out we're a lot different from that."

Before that fortunate discovery, however, the Hudsons were channelled into a rather artificial mold. Musically, for instance, they were directed to perform 50's takeoffs and Top 40 medleys, when their inclination leaned toward 60's music and their own compositions.

4. TV COSTS & TONY ORLANDO, BUT WHY AREN'T YOUR GUITARS PLUGGED IN?

Mark: It would be really nice to treat variety like we treat our music. To be able to go into the studio and do a song and say 'if this version doesn't work, let's do another one!'

Bill: "But it's big money in television. It costs \$3000 an hour just to rent the studio, not to mention 150 people in the crew. Not counting the actors and the regulars and the producers and the sets..."

Back to variety, it seems to be an endangered species on TV these days...

Bill: "Well, Tony Orlando and Dawn are coming on. It's a funny thing, but he's sold like 25 million records and got like 39-40 shares. And we come on, having done *nothing*, and got 33 or 34."

Brett: "Maybe if we'd sold 25 million records, we'd have pulled...22 shares."

Mark: "You never know. I'm happy for the guy. I know him, I think he's a great guy, and I hope his first-born child has shoehorns."

Returning to the general TV climate, Bill sees light at the end of the tube.

"Thank the good Lord that the people in the industry are finally beginning to realize that the public is not dumb any more. Because that's how it was for years. We're doing that *Razzle Dazzle* show, which is really fun to do. And the bulk of that audience, the young kids, are sharp. They ask very technical and intricate questions about what you're doing and why you're doing it."

Mark: "Like the old 'why aren't your guitars plugged in?' We get a lot of mail about that. And we would say, 'will you let us plug in our guitars? And even if we're not on we could put the little light on and make it *look* like we're playing it.' And they would say, 'no, no, no, it ruins the look of the show.' And we'd look at each other and shake our heads..."

Bill: "That's the thing we really want to change, make it realistic. The people out there aren't stupid."

Mark: "I think a lot of people still think that your public are a bunch of yo-yos who move to their set and plop down and are just mesmerized. It's really rewarding they're not that way, because if they like something, they really like it."

The last TV variety show with any musical identity (in a rock context) was the Everly Brothers Show in the summer of 1970. And that was bogged down with miserable comedy. If the Hudsons can really put together the kind of show they want to do, and get it on the air, that would be something to see.

5. GOING ALL THE WAY BACK WITH THE HUDSON BROTHERS

Having written rock retrospectives by the bucketful, it's been a stock approach of mine to inquire into artists' musical backgrounds. In the case of the Hudsons, who were virtual unknowns before being catapulted into media prominence, such inquiries seemed especially appropriate.

Bill: "The fact that we came in through television was kind of like coming in through the back door. But for eight years prior to this, all we did was play music. We played clubs, we were writing, we were a band."

The next question opened the floodgates--my fault. Where did you meet?

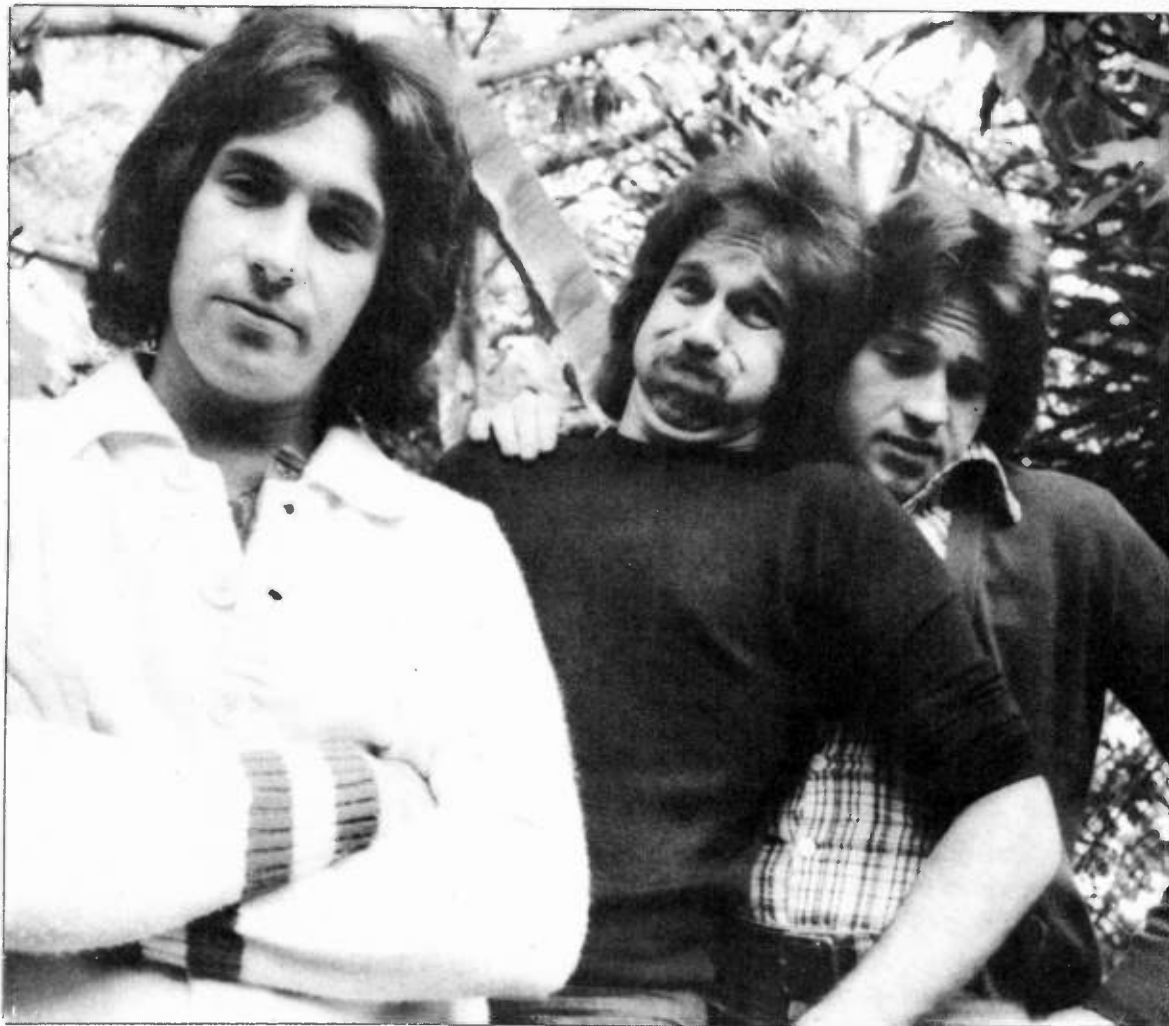
Mark: "It was April 13, my Mom & Dad were up in their bedroom. And that's how Bill came about."

Brett: "It was a cold night, and there was no heat..."

Mark: "Bill was three when I first met him, and Brett was about two weeks old, and we knew we'd be FM giants..."

Bill: "The beginning actually started when I was about five, which makes Mark 3 and Brett 1½."

Mark: "My grandfather would come over and



SUZAN CARSON

"Even the people who read rock magazines were kids once..."

play Italian folk songs on the guitar, and we'd be totally in awe of the man. So finally Bill learned a couple of chords and then my Mom bought me a Rainbowdrum set, which is one of those toy kits you can still buy, and I was the Gene Krupa of the '50s, really hauling ass on this thing. Then Brett got mad once and kicked my bass drum through..."

Bill: "The first realization was when we saw Elvis Presley in Portland, where we grew up, and everybody was screaming, and we just *knew*..."

Mark: "We knew we weren't gonna be plumbers from that point on."

Brett: "We'd take Elvis records and comb our hair back and stand in front of the mirror and--"

Short break for a chorus of Elvis impressions.

Mark: "It was kind of corny. We asked our Mom where songs came from, and she didn't know what to say, so she said, being very religious, songs come from God."

Bill: "So for three months we were praying for that--Give us a song!"

Brett: "We thought sheet music would appear in the sky."

Mark: "And the rest is history. It ended up that Bill and I wrote this song called 'Nothing,' and believe me, the title was exactly what the song was. It was just like--"

Short break as Mark sings, in a doleful, archetypal C-Am chord progression: "Nothing left in this world, oh I got nothing..."

"But it was a breakthrough; my Mom saying it was a smash hit, it was really encouraging. She really got behind us, because she knew we loved it."

Bill: "She'd do our homework so we could play."

Mark: "The three of us are illiterate, but we're great musicians."

Brett: "I'd seen my brothers play and I told my mother I wanted to play, too. So the fateful day came, she hocked my victrola and I was no longer a disk jockey. She got me a \$9 ukulele. I said to Bill, teach me a song, and he taught me 'Tom Dooley' and I took it from there and now I'm like Eric Clapton."

Mark: "On the ukulele."

Bill: "In those days rock & roll wasn't the only thing. We were into Kingston Trio and Peter, Paul & Mary and the Limelites..."

Mark: "Bill started a band in high school."

Bill: "But before that--"

Mark: "We're gonna have to bring a sleeping bag if you keep talking like that. We'll be sitting here with beards before we get to the present day."

Bill (wounded deeply): "I'd like to be thorough."

Mark: "Bill started a band--Brett and I were totally out--with this guy who had an amplifier and two microphones."

Bill: "He said he could sing and play, and I heard him sing and said, 'why don't you listen to my brother Mark, he can really sing?' So he said, 'no, Mark's too young.'"

Mark: "But it ended up I got an audition and I came up tambourine-in-hand and sang like Rod Stewart before puberty, really way up there, and they used me as a singer."

"We got a following in high school, but there was only three of us and we had no drums any more. So Mark used to practice on big cardboard boxes."

Mark: "And hang coffee-can lids for cymbals."

Bill: "All the groups were wearing red coats and

"Kids keep asking us, 'why aren't your guitars plugged in?'"

doing steps, and playing 'Little Latin Lupe Lu' and 'Louie Louie' and all that--"

Brett: "'Crisco Party.'"

Short break as all three Hudsons spontaneously render that infamous Northwest genre classic (sung to the tune of "Hully Gully" or "Peanut Butter," if you want to try it at home).

Bill: "All that Kingsmen stuff, Raiders, Wailers, 'She's a Witch,' the Sonics. By that time we were into the Rolling Stones and the Hollies, Zombies and Yardbirds. We had this after-game dance gig, with no drums and they were paying us like \$25.00."

Mark: "Everybody was wearing these red coats. For some reason, I had a paper route for a while, I had my Mom make me this Sonny Bono-type vest. I looked like a bear. We played this entire after-game dance with Bill on guitar, this other guy on guitar no bass and no drums, and I was just wailing on tambourine. And Brett would look at us and 'they've got it made.' We did 'Do Wah Diddy,' 'She's Not There,' all the English hits."

6. OF MYIRS AND THE NEW YORKERS

Bill: "We ended up wearing these sequinned things."

Brett: "Way ahead of ourselves--glitter rock."

Bill: "And Brett got really sick with a high fever, and being Italian and very emotional we thought, this is the end of our poor brother, he's gonna die, what are we gonna do? We know he's in love with the group, so his last dying thought will be that's he going to be a member of the group."

Mark: "So we said, 'Brett, would you like to join us?', and he looked up at us and said 'yes' and the next day he was 100% better."

"He didn't play anything but the ukulele and he was a bit overweight, so we put him on a diet and started teaching him bass guitar and he picked it right up."

"We were called the MySirs, and we still don't know what that means. It kind of sounded a little bit English and was better than the Wailers or the Sonics or So & So & the Duh-duh-duhs."

Bill: "So we had a Battle of the Bands at Silver Skate Ballroom against the biggest group in Portland, called the Scavengers."

Mark: "We were there with semi-long hair, not greased, doing things like 'The Last Time' and I was doing my Sonny Bono thing. We were hip. And the Scavengers were like bikers in a way. They wore tight pants and did steps. All the people had to vote on the winner. So they played and they were great. There were about 500 people there, it was packed. So we played and the people really liked us too. Finally, we won, 400 to 100--but 400 of those people were our relatives."

Bill: "But that got us publicity and a lot of gigs at other high schools. Then, the big thing was the paper saying 'The MySirs are leaving town.' Big headlines--The MySirs Are Going On The Road."

Mark: "And we went to White Salmon, Washington, which is just across the river. My Sonny Bono vest had then shrunk, and I wore it as a hat."

Bill: "But moving along, we wanted to make a recording. We were writing then, really primitive songs, but some of them we could still do today. Anyway, My Uncle Bill decided to spring for a recording session, 50 bucks, and we were really excited. It took us an hour, and the song was called 'Things are Changing.' And this guy from the Chrysler Corporation who was in advertising heard our tape and put us on to this guy in the Northwest named Jerry Dennon."

Historical Note: Dennon, owner of Jerden Records, was the Northwest's foremost entrepreneur, and was instrumental in the early careers of Ian Whitcomb, the Kingsmen, the Raiders, the Sonics and more hits than you'd care to count.

Bill again: "This guy from Chrysler was named Jim Bailey and he really took a liking to us, in more ways than one."

Not the famous female impressionist?

All: "No, but he was close!"

Mark: "They did have something in common."

Bill: "Jerry Dennon liked our music and took us up to Seattle to record. So we're out of Portland, we're regional now. Chrysler Corporation, because of this guy Jim Bailey, took an interest in us and wanted us to do industrial shows for car dealerships, get the kids in to bring their parents to see the cars."

Mark: "And the only drawback was that we had to change our name, and I went crazy! They named us after a car and we changed our name to the New Yorkers."

7. SETTING THE RECORD STRAIGHT

Thanks to a timely pre-interview phone call from noted folklorist Alan Betrock this fact was known to the interviewer and it was thus possible to produce from the vast PRM archives a few rare New Yorkers singles. Consternation would be a mild description of the Hudsons resultant reaction.

Mark: "'Mr. Kirby,' this is our biggie! If you ever show these to anybody..."

Bill: "We recorded these in 1966. We did this song called 'Things Are Changing' on a promotional disk for Chrysler. That's a classic. Then we cut one called 'When I'm Gone' and it was going to be released on Jerden. Dennon played it for Florence Greenberg at Scepter, and she liked it. They released it in the Northwest and it got up to #9 and that really got us going. We started playing opening act for the Who and Herman's Hermits, the Blues Magoos."

Mark: "We went on the Herman's Hermits tour, and the billing was us opening, then the Who, then the Blues Magoos, and Herman's Hermits. We played Seattle and a couple other spots on the tour, and then one night we were crazy and decided to do a medley of Herman's hits while he was on the bill. We did that and were thrown off the tour that night."

Bill: "We cut 'When I'm Gone' and it got great response and then we went in and cut 'Mr. Kirby' and this record played all over the country and did pretty well. There's a fuzz-tone guitar on the record which played Indian-type stuff *then*, which only a few people were doing then. Some radio stations wouldn't play that record 'cause it was too heavy."

"When we were doing this record we were wearing white seersucker suits all alike, and we were still having that problem of bridging the gap. We've been up against that all the time and we like it. We feel that if we could do it, that would be a different step--"

Cropping up for the first time there is one of the Hudsons' foremost goals, almost an obsession--trying to cover all the bases and appeal to the *total* audience. More on this later. Incidentally, those first two New Yorkers singles are definitely worth looking for. "When I'm Gone" sounds like the Zombies with a slight Eastern flavor, and the flip, "You're Not My Girl," sounds even better, very appealing husky vocal and a neat melody. "Mr. Kirby" does indeed have a prominent Indian aura, with strong harmonies and

another B-side, "Seeds of Spring," featuring some very strange folk-rock guitar, heavy on the tremelo. End of commercial

Bill: "'Mr. Kirby' got us off playing all around the country."

Mark: "And that's when we first found out about our manager. I was reading a comic book on my bed, and he walked by and I looked over the top of my comic and he was diving at me. I was a kid of 16 years old and I yelled 'Bill!' and these 400 pounds came falling on me and they pulled me out from underneath him. Then we knew he was a bit weird."

Bill: "When we were touring with 'Mr. Kirby,' we were making some good money. In those days if you had a record being played, you'd go out and get like \$1000 a night."

Mark: "So we were set up with all these gigs across the country and were put on an allowance of \$50 a week, and all the money went into a corporation. Well, he set up the corporation and he was taking all the money out and we had nothing. We ended up in Miami with checks bouncing and no money, and he left."

"We were discouraged then. We were coming out with another record on Scepter; 'Mr. Kirby' had taken its toll, but had really done well. We came out with a record called 'Show Me the Way' and it went on major stations right away. But because of all the problems with our manager, the record company wanted nothing to do with us and it was a big mess. They dropped it, he skipped town and we were left all by ourselves."

"After the big break-up, we were on the bottom. We thought, OK, we had a shot and we were doing great. Then this guy skips out on us. So we quit, we stopped performing for awhile, but kept writing songs. When we wouldn't pick up our instruments and play together as a band was when most of our really good writing was happening."

Bill: "This was in 1968."

8. THE NEW YORKERS IN NEW YORK

Bill resumes: "We had no money so we got a job at a produce company pitching watermelons. We quit that after we pitched a watermelon through a window."

Mark: "We were finally getting itchy again, so we called up--believe it or not--the guy who screwed us, Jim Bailey, up in Seattle. I walked in on him with a water pistol and he just freaked. And then I squirted him, ha-ha, and I said, 'look, I know what happened.' We'd gone through some legal things and found we couldn't do anything. 'But I just want you do us one favor--get me a record deal.' We went to Seattle and cut 'I Guess the Lord Must Be in New York City.'"

Brett: "It was supposed to be for the movie *Midnight Cowboy*."

Mark: "We'd been writing but we figured we'd do better with someone else's tune, so we did that Nilsson song and Bailey got us on Decca. This record actually played a bit, but it got us back into it."

Brett: "We started getting the band together again."

Mark: "And the feeling was just terrific. We started doing all the old circuit--hops and dances, the old one-nighter syndrome again."

Bill: "This gets us into 1969. We were making all kinds of trips from Portland to L.A. trying to sell our music. I can tell you that literally every record company in this town, including new ones that had *nobody*, turned us down, and they were turning us down with some of the same material we have today."

Brett: "One song on the album, 'The Three of Us--'"

Mark: "It ended up we had another record for Decca, 'Laugh Funny Funny.' With that record

they promised to promote us. There was a big party in New York. We had no management, we just walked in and signed contracts, that's how desperate we were. So they sent us to New York, which we were excited about.

"And we got back there and they said, it's all off, and we said, thanks, send us back, and they wouldn't do it."

Bill: They gave us one-way tickets."

Mark: "We were stuck in New York and one of the guys in the group quit, so we were down to the three of us, and we had to ask our road manager to play percussion. We were stuck in New York and we had to live there."

Bill: "So we started taking jobs, we worked in Paterson, New Jersey, at the 3-D Tavern..."

Mark: "We were at the Action House in Long Island, which was really a heavy thing--Rhinceros, and the Illusion and all those groups. We got up there and looked at them and they looked at us...Here we were, the Illusion had this wall of sound and there we were with out little guitars and doing the same stuff--"

Brett: "We were into the Buffalo Springfield then, too."

Mark: "And we were into our own music, but they wouldn't accept it."

Bill: "So we would lie. We'd say we're gonna do a new song by the Buffalo Springfield--"

Mark: "And we'd play one of our own songs."

Bill: "And they'd go, 'wow, far out!'"

Mark: "So we slowly but surely traveled our way back home--Kingston, New York; Schenectady, every town we'd go as far as we could and then get a job."

Bill: "We ended up in Athens, Ohio. We'd called up from Erie, Pa., and the guy at this club said you'll get free room and board and \$120 a week. We thought that's heaven, we'll get home, and free room and board. Well, the free food was these packaged sandwiches you cook in microwave ovens."

Brett: "Four seconds, and they come out and give you cancer."

Mark: "And pretzels--and the free room was--did you see Ratso's room in *Midnight Cowboy*? That was the Ritz compared to this place. All the windows were out and it was 20 degrees outside. And they gave us one heater. Finally we saved up enough money to drive nonstop from Athens to Portland, and we did it."

9. SHELVED ON LIONEL, MIRED ON PLAYBOY, ROLLING ON ROCKET

Bill: "By this time Decca had dropped us. We were on the Lionel label, which recorded two songs for us and shelved us for two years. They pressed the record but never really released it."

Bill: "Lionel sold the contract to Playboy Records."

Mark: "By the way, those we played on, and the one called 'Laugh Funny Funny,' but from that point on, there was about two years where they'd hire studio musicians--when the studio musicians were really hot, when 'Sugar Sugar' and 'Tracy' and all those Ron Dante things were really it."

Bill: "So for two years we were shelved on Lionel; they sold us to Playboy and cut an album using studio guys, on which they picked the tunes, they arranged, and we just sang."

Mark: "So that was Playboy and that fell right in the hole. And that's when we met Bernie Taupin."

Bill: "We knew him for a couple of months, we used to go out and drink beer. We didn't know what he did. We knew Elton John, but only by his singles; we didn't know Bernie was the writer--you don't pay attention to writers on records. One day he asked us what we did--he sort of had

the idea we were a band, and we asked, well, what do you do? He said 'I write lyrics,' and we thought, yeah, doesn't everybody in L.A.? 'Who do you write 'em for?' 'Elton John' and we--" (groan in unison).

Mark: "As soon as he told us he wrote for Elton John we went into a shell. He said, play me some of your stuff' and we said 'no way.' It took him a long time to convince us to play it. Finally he heard it and wanted Elton to hear it. Elton liked it and Gus Dudgeon heard it and liked it. We were in the middle of the Playboy thing--we'd been on the label about two years and done nothing."

Brett: "And they dropped everybody on the whole label except for us."

Bill: "We were finally going to cut another album, and thank the good Lord we didn't, and we got to get out of our contract."

Brett: "Bill said something very rude to get us out of our contract."

Bill: "Anyway, we ended up being involved with Rocket Records. We went over to England and France and cut an album called *Totally Out of Control*, which is by the way now released--"

All: (in unison) "And charted at 190 with a bullet!"

Bill: I think, for the time, it's really neat."

It was ventured that the Rocket album, in fact, sounded better than the one on Casablanca.

**"He said
'what do you
guys do?'
And we said,
'40 minutes...'"**

Bill: "Oh it is, there's no question about it. We had three months over there, two months spent cutting the album. The whole album gives it a feeling and there's just some really nice things on it. Some really good material, and some interesting recordings."

"Creatively, Rocket was terrific, and in England it was set up pretty good too. But they were just setting up in America, and we came back, and that's when we met Chris Bearde from Sonny & Cher. That's when the television started happening..."

10. HOW TO START YOUR OWN TELEVISION SERIES--OR TWO

A lot of people were quite startled when three complete unknowns (except to New Yorkers fans) landed a summer replacement variety show and a Saturday kids show. Among those startled were the Hudson Brothers. Here's the story.

Mark: "We went to this party and somebody said, 'hey, the producer of the *Sonny & Cher Show* is going to be there.' And you know, how many producers have we met--it was no big deal to us. So we sat down and Bill wasn't even there, Brett and I talked to him for a half-hour about his ulcers. He was quite friendly and said 'what do you guys do?' We said '40 minutes', and got up and did this schtick. And Bill had been reading this book about Howard Hughes and he was on this kick about money. He was selling cars and hiring gas station attendants."

Bill: "I would go into a gas station and if I liked the guy, I'd say 'you're hired' and drive away."

Mark: "Chris met us and he found out we were

brothers. So he asked us to come down to CBS and meet his partner Allan Blye, who we thought didn't like us."

Bill: "And then a year went by and that's the year we went to England. I would be calling Chris Bearde daily and sending him telegrams and he'd always be in a meeting--"

Mark: "We figured we'd stiffed."

Bill: "The day we got back from England, they were having a meeting with Fred Silverman, head of programming at CBS, and he wanted something new, something that had never been seen. So that night we went out, got back to the hotel and Chris Bearde had called, urgent. I called him back at 3 o'clock in the morning and he said 'next day we got something for you,' and out of that developed two pilots."

Mark: "The *Razzle Dazzle* show came about really weird--we read about it in the trades. They said there's this show called *Razzle Dazzle* on Saturday mornings; we want to know if you'll make an appearance.' We said sure, why not? And that was all there was to it. Then later we picked up a trade paper somewhere and it said 'New lineup for Saturday morning--*Shazam*, blah blah, and the *Hudson Brothers' Razzle Dazzle Show*. We said just because we're guesting on it they're gonna do that? And then we found out they'd given the show to us and no one said a word to us."

11. CASABLANCA--OR DON'T JOIN THAT BOGART, MY FRIEND

Bill: "We were still with Rocket and we had a record released in England that did pretty well, called 'Straight Up and Tall' (on the album). And they released one here too called 'If You Really Need Me' (also on the album, but the two scarce B-sides aren't). But what we needed was support from a record company, and Rocket was having problems. A lot of bad things started happening with the company businesswise, and we felt we had to get out. So we ended up on Casablanca."

"We'd heard about them and there was kind of an interest. And Capitol was interested. So we were already on a verbal agreement with Capitol."

Mark: "They had jackets made up; they were going to release 'Hollywood Situation.'"

Bill: "But right in the middle of it there was an attitude change with Capitol, and Casablanca's attitude was more positive. The way it happened was, Neil Bogart, the president, most people know him in the record business as a great innovator, the bubblegum music, etc."

Brett: "But as usual those Hudson Brothers didn't know who he was."

Mark: "We sat down in a meeting with Neil and said, 'OK, what do you do?'"

Bill: "We found out later that he was very upset about this. He said, 'did you realize what those guys did? They came in here and asked me to sell myself.' We did come in there and sort of intimidated him, but not intentionally--we respected him for what he'd done in the past but we were concerned with how we'd work with him."

"We signed only a singles thing, and 'Hollywood Situation' was the record we were going to release as a single. But we had to go up to cut some tracks for our publishing and for *Razzle Dazzle*. We came back and they said, we want an album, it would make more sense with the TV show and would make a better package. We said 'we don't have enough for an album, we just cut these tracks for *Razzle Dazzle*.' They said, let us hear them. Everybody listened to them and we went to Wally Heider and cut a few more tracks."

Mark: "Four of the tunes on the album were demos. But when I say that--I've put things on a Sony that I would actually put on records. The B-side of our next single is a live recording that Bill and I did, he sat down and played guitar and I sang it holding the words on a piece of paper. That kind of thing can really come off. So when I say four of the tunes are

demos, it isn't like I'm making an excuse. The record we had on the charts, 'So You Are a Star,' was a demo.

"We went in the studio and stayed up for three days straight and did four tunes for the rest of the album and then left the next day for Toronto to tape *Razzle Dazzle*. So in a way it's a bit frustrating--we can't wait for the next one, when we can actually sit down and spend the time we feel necessary."

Bill: "Everybody changed their mind in midstream to put out 'So You Are a Star.' We weren't sure about it, we held our breath--a slow song for a first record but it worked."

12. IMAGE--TV vs. HIP SNOBBERY

The Hudsons, obviously highly articulate, are never more so than when discussing the ticklish problems of image. Playing to such varied markets as they do--children's TV, *16 Magazine*, mainstream television, and music good enough to appeal to bubblegummers, FM-ers and everybody in between--they're painfully aware that some segments of their potential audience may take irrational offense at their activities directed at another segment.

Their comments need little amplification. We faded in still discussing the *Hollywood Situation* album...

Mark: "What happened with the Casablanca album will never happen again. We'll be more involved musically, even if we have to fight for it."

"It's all the time. We argued over the album cover as well. People associate it with the TV show--they figured to gear everything toward the TV show. But once again, everybody, including the producers and CBS, was worrying about us. I believe that it would have been just as effective if it had been a complete white album with 'The Hudson Brothers' written on it, instead of being so camp as to go completely for the television market.

"I can't blame the people who'd see us on television and think we were the next David Cassidy or Bobby Sherman... That's where the big shock came to a lot of people. They saw us on television wearing our sweaters and having our hair combed and doing schtick and all of a sudden they heard our album



SUZAN CARSON

which we actually *played*, not like the Monkees thing. We played all the instruments, arranged all the vocals, and whatever. And people were shocked to find out we were musicians as well as being crazy...

Getting pretty defensive about it all here, but when you consider some of the industry's dominant attitudes toward pigeonholing artists, it's quite understandable. Take the following...

Bill: "We had some FM people call back and say, 'There's some really good stuff on that album but we can't play it because they're on TV.' I think that is being very narrow-minded. Does it really matter how a cover looks or if I'm doing television, if I come out with a piece of product that is good programming for their station? Some of the FM stations have jumped on them, which I can thank them for, because it shows a bit of a breakthrough; they're being innovative."

Mark: "Some are playing *Totally Out of Control* just because I have a beard on the cover."

Bill: "That's true, the cover is probably 'hipper'--and I hate that word."

Brett: "And also they see Bernie's name and Bernie's supposed to be 'heavy'."

Mark: "I called some guy who wrote down in his tipsheet, that 'the album playing and production is very good, but I would advise you not to play this record because the cover sucks' or whatever he said. And I got a bit offended. I called him up and I said, 'Hey dorkbrain, what does this mean?' and I made him explain to me how you could have good material and a bad album cover and not be played."

Brett: "Here's the Hudson Brothers playing their new album cover."

Mark: "Another thing that made me sick is the Monkees. I really liked their records, although they didn't play and couldn't really sing. On television I would be watching them every time they were on. And all my friends would go 'Man, you can't watch these guys--let's go over to my Persian rug and smoke my hookah.' And so now the Monkees craze is over and I still think they were very funny on television and made some great records. Now all of a sudden all my friends who are still in college, they're all hookah'd out, they go 'Maan, we gotta go out and see the Monkees on Saturday morning, they're so far out!' Now the Monkees are hip."

Bill: "And there you go--why couldn't they discover that then?"

Indeed, not many people over 17 (myself included) had the raw courage to admit they liked the Monkees back in '66-7. I advanced the highly unoriginal but valid theory about the dread Teenage Stigma--anything liked by kids of 13 cannot be tolerated by those in the older brackets.

Mark: But you know what those guys who are 22 and 25 do? They're out there with their friends getting heavy, and then in their cars they sit there singing 'Sugar Sugar,' and 'Yummy Yummy.' And then when their friends get in the car they immediately switch to their FM button."

13. INVIDIOUS COMPARISONS

Bill: "The AM/FM thing is coming along slowly but surely. But things gotta change. The record industry shows that we're in a lull. Everything is so trite--it's all out there and there's nothing exciting. It's not just because of the people who are creating the music, it's also the people who are *programming* the music. You can't possibly make a turnover if you stick with your old ways."

Eminently fitting last words on the radio problem. And as for yourselves--

Bill: "Because of the way we came on with television, and the way we came on musically, we started at a really good stage. We have nothing else to do from here but grow. We're not professing to be the early '60's old Beatles--we *are* the Hudson Brothers, and whether we happen to have the influence of the pop 60's-type flavor, that's great. I don't want to be anywhere else at the moment.

"Of course the comparison to the Beatles is definitely a kiss of death. 'Jerry Garcia has quoted them as being the next Beatles.' And the Raspberries are the next Beatles and Badfinger--that's a bunch of crap."

Mark: "That's another thing, people compared us to the Marx Brothers, which we really resented. It's a compliment, but we resent it because then people say they're not at all like the Marx Brothers, how dare you compare them? We're not comparing *ourselves* to them."

Bill: "They're all compliments, but the way we feel about it is those people, the Beatles, the Marx Brothers, are in a category all their own and you cannot be compared to those people. They are

totally unique. You can be influenced by them, but you can't be like them or be compared to them. We are not like them. We will show you as we grow that we are really different, but you've got to give us a chance to grow."

Mark: "You've got the cynics too. People today are not always out to enjoy something--instead they're out to destroy it. Instead of saying 'maybe these guys are good, I'll give them a listen,' they say 'OK, show me, so you think you're the Marx Brothers, make me laugh like they do.'"

Bill: "We have a motto--'we're here for a good time, not a long time.' We heard it from a bouncer, he was kicking everybody out of a club."

Brett: "He was saying, 'OK, get out of the club. Let's act like hockey pucks and get the puck out of here. Let's make like dry leaves and wither away. Remember one thing, you're here for a good time, not a long time.'"

Mark: "You might as well make the best of life--"

Brett: "So we're going to an orgy after this interview."

14. CLOSING HYPE AND CREDO

But time and space are running out (sounds like a cosmic catastrophe--well, we're here for a good time, not a long time). No room for detailing the Hudsons' near-future plans (new single off the Casablanca LP, "Coochi Coochi Coo", remixed; plans for a new album soon; and a spring vacation tour headlining 2000-3000 capacity halls). No space for longterm future projects, like a five-years-in-the-writing comic rock opera that should really be something to hear. No time for windy expostulations about their brilliant-synthesis-of-60's-pop-essences-in-a-70's-context, and so forth.

But aside from their undeniable musical excellence, the most exciting prospect about the Hudsons is their solid shot (thanks to their unique TV/records position) at winning over the entire entertainment audience--while still retaining their essential rock & roll band integrity. That's their ultimate goal, too...

Bill: "There's no reason why you can't be accepted on a total basis. It's crucial for us that we capture everybody. There's no reason why you can't accept the fact that there need not be little bags for everybody. Trite as it sounds, we'd like to change it. That's really our goal, and has been since we were young."

And that, as Brett says, would be really great.

AL GREEN: IT'S NOT ALL GLAMOR

America's Only Comprehensive Black Music Monthly: A Special Supplement to Phonograph Record

SOUL & JAZZ

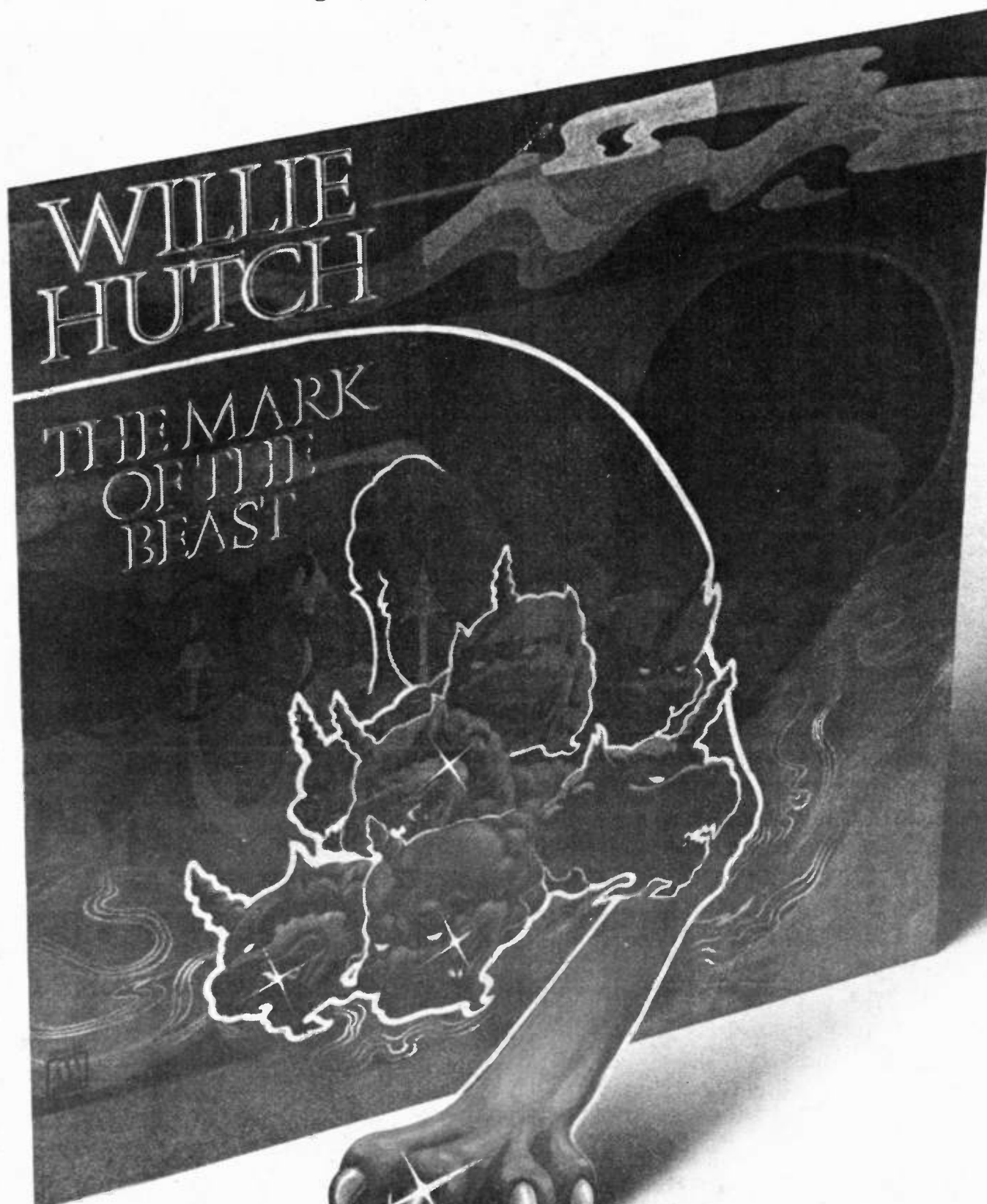


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Jan.'75 Vol.1

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SOUL & JAZZ

THIS MONTH

Al Green:

One of America's most popular singers, a sex symbol to millions, Al Green remains a man of mystery to his fans. We sought him out and got the inside story on his music, his outlook on life, love and stardom, and his reactions to the recent tragedy in which a female admirer took her life in Al's house. The complete story, for the first time anywhere.....5

Black Music Awards:

Black music has been treated and classified unfairly in all the established awards systems. One man has what he feels is a successful alternative; Soul & Jazz discusses with him the problems of recognition for Black musicians and the prospects for a solution to some of them.

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The Cover:

The sensational Al Green graces this month's cover. See inside for a glimpse of the man who's driving all those women wild.

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AL GREEN

A SUPERSTAR'S LIFE ISN'T ALL GLAMOR

He is a giant in his field (however slight of build). Standing only five feet eleven inches tall, Al Green is 157 perfect pounds of chocolate covered soul. His on-stage voice fills huge halls, creates a flame of excitement and sets both men and women on fire. He moves like a dancer, fluid across the stage, hopping from one end of his pedestal to the other, pausing only to toy with his audience or to hand a long-stemmed, red rose to one of his many fans.

Who would have believed that this man was to spend several painful weeks in the hospital recently after being scalded with a pot of boiling grits by a despondent young woman. The bizarre incident ended in further tragedy when the twenty-nine year old woman took her life.

Late that Thursday evening in November, at a Memphis, Tennessee recording studio, Mrs. Mary Woodson (the suicide victim) met Al Green and a friend, Mrs. Carlotta Williams. Green invited both ladies to his home near Shelby Forest State Park. The three arrived there shortly after midnight. It is reported that Mrs. Williams went upstairs while Al and Mary Woodson remained downstairs talking for nearly an hour. Green later told police that he had known Mary since last November when they met in New York City. During their conversation that night, Mrs. Woodson proposed marriage to him and he felt compelled to turn her down, ending their conversation on a rather sour note. He retired upstairs to bathe, never imagining the strange events that would follow.

Al Green once gave an interview in which he discussed his personal thoughts about marriage. "I'm not really a confirmed bachelor, just not married. I would love to have a couple of kids and come home and say, 'honey, I'm home,' but that's far into the future. The life I now lead is too hectic to expect any woman to accept!"

It seems he tried to explain this to Mary Woodson, but by the words of her suicide note, she could not accept his rejection. "I'm not mad, just unhappy because I can't be with you," she wrote. Premeditating her plan of action, she brought the pan of grits to a boil, then crept up the stairs, surprising Al in the midst of his bath. After severely burning the unsuspecting Green, she ran to another part of the house and placed the gun to her head, taking her own life.

Now when I first heard about this terrible incident, my mind raced back to several weeks before when I had the occasion to meet Al Green for myself. There was a quiet strength in the man, exuding in the grasp of his handshake or the confident way he stood among throngs of people and commanded attention. It was at Tito Jackson's Hollywood home where a grand party of press and celebrities gathered to honor the 'Green Giant.' Several people from the Los Angeles City Hall attended, presenting Al with a plaque to commemorate his participation in prison reform throughout the States and for his free performance given at Sybil Brand Institute for Women on his last visit to Los Angeles. A huge three foot long, three foot wide cake, detailing Al's illustrious career with ten miniature records representing his smashes from "Tired of Being Alone" to "Sha-La-La (Make Me Happy)," was sliced as Assemblyman Robert Farrell presented the

City of Los Angeles Proclamation.

The following day I was introduced to Al once again at a pre-arranged interview. Al Green, off stage and away from the bright lights and dazzle, is a soft spoken, rather shy and very secretive individual. He seemed always to be summing things up, putting everything in its proper perspective.

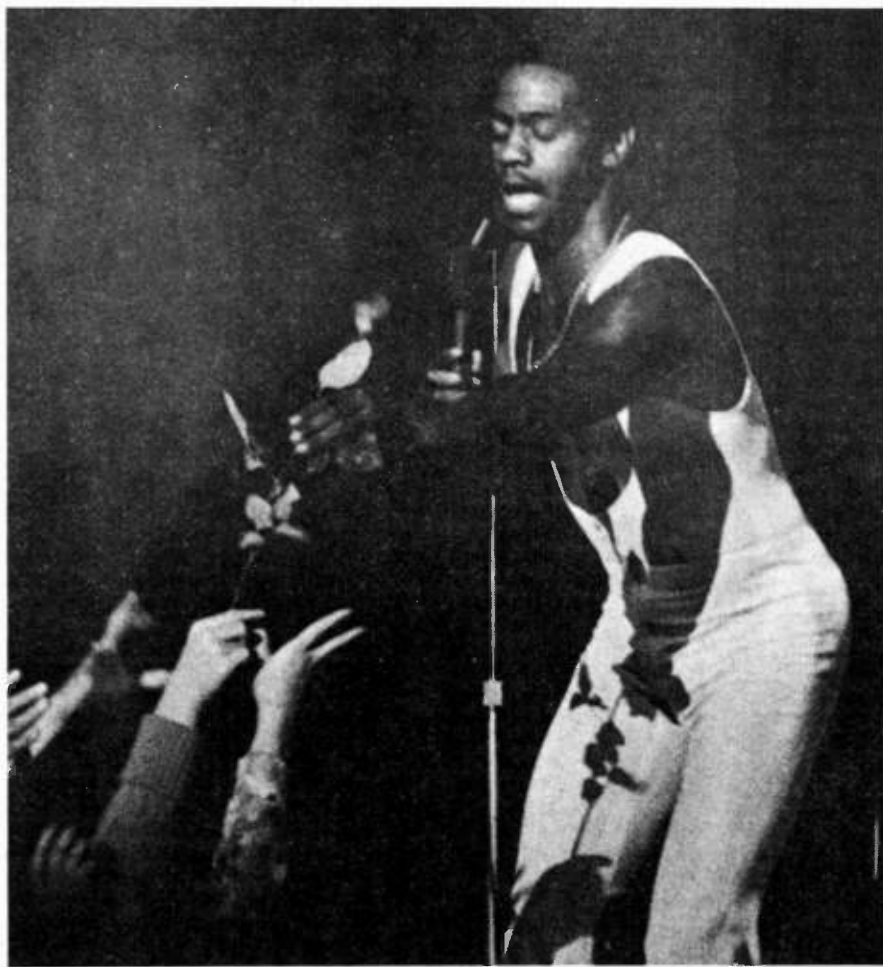
I settled down across from Al in his 12th floor hotel room, clicked my recorder on and

me, the way he does on stage to his captivated audience. Somehow, I could not imagine this likeable person being a black sheep).

SOUL & JAZZ: What influence did your mother have on you?

GREEN: A good one! She had a great influence on me! (He spoke with sincerity). I learned a lot of things from her.

He paused and I was conscious of his expressive hands and the sapphire and



"Once some ladies got hold of my pants and slid 'em right down my legs..."

began.

SOUL & JAZZ: Rather than dealing with your career, I'd like to just deal with you, as a person.

GREEN: Good!

SOUL & JAZZ: Okay--Tell me a little bit about you, as a child.

GREEN: Oh, I liked to do things wild, you know? At that time I did. Umm--as a child you know, I was...well...like, there's ten kids in our family. Five boys and five girls and I was always the weird one. Really...a very weird character. Always in trouble...(he laughed easily, letting his face reflect the emotion. He seemed to be reaching out to

diamond ring that flashed and winked at me as he rubbed them together.

GREEN: But, my mother and my father, they don't understand me. No one really understands me, you know? My brothers, they look at me as if I'm strange.

SOUL & JAZZ: Why do you think they do that?

GREEN: Why do I know they do that? I've only been knowing them twenty-seven years.

SOUL & JAZZ: But I mean, what would make them look at you strangely?

GREEN: Because I'm different. I'm different in the way they do things and I can't help it. I mean, you know...I'm just different. In the way I would do any given thing...even at the

office, the way I would do one thing and the way my business administrator would do something is completely different! Although he gets it done, I get it done. But I would do it differently

It appears that this has always been a dilemma with Al Green. He has generally been very much aware of doing things differently than others and at times in his life, this realization has almost been unbearable. But geniuses are often thought to be strange. Perhaps it was a touch of musical wizardry that made his family first notice that he was a different breed. I wonder if they realized early, in the formative years of his life, that Al Green was destined to become a world famous entertainer?

Being a prolific songwriter, Al Green tells much about himself in his music. An early song from one of his first LP's was called, "I'm a Ram" and expressed the urgency he seems to feel when it comes to communicating with people.

*There's a man caught in a bush
And he needs to be free. Oh,
somebody--please--
come and see about me.*

In the same breath and song he challenges:

*I'm as stubborn as I can be.
I'm a ram--yes I am.
Now try to get next to me...*

Long before Al reached his teens, he remembers asking his brothers if he could join their singing group and how they laughed at his request and told him he was too young and couldn't sing. The fact that he had been told *no* was his impetus to continue and prove to them and the world, that he could. He openly admits that he lives by that challenge today.

Al had two specific idols as a young man. One was the soulful serenading of Jackie Wilson who inspired him to reach for those top notes and to practice sliding up and down the scale with smooth, perfect tones. The other was the late, great Sam Cooke.

Because his family was extremely religious, and listen to his favorites along with two other rhythm and blues kings, Otis Redding and James Brown. You see, that kind of music was not allowed in his house. Still, Al Green realized early that he wanted to become a singer, and once the desire was there he began to stubbornly pursue his inner-vision. He sang everywhere, making his way from the church to the so-called "chittlin'" circuit. In those early days, Al recalls hard times when club owners refused to pay him. However, things are different today, and I was surprised to learn that his father travels with him and handles on-the-road arrangements. Now, at the height of success and stardom, Al Green has not forgotten his family in spite of the fact that for so many years his father disapproved of rock and roll, pop and soul music, going so far as to ban such records from their home.

Al talked to me about the business arrangement with his father and his brothers. There was sort of a pride in his tone and attitude, as though he was glad he could make it a family affair.

GREEN: My dad, he's kinda like the overseer. He's the elder of the group. See, now I have the group all situated where you have the older people in charge because they are the most wise. So, when we go out on the road, my dad goes with the group. He goes in the hotels and motels, presents himself, introduces the group and me, handles all the check-in arrangements, plus, he collects my money.

SOUL & JAZZ: What advice from an older person influenced your life?

GREEN: (He considered the question, pausing deliberately). That the medium of strength is the point of humbleness, which is the first thought of wisdom.

SOUL & JAZZ: That's beautiful. Who told you that, do you mind saying?

GREEN: (turning suddenly shy) Yes.

That shyness, making him almost boyish in appearance, has got to be one of the most appealing traits this man offers to thousands of women worldwide. Not only is he a sex symbol, in his skin tight pants and with his shirt flung open to expose his chest, but his mannerisms are shyly suggestive and can turn the female portion of his audience into a sacrificial mob, screaming and throwing themselves at the stage. Yet in spite of his overwhelming public acceptance and image appeal, Al Green seems to reflect a certain secrecy and a lonely alienation from people. His music mirrors some of that loneliness in songs he has written and recorded like: "Tired of Being Alone" or "Ain't No Fun to Me," where he writes: "I'll take love and affection whenever I can."

It would seem that someone with as much appeal and personality as Al Green would have little time to allow loneliness a place in his life. However, I imagine that being a superstar can become a lonely plateau high above the heads of ardent fans and admiring females. Upon meeting Al Green, the man and not the entertainer, I found him to be a very warm human being who tried never to be above the adoring crowds. Perhaps this love of people pivoted him into the unfortunate position that fateful November evening by making him too warm, too trusting and far too open! Even as he lay in a Memphis Baptist Hospital preparing for a series of painful skin graft operations his comments about the young woman's suicide expressed the highly spiritual and forgiving nature of the man.

GREEN: I am deeply hurt because of Mary Woodson's disastrous action, not of what she did to me, but of taking her own life. It is for that which I am more concerned. I pray God will forgive her and I find it difficult to sleep nights and remove this tragedy from my mind...

As a human being and as an entertainer, I only hope I can continue on, conveying the God-sent message of love and happiness, and peace and joy among men and women all over the world.

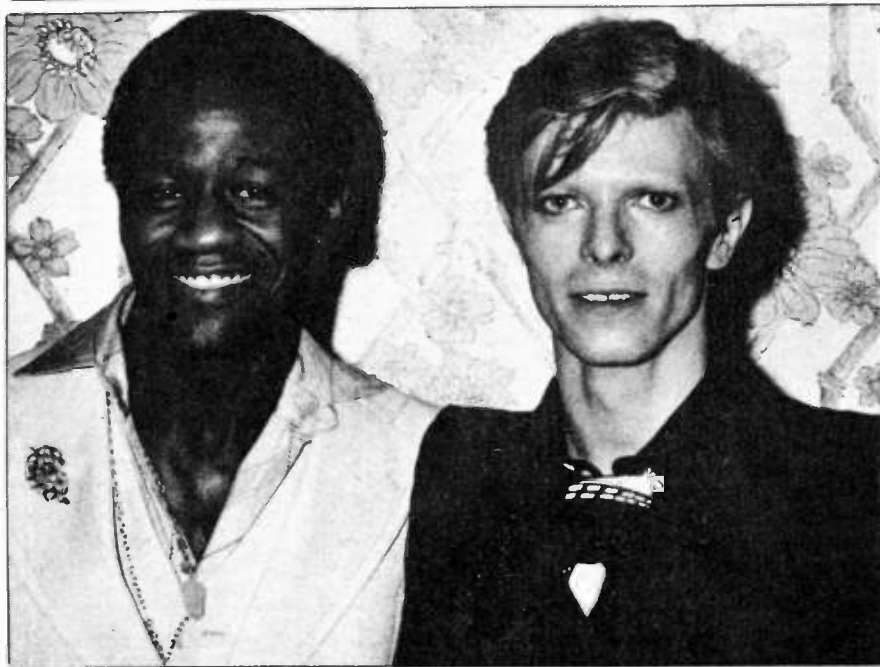
To carry Al Green's comments one step further, here are some excerpts from "Jesus is Waiting," a song he wrote and recorded on his *Call Me* album in early 1973. Not only was this his third consecutive gold LP, but it was also the album that fathered three single releases (all selling over a million units) and increasing his list of gold hits to seven.

*"Jesus is waiting, if you're broken down.
Jesus is waiting, don't let yourself down.
Standing right there behind you,
helping you to pick up your mind.
Jesus is waiting, (like to say it again)
Jesus is waiting, talkin' bout, you've got a friend--
down in your heart and say a little prayer
just for me.
He's the one that believes in love..."*

And love has been the nucleus of Al Green's musical messages. His songs initiate a strong feeling of affection and can woo and reassure a broken heart, help a quiet boyfriend find the right words or inspire the young women to fall head over heels in love. Understandably, when he wrote a song called "Let's Get Married," women everywhere panicked, feeling it was a prelude to the actual announcement that Al Green was finally going to tie the nuptial knot. His press representatives assured his feminine following that the soulful singer had no such



Al Green accepts an award certificate presented by L.A. city councilman Robert Farrell. L-R: Green, Farrell, councilman Cunningham, and Mrs. Tito Jackson. Below, Al chats with one of his admirers.



"No one understands me. Even my family thinks I'm strange.."

intentions. However, upon examining his lyrics, once again he verbalizes a lonely situation and his desire to correct it.

*"...There must be something wrong,
something here that I don't understand
I'm tired of playing around, a girl in every town,
I wanna settle down and stop foolin' around..."*

Recent circumstances have only fortified the feeling that Al is in no hurry to settle

down, however. For those of you who think you could fit the bill for that special someone in Al Green's life, here are a few things he made perfectly clear to me. He is neither a good cook nor a housekeeper. His tight schedule does not allow him to experiment in these departments, so his partner will have to handle both. He admits that he has a tendency to throw things around and although he prefers a tidy atmosphere, he is not always a very neat person. When he gets discouraged with himself, he will stop and take time to regroup and clean up.

Al Green is definitely not a television watcher, although he is making plans for a TV special and realizes the vast potential of television exposure. As for sports, the only one he participates in (on a regular basis) is swimming. He loves the beach and occasionally rides horses.

Al is a sensitive, stubborn, determined Aries person. He is a man set in his ways and looking for three main things in a woman; strength, beauty and intelligence. But in the meantime, he has a demanding career that would present keen competition to the best of women and the most loyal of attachments. After all, loving an entertainer is certainly not easy and oft times, some pretty embarrassing situations can occur on-the-road and in the line of duty. I asked Al to describe the worst on-stage experience he ever had to deal with.

GREEN: Oh-wow! Well, in Louisville, Kentucky I had on these tight...I'm good at wearing tight pants, (he interrupted himself to explain) and they had rubber elastic in the waist. They were just little slip ups, and there were about fourteen or fifteen thousand people at this place and these ladies got hold to my pants leg, 'cause the stage was too high and they could only reach my shoes and my pants leg. One of these ladies got hold to my pants and slid these pants all the way down to my knees and I'm standin' on the stage singing, "I'm Tired of Being Alone."

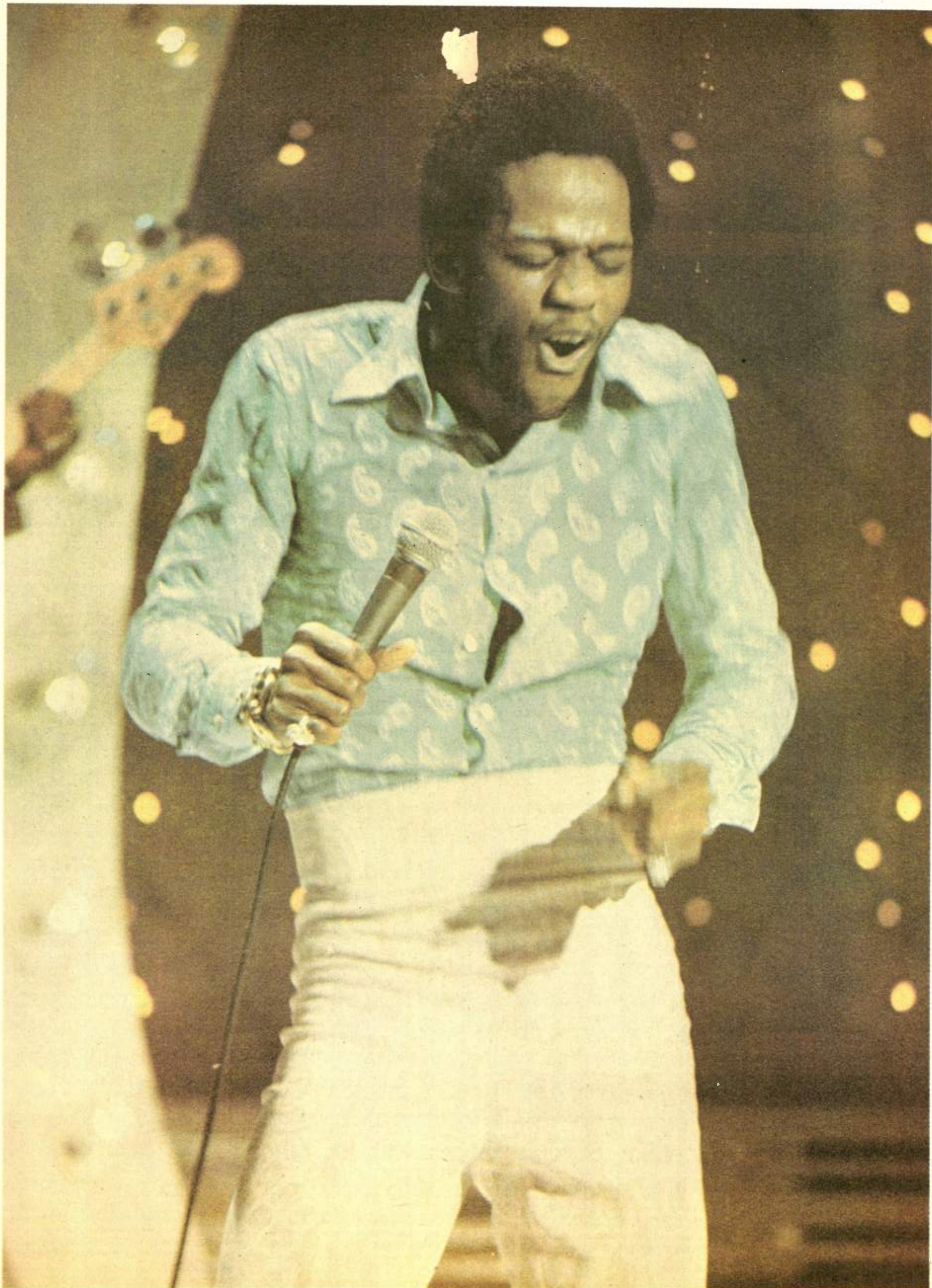
SOUL & JAZZ: Did you keep on singing?

GREEN: Hey man...I got rescued! Jesse came over, (one of the security people) and first of all, instead of grabbing me, he grabbed the pants. Well, he got the pants from the lady and I'm still standin' on stage and the whole place is in an uproar! And I have my pants half on so...I just said..."well," pulled them up and continued the show.

Naturally I wanted to know what Al Green thought the future held in store for him. Aside from being a top notch writer, producer and artist, the man runs his own publishing company, Al Green Music, which has been named number five in the country this year as far as active music publishing companies go. Additionally, he runs a large complex of offices in his hometown of Memphis, called Al Green Enterprises. He expects both concerns to grow rapidly and to expand his assets and contributions to the music industry. In between that side of him that is the entertainer and the business side, he has another face that looks forward to finding its way to the stage and screen as an accomplished actor. He explained that he has decided to pursue an acting career, and will soon debut in a screen play that is based on the 16th century classic opera *La Boheme*. The updated version will be called *Mimi* and Al Green will be starring in the role of a character named Rudy. His leading lady and co-star of the film will be played by none other than Melba Moore. Curtis Mayfield will play the part of a club owner and also will be doing some of the music scoring along with Al. Lola Falana is also slated to appear in what Al referred to as, "kind of a wild role."

In the meantime, his new single, "Sha-La-La (Make Me Happy)" has already permeated the music industry, gathering acclaim like roses and presenting his musical bouquet to an international audience. It appears this new single will gratify him once again with another gold record. Already his newly released album, *Al Green Explores Your Mind*, is climbing the international charts, while his single remains number one with a bullet on the soul charts and Top 10 on the Top 100 chart listings across the country. Not only did Al assist in the production of the album, but he also co-wrote every song.

Taking all into consideration, it certainly looks like Al Green will soon be adding a string of new credits and accomplishments to the growing list. Already he has received awards and honors from *Rolling Stone* for Rock 'n' Roll Star of 1972, named best pop and R&B vocalist in all three national U.S. music trade publications as well as a Grammy nomination for "Call Me." He has to his credit 7 gold singles, 2 platinum singles and 4 gold albums. Perhaps 1975 will offer an Oscar nomination for his upcoming movie debut, but whatever it has to offer, there is no doubt in my mind that Al Green will be ready, willing and proud to accept. Surely he has worked hard and diligently for everything he has attained thus far. I can only wish for him what he so beautifully offered to the world in his musical manner: Love and happiness!



SOUL & JAZZ REVIEWS



Stanley Clarke lays down some heavy bass.

STANLEY CLARKE
Stanley Clarke
Nemperor NE 431

By MICHAEL POINT

Stanley Clarke is without a doubt the reigning heavy amongst bassists in the electrified jazz/rock field. His work with Chick Corea and Return to Forever is what he is best recognized for although he has a lengthy and distinguished list of other recording credits, most notable of which are his appearances with Airtio and Flora Purim. This is his second attempt at a solo album and it manages to put across both his composition talents and the power-packed grace of his style on the bass with resounding success.

An excellent choice of musicians surround Clarke on the album and give the material he provides a thorough and inventive exploration. Veteran drummer Tony Williams, who pioneered much of this type of music in the early days of his Lifetime group, is a dynamo of precision percussion that combined with Clarke's own energetic bass lines creates an unbeatable and highly aggressive rhythm section. Jan Hammer, who has since teamed up with fellow Mahavishnu-ex Jerry Goodman, provides the keyboards and Return to Forever-ex Bill Connors supplies the guitar licks with suitable style.

"Vulcan Princess," a punchy number forced along by Williams' powerhouse drums, opens the album and leads into a brief, subdued vocal ballad by Clarke, "Yesterday Princess." Two seven minute-plus Clarke energy vehicles close out the side with a show of force. "Lopsy Lu" begins as a duet with Clarke plucking notes from his bass

while Williams marches along with a steady rhythm on cymbals. Hammer and Connors soon join in and the song is energized into full-flight before breaking down for a patented Williams bash on the drums as everyone offers brief embellishments to the solo. Clarke takes over and rips pulsating chunks of sound from the bass, pulling and popping the strings like a strong gust of wind playing with electrical powerlines. "Power" is aptly titled and continues in the same vein with Connors getting in quite a few high-energy guitar licks.

The album's second side is devoted to a suite written by Clarke that runs through a variety of styles and a piece written by Englishman Michael Gibbs that allows Clarke to further display the versatility of his talent. Gibbs' "Spanish Phases for Strings and Bass" is exactly what it sounds like and Clarke dances up and down the neck of his acoustic bass with customary grace. Gibbs scored the relatively passive string section parts that drift in and out besides doing the orchestration for both strings and brass on Clarke's "Life Suite." The album is primarily an electric affair even when the strings and brass peek through and Clarke is uniformly excellent throughout as he continues to fulfill and surpass the music world's expectations.

FLYING START
The Blackbyrds
Fantasy F 9472

By ARCHIE IVY

Music Education has come a long way. A few years back, if one went to school to

study music, he learned the rules of theory and composition by way of the classics. But times have changed: Howard University has a department of jazz. Out of this school have come the Blackbyrds, six young student musician/composers.

Under the direction of trumpeter Dr. Donald Byrd, the department still teaches the elements of music--those will always be the same--but from the jazz ethic, being based on spontaneous improvisation. Nothing is "illegal"; if it feels (or sounds) right, do it. The stress is on the understanding of rhythmic structures, giving songs the polyrhythmic existence they enjoyed in Africa.

Their initial Fantasy album, *Blackbyrds* is doing well on the charts now, riding the strength of the popular single "Do It Fluid," an eased back summer groove that is just now reaching the mass audience. That's why I was surprised to learn that there was another release *Flying Start* which I feared could confuse many trying to find "Do It Fluid." Then I listened to it. No problem.

If you are looking for party music, it's here. The opening cut, a frantically paced smoker called "I Need You," is more of what "Do It Fluid" promised, only much faster. Whereas "Do It Fluid" was a summer groove, this one is designed to warm you up; it's for serious dancing only.

Although their music is danceable, the melodic content of Blackbyrd tunes is nearly intelligible, like distant conversation. Each instrument has a line in the statement of them, and they give and take of each other, lifting the theme to wherever it wishes to grow. Of course it moves you round; the rhythm is tight and bouncy. But it also sounds good, having those mystical qualities that make you want to whistle them all day.

The music of the Blackbyrds is a fusion of rock and jazz: the harmonic subtleties of jazz are beautifully laced through the energy and drive of the rock rhythms. Inside the songs you may hear the influence of Stevie or Sly of Funkadelic as readily as that of Miles or Kenny Burrell or Byrd. Like Earth, Wind & Fire and Kool & The Gang, the Blackbyrds often employ a more jazz-based concept of motion to add dimensional beauty to their already interesting rhythms.

If you like music, you'll find plenty here. In addition to the happy love song "I Need You," there is also "Spaced Out" and "Future Children, Future Hopes" to groove the disco dancers. Romanticists will appreciate "April Showers" and "Love is Love." And for those who like music to do it--whatever it is--to it, there is "Blackbyrd's Theme," "The Baby," and "Walking in Rhythm."

THE CUTTING EDGE

Sonny Rollins
Milestone M-9059

CHAPTER THREE - VIVA EMILIANO ZAPATA

Gato Barbieri
ABC-Impulse ASD-9279

By MICHAEL DAVIS

Two masters of the tenor saxophone here, two men who can really blow you away. Rollins, whose career spans the last twenty-five years, is all the more valuable today because you never know when he'll slip away into one of his frequent retirements. Barbieri continues to make some of the most adventurous Latin American jazz going, while teetering on the brink of mass popularity.

Sonny Rollins' current period of activity is just about three years old and his music is gathering strength as he goes along. His band seems to have found an inobtrusive groove so that they can provide a sturdy foundation for his long solo excursions. Followers of the post-Coltrane school of tenor players may find Rollins less than mind-riveting because he is more melodically based but he can make those melodies change shape completely right before your ears and he can get your ass moving too.

The Cutting Edge is taken from performances recorded at last summer's Montreux Jazz Festival and like many Montreux sets, this one really comes alive. The ballads, "A House is Not a Home" and "To a Wild Rose" are at once sensuous and relaxing (the latter

being my favorite of the two because of Sonny's fine unaccompanied spot) but it's the upbeat cuts that keep me coming back for more.

"First Moves" is the standout here, a bouncy little tune that all but invites you to bounce along. "The Cutting Edge" isn't far behind but is more bop-oriented. And for those who thought Sonny is past dealing out any surprises, there's "Swing Low, Sweet Chariot," featuring guest soloist Rufus Harley on bagpipes. Not only is the piece humorous but it works musically, thus confirming the notion that Rollins is still seeking (and finding) new ways to present his music.

This is also true of Gato Barbieri and it's fortunate. Since returning to his Latin roots in 1970, Barbieri's playing has become quite stylized and even though it's an exciting style, filled with brash South American melodies and intense shrieks and cries, it has gotten pretty repetitious over the long haul, particularly since Gato doesn't allow other soloists on his albums.

For *Viva Emiliano Zapata*, Barbieri has chosen to ensconce himself in a big band format that is at the other end of the musical spectrum from the occasional projects he does with Carla Bley and the Jazz Composer's Orchestra. There is nothing avant-garde about Chico O'Farrill's arrangements but there's nothing simplistic about them either; dense multiple rhythms provide the basis for Gato's soaring sax while the other horns provide rhythmic support and counter-melodic coloring.

The initial audience response to this album has been very encouraging, which helps bolster my confidence that Barbieri's music has tremendous commercial potential. All he would have to do is hit the rock circuit for a couple of years and I'm sure he could follow in the footsteps of Herbie, Chick and the Mahavishnu in capturing a large audience.



THE MAGIC OF THE BLUE
Blue Magic
Atco SD-36-103

By VERNON GIBBS

1974 will have to go down in music history as the year of the ripoff. Barry White finalized his triumph over Isaac Hayes with a burst of prolificacy that must be a record in itself, only to be attacked from the rear by Johnny Bristol's "Hang On In There Baby." Curtis Mayfield found himself under attack from William DeVaughn and quickly retaliated with his best album ever in *Got to Find a Way*. The Stylistics suffered the greatest setback however; the barrage unleashed by the Dynamic Superiors and Blue Magic caused them a sizable loss.

When "Stop to Start" became immortalized as a red light classic, it also served notice that a new and important force had entered the sexy soul sweepstakes. The completeness of the album from which it was taken, *Blue Magic* served to indicate to others in the genre, The Main Ingredient, the Miracles, etc. that an album of primarily slow, sweet songs could be interesting from beginning to end. The triumph came simply not because the group included uptempo songs which worked as well as the slow ones, but because in choosing and writing material, Blue Magic and their producers showed an uncanny level of good taste.

SOUL & JAZZ REVIEWS

It seemed unlikely that the group could follow up what must undoubtedly be considered one of the best group debut albums since albums became the deciding factor in an artist's reputation, but with *The Magic of the Blue*, Blue Magic has surpassed itself and taken complete control of a market once neatly divided between the merely adequate and the great. With this album Blue Magic should establish itself as the vocal group to watch.

The album opens with the brilliant single "Three Ring Circus" which with the line "life is a three ring circus" contains perhaps more truth than the author had intended. A calculated followup to "Sideshow," it has the same melodic grab. This is of course the Philly sound, MFSB provide the backup and Norman Harris is the producer. But even though they are using the same musicians, the difference in production values is what makes Blue Magic different from the Stylistics/Thom Bell era.

First of all, there is an increased emphasis on blending the background voices, the horns and strings into a homogenous mass that seeks sweetness instead of distinction between the different elements. Ted Mills as a lead vocalist reaches, sometimes with an effort, the range and tone described by Russell Thompkins, but the other singers are effective in a lead capacity especially in "Love Has Found Its Way," which is reminiscent of a Spinners raveup and with the melodic hook which makes it a masterpiece, should be the next single.

"You Won't Have to Tell Me Goodbye" is the other standout possibility for a single from a nearly perfect album. With the right push Blue Magic could easily get three gold singles out of this album. Even if that doesn't happen everything about it indicates that Blue Magic has come out of nowhere to become the most exciting vocal group to emerge in the seventies.



NIGHTBIRDS
Labelle
Epic KE 33075

REJUVENATION
The Meters
Reprise MS 2200

By ARCHIE IVY

New Orleans is one of the richest cities in the Afro-American musical tradition, a connection to our musical past as well as a part of our musical present. It was the home of ragtime and swing, the cradle of jazz. Many consider it to be the birthplace of "funk." But most of us are more familiar with the Memphis sound or the Philly groove than the sweet soul of Louisiana, Cabbage Alley. These two new releases, both produced by the Crescent City funkmaster Allen Toussaint may serve to reacquaint us with the sound from Cabbage Alley.

Toussaint, more than any one person, has been the crusader of the New Orleans sound, working with groups and individuals since

1955, having been responsible for such hits as "Java," "I Like It Like That," and "Mother-In-Law." Recently he has worked with such rock-oriented groups as Badger, Little Feat and Joe Cocker, not to mention the Band, spreading the sound to a wider audience, filling the music with that happy feeling associated with the scene of the world's largest party, the Mardi Gras.

The Meters are to Toussaint as MSFB is to Gamble-Huff: they are the musicians who capture in time and space their city's sound. They are the group that backed up Mac "Dr. John" Rebennack with his disco smash, "Right Place, Wrong Time."

Rejuvenation is the second Warner Bros./Reprise album for the Meters. Their first, *Cabbage Alley*, was a testimonial to the group's extensive talents, going funky ("Do the Dirt"), reggae ("Soul Island"), and soft-rock ("Birds" by Neil Young) to show that they are comfortable with varying musical forms.

Rejuvenation is a continuation of *Cabbage Alley* in the sense that it is another example of the Meters' ability at making music. Not over-conscious of the commerciality of the music, the Meters tend to just play what they feel, and if we can dig it, cool. They display a wide range of musical taste, from the soft and soulful "Love is for Me" and the chorale-treated "Loving You is on My Mind" to the hyper-tense "Just Kissed My Baby" to the laid-back grooves of "Jungle Man" and the telling "Africa."

The main song is "It Ain't No Use," which is an eleven minute jam covering each man's abilities with solo parts, starting with Leo Necontelli's melodic guitar phrasing over Zig Modeliste's solid, punching drums, building to a climax that bassist George Porter, Jr. steals.

From the non-commercial to the most salable, the Meters have also included a phase-shifted, rapid-fire, tight-assed tune called "What Cha Say," which is an instant smash, commanding your body to move.

"Hey Pockey-Way," the first single from the album, is a cute idea built on a typically New Orleans slang phrase to match a typically New Orleans funky riff, allowing pianist-vocalist Art Neville to do his thing.

Toussaint gets the clean sound necessary for a good album, and basically turns the boys loose to groove like they should. But this is their session.

Enter Labelle, New York's loveliest. Originally Patti Labelle and the Bluebelles, the trio has condensed to the more abstract Labelle. Many say they are the most exciting female act ever, not being the usual three girls in one dress.

Patti Labelle, Sarah Dash and Nona Hendryx have been recording for some fifteen years, starting with "I Sold My Heart to the Junkman," a million seller obviously indicating the presence of talent but growing at a disproportionate rate with their audience, Labelle stretched out to the more progressive music, and thus moved right out of commercial categorization. Now, three albums and two record companies later, the trio finds itself at Epic and working with the hitmaker, Toussaint.

Labelle offers quite a challenge to Toussaint. Their trademark is energy, and no producer has been able to capture that energy on vinyl. That is until now. Toussaint's genius has enabled him to gather the essence of Labelle, recording not what Labelle is but what Labelle can be. Rather than reaching for the energy in the ladies, Toussaint has hidden the energy in the music, using Sarah's high, melodic voice, Nona's deep alto and Patti's infamous personality-filled leads to create events on record.

Obvious disco cuts like "What Can I Do for You?" and "Lady Marmalade" insure a larger audience for the group, and this could be another monster. Nona firmly establishes herself as a serious songwriter, giving the album a tone of "saving the children," but more in concept and design than wornout rhetoric.

SOUL & JAZZ SINGLES



By VINCE ALETTI

End of the year already? Didn't we lose a month or two back there? Doctor, my mind is a blank. But I've managed to come through with--ah yes--a Top 20 for 1974 even though I know I'll be kicking myself with second thoughts tomorrow (how could you leave out "Boogie Down" and "Dance Master" and "Then Came You"?). But enough of that--here's the list, then a headlong rush through the best of the new releases.

The newest single on the Top 20 is "Happy People" by the Temptations (Gordy 7138), the group's first work without producer Norman Whitfield in nearly eight years. The production, credited to someone named Jeffrey Bowen and Berry Gordy, is not a sharp break with the Whitfield sound; instead, it's nouveau Whitfield, like the best of the Jackson 5's recent work: densely electronic but very bouncy; minimal lyrics, maximal production (including a mostly instrumental B-side credited to "The Temptations Band" and bringing the total length to 6:23). The only other record causing as much excitement in the discotheques right now is "Shame, Shame, Shame" by Shirley (And Company) (Vibration 532), produced by sexy Sylvia for Shirley for Shirley and Lee who still has that impossibly high voice that opened "Let the Good Times Roll." Here, she's singing about discotheques (which she rhymes with "Break of day") with some guy who can scream like nobody I've heard this year; but when she says, "my body needs action," you're not so sure she's talking about dancing. It sounds like a zippier "Rock

TOP TWENTY SOUL & JAZZ SINGLES OF 1974

1. "TSOP" MFSB (Phila. Int.)
2. "The Player" First Choice (Philly Groove)
3. "Good Things Don't Last Forever" Ecstasy, Passion & Pain (Roulette)
4. "Ask Me" Ecstasy, Passion & Pain (Roulette)
5. "Woman to Woman" Shirley Brown (Truth)
6. "Dancing Machine" Jackson Five (Motown)
7. "Rock the Boat" Hues Corporation (RCA)
8. "What Goes Around (Comes Around)" Black Ivory (Kwanza)
9. "Don't Go Breaking My Heart/Without Love" Aretha Franklin (Atlantic)
10. "Lady Marmalade" Labelle (Epic)
11. "Rock Your Baby" George McCrae (T.K.)
12. "The Boy Next Door" Bettye Swann (Atlantic)
13. "Never Can Say Goodbye" Gloria Gaynor (MGM)
14. "When the Fuel Runs Out" Executive Suite (Babylon)
15. "Bingo" The Whispers (Janus)
16. "Dream World" Don Downing (Scepter)
17. "For the Love of Money" The O'Jays (Phila. International)
18. "Sugar Pie Guy" The Joneses (Mercury)
19. "Happy People" The Temptations (Gordy)
20. "African Yama" Chakachas (Janus)

Your Baby" (which should get an award for the most imitated record of the year) and also follows the disco format with a longer instrumental B-side to keep the dancers spinning.

A lot of instrumentals this month, most of them for dancing. The best: Joe Bataan's Latin-flavored version of Gil Scott-Heron's "The Bottle" (Salsoul 736), a terrific blend of brass and strings anchored by one of the hippest Latin bands around. "Waitin' for the Rain" and "Don't Depend on Me," back-to-back on Phil-L.A. of Soul (369), instrumental tracks from the same two songs released last year by the Fantastic Johnny C (remember "Boogaloo Down Broadway"?), now credited to the Philly Sound (that is, MFSB or a large part thereof, since the production was done at Sigma Sound by the crack team of Baker, Harris & Young; since "Waitin' for the Rain" was something of an underground disco hit (when it was still possible to have such things), that's the most popular side, but the sweeter "Don't Depend on Me" is surprisingly good and could lead to a revival of the Johnny C vocal (also Phil-L.A. of Soul 361). Lalo Schiffrin's "Ape Shuffle" (20th Century 2150), reported last month, has been flipped to an equally spacey instrumental called "Escape from Tomorrow," which sounds like a chase sequence from a movie soundtrack, full of building horn structures and pounding drums; quite hectic. The instrumental side of Ultrafunk's "Kung Fu Man" (Contempo 7701) is more than six minutes and beautifully orchestrated--again,

it's the soundtrack aesthetic, but tight and hard-edged rather than marshmallowy and dull-witted. The Lords of Percussion have something called "The Kung-Fu" on Old Town (105) that's full of yells and grunts; I prefer the strange B-side, "Geisha Girl," which has some of the most unusual and attractive percussion work I've heard in a while--very exotic. Worth checking out: "Grab It" by the Olympic Runners (London 5N-216), Monk Montgomery's "Bump De Bump" (Philadelphia International 3557), "Do It, Do It" and "Just a Rock" by the Peppers (who are overdoing that supersonic effect on Event 221) and the infectious, high spirited "Living, Loving, Laughing" by Jesus (He's returned as a soul star?) (Vibration 531).

SOCIAL STUDIES: Ronnie Walker is optimistic in "You've Got to Try Harder" even though, as the parenthetical title states, "Times Are Bad" (Event 220). It's not the most cheering advice I've heard, but it's delivered in a fine falsetto style and with a sharp production done in part by Vince Montana (the B-side is also excellent, but slower: "No One Else Will Do"). Love Committee, another Philly-based male group with a familiar O'Jays/Trammps sound, suggest "what we really need" is "One Day of Peace" (Golden Fleece 3256) but what about the day after that? Things look pretty bleak to Bobby Womack, who sort of throws up his hands and sings "I Don't Know" (UA XW561) in one of his best singles ever, very "I Can Understand It" in pace except here he can't understand it. Esther Phillips is

considerably more pessimistic and sharp-tongued in "Disposable Society," a Eugene McDaniels composition about "planned obsolescence...paper plates, cardboard skates, plastic silverware/Automobiles with disposable wheels, wigs instead of hair." The arrangement is jazz-based and spare but perfect; Phillips has an incredible, exciting voice and the intelligence of her delivery combined with the intelligence of the material could set this off along the path followed by Gil Scott-Heron's "The Bottle" (because it is danceable) or bring it to a quick, too-hip end. Check it out one way or the other.

The Invitations' "Look on the Good Side" (Silver Blue 818) isn't more flimsy advice on how to deal with our social problems. Here, we're back to love, though it's clearly not always safe ground. The production, partly by Bobby Martin, is Philadelphia at its best, especially the long introduction, and the Invitations' vocals are strong and driving. Jerry Butler deals with a similar love problem--trying to convince his woman he isn't fooling around--in his delightful "Playing On You" (Mercury 409), a must for anyone who's ever fallen in love with Butler's honeyed voice. Speaking of Butler, his classic "He Will Break Your Heart" has undergone a disco transformation and gender change for Lea Roberts' "She Will Break Your Heart" (UA XW539), the other side of her lovely "Laughter in the Rain," recommended here a few months back--makes it doubly worth buying. Polly Brown sounds just like Diana Ross in her last years with the Supremes on "Up in a Puff of Smoke" (GTO 1002), a little more punched up than the old Motown sound, but otherwise an accurate and appealing revival. Silver, Platinum & Gold, on the other hand, sound very much like--you never would have guessed it--Ecstasy, Passion & Pain on "La-La-Love Chains" (Warner Bros. 8057), about a girl who's all tied up in love, or something. Finally, there's Shuggie Otis' airy, unclassifiable "Inspiration Information" (Epic 8-50054), which should only serve as an introduction to his winning album of the same name. Happy new year.

Black Music Awards: The Search For an Alternative

by Walter Burrell

Ever since the Grammys were first awarded to recording artists and technicians back in 1958 there have been grumbings of dissatisfaction over the delineation of the many and varied categories. Especially those categories pertaining to Black artists and their product.

Last year Roberta Flack chuckled in not-so-humorous disbelief as she read the name and category of a winner at the Grammy presentation. Miles Davis reportedly became so upset over having been nominated in the same category with another artist supposedly of a totally different classification and caliber that he walked away from the Grammys vowing never to return. Aretha Franklin flew to Los Angeles and set up a press conference just to pass along her statuette to Little Esther Phillips, whom she felt deserved the award.

But aside from such obvious emotional undercurrents which are indigenous to virtually any awards presentation, there is still a perhaps legitimate confusion on the part of many music industry people as to which artists and sounds are to be pigeon-holed into which category.

One man's projected alternative is the Soul & Blues Awards, a Black-run affair established three years ago by former California disk jockey Chuck Mann. But even this idea, though it may well have been conceived on the idealistic wings of genuine concern over the premise that Blacks should award "their own" as only they know how, has been plagued by lack of total industry cooperation.

Mann's list of grievances with Grammy is long and more often than not colored (no pun intended) by as much emotion as fact. It is understandable why more than one music industry trade publication has accused Mann of racial separatism, to which he responds, "There can only be separatism when there has been togetherness, which has not existed at NARAS. The only separatism I would be guilty of would be from the Grammy awards, but the Grammys have reached the stage where they are limited in selecting Black artists in different categories. They simply can't categorize Black musicians properly."

Mann also disagrees with Grammy's method of selecting award nominees and eventual winners. According to him, card-holding members of NARAS (National Academy of Recording Arts and Sciences), who Mann believes number "close to 20,000," are polled for possible nominees. Then, insists Mann, the results are compiled by "a fairly closed committee of maybe eight or ten people. And the only Black one I know of is Lee Young."

But a high-ranking officer of NARAS presented another picture of how a Grammy is born. "All the voting members and associate members and the record companies submit a listing of all the product released between October 15 and October 16 of the succeeding year. There are about 4,000 eligible responses (a far cry from Mann's figure of 20,000) in the various categories."

Our sources at NARAS went on to point out that a committee of experts then meets for two or three days straight making certain that the entries are properly categorized. Their resultant listings are then shipped out to the academy's seven chapter cities (New York, Nashville, Atlanta, Memphis, Chicago, San Francisco and Los Angeles) where the academy's board of governors and other experts make final revisions. The pre-nominations list which emerges from them is then sent to the entire voting membership, who select nominees. Then those nominations are again sent out to the membership and the final winners are voted upon.

The NARAS spokesperson also pointed out that several highly respected Blacks are included as experts during the selection of nominees, including Jim Gosa, Artie Wayne, Lee Young, David Banks from Warner



Mr. Ewart Abner, president of Motown Records is shown presenting Marvin Gaye with a gold record for his "Marvin Gaye Live" Album.

Brothers R&B product division, and Harold Battiste.

And how are the Soul & Blues nominees selected? "During the first two years," says Mann, "when we were just starting out, we had a select, blue-ribbon committee of 15 people within the record industry making up the nominations. The actual voters included everyone we could contact in the record industry: roughly 1,000 people."

"For our next upcoming presentations we now have chapters in Memphis and Chicago, in addition to Los Angeles and New York. Our initial nominating committee will be larger this year and voters will include people currently associated with Grammy, plus those disenchanted with NARAS and anyone else working in the record industry."

"If you'll remember Dick Clark's American Music Awards which he did last year, he threw that show together in less than one year and there were no questions asked in the industry as to his credibility," continues Chuck, taking the sweeping liberty of comparing his stature and credibility in the field of recorded music to that of Clark.

"Clark had maybe five or six thousand people voting in perhaps four or five states," Mann points out. "There will be 30 to 35 people on the Soul & Blues steering committee this year. And as for voting, we plan to involve ourselves heavily with *Ebony* and *Jet* and their own music polls because they're Black and they reflect more accurately than do whites the true tastes of Black music lovers."

"I was in Chicago a few weeks ago and talked at length with John Johnson, publisher of *Ebony* and *Jet*, and told him what we plan to do. We want to align ourselves with a Black publication. You have to understand one thing about white trade publications like *Cashbox*, *Record World* and *Billboard*. When they release their Top 100 and their Soul 50, there are only three or four people who determine what records get onto those lists. And they are all white. And 60 to 80 per cent of what they choose is the result of pure hype because ads are involved."

"I say that Johnson Publications publishes

a more authentic poll of Black music each week. We plan to tabulate the votes of the voting public. We'll let the people who buy the records send in their votes. Then we'll funnel that information through our steering committee and come up with our winners."

One of Mann's chief complaints against NARAS when it comes to categorization is his assertion that Grammy divides Black gospel from white under the headings "sacred" (white artists) and "non-sacred" (Black artists).

To me there is only one God," says Chuck in what must rank as the understatement of the decade, "but Grammy makes one gospel category for Blacks, another for whites. Last year Roberta Flack presented that award and she chuckled as she read off the card. Whether it's Ray Charles or Glen Campbell who sings it, it's still gospel."

NARAS was quick to respond to Mann's charges of racial segregation in the gospel category. "The rhythm & blues category is broken down into best performance (R&B) by a female, male, duo, group, instrumental and soul gospel," they explained. And completely separate from that category is another which deals with ethnic and traditional, including traditional blues. In addition there is another category centered around inspirational gospel (as opposed to soul gospel). And it is here that some Blacks, including Mann have opposed NARAS.

"'Inspirational gospel' could easily include all white artists," admits the NARAS spokesperson, "but we don't go by color. We go by the sound of the record. There are white gospel groups like the Oakridge Boys, The Blackwood Brothers, The Happy Goodman Family and The Thrasher Brothers and we cannot put them in the same category with soul gospel artists like The Rance Alan Group, Mildred Clark, The Edwin Hawkins Singers, The McNeil Twins and Rev. James Cleveland. Those are two vastly different types of recordings."

"We did once put them all together, but we decided that wasn't fair because the soul artists kept winning all the time. So we made

two separate categories and it's worked out perfectly."

Evidently Chuck Mann is far from being the only one who is dissatisfied with the NARAS ways of giving out music awards. A Motown executive stated that even though last year was a great one for them (Stevie Wonder won in both pop and R&B categories), Marvin Gaye's smash, "What's Goin' On," was eliminated from all Grammy pop categories.

The Motown spokesperson also expressed dissatisfaction over the possibility of so-called block voting on the parts of big record companies ("If large companies with substantial NARAS memberships vote along company product lines, it's obvious who's going to come out ahead"). Even people outside Motown have pointed to the fact that Lou Rawls won over Marvin Gaye last year, even though Gaye's record was far more popular nationally.

But Grammy countered with the belief that they don't feel block voting is "as widespread as people might say. Whenever we've tried to pin anyone down on it, we just can't come up with evidence. A good way to judge this is to look at the nominations. Every year there have been more of the smaller companies involved. You can only have block voting if one major company keeps coming up with massive nominations. But the nominations have been proportionate to the number of companies in the record industry."

A logical and valid question to put to any fledgling awards presentation such as Soul & Blues is just what reaction it has gotten from the artists and record companies upon whom it must depend for its virtual existence.

"To this point," admits Mann reluctantly, "it's been somewhat disappointing to me as far as total input from Black superstars is concerned. I don't have to tell you how anything Black has to prove itself with regard to credibility. Black ideas have to prove themselves over a period of several years before we Blacks endorse them."

"I'm talking about the so-called big names who may feel that if they do endorse it in its infant stages and it fails, then it'll hurt their careers and reputations. Motown, for instance, has not endorsed the Soul & Blues awards. Motown vice president Suzanne de Passe said her work kept her busy, but I feel basically that Motown is waiting to see if this thing is going to merit their participation."

Indeed, that is a fair appraisal of Motown's motivations. "As with most music industry situations, if you don't have 100% participation from the people you're dealing with," said a company executive honestly, "then you cannot be totally successful."

A Warner Brothers spokesman added that, "It just isn't the same as a Grammy, no matter what you say about NARAS. People are used to the words Emmy, Grammy and Oscar and their egos will be satisfied with nothing less. Soul & Blues still has to earn that kind of awe-inspiring reputation."

A top-named Black singer, when questioned as to his feelings about potential involvement by noted personalities, noted without sarcasm that "as far as I can tell Soul & Blues got a fair amount of participation last year, but relative to what? To nothing really, because there's nothing to compare them with."

Still Mann feels his brain child is growing both in stature and prestige. "During the three years we've held Soul & Blues awards," he says with an undisguised air of accomplishment, "the Grammy folk have realigned their categories, adding more emphasis to Black artists. For instance, Stevie Wonder was nominated for five Grammys last year and that wouldn't have happened if Soul & Blues hadn't started calling attention to these Black artists."

Continuing his stream-of-Mann-like logic totally devoid of humility, Chuck pointed out that "we've noticed that Grammy is paying close attention to Soul & Blues, even though they're not saying anything publicly. I received a call from the NARAS president in Memphis last year, but I was out of the office and didn't get to talk with him. But I read where he had been asked about some of the statements I've made in interviews about Grammy and Soul & Blues. His response was that he didn't know enough about Soul & Blues to make a statement because he didn't want to get into a controversy, but basically he thought it was a good idea."

A good idea it may well be, but the Soul & Blues awards obviously have a long way to go before they gain the credibility Chuck Mann so optimistically foresees. And at this point in history they are more an experimental addition to the existing order of things than they are a viable alternative.



Illustration by Tim Clark.

IT PAYS TO HANG TOUGH

Alex Harvey's Fifteen Year Pursuit of the Ultimate Rock Dream



SUZAN CARSON

By Richard Cromelin

"Maybe I'm getting old," says Alex Harvey, sounding a bit puzzled. "It may be that simple." It's a bit of a laugh, after listening to so many 25-year-old rock 'n' rollers lament over and lash out at that terrifying prospect, to hear it from someone who's a rising star at the age of 39. He's not sitting here fretting about outgrowing his boogie shoes--his five-night stand at the Whisky, the first major date on this first American tour, had been a smashing success, not merely drawing large crowds but generating a pervasive buzz around this town; once more he'd carried through with the challenge hurled by the very name of the group--The Sensational Alex Harvey Band.

"After Elvis, what else could a young man be?"



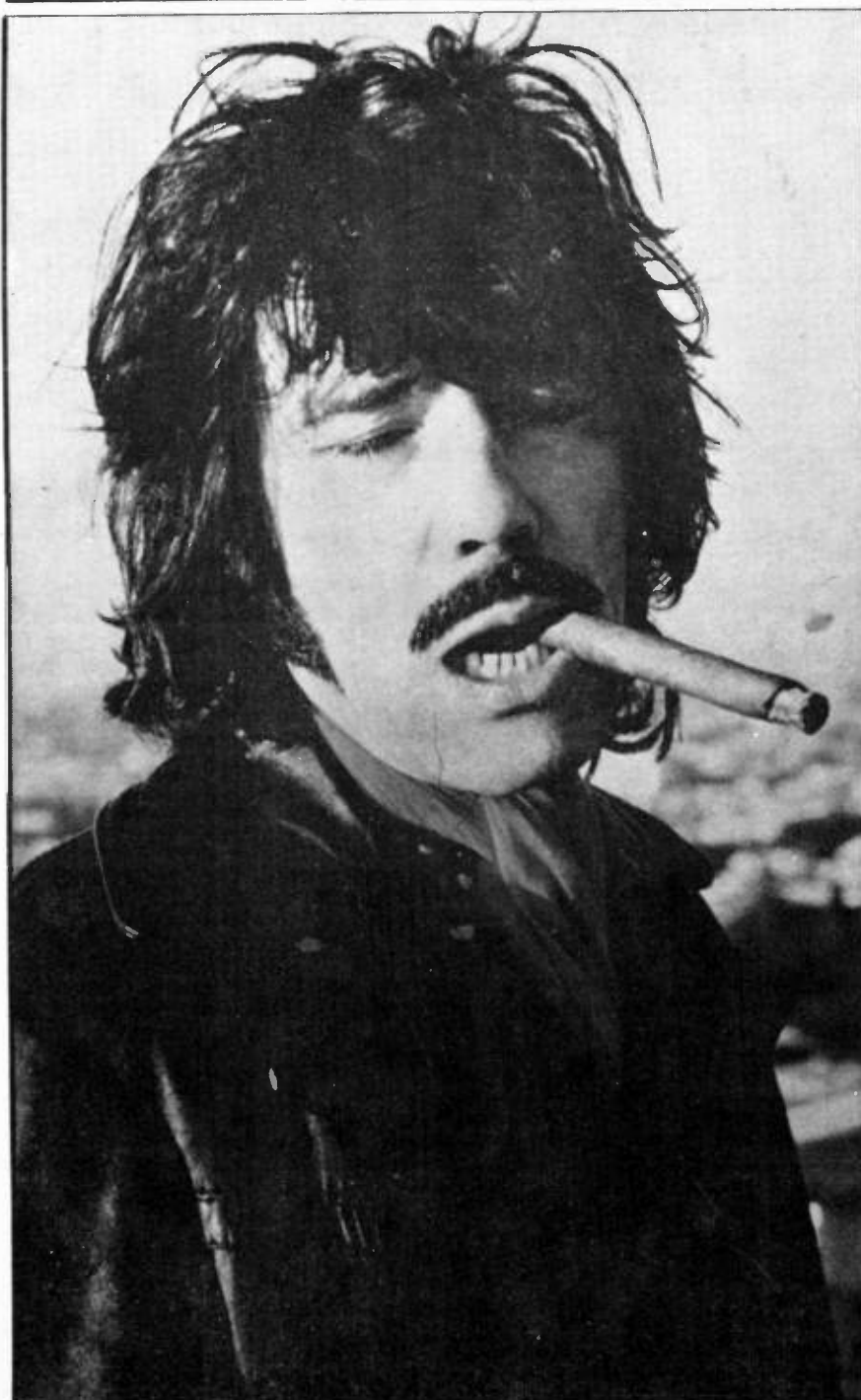
Nor is he gingerly fingering an arthritic joint, or spreading the lines on his face and hoping they'll finally stay apart. He's onto something a bit deeper. It's something that comes out in the show, when he wags his finger at the boys and girls and admonishes and advises, almost becoming a preacher as he extols the sanctity of freedom. It's a little hard to figure out exactly what his attitude is at that point, all this moralizing coming after he's established himself as a fairly mad, anarchic character, a rough Scottish counterpart to Joel Grey's taunting *Cabaret* stagemaster.

And now Harvey is indicating that the intention is indeed serious, even though he'll presently play down the idea that there's any heavy *Message* in the show. Getting old is part of it, and so is his heritage. "I think maybe I'm puritanical deep down," he says after a few moments of serious mulling. I don't think people for some curious reason, respect freedom...There seems to be a disrespect for the human body. I don't know. It just seems a shame, throwing it away--like drugs, sex. I've seen kids about 20, 25 years old, and they're over, more or less. They've done it, done the whole thing."

It comes down to wanton destruction of the very means of survival. Harvey remembers the Summer of Love, but he dwells longer on its backwash, when he started throwing people out of the commune where he lived because they were ignoring the basics of survival. If there's one thing Harvey respects as much as freedom, it's survival.

He recalls his childhood in Glasgow, the single room he shared with his brother and parents and which his father barricaded with tin sheeting and broken glass against

"I didn't want to start just another rock band..."



the onslaught of rats. Not that he's painting a picture of himself as a tragic urchin. It wasn't all that colorful, and he says he was happy. The only way to escape the confines of the tough neighborhood was to join the army or become a gangster, but Harvey did it his own way, running through 35 jobs before settling down to music. He remembers that number, 35, as if it were a proud battle record.

Treecutter, plasterer, tombstone maker, waiter, laborer, sailor, plumber's mate, fruit porter, circus hand (he worked the Dodge-Ems, a real-life version of Ringo and Essex in *That'll Be the Day*). Not a thought to music, though he'd taken up guitar when he was about 16. It was at the fruit market that the first revelation came, from an old collector who initiated him into the mystique of Jelly Roll Morton. "The first thing I liked about him," says Harvey, "was his name--Jelly Roll Morton and his Red Hot Peppers. It was magic, you know. And he had photographs of these guys in straight shirts and arrow bands and cigars. That was out of this world." At the same time Harvey discovered Big Bill Broonzy and Muddy Waters, then got a trumpet and joined a jazz band. All of which was preliminary to the true revolution.

"The big difference, the big thing," he says reverently, "was the electric guitar. I'm pretty sure there's been nothing since then that had as big an impact. The first thing was that picture of Elvis, and these guys standing around with these guitars with all these plugs and things. That was the one. That was really the one. And I don't think there's been anything like that since...I mean it was an answer. To me it was anyway...the haircut, everything. What else could a young man be?"

CURL UP TONIGHT WITH A GOOD BOOKER



"Evergreen."
Booker T's finest achievement.
On Epic Records  and Tapes

"It seemed we could have gone on for



Young Harvey's rock 'n' roll niche came along presently, following more of the jazz band and then a skiffle group. After winning a newspaper talent contest in Glasgow, Harvey formed the Big Soul Band. That was in the quiet dawn of the '60's, before the blues boom, and Harvey says there's conjecture over whether the BSB, with its treatment of Bo Diddley and Muddy Waters tunes, was the only one of its kind in Britain at that point. Harvey thinks it was. In any case, it became something of an institution, though hardly at the monumental commercial level on which bands operate today. "We made a couple of records and stuff," Harvey recalls, "but we weren't trying to be famous. The machine hadn't really started then. Maybe it had in a way, but we never consciously thought of selling us to a wide public or being commercial. It was only just a thing. We were a road band. We were on the road. That was what we done for a living. It could have been stretched for hundreds of years in the future, just doing another one-night stand... Didn't really get a lot of money, but we kept alive, and it was still better than working in the fruit market."

The Big Soul Band split up in 1966 and was followed by a couple of episodes which were to provide Harvey's '70's rock 'n' roll show with much of its substance and flavor. The first was a stint as guitarist in a nightclub dance band, where he'd occasionally get to clip on the cufflinks and do an upfront number, singing things like "I Left My Heart in San Francisco." Then in '68 he landed a job in the band of the London production of *Hair*. That lasted five years, during which time Harvey picked up some know-how in areas other than music.

"I learned a lot from Americans in *Hair*, when it started," he says. "Watching these people was different, because when they said a rehearsal at ten, it meant ten, didn't mean five minutes past ten... There was a professionalism. They could be feaky, they could get stoned, stay out late. Nevertheless the act and the show was a legend. It meant a lot to me personally working with people like that. I felt at home, I felt a belonging there."

Professionalism is another of Harvey's prime virtues, and accordingly he's picked up several

major influences usually untouched by rock 'n' rollers. "There's nothing I like better than to see a real pro, at anything," he says. "Fred Astaire meant a lot, for some strange reason. He was always show-business, but good."

So with the rough-and-tumble heritage of rock 'n' roll R&B, with the inborn, hardnosed fighting spirit that survives from the Glasgow

band," he says, "I reckoned I didn't really want to form another rock 'n' roll group, because, well, that's exactly what the world needed, another rock 'n' roll band. So what was in mind was some kind of travelling revue if you like, that could develop and have space for improvisation, and without being spectacular be simple, but be street-cheap."

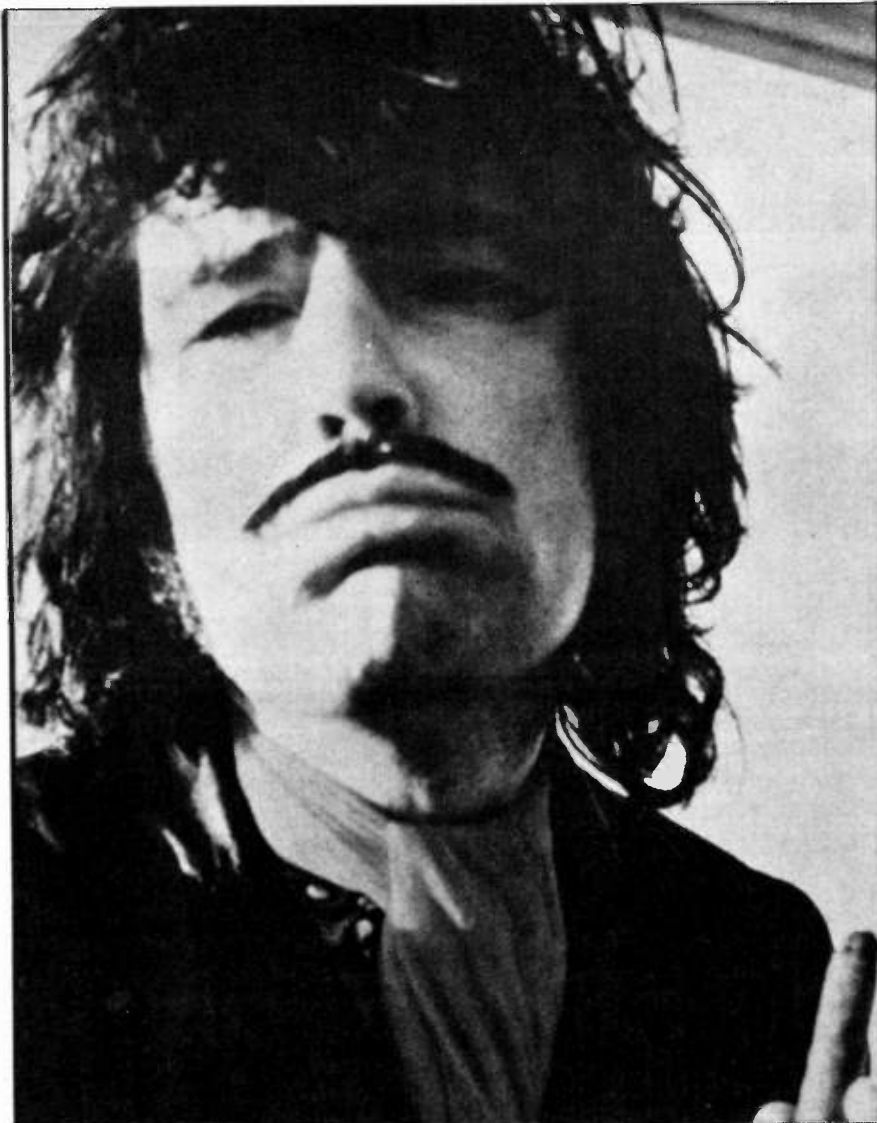
Harvey had been writing songs all along, though he failed to make much of a dent in the publishing establishment. "Although I had some published," he recalls with a half-smile, "everybody told me they were uncommercial. Like publishers used to say, 'Well, after all, who can I get to do them? They're not actually pop songs. Can't you pep them up a little bit, can't you add a hook phrase?... I wasn't consciously trying to be clever or make social comment or anything. It was only a case of writing a song, and they just came out like that. I'd try and make them simple, as opposed to being complicated. I always reckoned that it would be better if it was simple.'"

In '72 Harvey journeyed home to Glasgow from his homebase in London to check out a band called Tear Gas. "They were loud and sort of laid back and heavy," he says, "but they were introverted onstage and extroverted offstage. So we spoke about it, and they needed me and I needed them. Cause they really didn't know very much about what it was about. And I needed their enthusiasm and balls and togetherness... Zal the guitar player was a natural."

Zal Cleminson is Harvey's perfect foil onstage, though he in no way comes off as secondary. As Harvey puts it, "He's like the comical sidekick. Or maybe I'm the comical sidekick." Cleminson's is an elastic face coated in smooth clown makeup, like a frizzy-haired

Joker, and he'll contort and stretch the features into ludicrous grins which are interrupted by his flickering tongue. Truly comical, but a bit disquieting as well--like, if that cute little poltergeist can knock things off the shelf, well then it could do some nasties if it wanted to, right?

"He developed that himself," says Harvey. "That was always there. I just drew everybody out, sent them up a bit. At first I used to have a little go at him onstage. Sometimes he has a little go at me." Credit keyboardist Hugh McKenna



"I think rock & roll is show business first. I respect guys like Fred Astaire, the Marx Brothers, Maurice Chevalier."

childhood, complete with stances, gestures, poses, attitudes and expressions picked up on 35 ordinary workingman's jobs, all seasoned with the salt of the earth, the Sensational Alex Harvey Band features a stylistic breadth in music and presentation that few competitors can touch. The influences come from every area--the nightclub crooning, the demanding, enriching *Hair* engagement, the nomadic fairs, the road-band circuit, everywhere. And that's the way he designed it from the beginning.

"When the opportunity came to form a

hundreds of years doing one-nighters."

JANUARY '75: PHONOGRAPH RECORD



with much of the sophistication, variety and humor of the band's music. "Hugh, he's the man," Harvey affirms. "Him and I work most of the music...He's got the theory and he knows what chords he's playing and he knows how to extend and work out a harmonic structure and he can play really good cocktail lounge piano or boogie or jazz." On pouty, baby-faced bassist Chris Glen:

"Chris is an up-and-coming rock 'n' roll star. And then Ted (Hugh's cousin) gives it the anchor."

Thus armed and trained, the Sensational Alex Harvey Band sallies forth to do battle. An apt image, because the show is a violent one. Not overtly, like Bender and Hunter dragging each other around the stage, but not stylized inflated into harmless balloon shapes a la Alice Cooper. It's in the music, first of all, a rough raw sound which Hugh regularly snatches from the brink of heavy-metal. Harvey's approach is too exaggerated to really threaten, but too vivid and real to ignore. The tradition is that of the two Screamins--Jay Hawkins and Lord Sutch--in which the performer, through aggressiveness and complete possession, obliterates the line between real and pretend, between stagecraft and actual insanity. It's confusing, yet gripping, ambiguous but complete and satisfying. "I like being on the thin edge between total madness and organization," says Harvey.

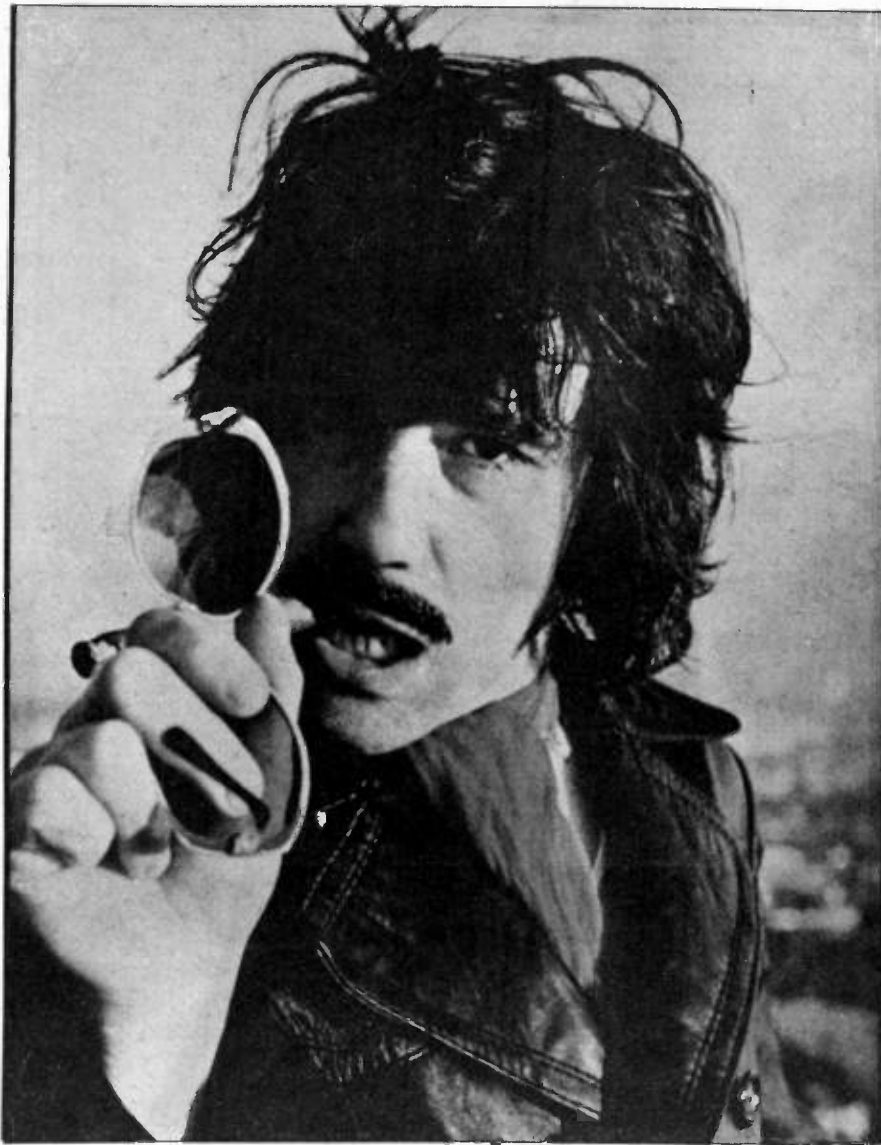
He calls it simply a 1974 song-and-dance act, yet it inevitably comes off as something of a morality play as well. The show is often surreal, difficult to follow, but there emerges, beyond Harvey's unadorned, solid presence (which suggests sailor, lion tamer, master of ceremonies) beyond the more defined roles (paperback

detective, leather-jacketed, graffiti-scrawling, framed prisoner) and in paradoxical contrast to the blazing cynicism he projects, a clear and present appeal to sanity, to escape from repression, and yes, to respect for freedom. His warning: "Don't piss in the water supply."

It's rock 'n' roll as national anthem, but the nation is undefined, perhaps only imaginary; still, Harvey acts the patriot right down to the last shot, and unlike Nathan Hale, he has many lives to give--one each time he takes the stage. It

could be that the frustrations unleashed during the show are the throes of the sleeper in the grip of the Impossible Dream. That's the name of the band's second album, and besides boasting the group's eclecticism, it poses the dilemma on which the thrust and energy of the show ultimately depend. The Dream is a clue, an inspirational hymn, a motivating illusion. Free-

Whiskey, and they must have seen a lot of acts. So they're not going to go out and get excited easily about anything. Not blasé, but sophisticated I suppose. Well if they're not sophisticated, who is sophisticated, as far as a rock 'n' roll band goes, or any entertainment period? This is it, isn't it? Well, it says so on the mountain--there's 'HOLLYWOOD.' "



"I like being on the thin edge between organization and total madness..."

dom without abuse of freedom.

Harvey and his two-year-old band have recently picked up a strong following in England, going the classic route of a small, tight cult ("the kind of kids that say, 'We've discovered something' ") on to a more general audience (specifically, through some festival stealing sets at Reading and Buxton). Harvey is pleased, so far, with the American tour, and especially at the reception in Showbiz City.

"It's not hard," he says, "to figure out that this is Hollywood, and the Whiskey's the

Hollywood. Fred Astaire. Entertainment. Song-and dance.

Those are the reference points to which he constantly returns, refusing to admit, much less explain, any heavy political or philosophical points: "It's basically only entertainment...I think rock 'n' roll is show business. It's show business first, and rock 'n' roll, that's a part of it. Same as show business contains vaudeville and it contains cabaret and it contains military marches if you like, but it's still show business."

It's in the Hollywood mythology that he finds the reconciliation of entertainment and message. "The Marx Brothers," he points out, came out of America, which was quite a straight environment, and they did things that disrupted the whole government reality--like the one where they're going through customs and everybody impersonates Maurice Chevalier, and Harpo takes the stamp and stamps the guy's head! That said a lot to me...Maybe they didn't deliberately try and be like that, but they were and Groucho is. He's a total anarchist. He's just beautiful...

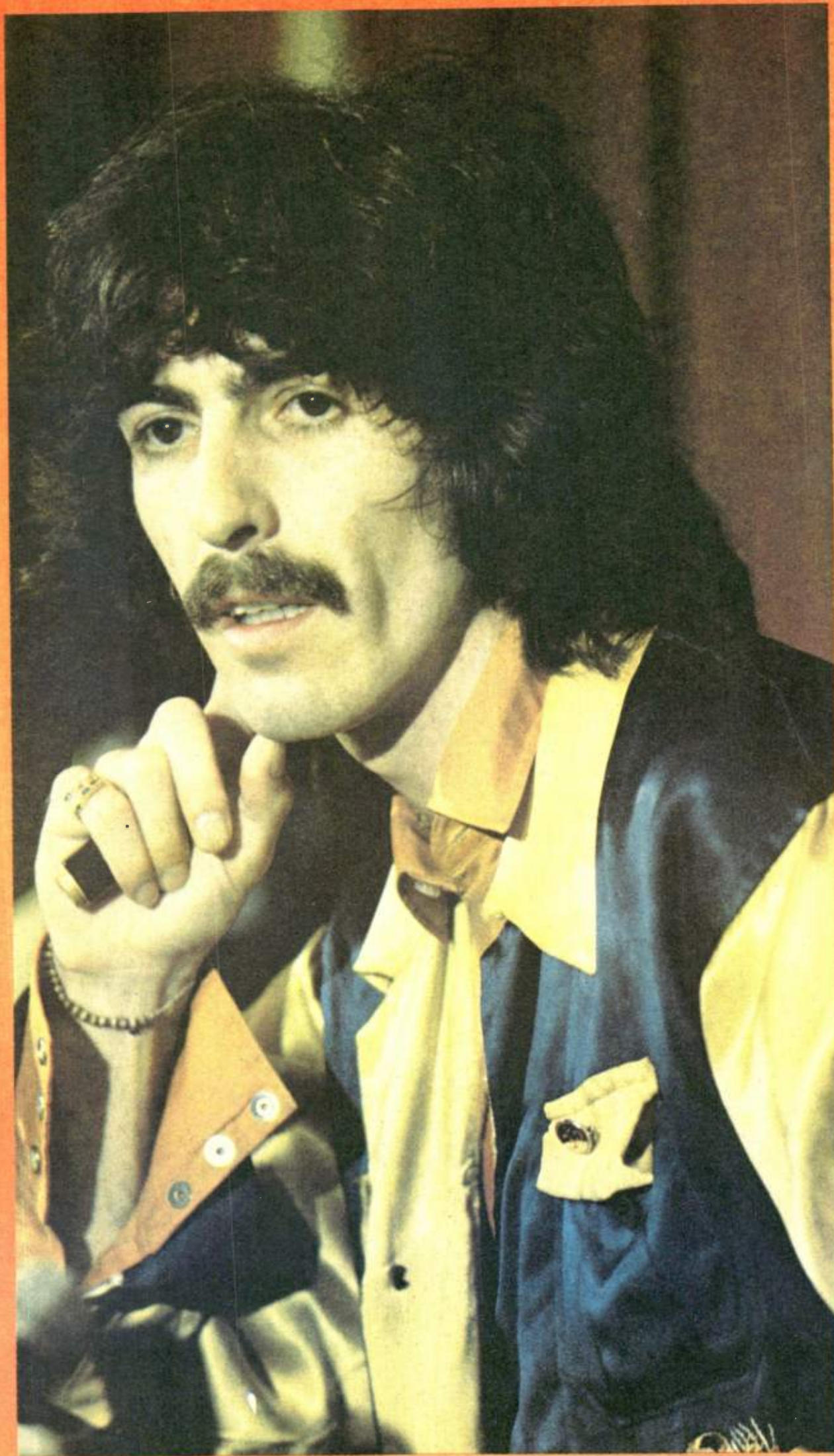
"I see myself not being so much a musician perse as a director, and we're making a movie every night, and playing the soundtrack. There's no cameras or film, but that's incidental...I love that, 'Good Evening, folks, welcome to the

show.' It's always the same. That's what's good about it. It's like these old musicals. The best plot you could ever have is boy meets girl, and they don't know until the final reel, and they run on and save the show in the last act. The show's going to die a death and they say, 'Who can do it?'"

Mickey Rooney and Judy Garland, right? "Of course! Who else?"

Well, now that it's 1975, maybe Alex Harvey.

PRM REVIEWS



DARK HORSE
George Harrison
Apple SMAS 3418

By COLMAN ANDREWS

The thing I've always liked about George Harrison's LPs is that they couldn't hurt a fly. They are probably, as a class of things, the most benign, fraternal little wheels of black vinyl ever minted.

But there's something wrong with George Harrison's LPs, despite (or beyond) this: of all ridiculous, unlikely things, after we've all heard George Harrison so very much for so very long—as a Beatle, as a session man, as George Harrison—it turns out that it's difficult to tell who he is. He can write and sing and even play in so many different styles, with so many different sensitivities, from so many different points of view (this is a tribute to him as a protean musical creator) that—unless he's parodying himself, as in this album's "It Is 'He' (Jai Sri Krishna)"—it is simply not always possible to know for sure that it is *he*.

His guitar style is familiar of course—his descending figures, his frailing, those certain progressions we remember even from the latter days of the Fab Four. But he can (and does) sing like half a dozen different pop idols, and he can (and does) create musical environments that could be duplicated by almost anyone.

Dark Horse's opening track, for instance is an instrumental called "Hari's on Tour (Express)." Now, it's a nice little song with a funky break or two and not a whole lot of melodic sophistication. And it's played by Harrison with Tom Scott and his L.A. Express, including Roger Kellaway on piano, Robben Ford on guitar, John Guerin on drums, and Max Bennett on bass. (Remember when you used to play behind Helen Carr, Max?) And it's a session band instrumental like every other session band instrumental you've ever heard. It's the kind of "rock-and-roll" that they're always playing at "discotheques" or on the car radio in mediocre films that have to have a brief "rock-and-roll" scene. "Simply Shady," with the same band, has Lennonesque lyrics and is sung with Lennonesque intonation.

"So Sad," with Ringo and Jim Keltner on drums, Nicky Hopkins on piano and Willie Weeks on bass, lacks only the elaborateness of George Martin's production (and the presence of a couple of other guys) to be a perfectly acceptable Beatles song.

"Bye Bye, Love" almost works in Harrison's rather gentle recasting of both its verses and its mood. It's not as good (or as thoroughly recast) as John Cale and Company doing "Heartbreak Hotel," of course, but then what *is* these days?

"Maya Love" is not about a Mexican romance. "Maya Love" instead, "is like a stream/Flowing through this cosmic dream." Get it? It sounds like it's going to be a Stones song at first. No such luck.

"Ding Dong, Ding Dong" is a spirited, repitious, clanking and clunking affair, involving people like Alvin Lee, Gary Wright, and Klaus Voormann (sic). If the idea of a grown man standing before a microphone in front of hundreds of thousands of dollars worth of recording equipment singing "Ding

NEIL PRESTON

Dong; Ding Dong" over and over again doesn't bother you, then neither will lines like "Yesterday, today was tomorrow/and tomorrow, today will be yesterday."

The best track on the album is "Dark Horse," obviously a sort of anthem for Harrison (since it's not only the name of this LP, but also of his new record label), and thus apparently a little more carefully written. The lovely flute lines by Tom Scott, Jim Horn and Chuck Findley are particularly attractive, and Harrison proves that, as a singer, he can genuinely swing when he wants to (even though he does start off phrasing like the Dylan of about four years ago and finish off sounding very much indeed like the current Cocker.)

"Far East Man" is another enjoyable track if you don't listen to the words too closely, with some calm Philadelphia Sound harmonies and a healthy shot of Tom Scott's burred Junior Walker lines in the background.

7-TEASE
Donovan
Epic PE 33245

By BOBBY ABRAMS

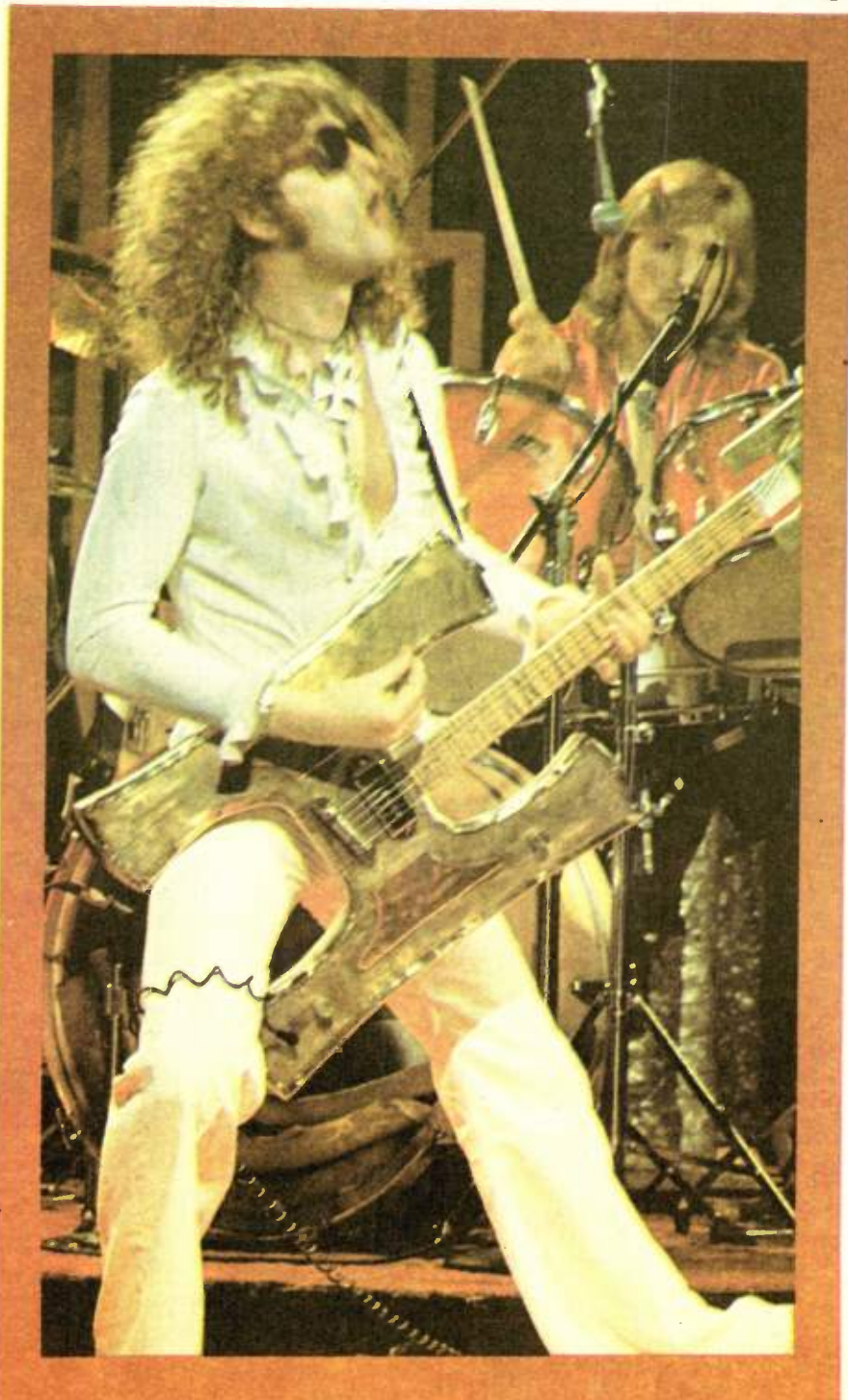
Break open a bottle of wine, to celebrate the return of an old friend--Donovan's back. Not that he was ever really gone; in the last few years, he's released two solid albums, *Cosmic Wheels* and *Essence to Essence*. It's just that he toned down his image a bit, adopted a low profile and dropped out of the media consciousness. In being so laid back, plus the fact that only minimal promotion was given the latter albums, and the attendant lack of a single, people became

convinced that the true flower child of the '60s had finally shot his last wad of credibility. But folks, this man has no shame, and I for one, am glad. He's back out front, trying to re-establish his commercial visibility and, from the grooves on this album, I'm sure he'll succeed.

Donovan first appeared as a wandering troubadour, the English Bob Dylan. As such, it was a complete misperception and yet, such a comparison was so easy in those days. After all, they both played guitars and wrote folk songs didn't they? And yet on re-listening there is none of the hardness of Dylan in this man, none of the rampant nihilism, the raging hostility. Again, they both represented the post-Beatnik existentialism of the sixties, yet each was destined to take this basic philosophical outlook and go in completely opposite directions. Too, both were called poets and here again, their poetic consciousness is so totally different, it is hard in retrospect to see how we confused them. Dylan specialized in the completely abstract, the hip phrase, the Blakeian metaphysical. Donovan preferred the lush romanticism of a Coleridge, a Keats or Yeats if you will. Perhaps it was this lushness that got him into trouble. Dylan was the prophet of hard amphetamine consciousness (as represented in "Subterranean Homesick Blues") a stance long since abandoned, where Donovan has always been the gentle dope smoker, a sentiment he is still pushing in the seventies, where such stances are both superfluous and meaningless. A very lovely lady once put Donovan in perspective for me, in the post-"Mellow Yellow" period. She simply said, "He's the best friend one could have to chase the loneliness of a rainy day." In that context, his beautiful lyricism holds up

(continued on p. 38)

"The bottom line for Mott is their inventive power and chord riffing."



YORAM KAHANA

Take a close look folks, it's Donovan...The years have been kind to him, and so has Bobby Abrams.

MOTT THE HOOPLE LIVE
Mott the Hoople
Columbia PC 33282

By KEN BARNES

If you haven't heard already, this album's a scorcher. Offhand I can't think of a live album that tops Mott's 50-minute opus here, but I'm not trying too hard. I'm still a little dizzy from the closing medley masterpiece.

The bottom line for Mott, it seems to me, is in the inventive power of the chord riffing. Theirs are the best in the field since the Who--more invigorating and less monolithic than the metal mesmerizers, more stunning than the Stones, more direct and basic than the idiosyncratic intricacies of a Blue Oyster Cult. Sometimes the surging power of Mott's riffs has been chopped and channelled on a studio recording, but never in person. *Mott the Hoople Live* fortunately captures the raging, relentless power. Add the piquant presence of Ian Hunter, the most expressive non-singer around, and you've got an unbeatable band.

Not that the album's perfect--what live album could be? Side one (recorded in New York) is merely great. "Sucker" is dragged out a bit, "Walking with a Mountain" suffers from slight instrumental excess (Ariel Bender's lead breaks throughout, in fact, aren't all that impressive); and "Rest in Peace" (the flip side of "Golden Age of Rock & Roll" and almost three minutes shorter there), while pretty, is a slow six minutes. But "All the Way From Memphis," sloppy, loud, down and dirty, improves on the original, and "All the Young Dudes" remains a monumental creation, both stately and rocking (a rare combination).

Side two (from London) is transcendent. "Sweet Angeline" is yet another impossibly dynamic riff-rock, and a showcase for

Hunter. Sure, the talking midsection could get tiresome, but it's amusing, too, and just after it, right before they start raving again, there's a neat bit of effete, Del Shannon-style piano (great sense of humor Mott have, too). "Rose" (flip side of "Honolulu Boogie") has always been a personal favorite, and is the set's melodic highlight. Hunter's written some perfectly lovely slow numbers ("Trudi's Song" and especially "Waterlow" from *Wildlife* stand out), and while they're hardly likely to feature that side of the band live, "Rose" is a welcome inclusion and a nice breather.

You need one too, because the following medley is the most incandescent 16 minutes of rock & roll this year, and without a doubt Mott the Hoople's pinnacle. "Jerkin' Crocus" leads the charge at breakneck velocity; a great song, jolting ultimately into a snatch of the group's old instrumental showcase, "You Really Got Me." After hearing "Can't Get Enough" for three months, "One of the Boys" is a *deja vu* shock of sorts, but again a terrific rocker. "Rock & Roll Queen" yet another amazing riff. It's followed by a short stretch of "Get Back," with Hunter displaying an impressive non-mastery of the lyrics, and a snippet of "Whole Lotta Shakin' Goin' On" on a "Peter Gunn" foundation. They keep this one short, thankfully--nothing's more tedious-inducing than a 50's rocker revved up in a sledgehammer 70's style (Mott's previous "Keep-a Knockin'" being no exceptions. A dash of Who-like pyrotechnics leads into "Violence," with an intro straight out of get this--Cat Stevens' "Matthew & Son." The juxtaposition of Hunter's fey vocal with the track's inchoate instrumental frenzy makes it a frighteningly powerful song. Fittingly enough, Mott close with a final bow to the original power riff-rock, "You Really Got Me."

It leaves you breathless. Nothing more to say.

REVIEWS

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remarkably well, even if, at the time, he seemed to be a bit too saccharine for the violent changes of the late sixties.

7-Tease is a comeback album, and as such, it is heavily laden with nostalgia. But its parallels are the work of such artists as Paul Anka and Neil Sedaka, forced by a lack of currency to modify their experiments and return to what they do best. Too, it is a loosely woven autobiographical tale of wandering through the sixties into now, and as such, it certainly has a bit more metaphysical validity, as well as a higher listenability quotient than a certain super-group's rock opera on a similar theme.

Side one opens with "Rock and Roll Soulier" which is a great uptempo cut, a real rocker. It should be. Though it ostensibly appears to be an updated arrangement of the riff he used in "To Susan on the West Coast Waiting," it opens with about ten seconds of harmonic overtones *a la* the Byrds' "I'd Feel a Whole Lot Better," and suddenly it shifts into the most amazing cop in years—he has actually based this song on John Fred and the Playboys' "Judy in Disguise." And they used to say this man wasn't hip—I can't think of a hipper move successfully pulled off by anybody recently.

The back photo on the *Barabajagal* album features Donovan in a mohair sweater, posed in the style of the great crooners: Bing Crosby, Perry Como, Andy Williams—all great sweater men themselves. There is a side of Donovan that has always seemed rooted in this tradition and "Your Broken Heart" is typical—so typical though, that it's perfect. This is the Neil Young sound that Neil's never quite attained and never will. It's no coincidence, as the string arrangements are by David Briggs, who has worked extensively with Young. Currently, ragtime as typified by Scott Joplin is the rage. There were other forms such as the big band variety, or the boogie woogie stepchild. "Salvation Stomp" is a great version of what I'm talking about and I wouldn't be surprised if this is the next single. It has the good time feeling of any great hit by Cab Calloway or the Red Onion Jazz Band. A tune based in a similar time period is "The Ordinary Family" which is taken from the English vaudeville tradition. It has great ironies, including its production. Side one closes with an English readymade, "Sadness" which is a little too lush for repeated listenings, but quite enjoyable the first time round.

Repetition seems to be a trademark of Donovan's career, and to prove it, side two seems to be laid out in a similar manner as the obverse side. The opening cut, "Moon Rok" is a song that leaves me marvelling at its roots. Everything of the last twenty years is here. The basic riff is from a somewhat obscure Slim Harpo tune, "Shake Your Hips." The vocal style and phrasing is typical derivative Elvis or Jerry Lee Lewis. Most amazing, especially considering the artist in question, is that the melodic structure of the song comes from the recent hit by Abba, "Waterloo," which is itself copped from a power-laden Uriah Heep standard, "Easy Living." Great!

Following this is one of the most beautiful songs I've ever heard, "Love of My Life" which I can only imagine is written for his lovely wife Linda. "The Voice of Protest" is a nothing special song, but the chorus is phrased *a la* Buffy Sainte-Marie, which is far out, since she is doing backup vocals. It also features some great harp work by Donovan, the first harp stuff we've had from him in far too long. Next is another tribute to the past in "How Silly" which features a style reminiscent of Lambert, Hendricks and Ross. Nice, light fifties MOR. "The Great Song of the Sky" is destined to become a campfire classic and the album ends with some typical throwaway stuff, "The Quest."

This album is so dynamic, so exciting, so nearly perfect that anyone who attempts to merely dismiss it as mundane Donovan will immediately expose himself as a musical illiterate. More than that, I just can't conceive of someone not liking this album. Donovan is back, fully again in our consciousness, and as he has matured as an artist, hopefully, so have we as an audience.



MILES OF AISLES
Joni Mitchell
Asylum

By TOM NOLAN

The two most annoying things (to me) about Joni Mitchell in the early years of her career were her songs, which often seemed impersonal, shallow and written by formula (remember that oft-played opus about the surly New York cabbie?); and her voice, which leapt all over the place in a shrill demonstration of technique. ("Congratulations to Joni Mitchell upon her conquest of the octave," Richard Goldstein wrote sarcastically of her first album.) Voice and songs! Two big strikes against a budding singer-songwriter. It's no wonder many checked out after her second or third record and refused to listen anymore despite rumors of artistic maturity and increased sophistication.

This two-record live album, then, is an ideal introduction to this artist and her "recent" work: that body of songs in which Mitchell has found her proper subject matter, came into power as an artist and deservedly increased her audience to star proportions. All but two or three of these selections are about men and women, their games, roles cynicisms and optimisms, despairs and new beginnings. When she strays from the country of the heart, as in "Real Good For Free" and "Woodstock," she wanders toward an Aquarian Age-*Redbook Magazine* soporific; but when she charts the geometry of emotion and makes pictures of full-dimensional human beings, she's as effective, intelligent and entertaining a writer as anyone around.

These are marvelous short stories she creates; her touch is sure and literate. Listen, for instance, to the artful and economical beginning of "Peoples' Parties"; how easily she sets a scene and draws one into it. The talent she always had for summoning and adapting situations—a commercial quality—has in recent years acquired a toughness of mind necessary if her work was to be elevated above the merely clever.

Mitchell's sound here is not at all jarring. The harsh, brittle attack present on much of her recorded work is replaced by a breathier, freeflowing approach. While she plays around with her voice, the result is not the undisciplined self-indulgence I was dreading, but soft, rhythmic and pleasantly blurred. The melodies and tempos are treated with a welcome lack of inhibition, and these songs so familiar to the audience seem to blend into a many-faceted suite. The effect is satisfying rather than monotonous, with much credit due the L.A. Express, who provide imaginative coloration for a variety of moods. Especially well served is "The Circle Game," pumped along by a catchy blues riff which salvages it from its dated past. Although apparently absent for almost two whole sides of this double album, their influence and memory seem to linger until their return.

Two new songs, "Jericho" and "Love or Money," round off this collection of previously released material and are fine enough to deserve more attentive studio versions.

Besides the very generous amount of music included here and the most agreeable manner in which it's performed, there is another factor making this the perfect record with which to become acquainted with Joni Mitchell: the opportunity it allows for her personality to show through. In contrast to the somewhat aloof impression that has accrued to her in her years of not granting interviews, there is much good humor here: in her pleasant handling of request-shouters; in her perfect Lily Tomlin waitress one-liner in the middle of "The Last Time I Saw Richard"; and in her acknowledgement of

Bob Dylan's hilarious alternate verse of "Big Yellow Taxi" by incorporating it into the text. In fact, in a year when the fashion is for performers to erect a cool space between themselves and the first row of seats, the good feelings emanating from this set are positively inspiring.

WAR BABIES
Daryl Hall/John Oates
Atlantic

By ALAN NIESTER

Can it not be steadfastly argued that an album produced by Todd Rundgren, with Todd Rundgren playing lead guitar, which contains songs written after a thorough scrutinization of the complete Rundgren songbook, is, in actual fact, a Todd Rundgren album, even if the names plastered across the front of said album erroneously credit the masterpiece to two relative unknowns? To my way of thinking, it certainly can.

Todd has a tighter grip on these plow-boys than Chesty (73 inch bazooms) Morgan's brassiere. And as if production, guitaration, and songwriting similarities weren't enough, Daryl Hall's vocals sound so much like Todd's (not exactly basso, if you will) that it's quite scary/neat. And listen to those *True Wizard* electronic effects on "War Baby Son of Zorro." And the way that "You're Much Too Soon" sounds like a speeded up "Hello, It's Me." Hell, you don't need no glamorous, ridiculously overpaid rock scribe like myself to tell you all this. One listen for yourself will make it all clear. *War Babies* is Todd's latest masterpiece.

Now, in all fairness, Hall and Oates are somewhat more than mere parasites sucking genius milk from T.R.'s scrawny chest. Daryl Hall is, in fact, a songwriter and lyricist of vivid imagination and commendable originality. Listen, if you will, to the totally warped saga of the guy in "I'm Watching You (A Mutant Romance)" who finds himself falling in love with a whore he sees standing in the doorway while he is patrolling the city of New York by means of a TV monitoring system, because she looks like a chick he used to want (obviously symbolic use of the word 'want', in case you didn't get it) in Jr. High. And Oates' finest contribution, "Can't Stop the Music (He Played It Much Too Long)", (they're as clever at titling songs as Dave Mason at his junked-up) sounds like a clever hybrid of Orpheus (great Boston band of the late sixties with whacko Rogers & Hammerstein chops) and the Average White Band.

But in the main, it's Rundgren's studio wizardry, nifty electronics and teenage pervasiveness that makes the album a near classic. As a matter of fact, *War Babies* is a more logical follow-up to *Todd* than *Utopia* is.

ALL THE GIRLS IN THE WORLD BEWARE!!
Grand Funk
Capitol SO-11356

By GREG SHAW

Meet the 1975 Grand Funk. If you liked the 1974 model, you're gonna love this one. The all-new features include an elaborate new cover motif depicting our heroes as musclemen supreme, a 1975 world tour both advertised and commemorated (depending on when you buy it) on the inner sleeve, and production by Jimmy Ienner, the current master at making a band sound more commercial without changing their sound.

Plus, all the features you adored in the old Grand Funk have been retained. The red lettering on black (where would a Grand Funk album be without that...), the famous three-cylinder, no-knock wall of sound, the boastful songs of Mark Farner, the punk tunes of Don Brewer, and the biggest hit of last year's model, that popular "oldies" flavor.

There is no "Locomotion" on this album. "Some Kind of Wonderful," the current single, turns out not to be the Drifters tune of the same title, and the other songs are all originals except for the Rascals-like "Look at Granny Run Run," written by Jerry Ragavoy but hardly what you'd call an oldie. And yet, this is Grand Funk's most back-to-the-roots album yet. Like any musicians worthy of the name, these boys idolize the music they grew

up with, specifically the Motown sound of 1962-1965, and this album contains more of that sound than any they've done since *Monumental Funk* (a 1974 bootleg composed of early demos including "Come See about Me," "Harlem Shuffle" and a 7-minute Motown medley—and a better sounding album than any they did with Terry Knight, I might add).

Grand Funk have retreated from the overweening braggadocio of "Walk Like a Man" and "We're an American Band." The only song of that sort here is the title number, which suffers from a weak melody and a lack of memorable riff. Farner's other brag song is "Runnin'" -- he's running through his life trying to taste as much as he can before he gets old. Good theme, fair execution, but marred by superfluous horns and a too-frantic pace.

But eliminating those, we're left with an album full of songs that present a Grand Funk with more taste, subtlety, genuine soulfulness and solid musicianship than they've ever displayed before. It's a strange kind of heavy metal soul they're singing; no soul record ever sounded quite like this, that's for sure. And yet the structure of the songs, the phrasing and vocal intonations, and most especially the subject matter, are pure early 60's Motown. You can hear it in "Some Kind of Wonderful," and even more so in the haunting "Memories," my choice for the next single. There are enough possible singles here, in fact, to keep them on the charts constantly through 1975. "Responsibility" is another strong contender; this would be a great song for J. Geils. And "Bad Time" is a real growler, reminds me of the Buckingham, like a 1965 punk group reflecting some English group's interpretation of a 1962 Arthur Alexander song or something. A great sound is all you can call it and nothing like what Grand Funk has been known for in the past.

The album's showpiece, stuck in the middle of the second side, is a 7:34 excursion called "Good & Evil," the intent of which seems to be to prove Grand Funk can equal the Stones at Satanic decadence. Which is ridiculous, of course. Four less-decadent men I've rarely met. What this cut actually proves is that they can put Brewer's voice through mixing-board gadgetry until it sounds like Jagger imitating Dr. John on "Dancing With Mr. D."

It succeeds as a mood piece, but adds nothing to the overall impact of the album, which rests in the group of short, tight, soulful songs that are bound to make Grand Funk more secure with record-buyers than ever before. If they chose to pursue this direction, I have a feeling they'll end up a lot bigger than Terry Knight ever envisioned.



THE LAMB LIES DOWN ON BROADWAY
Genesis
Atco SD 2-401

By MICHAEL DAVIS

Creativity can be a pretty frightening thing; it doesn't always mature in a linear, logical fashion. Sometimes a band will go for years, making competent music or even struggling to get that far and then suddenly, due to the right set of circumstances, something will click in place and they'll produce something that far surpasses even the best of their previous work. It's happened a number of times, a notable example being Mott the Hoople and Mott, and now it's happened with Genesis.

Coming up in the wake of Procul Harum, King Crimson, and Yes, Genesis never really impressed me as being a major band. Oh,

they were pleasant enough and I usually got a chuckle out of the occasional absurdist tidbits they'd throw in to balance out the pomposities, but their sense of restraint and their instrumental limitations kept me from really getting involved with their music.

The Lamb Lies Down On Broadway is a different story. I mean it tells a story that is really different for rock, kind of like Cocteau's *Orphee* or Fellini's *Satyricon* transported to New York City. The New York setting itself is different for Genesis, who have always used their native Britain as the stage for their fantasy tales; it would appear that the Big Apple really had an effect on these people.

Peter Gabriel's story line is laid out on the inside cover and it makes *Tommy* seem mundane by comparison. The main character is a street punk by the name of Rael, who sneaks around making a name for himself with Molotov cocktails and a spray gun. One morning, he alone notices a wall moving through Times Square mowing people down right and left and makes a vain attempt to flee. After being clobbered by the wall, Rael wakes up to find himself in a cocoon, then is attacked by a cage of stalagmites and stalactites which mysteriously disappears. He next encounters the Grand Parade of Lifeless Packaging where he finds his old croneys neatly packaged but he is allowed to escape.

And that's just side one; you won't believe the weird stuff that goes down on the other three sides. Of course, if you don't want to follow the story all the way through (and who wants to sit through all 95 minutes every time?) that's cool too because it's chopped up into individual songs, a minimum of five to a side. Why, even the occasional instrumentals function as effective mood pieces, particularly the free-form bizarre track, "The Waiting Room."

I guess what I'm trying to say is that for the first time in a long time, we've got a concept album that works on every possible level and I just may go off the edge and call it a masterpiece if I don't watch myself. Still, it's not for everybody—Genesis has never set fires in the pants of boogie brats and probably never will—but for fans of progressive rock, it's an absolute must. Or, as Peter Gabriel puts it, "It's only knock and knowall but I like it."



The psycho-suave Bryan Ferry relaxes at home.

COUNTRY LIFE
Roxy Music
Atlantic SD-36-106

By RON ROSS

Yuletide last, energy starved Britons accustomed to tacky displays of teen ostentation were wished a "Ferry Merry Christmas," as Bryan Ferry, Roxy Music's *ubermensch*, unveiled a definitely anti-glitter (if distinctly glamorous) dapperness. Peerlessly pristine in a white dinner-jacket, Bryan appeared on the cover of *Melody Maker* surrounded by Playboy bunnies perched at a penthouse bar. He radiated the perfect poise of a man who has no need to gamble because he owns the casino. Ferry had shed his leopard skin flash and shut it away in the closet of his past. As recession devoured what was left of England's precarious social mythology, Ferry seemingly revived its most neatly pressed and tailored model.

While paragons of punk aggression such as Slade screamed toward a premature burn-out, Bryan Ferry remained cool to the thrill of it all. Like James Bond with two Tanqueray martinis under his alligator belt, Ferry figured if you try too hard, you lose control, and *Stranded*, Roxy's most accessible brainstorm yet, established them clearly as England's foremost futurismos. Ferry's subtle sangfroid had found a way to be palatable without becoming predictably pop.

His sophisticated satirical sensibility as expressed on two stunning solo albums provided a persuasive introduction to an attitude that had seemed (to Americans at least) to be far too starkly avant on Roxy's own Warner offerings. Flirting with funk and funning with familiar Tin Pan Alley standards, *These Foolish Things* and *Another Time*, *Another Place* supplied clues to what had been a tantalizing, but almost completely opaque, image. With Eno's departure from Roxy and the international acceptance of his solo work, Bryan seemed no longer obsessed with obscurity for its own sake. His Saint-like style took on a shock value all its own. With *Stranded*, time honored musical values like melody, energy, arrangement and production began to take precedence over mere strangeness, a previous Roxy trademark too easily dismissed for its overkill.

Where they had formerly been scorned as the last in a line of dubious glam-rockers, Roxy was accorded a far more encouraging

reception on their second, all too brief American tour. Now backed by a heavy promotional commitment from their new American label Atlantic, Roxy built a democratic base of support in the States. Their fans ranged from trend-touting teens to acid-lace Dead freaks, who thought Roxy psychedelic rather than copasetically cosmopolitan. Possessing a finesse all too rare, these elegant aural electricians are in fact both piercingly visceral and urbanely intellectual, thus binding disparate elements of the rock audience to transcend their dryness and sonic density. Their fourth album *Country Life* confirms their reputation as startling image-makers, while it reveals a readiness to rock that will create a generation of Roxy-youth.

While *These Foolish Things* had been a collage of carefully selected covers, with no original Ferry tunes, Bryan had intended to include an entire side of his own material on *Another Time*, *Another Place*. The pressures of a tight recording schedule prevented this, however, so *Country Life* includes Roxy's most straightforward tracks ever in line with Bryan's easily grasped solo approach. One of these, the British hit single, "All I Want is You," is Roxy's most emotionally satisfying song to date. With an uplifting melody that recalls the early Beatles in full flight, the lyrics are those of a love song:

Don't want to hear
What's going on
I don't care what's new
Don't want to know
About anything
'Cos all I want is you.

Beneath the trite romanticism there lies a literate intensity:

Don't want to know
About one-night stands
Cut-price souvenirs
All I want is
The real thing
And a night that lasts for years.

Ferry may not be sexually abusing inflatable dummies any longer, but he's still seeking truth amidst the glut of banality. Phil Manzanera's sharp guitar is a delight, and Paul Thompson's drumming is steadfast and remarkably sturdy under the wall of "treated" sound.

"The Thrill of it All" is butt-bruising hard rock building to a frenzy over Thompson's savage percussion. The jangly undercurrent of violence that made listening to Roxy's first album an uncomfortable experience for many has returned in a form as direct as the Stones' "Live With Me." A footstomper that will seduce even those immune to Roxy's more introspective experiments, "The Thrill of It All," like all great seventies rock and roll, is amazingly mannered and yet breathtakingly assertive. The track dramatizes the exhilarating chaos of a drunken binge before the black-out.

Andy Mackay, whose solo album of this past summer was a pleasant set of saxophonics, has co-written two tunes with Ferry for *Country Life*. "Bitter-Sweet" has much of the funereal, intentionally oppressive atmosphere of "Song For Europe" from *Stranded*. Solemn, like one of the better realized numbers from Lou Reed's *Berlin*, "Bitter-Sweet" actually breaks into a German lyric at its finale, a dense orchestrated denouement a la Wagner. While the rhythm section seems deliberately languid, Manzanera's guitar at times becomes almost unbearably drilling as Ferry projects the pain of the alienated lover. "Three and Nine" is a much smaller-scale Ferry/Mackay collaboration, with an odd little melody and a title that refers to the old price of a movie ticket in England. Ferry's first rock dreams were born from countless afternoons spent with Dean and Brando in provincial bijoux.

You might remember
How it used to be
3 and 9 could show you
Any fantasy
Parti-coloured pictures
Now and then 3D
No cheap nostalgia
Conjured up by me.

The barrelhouse bluesiness of "If It Takes All Night" is countered by the somber religiosity of "Triptych," which closes with "If the sun's eclipse seems final/Surely he will rise again." Ferry conveys a *King and I* orientalism-on-Broadway with his harpsichord, as the band joins together for robust medieval churchy harmonies. "Casanova" is a hard hitting expose of "another-time loser" in bolero drag this time. Mechanical and inexorable, "Casanova" has a metallic quality that the most insatiable of guitar gluttons should appreciate.

"A Really Good Time" is the kind of blue romantic number on which Ferry's see-saw vocals excell. Similar to "Just Like You" on *Stranded*, "A Really Good Time" has a resigned "you got a lot of nerve" air that is moving despite its stylization. Like "mother of pearl" in an earlier Roxy classic, the girl in question here "never goes out much, but boy—when she does then you know."

"Prairie Rose" concludes *Country Life* with a lonestar explosion of go-go majesty. A Ferry/Manzanera co-composition, it's a driving roadrunner of a song that must inspire riots in performance. A long fade has "prairie rose" shouted hypnotically over a positively inspired melody and arrangement while the band sings with touching girl-group sentimentality, "hey hey-yay." It's regal and it's pop—nobody makes 'em any better these days.

Although Ferry's recent solo concerts in England leave Roxy Music's future as a group somewhat uncertain, the band's fourth album is far better than any Ferry has produced under his exclusive supervision. Exploring musical textures far more complex than rock and roll has ever offered in the past, they are conceptually a "look through Who's Who" so far as pop attitudes and images are concerned. Roxy's instrumental assets are being exploited in increasingly ambitious fashion even as their work becomes more easily absorbed with fewer listenings.

Despite a passing resemblance vocally to Lou Reed, Ferry's sing-speak style is far more versatile and apparently much more self-aware. He is an original—one of the few new super-talents significantly of the '70s. Certainly Roxy will need more than improved airplay and rave reviews to rule in America as they have in England. They require concentration and a certain devotion to sink in. But for those bored with the boogie beguine and fed up with feckless fandangos, they're the New Way. That's what we say. *Stranded?* Do the Strand.

NEW IMPROVED SEVERIN BROWNE
Severin Browne
Motown M6-779S1

By GIL FERRER

On this album Severin Browne displays much the same facility with melody and lyric that is the trademark of his much revered brother Jackson. But more importantly, he accepts the differences.

While Jackson's impact rests on his lyrics, Severin's stronger point is melody. Each of his songs spins a web that the listener doesn't spot until he's become hooked. It's an excellent use of low key mood to achieve strong effect and it works well on "Love Notes From Denver" and "Beginning to Believe."

It would work well on "Love Song" also if it were not for the strangely self-indulgent lyrics. The hackneyed idea of a romantic merry-go-round(I love somebody who loves somebody else who loves somebody else all the way back to point A) isn't helped at all by his seeming use of rhyme for rhyme's sake. It's this same type of self-indulgence, however, that manages to work on "Cooking School," an unusual song with lyrics so dumb they're clever.

Browne's voice is bland, but at the same time has an appealing easiness that meshes well with his material. The result is an unprofound but pleasant album.

REVIEWS

I CAN HELP

Billy Swan
Monument KZ-33279

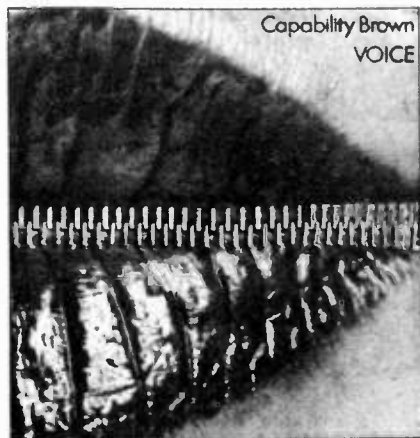
By BOBBY ABRAMS

Unless you have been totally asleep you know by now that the hottest artist coming out of Nashville this Christmas season is Billy Swan and his monster, billion-selling "I Can Help." You might even know that this Billy is no stranger to the business, having written another monster chart-topper, "Lover Please" which was the biggest hit old Clyde McPhatter ever had, and that was way back in the pre-historic early sixties. He also put in his dues as a road musician for Kris Kristofferson and produced a biggie for Tony Joe White, "Polk Salad Annie." So with credentials like these, it comes as no surprise that there is some dynamite music on his debut album, titled appropriately, *I Can Help*, and that the level of professional consistency is impressive.

The album opens with a hot, very hot version of Billy's first hit, "Lover Please." Most impressive on this cut is the saxophone arrangement by David Kielhofner, which just sizzles. Following this is an even better version of "I Can Help" than the one found on your AM dial. Towards the end of the cut there is a silence filled by a single note from Swan's organ that builds the song up to a searing climax and right before the end, he repeats this move, sorta like Otis Redding in "I've Been Loving You Too Long." We get two more rockers from the golden age of rock and roll and on these, Swan has cut the tempo to a tenth of the originals, making them sparse masterpieces in a most effective manner. Reggie Young plays some great guitar on "Don't Be Cruel" and I'm really knocked out by this version. The use of the Jordonaires, Presley's back-up vocal group, adds a nice touch of irony. Billy's vocals are just great, particularly in the difficult phrasing he has chosen for this song.

The rest of the album consists of hard core contemporary country music, all well done and to be enjoyed depending on one's capacity for the country experience. Two of these cuts are simply outstanding: "Ways of a Woman in Love" and "I'd Like to Work for You." This latter cut in particular would make a great tune for Roger McGuinn and I can only hope he picks up on it. "P.M.S.," which closes the album, is arranged brilliantly, if somewhat esoterically, but it works for me and I liked it.

I would suggest that if you don't already own this excellent album, you go out and buy it immediately and maybe even buy a copy for a friend—it certainly is the best debut album to come down the pike in ages and it may just be one of the best albums of 1974.



Capability Brown
VOICE

VOICE
Capability Brown
Passport PPSD-98004

By MICHAEL DAVIS

Capability Brown are well-named; they are capable at the things they do but manage to sound better than the sum of their different abilities. Rather than strive for a style that stresses originality, they have concentrated on creating music that sounds instantly familiar and then playing, singing, and

producing it with such clarity and conviction that they can't help but make a good first impression upon most people who hear them. Professionalism, I guess it's called, and it just may make the difference between success and failure for this British sextet.

Capability are a band that know their strong points and how to use them to make their limitations less noticeable. They don't have any heavyweight soloists so they emphasize tight ensemble playing from the guitars and keyboards on down to the funk-based rhythm section. They don't have an outstanding lyricist so their singers don't stress each word and a lyric sheet is not included. They do have excellent voices (hence, the album's title, perhaps?) and construct gorgeous harmonies, sort of The Association meets Yes, which are probably the best thing they've got going for them at this point.

Side one doesn't stop for a moment; it just rolls smoothly on by. "I Am and So Are You" and "Sad Am I" introduce the group's sound well; crispness in the instrumental passages, precision in the transitions, beauty in the vocal harmonies. "Midnight Cruiser," the one non-original in the set, is even more effective because the song's melody is simpler and its lyrics are actually about something you can get involved in—in this case, an aging cruiser. It's just begging to be a hit single. "Keep Death off the Road" closes the side with some spirited rock and roll featuring some BOC-like guitar harmonies.

Since "Keep Death" is stretched to nearly seven minutes with no bad effects, you'd figure that these guys would stand a chance of getting together side two, even though it's only one song with the dubious title of "Circumstances (In Love, Past Present, Future Meet)."

Sorry, no way. "Circumstances" is made up entirely of musical fragments stitched together like a patch-work quilt with little rhyme or reason and no discernible pattern. Some of the fragments by themselves are okay, especially the astounding a cappella section near the beginning, but the transitions are forced or nonexistent and the whole thing flounders under its own weight.

It seems strange that a band which displays so much discipline and professionalism on half an album could turn around and produce such a self-indulgent morass. Most likely, it was just a project that got away from them; here's hoping so anyway, and hoping for a two-sided triumph next time.

SILK TORPEDO

Pretty Things
Swan Song sd 8411

By ALAN BETROCK

The Pretty Things are back, and this time, with a new label and expected tour, can realistically be expected to enter the American top-40 album charts for the first time in their long and distinguished career.

Despite the long layoff since their transitional Warners album, *Freeway Madness*, the personnel has remained fairly constant with holdovers Skip Alan, Pete Tolson and John Povey joined by newcomers Gordon Edwards and Jack Green. Phil May (the only original Pretty Thing of the bunch) is still clearly the leader of the band, writing and singing just about all the songs here.

The Pretty's were always crafty innovators; that is, they took what was around and gave it new meaning and vitality. Their early R&B raunch always rivalled the Stones for pure aggressiveness, and later inspired a slew of American punk-rockers to go crazy a few years later. During the late sixties they paved the way for concept albums, thematic profundities, mime theatrics, etc. (Of course, their original conceptions were blown out of all proportion just a half-decade later). This was the period when they created their best works, *SF Sorrow* and *Parachute*, produced by Norman Smith.

Norman is back again as well here, and has given the Pretty's their most even sounding and nicely textured album in ages. The Pretty Things however are not on the top anymore—they are not so much innovators as incorporators, combining their stylistic signature with the penmanship of others. For instance side two's opener, "Come Home Momma" shows more than a vague similarity to Stewart and Faces' "It's All Over Now." "Bridge of God" is perhaps the most "English-sounding" track on the album, flowing beautifully like a melodic Yes, and "Is It Only Love" reminds one of a drifting

Stones' ballad. Yet they all work well here, providing us as well as the group with a point of reference for their various jumping off points.

"Singapore Silk Torpedo" drives along with a wonderfully energetic series of verse and chorus interplays, and "Joey" is side one's showpiece, emitting a lot of the old Pretty's magic. So what does it all add up to? A good solid album, and one which is fairly distinctive as well.

The album was recorded some time ago, and the Pretty's are reportedly anxious to come over here and tour properly, as well as getting back into the studio to record some fresher material. With the impending commercial success of this album, and the experience of a tour under their belt, it would seem only reasonable to expect the Pretty's to emerge with a more confidently adventurous album next time around. Until then, *Silk Torpedo* is a welcome homecoming for a band who had been away far too long.



CICERO PARK
Hot Chocolate
Big Tree BT 89503

By HAROLD BRONSON

As everyone knows, soul music is in now more than ever, but in the frenzy of cheerful accolades and mountainous monies embracing Barry White and Stevie Wonder, lay an ignored Hot Chocolate. Virtually unknown in America, in the Isles they've had a handful of hits under the tutelage of hitmaker producer Mickie Most, and make regular appearances on TV shows where they're garbed in gangster suits. Everybody loves them there, but here, if anyone's heard of them, it's more along the lines of, "They wrote that hit for Stories, 'Brother Louie,' didn't they?"

The story goes like this. Songwriters Brown and Wilson recorded a reggae version of John Lennon's "Give Peace a Chance." Lennon heard the record, liked it, and it became one of Apple's earliest releases. Like most of the label's artists, they were ignored. Mickie Most liked what he heard and signed them to his English label, Rak. He even had them compose a song for another of his acts, "Bet Yer Life I Do" for Herman's Hermits. It's been hits ever since for Hot Chocolate.

To my mind Hot Chocolate offer the freshest sound in soul music today. The Brown/Wilson writing team provide generally good songs that are more often than not superbly arranged. But it's the wedding of diverse styles and influences that create the group's winning sound.

While the singers aren't really strong, their West Indian affected vocals are completely new to Stateside (non-reggae) soul. The strings, somewhat akin to Gamble-Huff orchestration but more oriental sounding, are used differently throughout the album. On one song they actually provide the rhythm in the usual manner of a guitar, but mostly they hauntingly pierce the soul with sharp stings.

"Brother Louie" of course is a knockout. Utilizing wah-wah electric piano, a mandolin-like strummed guitar, bongos, and passionately crying strings, it strikes home a bit closer than Stories' rendition. The black/white dialogue—"I don't want no honkey in my family"/"I don't want no spook in my family"—makes the plea more real. "Cicero Park" is another near-masterpiece, sort of a soul equivalent to Simon and Garfunkel's "Scarborough Fair/Canticle." "Don't let it happen in your world," warns the lead singer, "life is dying out." The eerie strings swell over a bolero rhythm and unsettling bongos. A reedy flute and aching backing vocals insure the song's ominous mood.

As a whole, like the brooding Mafia-

dressed characters on the album cover, there's a tremendous sense of drama infusing the whole project. It's a hard album, imbued with the subdued aroma of cool jazz and the New York beat scene. It's tonne is the ghetto, housing projects, Harlem. Hot Chocolate "through chocolate covered eyes" have a vigorous grasp on reality with firm threads for an optimistic tomorrow. They could well be the future of soul music.

RELAYER

Yes
Atlantic SD 18122

By ED SCIACKY

Singer Jon Anderson and bass-player Chris Squire originally conceived Yes as a pop harmony group with an arranged backing. Yes' reputation and following came from a series of five albums of increasingly complex, decreasingly pop-like music: *Yes* ('69), *Time and a Word* ('70), *The Yes Album* ('71), *Fragile* (Jan. '72), and finally, *Close to the Edge* (Sept. '72), whose symphonic brilliance seemed to make it the ultimate pinnacle of Yes' musical achievement. *Yessongs* followed in May '73, a good three-record set of live performances, but more a reflection than a step in the progression.

Then in January '74, sixteen months after *Close to the Edge*, came *Tales From Topographic Oceans*, a difficult and complex four-sided opus based on the Shastric Scripture. Reviewers were instantly bewildered and, not having the time to figure it all out, severely critical.

Now a year has passed—enough time to investigate and digest the incredible multi-layered fabric of *Topographic*. (As with classical music, familiarity with the intricacies of Yes' complex structures leads to an understanding and appreciation that doesn't come from a casual half-listen.) *Topographic* is revered by Yes freaks as a masterpiece deprived of its rightful acclaim by its length and lack of immediate accessibility. *Time* recently called it "by far the most provocative album of the past year."

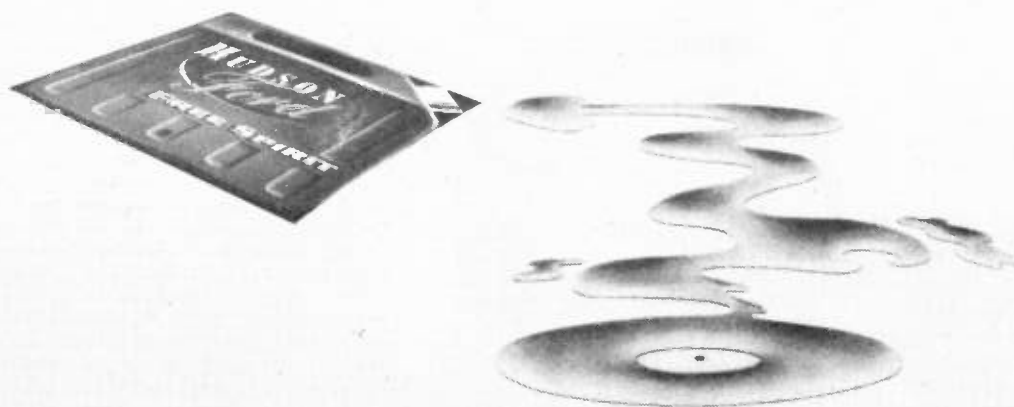
Since *Topographic*, Rick Wakeman, whose keyboard technology accounted for a sizable part of the development of Yes' sound, has journeyed on to a solo career. Replacing Rick is Swiss-born Patrick Moraz, fresh from Refugee. *Topographic's* difficulties and Wakeman's departure make the eighth Yes album a crucial one.

The format of *Relayer* is a return to that of *Close to the Edge*: one record, three tracks. Side one is "The Gates of Delirium," the album's major work and Yes' first about War. The first part deals with specific aspects of War: its motives, glory, evil, anguish, futility, and lastly, inevitability, in the most substantive of the album's sparse lyrics. The middle portion is an instrumental representation of a charge and battle, which resolves into a final part, and *Relayer's* finest moment: Jon Anderson's soaring vocal promise of a near and certain time of awakening and fulfillment ("Soon").

Side two opens with "Sound Chaser" (wherein we find a *Relayer*, Nature). It's jazzy and even funky (!) as it expounds and expands the basic ideas of Yes: freedom to explore, to chase sounds, the sound of lyrics as well as music; the challenge to delve into the layers of texture; rhythm changes; variations on a theme. Most striking are Steve Howe's wailing guitar solo and an eerie shouting effect—at once animalistic and machine-like—unexpected, but really an extension of an idea first explored in "Siberian Khatru" on *Close to the Edge*.

Side two closes with "To Be Over" a mellow and melodic piece that is *Relayer's* simplest and most accessible whole track. It is classic Yes in four easy parts: introduction, song, guitar variations on song, final resolution of song. Throughout, the pervasive optimism of Yes' lyrics prevails in a message of reassuring advice.

And *Relayer* is reassuring. The production, by Yes and near-member Eddie Offord (on his mobile equipment) is flawless and astounding. The role of Moraz' keyboards is naturally subdued from Wakeman's, but so is that of Jon Anderson's essential vocals. The resulting greater individual importance of Steve Howe's brilliant guitar work, Chris Squire's foreground bass lines and Alan White's powerful drumming, leads to the most unified blend of musicians Yes has yet produced, playing music that's melodic, cohesive and concise. *Relayer* is exactly the album Yes needed to survive the crises, convince skeptics and at the same time, further the enchantment of believers.



A SMASH FROM HUDSON-FORD
ON A&M RECORDS

JUKE BOX JURY

POP SINGLES FOR THE '70s

By GREG SHAW

The last few weeks of 1974 brought with them an encouraging number of first-rate singles. The current Top 40 contains only one record I really dislike--Prelude's "After the Goldrush"--and I can't remember how long it's been since I could honestly make such a statement. Only a few of those 40 hits are what I'd call great: Billy Swan, Three Degrees, McCartney, Kiki Dee. And some have become tedious: Chicago, Barry White, Harry Chapin, Bobby Vinton, Ringo. But they're all good pop recordings, and that's something in itself.

Personally, I'm getting more and more excited about the return of girl singers to radio-land. It's been about nine years since females played any significant role in pop, and while today's crop is somewhat older than the teenage heartthrobs of 1965, the important thing is that they are female, and sounding sexy as hell. Among my very favorite records currently are The Three Degrees' "When Will I See You Again" (Phila. Intl. 3550), a sheer classic; Kiki Dee's "I've Got the Music in Me" (Rocket 40293) which is also one of the hardest rockers in some time; Gloria Gaynor's "Never Can Say Goodbye" (MGM 14748); Anne Murray's "Day Tripper" (Capitol 4000), even if it's far from the best Beatle tune she might have chosen; Carol Douglas' "Doctor's Orders" (Midland Intl. 10113); and two new ones, the Carpenters' long-awaited return with "Please Mr. Postman" (A&M 1646) and Linda Ronstadt's brutal "You're No Good" (Capitol 3990), the best version of this song since the Swinging Blue Jeans (Imperial 66049). Throw in Helen Reddy, Carole King, Chaka Khan, Odia Coates, Pointer Sisters, Gladys Knight, Aretha, Shirley Brown, Fancy, Tina Turner, Maureen McGovern, Love Unlimited and Barbara Mason, and you can easily see that a full-scale invasion is at hand. More power to 'em, I say...

The next stage is bound to include more teen-oriented female records. One harbinger is the debut of Phil Spector's new label, his first since Philles folded in '67. Of his two initial releases, "Christmas" by Darlene Love (Warner-Spector 401) is a seasonal revival of this '64 classic, while "Baby, I Love You" (W-S 400) by Cher is a new Spector production of the Ronettes standard. Needless to say Cher is no match for Ronnie, but beyond that I have to report immense disappointment in this record. Cher's always been at her best with medium to fast-paced tunes and for good reason. Here, slowed to a snail's pace and drenched in the molasses of Spector's full treatment, she only proves herself less sensual than Roberta Flack, let alone Veronica. Or Andy Kim, for that matter. Definitely the wrong song for her, but then maybe they figured one bad marriage deserves another...

The real problem seems to be complacency, the same complacency that afflicts Ringo, Nilsson, Dylan, Harrison and so many of our superheroes. For these people, it's so easy to succeed that there's no reason to try. As for Spector, he should get back to the street and round up some trashy girls and shove 'em into a studio with no idea what's going on, and pick up where he left off before he went to Apple...

There are girls out there just waiting for a great producer. One such may be Mary Lou Nocerla, whose "A World of Love" (Top 40 02) could've been made in 1964 by Patty Duke or any would-be Lesley Gore. It's a good, Del Shannon-like song, dealing with the need to be free and find brotherhood with humanity...real teen dream stuff. And how about Cilla Black? "He Was a Writer" (EMI 4003) may be the comeback she's been waiting for. I wouldn't have believed she could sound this much like Olivia Newton-John.

It's been a month for old friends. Dave Edmunds' first release in 2 years is "Need a

Shot of Rhythm & Blues" (RCA 10118). An English standard since Johnny Kidd did it in 1963, this tune's appeal has always eluded me, but Dave gives it his usual electro-flash treatment, singing a bit like Roy Wood, but with a fuller, hotter production. Eric Burdon is back with "The Real Me," (Capitol 3997) a frantic rocker in which his singing is unfortunately overpowered by the band who are, however, sounding good. And hey, Soft Machine fans, how about Robert Wyatt's great remake of the Monkees' "I'm a Believer" (Virgin 56000)? Love that Cockney accent, real cute...



Don't miss this all-time classic...

Paul Jones, a favorite since he fronted Manfred Mann years ago, offers "Love Enough" (Private Stock 45,004), a pleasant MOR sort of ballad that will hopefully reestablish him. David Essex, who's been around nearly as long as Jones, has just released his first good record. "Gonna Make You a Star" (Columbia 3-10039), currently #1 in England, is the first real song David's tried to sink his teeth into, and it's about time. Like First Class's "Bobby Dazzler" the subject is the current British trend of revivifying forgotten popstars, and there are some good ironic lyrics if you listen.

Several other fine records from England this time, particularly Splinter's "Costafine Town" (Dark Horse 10002), the Bay City Rollers' "All of Me Loves All of You" (Bell 45,618) and two by less familiar names. Pilot makes a strong impression with the Move-influenced "Magic" (EMI 3992), with great harmonies and background "la-la-las". And Pat Codd gives us "Harry and the HulaHoops" (UK 49029), a plain but pretty melody that grows on you.



THE GIFT
Rosko
A&M 1640

By BOBBY ABRAMS

New York is the big apple and to be top jock in that market takes something special. Over the years, individuals, trying to be king of the mountain, have tried various schticks--Murray the K, with his submarine race watchers and African war chants, Cousin Bruce with his crazed amphetamine ravings, Jocko and his rocket machine. One who successfully made it to the top of the heap is Rosko Mercer, who leapt from just another

Back in America, there's plenty happening as well. Biggest surprise of the month is Barry Manilow's "Mandy" (Bell 45,613). And just when I'd written him off as a total waste. But then, he didn't write this one. Scott English did, and recorded a fine version of it four years ago under the title "Brandy" (Janus 171). Manilow's version is superior, however, mainly due to the melletron and orchestration which makes it sound like a second-rate Hollies. This record was co-produced by Ron Dante, and oddly enough Manilow has co-produced Dante's latest, an excellent song called "Midnight Show" (Bell 45,619). This one really deserves to be a hit.

I don't know whose idea it was to follow the Raspberries' "Hit Record" with "Party's Over" (Capitol 4001) but it was a bad one. Practically the only uncommercial song on the album, this can do little to provide the sustaining power they so badly need. I suggest a rush release of "Play On" or even "Cruisin' Music," which is this one's B-side.

Flash Cadillac's "Dancin' On a Saturday Night" was one of the best singles of 1974, and their first since then is "Good Times, Rock & Roll" (Private Stock 45,006), another fine California dancing tune and a tribute to radio and oldies as well. No shortage of oldies these days, that's for sure. The Hagers' follow-up to "Love My Life Away" is "Cherry Pie" (Elektra 45219). Lou Christie's latest is "Hey You Cajun", a really nice-sounding record. Screamin' Jay Hawkins has his first in some time with "Voodoo" (RCA JH-10127) which is like some weird mixture of Ray Stevens and Cab Calloway.

More names from the past: Robert Parker of "Barefootin'" fame is on a national label for the first time with "Get Ta Steppin'", a good funky dance number from the suddenly prolific New Orleans production company of Allen Toussaint, Marshall Seahorn and Wardell Quezergue, who arranged this one. Bobby Sherman, another old standby, has a pretty good rendition of "Runaway" (Janus 246) while Stavely Makepeace, whoever he may be, gives "Runaround Sue" a go (London 1060). Good songs both, but neither record really does them justice.

It's time once again to look at some of the local records being produced around the country. Would you believe a group called UGE on WGW Records (Box 416, Somerville, NJ 08876) entitled "Mad Charles"/"Sophie the Polish Chicken Hen"? Produced by Laser Dynamics, Inc. (there's a photo of a laser machine on one side of the label) this is the kind of thing ESP Records must've received

on demo tapes every day of 1968. Real garbage psychedelia, lots of sound effects and weird dialog. Good luck guys...

Then there's Amnesia, newest group from Tampa (the city that gave us the Tropics, the Savages, White Witch, and Tommy Roe) who've issued their own EP on the Earshot label. They seem to be a competent glitter band with a strong Lou Reed influence. Worth a listen. (10107 Arden Ave., Tampa, FL 33612).



And remember the Road? They were on Kama Sutra a few years ago and did freaky arrangements of Zombies songs. Now they're back in Buffalo, where they started. "Night in the City" (Goodtime 4504) is a locally-recorded version of a Joni Mitchell song; not bad, almost commercial. They haven't changed, though--the B-side is full of jazzy organ noodles.

The one place it's really happening lately is Canada, particularly Montreal. One of the most interesting Canadian labels, Daffodil, has a couple of outstanding new releases. "California Jam" by Klaatu (1057) is a "Woodstock"-like tribute to a 1974 outdoor concert near LA which starred Deep Purple. Very amusing, especially since they include printed lyrics. It's actually a more generalized glorification of the California myth, a bit like "Beach Baby." Also of note is "What's In You" by Cochrane (1063), a good hard rocker that could make this act the next Rush. There are so many fine Canadian acts whose records aren't being released here...for starters Pagliaro, April Wine, Randy Bishop, Charlesbois, and the Dudes. What's the problem? Whatever the country of origin, the time has come to demand equal time for superior rock & roll. How's that for a New Year's resolution?

personality at WABC to reigning top dog at the then new experiment in free form radio in New York, WNEW-FM. And he brought with him the perfect touch for an emerging consciousness in the late sixties: readings from the Poet, Kahil Gibran, over back-grounds of appropriately reflective music.

Christmas is that time of year when the music business goes off the walls in search of a novelty record that will turn on the public. In past seasons we've had the Chipmunks, Phil Spector's Christmas album (including "Christmas" by Darlene Love which has just been re-released), The Beach Boys "Little Saint Nick" and "The Man with All the Toys," various Beatle fanclub releases, Bobby Helms' "Jingle Bell Rock," Brenda Lee's "Rockin' Round the Christmas Tree" and other efforts too numerous to mention.

This year's Christmas releases have included the traditional Andy Williams album, a Waltons' album of Christmas favorites to capitalize on their television success and a bizarre effort from left field on A&M, Rosko's "The Gift." To set the record straight from the beginning, this is not a cover version of the great Velvet Underground classic of the same name. Rosko, incidentally, is currently the numero uno on the new and seemingly successful addition to progressive radio in New York, WQIV-FM.

No, this is the man doing his thing, reading poetry over an inobtrusive background appropriate to the spoken sentiments. This Christmas song is the story of a great and



B. Rosko Mercer, on wax.

powerful love; a lover confronted with the problem of choosing a gift for his mate. While this isn't Hans Christian Anderson or O. Henry's "The Gift of the Magi," it is a nice record for two people in love to share. Naturally there are the everpresent strings and overly sweet guitars that characterize these records, arranged and produced by Don McGinnis. And of course the very mellifluous and euphonic tones emanating from Rosko's larynx.

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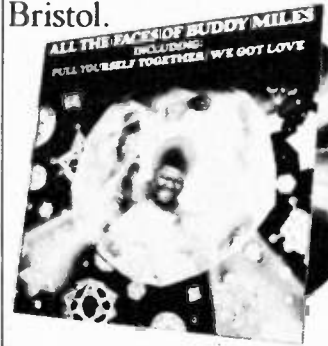
Dave Mason's "Dave Mason" is a rare offering, delicately sprinkled with all-new original Dave Mason jewels.



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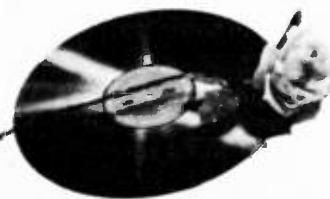
All facets of the very beautiful Buddy Miles are explored in his desirable new offering, as produced by Johnny Bristol.



The tender music from "Death Wish," sensitively composed and conducted by Herbie "Head Hunters" Hancock, will satiate her every musical dream.



As precious as a silver-blue butterfly is "Borboletta," new from the group always known for its subtle loveliness, Santana.



*A Phonograph Record is Forever.
On Columbia Records and Tapes*

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.

Edited by KEN BARNES

Carmen--Fandangoes in Space (Dunhill)

Hi there this month--for any of you new readers that just joined us--The New Readers of the Phonograph Record. Carmen! Good God! Can't you see them dancing on the tables? Ole! There's a group with a lot of nerve. Is this really bullfighter music? Mark my words--this is a group to watch out for this year. I think it'll take a couple albums and by the third they're gonna be raving. I predict everybody's gonna go nuts for flamenco dancing. On the other hand it could be as much of a helpful gimmick as the Pyramids being bald under their Beatle wigs.

Excerpts from Masters of the Airwaves (Epic)

Splinter! Kim Fowley used to hype them? Kim Fowley used to hype everyone. Fresh Start! Bulldog! Ernie Broglio! Sounds like the Raspberries. This is good. It's the cast of Hair. It sounds like Joe & Eddie. Pat Boone. A four-word name? Rally Round the Flag. Play the Kim Fowley song--it's not "Hungry Planet" again, is it? Masters of the Airwaves? Never heard of 'em. "The streets have become sleaze chambers." Who is this 18-year-old punk telling me about the streets?

Excerpts from John Dawson Winter III (Columbia)

Get down! Foghat! Uh-oh, is he albino? Take it off. Somehow I've heard it all before. It's sort of like the organ player at Dodger Stadium--you know what to expect. It's safe for Johnny listeners--whatever they represent as part of our cultural community. John Dawson Winter III and the All-New Pigmentation Band. There's a word to be said for Democracy in all of this. Oh no! If we were under communism we'd all probably have to listen to that! I'd like to break that album! No, it's good hard rock for those people. Get down jungle boogie. I'd rather listen to Archie Bell & the Drells for that sort of sound. Who wouldn't?

Shawn Phillips--Excerpts from Furthermore (A&M)

Is he an albino? I know who this is already. It's Jerry Goodman and Jann Wenner. Clavinet! It's his 90th album. It's the guy with the longest hair in the world. I have every album he ever made and I haven't listened to them. Shawn! There's only one Shawn-nine-albums-in-the-can Phillips.

"He'll end up in the medical journals."

Dennis Linde, excerpts from Trapped in the Suburbs (Elektra)

This is the best month in months. Hudson Brothers. Slade. Budgie. Jeff Barry? Known for his songwriting? Ira Gershwin. Jerry Jeff Walker. Loudon Wainwright III. Albert Hammond. Michael Fennelly. Tim Moore. He's an Afro-Italian, right? You're thinking of Gino Vasetomy. This isn't Lobo, is it? Wrote for Elvis? That's supposed to help? Hoyt Axton at the wrong speed! Hoyt Axton's Mom! It ain't P.J. Proby. How come I still don't know who it is, after four cuts? This one'll give it to us. Harry Chapin. David Allan Coe. Really nice. Little touch of Mike Nesmith there. He wrote "Burning Love?" I really don't know. Well, if we don't say anything, the tape'll just be blank for a portion and no one reading will have any idea we didn't know the answer. Come on, we know the guy. Dennis Linde? I have never heard of him. I wouldn't know him if he bit me on the street. The guy's got a good pop perspective. Or a bad case of acne.



Which is January's best? Only the long-haired guy with the biceps knows for sure.

THE FLO & EDDIE TOP TWELVE

Flo: You notice how the ones near the end are played near the end? This is all mediocrity. What if I told you Gryphon was number one?

1. Master of the Airwaves--Good pop on a relatively youthful level.
2. Dennis Linde--Has good songs basically all around.
3. Gryphon--Even though I didn't review them very strongly, I felt really they deserved to be up there.
4. Jo Jo Gunne--because of their never ending supply of riffs and the California Look, the cultural appeal they have.
5. Black Oak--because I know 'em.
6. Poco--because I know 'em and I want 'em to think that I like them.
7. Charlie Daniels--I like the album cover. He's bigger than me.
8. Shawn Phillips--He's smaller than me, but he's got those biceps I can't believe, and shows them on every album. Longest hair in the world.
9. Elf--Should be lower but I don't remember what they sound like.
10. Billy Swan--Only because he hit and because he should be ahead of the albino.
11. Johnny Winter--Good luck.
12. Carmen, they can handle being last better than any of the others, because they're gonna be bigger.

Excellent month. Boring as hell.

Eddie: (began with 10 minutes of demonic chuckling, apparently over Charlie Daniel's album cover). The hardest thing is to decide where Elf goes.

1. Masters of the Airwaves--The same Number One as Mark. It's unique and it's real good. As long as it's rock & roll, great. I don't know, though, they recorded in Sausalito.
2. Carmen--They have more nerve than anybody I've ever seen.
3. Dennis Linde--Deserves to be listened to.
4. Billy Swan--Just because somewhere on his album is him singing "Love Please," and that must be worth something to someone.
5. Jo Jo Gunne--I give this album a lot of credit, just because it's out.
6. Johnny Winter--This may seem like a strange choice. We should really watch his career closely, he may end up at least in the medical journals.
7. Black Oak Arkansas--This month I'm doing sort of a Buyer's Forum. You'll have to have early BOA if you've got the others.
8. Poco
9. Charlie Daniels--It was hard deciding about these last four albums, and I don't know if I have any comments.
10. Gryphon
11. Shawn Phillips--It's too late...
12. Elf--Who cares?

Poco, excerpts from Cantamos (Epic)

15th album? Real well known? Poco! Leave it on. We've heard this album before. Good Poco album. If you're a Poco fan, it's a good album. Let's pretend we've never heard of them. We've led a sheltered life and only heard Shawn Phillips. There's one cut on here I like. I think Poco should change their names--I know it's contrary to everything they believe in, but if I were working with them I would advise them to forget they ever had country roots. Because the best stuff they do is when they rock out. I think they're a great live act and I really like 'em when they rock. Even on record, the harder the better.

"Who is this 18-year-old punk telling me about the streets?"

Charlie Daniel Band, excerpts from Fire on the Mountain (Kama Sutra)

Carmen! Vermin! Their name ends in "Band?" Climax Blues! Kiki Dee. Sensational Alex Harvey. I could go on forever. We've never heard of them. Can I hear another cut? This is sort of Marty Robbins. I can't get my bearings. Doug Sahm. Who could this be? Batdorf & Rodney Band. Everybody's name ends in "Band." On Kama Sutra? That's supposed to be a dead giveaway? A Dead Giveaway on Kama Sutra Records. The Dead Giveaway. I don't know who it is. I don't care. I refuse to guess. It's not Sha Na Na. Impressive physical girth? Are you saying this is a large gentleman? They sound compressed somehow. Charlie Daniels? Oh, yeah, I drink him all the time.

Elf, excerpts from L.A./59 (MGM) This couldn't be the best cut, could it? Navasota. Give us some clues. Anything! 3-letter name? Like Gun? Mythological? Man, you could tell me and I wouldn't even know. God! Eat! Elf! Elf! Elf! So that's Elf, eh? I've seen the ads. Sounds like they're Wet Willying out on this album.

Billy Swan, excerpts from I Can Help (Monument)

Burl Ives! Shawn Phillips George Harrison. John Hartford. That's the opening cut? That's a rouser. Chip Taylor. David Essex? So far so good. Is this guy a household name? Carl Douglas. Steve Miller. OK, speed it up a little bit. It's not Andy Kim, is it? We were on our way to a month that seemed so promising...Big hit record? Billy Swan. That song has something unique going for it the same way George McCrae's record did. I think he's a one-shot. Harmless. But so were the Music Machine.

Gyphon, excerpts from Red Queen to Gryphon Three (Bell)

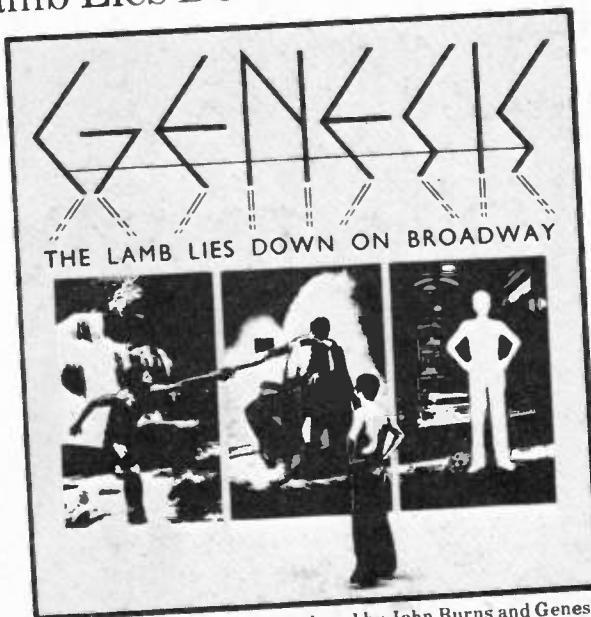
An overture! Rick Wakeman's favorite group? That's just great! You don't even have to play this one! English? Sure, of course they are. What ever happened to E to A to B? I can understand why they're Rick Wakeman's favorite group. They sound just like him, boring as hell! Futuristic, entering a new social reality. The Vietnamese Clap, that's the social reality we're entering. The only symptom is death, just like this record! Only kidding! Never any singing, right? He sings with his axe. I'll never get it. Red Queen to Gryphon Three. Anybody who'd devise a thing on chess...Opening move, Second Spasm, Checkmate. I can see they had the board out, every move planned, and wrote movements for every move. Figure out the game! It's the greatest concept ever. Sort of like Music Minus One. It felt like a chess game. About as exciting as one too...



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