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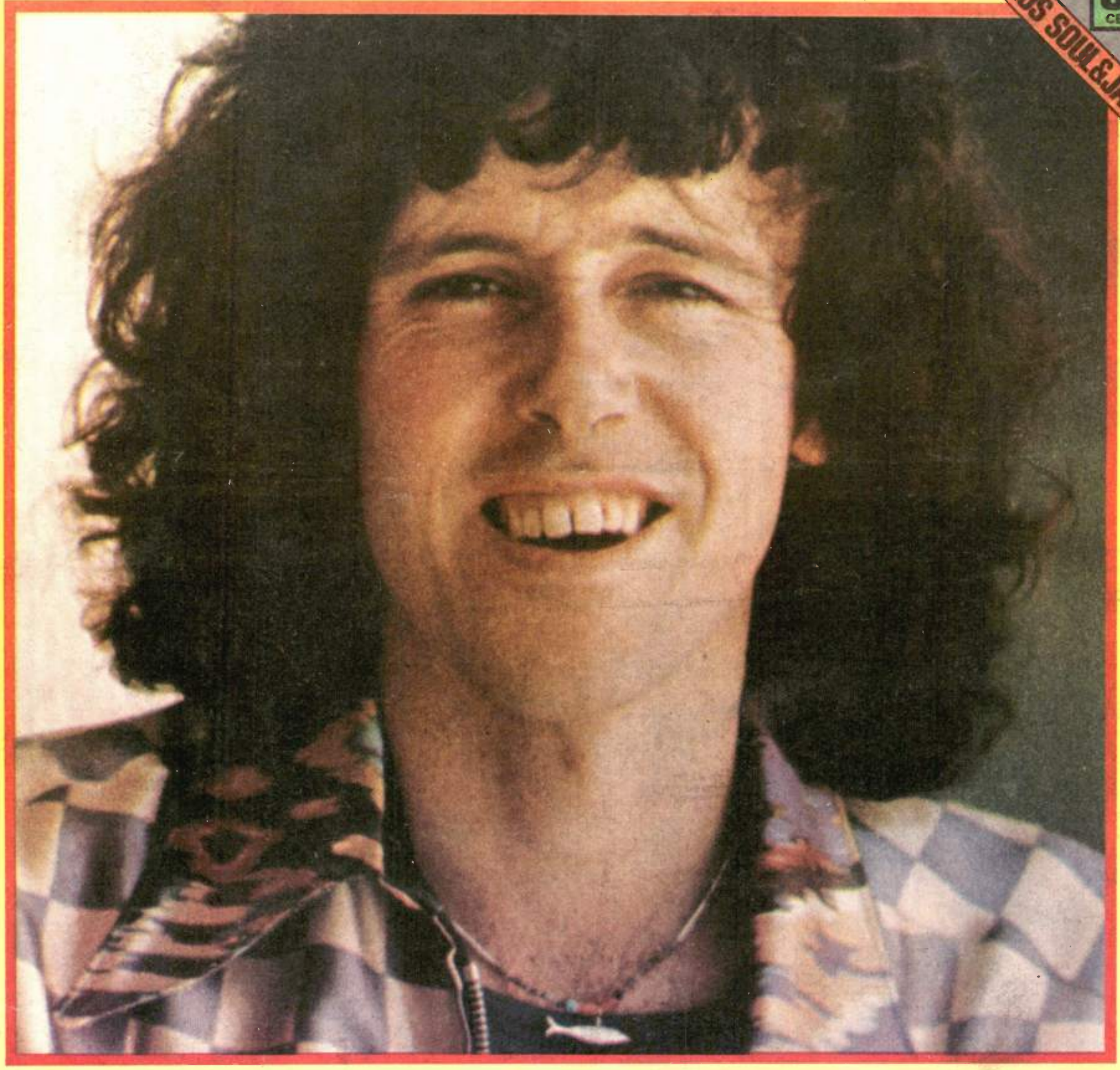

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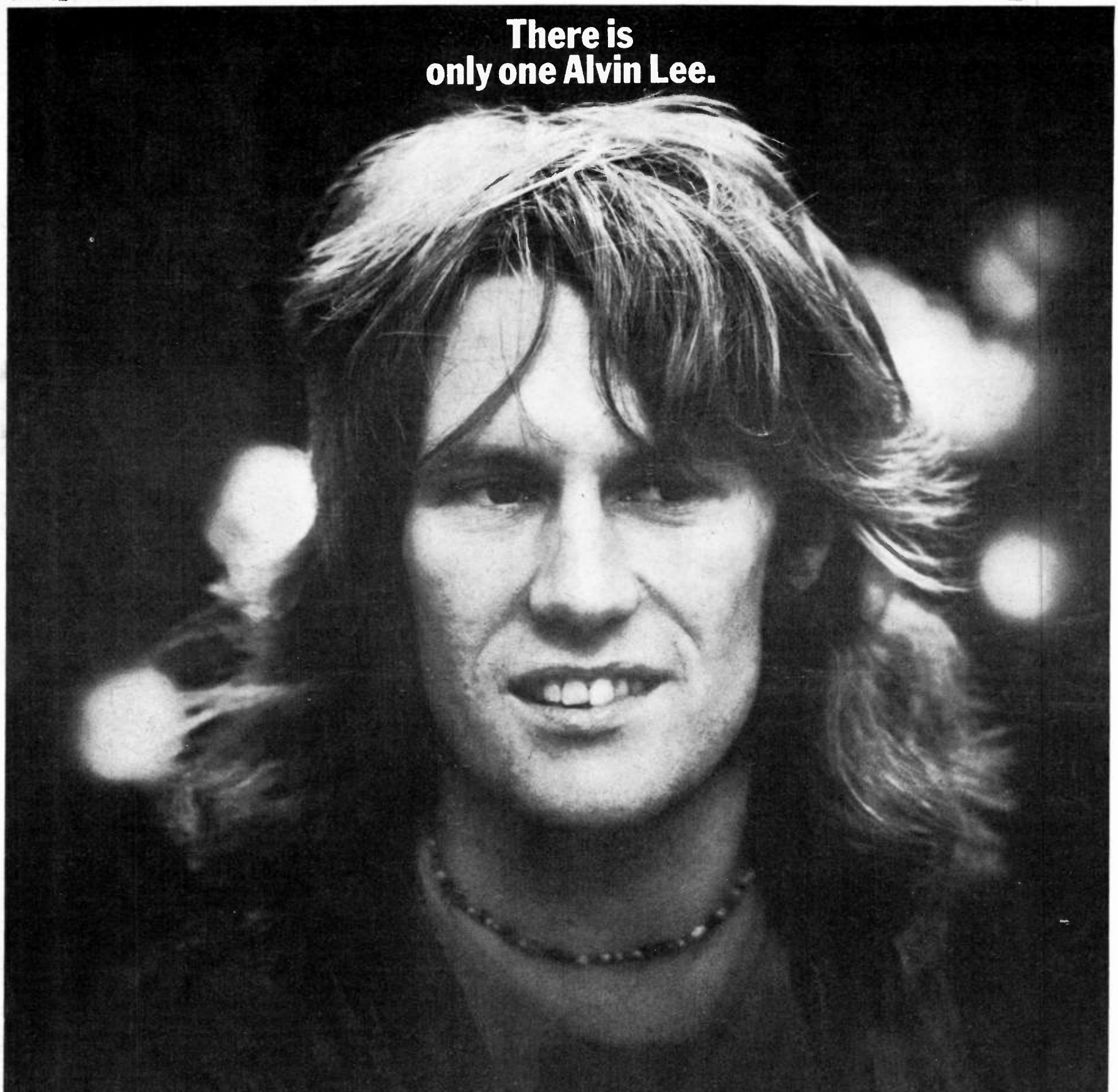

There aren't very many performers who would premiere a new solo career at London's prestigious Rainbow Theatre with a brand-new band. And there are even fewer who could simultaneously record a live double album. But then, there's only one Alvin Lee.

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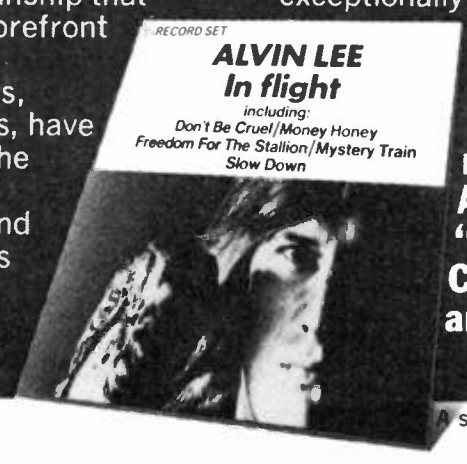

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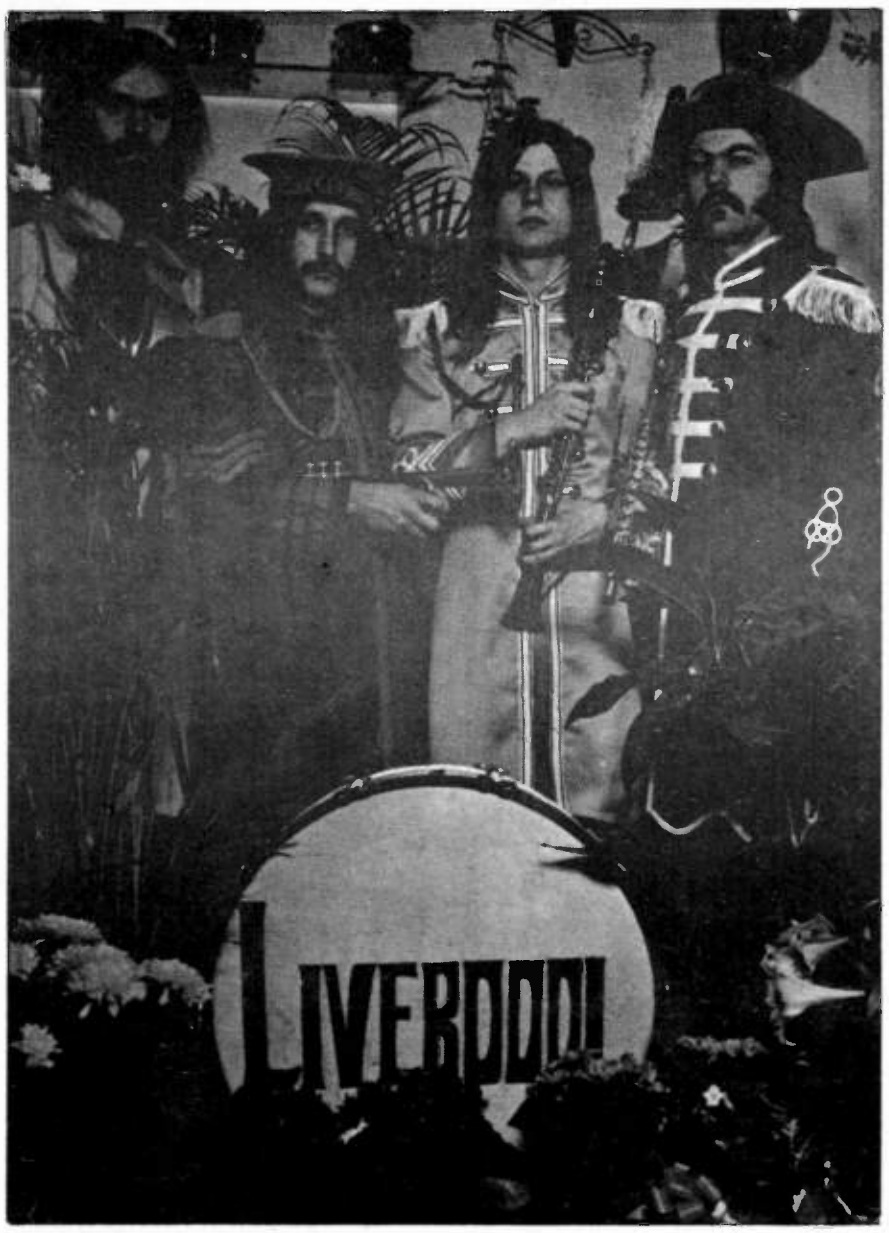


Would you want these guys on your lunchbox?

LIVERPOOL
Piccadilly Tube
Toronto, Ontario

By BOB DUNNE

It was only natural, in the wake of Sha Na Na, Teen Angel and the Rockin' Rebels, Flash Cadillac and all the golden grease they glorified, that we should see a nostalgic trip into the heyday of the sixties. It started with Richard Nader's 'British Invasion' package tour in 1973. Liverpool, a four piece Canadian band with a fanatical obsession with the Beatles' material, is the latest manifestation of this trend.

Liverpool recently played at the Tenth Anniversary celebrations that were the New York Beatlefest. Written off by some reviewers as a "Canadian look-alike, sound-alike rock & roll group," Liverpool in fact offers something which the Beatles have declined to do since 1966: Beatle songs performed live and performed well.

The show opens with the quartet dressed in matching black suits. Though the hair is longer on Liverpool than it was on the original quartet when they played the Cavern or even the Ed Sullivan show, the visuals are never very important. Liverpool leaves the *presence* up to the music. People wishing to *see* their heroes can attend *John, Paul, George, Ringo and Bert*. People wishing to hear the tunes reproduced faithfully and with enthusiasm have Liverpool.

The band churns through a number of early Beatle hits, all finished in less than three minutes, all highly danceable. The pace is frantic. "I Wanna Hold Your Hand," "I Saw Her Standing There," "She Loves You," Can't Buy Me Love," All My Loving," and then into the middle period: "Help!," "Ticket to Ride," "Day Tripper" and "Paperback Writer." The crowd is sweaty from dancing, the waiters are rushing to serve the patrons more swill and the band is backstage changing attire to something more suitable, a little more contemporary.

"It was twenty years ago today/Sgt. Pepper taught the band to play!" The lights are up and Liverpool *is* Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band, glowing and smiling in the multicolored silken threads. There has been much debate as to whether the Beatles stopped touring as a result of realizing that the screaming was coming to an end and people were tuning into the music. This being the case, it would be necessary for the band to reproduce the sound live, something which many maintain they were incapable of at the best of times. Not so, Liverpool.

"Lucy in the Sky with Diamonds" may be Elton's latest single, but he'll never infuse it with the power and majesty that Liverpool bestows upon all the Sgt. Pepper material. That in itself is quite an achievement considering the limited resources of a four man band in tackling songs which took 18 months for the original genius of the Beatles to mold. Suffice it to say that great care has been taken to do justice to the songs. Liverpool operates on the premise that, if Beatle tunes are their bread and butter, the tunes must be performed perfectly or, sooner or later, interest will fade and they will be left to starve.

The third and/or fourth sets depend largely on the audience and venue. In clubs the band attempts to keep things rockin', assuaging the notorious hair-trigger tempers of barkeeps who want to keep the crowd jumpin' and thirstin', thereby dumping brew on the tables by the keg. In concert situations, however, the band follows a different tack. "Abbey Road" is the theme and the sound is at once symphonic and simplistic. The instrumentation is sparse in comparison to the earlier numbers, the mood more subdued.

The fourth set is made up entirely of original material, something which Liverpool intends to get increasingly serious about. A single is in the works, probably to be released on Canada's Moon label, a record company started by the band's management, SRO Productions, for their other band, Rush. Rush was then signed to Mercury world-wide for a fair dollar, so SRO naturally hopes that what's good for one will be good for the other.

There is much interest in Liverpool at the moment, and not simply because they happen to be the human jook capable of performing some of the most successful songs ever written. Without any pretension, it can be said that Liverpool offers an enjoyable night out for the most discerning rockers. With pretention, it can also be said that Liverpool is probably going to cause quite a stir in '75. Especially for those who missed the stir in '64. Yeah, yeah yeah!

WISHBONE ASH
KISS
Long Beach Arena
Long Beach, California

By JOANNE RUSSO

Despite a faulty p.a. system clouding the set, and an audience that had been drained and almost deaf by the intense second billed act, Wishbone Ash played an exceedingly fine sampler of harmony framed rock music.

The act managed to defy the expectations of pessimistic fans, who predicted that the exit of guitarist Ted Turner meant an inevitable *au revoir* to the amazing twin lead guitar arrangements that over the years have grown to characterize Wishbone Ash.

What they didn't realize is that Turner's replacement, Laurie Wisefield (from the now-defunct group Home), is also admirably nimble-fingered and inventive as a guitarist. And while Wisefield doesn't attempt to fill Turner's shoes by copying his style, he and Andy Powell work cohesively together, successfully carrying on Wishbone's tradition of blending highly creative, three-part echoplex tinged vocals.

The set began with a few selections from their latest album, *There's the Rub*, including an excellent version of the whining-ballad, "Silver Shoes." Then the band went through three of their classics; "The King Will Come" and "Warrior from Argus," Wishbone's most renowned work to date, and "Phoenix" from the first album. Each sparked some enthusiasm with their opening bars, but then tended to lag partway through.

The group demonstrated its rockier side with "Time Wars" and "F.U.B.B. " but reserved any loosening of the individual personalities for the encore. They responded to the tired yet persistent applause with two rockers, "No Easy Road," and "Where Were You Tomorrow," finally bringing the audience to their feet and a semblance of involvement to the group.

It isn't all Wishbone's fault that they personally seemed so bland; it's not easy to follow a band like Kiss, gimmick rock's *heil* played to the hilt.

Musicians on the dole, with bitter jealousy, hate Kiss. Their music is typical and repetitive, their lyrics indistinguishable; yet these guys can get an audience going in a matter of minutes, and be called back for encores till they collapse.

According to Kiss rhythm guitarist Paul Stanley, their macabre style, bizarre makeup and complex props are no more a gimmick than Elvis' limber hipline.

Sorry kids. No one can argue that Kiss' real charm doesn't stem from the appeal of the ingenious live act. Clad in black, silver and white skintights, the four are in constant motion, blending, leaning and prancing, with mechanical synchronization like a team of grotesque dolls, animated a la *Twilight Zone*.

They appeared on stage out of a cloud of smoke, and kicked off the set with a wild stomper called "Deuce." Seeming like a Bowie-conjured pack of Diamond Dogs, they rampaged through the tough and tight "Strider" and "You've Got to Choose," before reaching the peak of the act.

As Stanley donned a fire helmet, flashes of flame, sirens and floodlights captured the arena in a total environment rock nightmare to compliment the title cut of their new *Hotter than Hell* LP. It could have come off as tacky as all hell, but these guys had the act down so tight that they had the entire audience at an insane level.

DAVE MASON
The Spectrum
Philadelphia, Pennsylavania

By FRED TRIETSCH

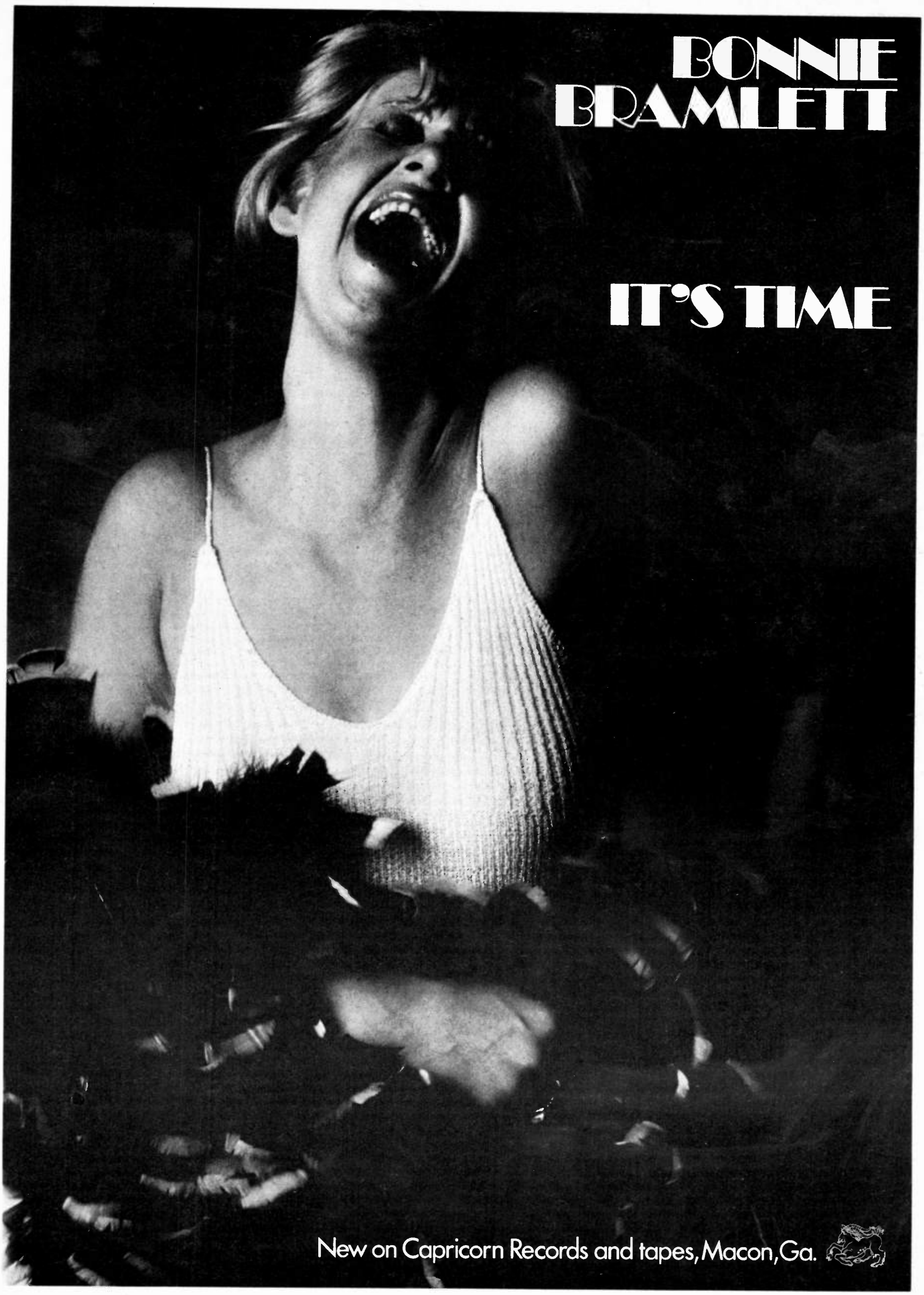
Welcome back, Dave Mason.

That's about all that need be said for those who once fell for his beautiful songs and superb guitar technique five years ago and wonder what happened to that brilliant touch so remarkably evident in his classic *Alone Together* album. Since that time, Mason had lapsed into a severe decline, occasionally showing a few sparks of brilliance with Cass Elliot; but he's been generally hindered by contractual disputes and a search for just the right band to perform with.

Well, he's found the right musicians now, and all that mess seemed well behind him, indicated by his show at The Spectrum--a breakthrough for Mason and his final arrival into the 1970's. No longer does he hide behind keyboard solos of others nor guitar licks from sidemen, no matter how well some of those played. No, it was Mason himself stepping out with a confidence long lacking, center-stage with stinging guitar lines and extended solos--no truncated statements, but fullblown leads, nearly every number becoming a soaring celebration with Dave's bouyant and folky blues leads bobbing on top of a strong backing structure. Only occasionally did he duel with second guitarist Creeger, showing a greater reliance on his own skills than on those of his band.

And, wonder of wonders, Mason showcased a bevey of excellent new songs to go along with the old standby classics. "The Lonely One" and "Show Me Some Affection," compositions that featured perfectly stated but brief leads as well as an infectious beat and a few nods toward pop tendencies, mixed sublimely with things like "Just a Song," "World in Changes," "Pearly Queen," "Only You Know and I Know," all delivered with the flighty drive they once had, and without ever sliding into redundancy. A well-placed change-of-pace version of the old chestnut, "Goin' Down Slow," about mid-way in the set, became a launching pad for a vibrant exchange between group members, leading smoothly into Dave's upbeat rendition of "All Along the Watchtower," saved from cliche by a bold lead burst from Mason. He even unhesitantly seized the moment of truth in "Look at You, Look at Me" brilliantly, hedging at first a bit with a Mike Finnerean piano lead into a swinging bop motif, but then masterfully cooling down to take the climbing, stormy lead himself in crisp bunches of notes, capping off a remarkable arrangement of the tune.

Multiple encores followed, but they were really anti-climactic. Mason had won a spectacular victory--a sold-out house and his first concert in years that began to capture the promise once so obvious. Indeed, welcome back.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The American Music Awards Show

Dick Clark Presents The Best Of 1974

By Martin R. Cerf

Over the past twenty years rock and roll hasn't merely come of age, it's *become* the age. This is a leisure time business whose $2billion annual gross now exceeds even the film industry's yearly income. Consequently it's irresistibly attracted even the most conservative media investors: television.

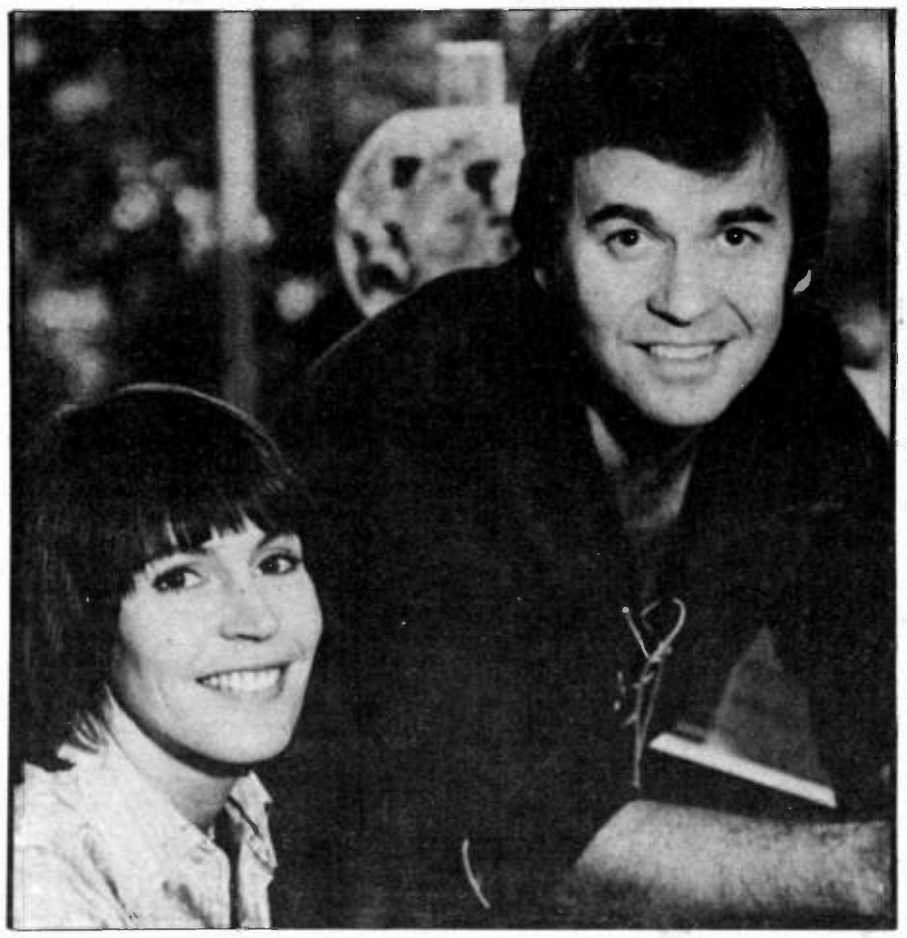
Of the three national television networks, ABC has always taken a back seat in position to NBC and CBS in total audience shares. But ABC-owned stations and their affiliates have never failed to top the numbers battle where pop music is concerned. Even in the beginning, it was ABC with Dick Clark's *American Bandstand* back in the middle fifties (still on the air today) that introduced video rock and roll to an unsuspecting world. Then in the mid-sixties ABC debuted *Shindig*, which once more spearheaded and perpetuated another pop renaissance (the English Invasion, Protest, etc.) Then, just over two years ago, Dick Clark and Don Kirshner created the *In Concert* format for ABC and subsequently made official music 's latest incarnation. Now the emphasis is placed on live performance as opposed to recordings. Thus we have Triumvirat, Nektar, Climax Blues Band, Wishbone ASh, ELO and so on. Seventies talent has arrived.

In the summer of 1974, ABC made history in the rock world again as they were the first broadcasting network to sponsor a music festival, the California Jam at the Ontario Motor Speedway. It's since become known as the most successful pop festival of all time as the ABC Entertainment Group played host to more than 400,000 fans, all without murder, only a few drug or physical casualties, and miraculously few arrests.

1974 was certainly one of ABC-TV's most adventurous years as relates to rock music. Last February Dick Clark Productions initiated the American Music Awards. Akin to the Emmy and a second cousin to the Grammy, the American Music Awards was another breakthrough in that it was the first music competition whose nominees were selected by the public. Presented as one segment in ABC's ongoing late night "Wide World of Entertainment" series, the show was network's highest rated special in 1974. On February 18th, Dick Clark will present the Second Annual American Music Awards Show.

Currently there are at least six annual record or music award presentations, the most recognized of which is the Grammys, sponsored by the members of NARAS (National Association of Recording Arts and Sciences). Lesser known, but nonetheless omnipresent yearly are those shows brought to us by NATRA (National Association of Television and Radio Announcers), NARM (National Association of Record Merchants), the Image Awards from NAACP, the Billboard Magazine Awards, and MOA (Music Operators of America). The process by which all of these organizations select nominees and the respective winners has always been ill-defined and open to great debate. Which is where Clark's American Music Awards fills the void, as the main variance between this presentation and the others is the crucial fact that the nominees and winners are chosen by the public. Says Clark, "Popularity as opposed to music industry dictation or a pat on the back from your colleagues in the business."

To circumvent the nepotism previous ceremonies have been unable to avoid by definition, ABC and Dick Clark Productions went to exaggerated ends, bordering on excessiveness, selecting the artists and the individual winners in the three categories represented (Soul, Pop and Country & Western). Marketing Evaluations, one of the largest survey organizations in the world, was contracted to perform the function of securing a broad cross-section of responses from people of all ages, economic means, married, not married, white, black, living at home, not living at home, ethnic groups, all areas were represented in the voting. This year, like last, ME posted some 40,000 ballots at Christmas time to selected households which listed literally hundreds of titles and artists compiled from the top 100 LP and 45 charts of all three music trades for the year. By the second week of January, 20,000 completed forms were returned in time for the deadline. Under the supervision of Keith Marwick, Marketing Evaluations' CPA, the individual ballots were fed into a computer and totalled. The next step was to announce five to seven finalists in each category based on the total number of votes for each artist. Until the night of the telecast the winner remains unknown to everyone but ME. Only the finalists are made public. In contrast with the Neilson TV ratings, which are dervied from an average of 1200 households, it's easy to appreciate and respect the validity of this system's conclusions.



Last year's show was originally created in the summer, committed in the fall, and put into production by Clark and his staff about a month before airing. Regardless of what seems a drastically reduced timetable, the American Music Awards pulls together, in one tenth the time, ten times the TV fare that has been the Grammy extravaganza (although we're told the forthcoming NARAS show will be changed dramatically and become more realistic). "It would be bad for me to really get into all the problems that are inherent with these show," says Clark, humbly chalking up the phenomenal success of his first AMA broadcast to "luck." "Apparently for some unknown reason we put armies to work. We had 300 people working and every blessed little flaw that could possibly happen was covered. You have to have a tremendous amount of luck and we did, but our pre-planning was such that it was like a battle plan."

Among the walk on guests presenting at this year's show will be Tony Orlando, Olivia Newton-John, Jim Stafford, Connie Stevens, Paul Williams, Donnie & Marie Osmond, Sandy Duncan, Pat Boone, Michael and Janet Jackson, and Charlie Rich. Sly Stone will perform and Roy Clark will be the sole host of the show. Also, there are plans to videotape a segment with Stevie Wonder currently touring Europe for inclusion in the show.

There's no specific album available representing The American Music Awards broadcast, although Clorox, one of the show's sponsors, will be adverising a mail-order premium LP featuring some of the biggest hits of 1974 (the customer is asked to send product labels and a buck fifty).

As last year, the American Music Awards will be produced for Dick Clark Teleshows by John Moffitt. Line producer is Bill Lee, and Billy Strange will handle the music. Dick Clark is executive producer. The show is videotaped live the night of the broadcast before 1,200 monkey suited industry veterans at the Aquarius Theatre in Hollywood.

Unquestionably Dick Clark knows how to rock the tube the way it should be rocked. His American Music Awards may well become an overnight institution after this second telecast if for no other reason than it is the only such show that reflects the voice of the buyers, the listeners and the viewers. There's something to be said for relevance and when discussing rock & roll on television, Dick Clark is synonymous with the genre. Whether you're the average Joe on the street or the pinnacle of industry snobbery, Dick Clark must be recognized as perhaps the most singularly important individual contributor to popular recording. He remains unchallenged in that right. The American Music Awards is required viewing for all rock academics.

THE 1975 AMERICAN MUSIC AWARDS NOMINEES

FAVORITE MALE ARTIST

POP: John Denver, Elton John, Charlie Rich
COUNTRY: Roy Clark, Charley Pride, Charlie Rich
SOUL: James Brown, Barry White, Stevie Wonder

FAVORITE FEMALE ARTIST

POP:Olivia Newton-John, Helen Reddy, Barbra Streisand
COUNTRY: Loretta Lynn, Olivia Newton-John, Marie Osmond
SOUL: Roberta Flack, Aretha Franklin, Diana Ross

FAVORITE DUO, GROUP, OR CHORUS

POP: Bachman-Turner Overdrive, Gladys Knight & Pips, Paul McCartney & Wings
COUNTRY: Conway Twitty & Loretta Lynn, George Jones& Tammy Wynette, Statler Bros.
SOUL: Gladys Knight & Pips, Stylistics, O'Jays

FAVORITE SINGLE

POP: "I Honestly Love You",Olivia Newton-John
"Seasons in the Sun", Terry Jacks
"The Way We Were", Barbra Streisand
COUNTRY: "If We Make It", Merle Haggard
"Mississippi Cotton Picker", Charley Pride
"The Most Beautiful Girl",Charlie Rich

SOUL: "Best Thing That Ever Happened to Me", Gladys Knight & Pips
"Feel Like Makin' Love", Roberta Flack
"Midnight Train to Georgia", Gladys Knight & Pips

FAVORITE LP

POP: *Behind Closed Doors*, Charlie Rich
Goodbye Yellow Brick Road, Elton John
Greatest Hits, John Denver
COUNTRY: *Behind Closed Doors*, Charlie Rich
Let Me Be There, Olivia Newton-John
Very Special Love Song, Charlie Rich
SOUL: *Imagination*, Gladys Knight & Pips
Inner Visions, Stevie Wonder
'Let's Get it On, Marvin Gaye

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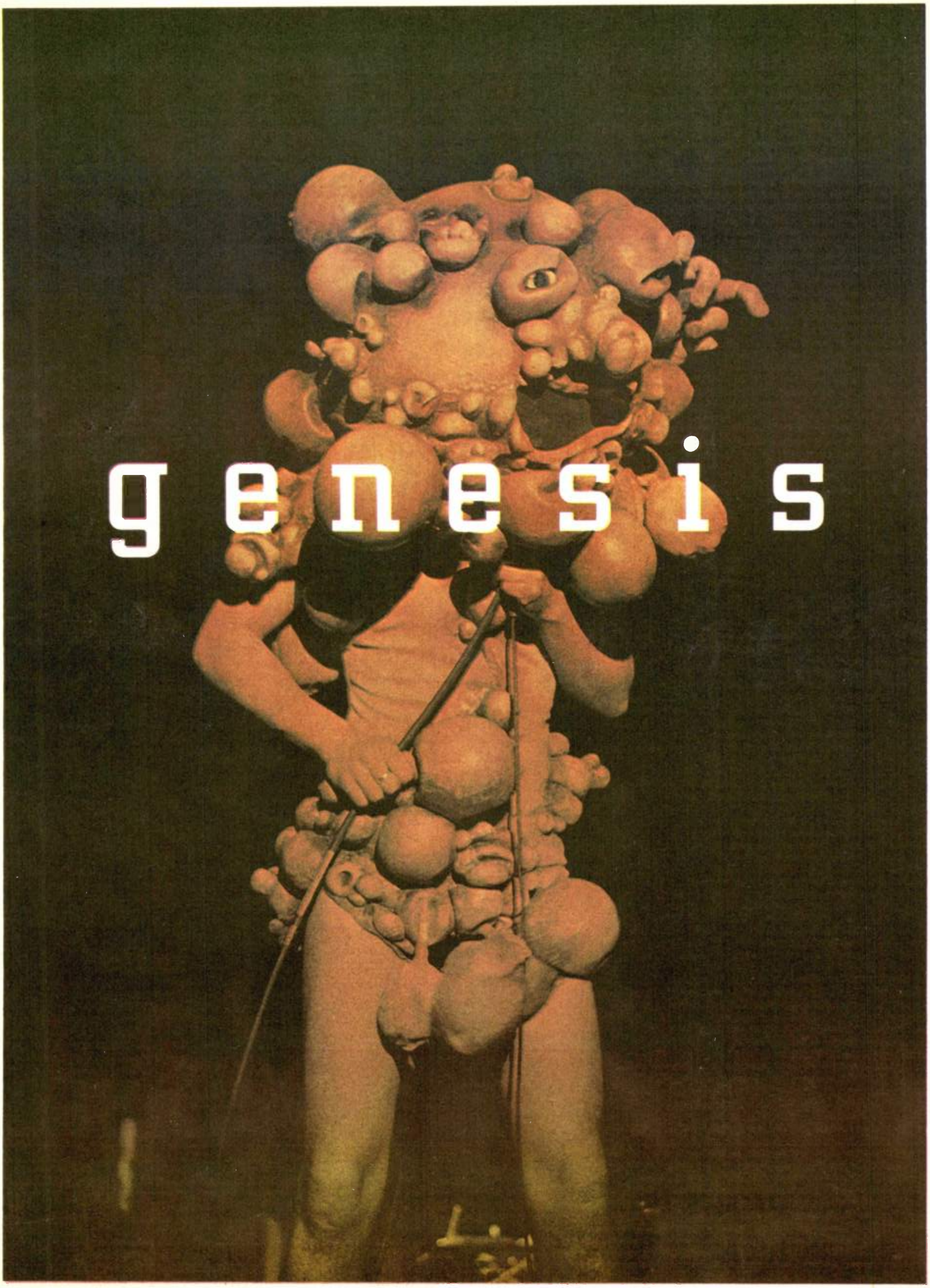

genesis

Genesis

By Ron Ross

In the streets, he's loud, fast, furtive, defensive and horny. Hyped on every side to acquire dreams he can't afford, he holds court on neighborhood street corners, alone and in small chattering groups, demanding attention by the blare of his huge, portable, cassette-equipped AM-FM radio with all the latest features save heat in winter. Each passing senorita is propositioned with the same shrill mechanical pitch. If alone, he favors "Boo-tee-fool, Boo-tee-fool," hoping vaguely to be suddenly swept off his sneakers by a stranger longing for a Latin lover passionately appreciative of her charms. Odds are, she doesn't have to be beautiful or charming; the merest femininity inspires the warmest approval, although last years glam-rock androgony confused the more ardent action seekers. More macho festers in twos and threes, when the beckoning bleat becomes, oddly enough, "Hey Mommy! Hi! Momma!"

But he *owns* the subways; the subterranean "rapid transit" system is day glo with his stamp. Once he's begged, borrowed, or stolen past the turnstile, he's truly lord of his own neon-lit turf. One marvels at his hearty appetite as he swallows a lukewarm Yankee Frankee while roaring trains provide his dinner music. But though food may be a luxury indeed, he burns energy recklessly as he dashes through a car door enthusiastically blocked from closing by his amigos, while the other passengers await his pleasure.

Above ground he aches to violate virginal slim figures who pick up their pace as he veers toward them, aiming blindly for an "accidental" brush with the sublime or thereabouts. But underground, the rush hour is consummated with rapid breathing and averted eyes, and after the Brooklyn commuters have fallen asleep in front of Johnny Carson, he rools with a flourish of spray paint that leaves the dirty gray cars agleam with his stylized signature, repeated a dozen times in as many places in as many sizes. The aerosol artist has no time or talent for wise-ass epigrams or sarcastic suggestions, just a trail of curves and curlycues that spell out his name and street number with elegance of line and a splash of gaudy color--outside the cars and in, over route maps, and across entire block-long walls in stations. He might be called Angel, or Juan, or Hector, or Jose, or Taki, or even T. Rex.

But in Genesis' new saga of a Puerto Rican punk through the dada looking glass, he is called "Rael." Rael is the principle persona of *The Lamb Lies Down on Broadway*, which is variously a four-sided recording of 23 separate songs, a short story that comprises no fewer than 48 different plot movements, and a stage show with 3,000 slides paralleling the action, both musical and conceptual. So what's a fly dude of Spanish extraction got to do with five well-bred, highly educated and frequently esoteric young Englishmen, with a penchant for moody myths and subtle self-satire?

But in Genesis' new epic saga of a Puerto Rican punk through the dada looking glass, he is called "Rael." Rael is the principle persona of *The Lamb Lies Down on Broadway*, which is variously a four-sided recording of 23 separate songs, a short story that comprises no fewer than 48 different plot movements, and a stage show with 3000 slides paralleling the action, both musical and conceptual. So what's a fly dude of Spanish extraction got to do with five well-bred, highly educated and frequently esoteric young Englishmen, with a penchant for moody myths and subtle self-satire?

Could it be that having flirted with seductive naiads and ancient hermaphrodites, Genesis are attempting to be trendy and up-to-the-minute by creating a contemporary Third World character? After all, with Bowie now a disco-dancin' cha cha queen at a time when all the world seems unlimitedly in love with Barry White, who could blame this quaint quintet of scholarly surrealists for hopping onto the soul train? If they chose to funk up their music (slightly) and allow Peter Gabriel's image some room to wax aggro, it might well be just another pragmatically conceived bit of playacting, what? But this particular P.R. persona is ultimately more than a randomly selected expose on the psychology of race by a band on the make. Rael serves as a psychologically and morally alienated adolescent with whom Genesis' audience can identify. With Gabriel now affecting the leather jacket and jeans of a frustrated hitter, fans can more fully enter emotionally the group's most extensive and complex fantasy ever. "The New York setting is a device for making the character more

real, more extroverted and violent, as the kid goes through these fantastic changes," Gabriel recently explained. "Adolescence is the time you adjust yourself to the world. You either find a slot or reject a slot; you're questioning most things around you. But this guy is slotless; his name is supposed to be raceless. He feels as if he's a waste of material, part of the machinery. He doesn't even think about his position in society. All he can do is escape or give up. He's very aggressive." Hence, "Rael Imperial Aerosol Kid," as one of the lyrics would have it.

So, "The point of Rael being accessible, earthy and aggressive is that he provides an earthy response to these fantasy situations," Gabriel told *PRM* hopefully. Rael's purpose being not so much to attract a larger integrated following by virtue of his ethnicity, but to lure Genesis' existing audience more totally into the illusion and mood all five of the band have worked so carefully to project throughout their career. "Supper's Ready" on *Foxtrot* (their fourth album) had proven Genesis' ability to develop a musical mood for twenty minutes at a stretch. Although there had been concept albums in profusion, with Yes, ELP, etc. experimenting with side-long suites, only the Beatles, with side two of *Abbey Road*, and Genesis' with "Supper's Ready," had managed to produce a bandless flow that blended a number of separate musical and lyrical ideas without resorting to lengthy improvisations.

If Genesis were to carry their fables of sex, death, money, dominance and submission even further, they would need a character with whom audiences could relate a bit more closely than a wood nymph or a pre-Raphaelite prince. Guitarist Steve Hackett admitted, "We tend to keep away from the present. We're very hesitant to make any commitments to how we feel about what's happening now." But even before the current r&b boom, Gabriel had expressed the hope that "spending time in America might well change our music for the better by making us seem less isolated in our opinions. Soul music excites me more than rock and roll. There's more emotion and I like the rhythm better. A lot of rock and roll seems to be working at a high speed, but not high intensity."

So, while *The Lamb* and Rael appear to be a major departure from Genesis' past, especially given Gabriel's radical change of image, the band's motivation and method have remained inherently the same. "Our albums should be in some ways like books in that you can dip into them when you feel so inclined, instead of making them being fashionable things you can listen to a lot one month and then discard the next," Gabriel stated unequivocally. So much for unfair accusations of trendy opportunism.

While *The Lamb* may seem more conventional on first listening for its divisions into distinct songs (a la *Tommy*), Genesis' most ambitious opus to date makes far more of the band's impressive instrumental assets than their previous work. It also offers a realistic, built-in *mise en scene* by which the group can realize yet another of Gabriel's most important goals. "I expect to see groups and artists get together," he once said with a visionary gleam in his eye. "I think the time is nearly ripe for the first visual artist to become a pop star. There will be situations in which the band itself becomes much less important and there will be less of an ego thing. They won't be quite as alone as in an orchestra pit, but somewhere in between that and what exists now." Thus, *The Lamb* show is all the more engrossing for artist Geoffrey Shaw's 3-screen slide panorama which cuts from seamy scenes of New York streetlife to Magritte-like surreality in the blinking of an eye. Even when *The Lamb*'s plot becomes obscure and convoluted, Shaw's slides sustain involvement in the mood of fantasy.

Suzan Carson

Peter Gabriel himself of course has always been a compelling theatrical presence. At first, Peter was the only member of the band who performed standing. Later, his foxhead, buttercup bonnet, bat's wings and elaborate make-up tended to snatch the headlines away from the group's songs, for which the various props were intended only as dramatic servants. The band's deliberate anonymity had worked so well that few realized just how democratic their creative process really was. Although he is the focal point of a considerable Genesis cult on both sides of the Atlantic, Gabriel makes every effort to avoid the rockstar limelite that more extroverted faces revel in. He has his artistic, as well as personal, reasons: "With rock it seems a performer's offstage persona is often more colorful than his onstage character," Peter has complained, citing Mick Jagger as an artist limited by his image as *the* Rolling Stone. Relative personal anonymity provides greater theatrical freedom, Gabriel feels, and it's been so effective that when he cut his hair this summer and combed it over his famous bald streak, even friends failed to recognize him on the street. And Steve Hackett has suggested seriously, "I'd like to feel that if we did have an impact on music, I'd like to change the star syndrome, which lacks self-criticism. Musicians *should* have more anonymity, so that there won't be so many people trying so desparately to find star images."

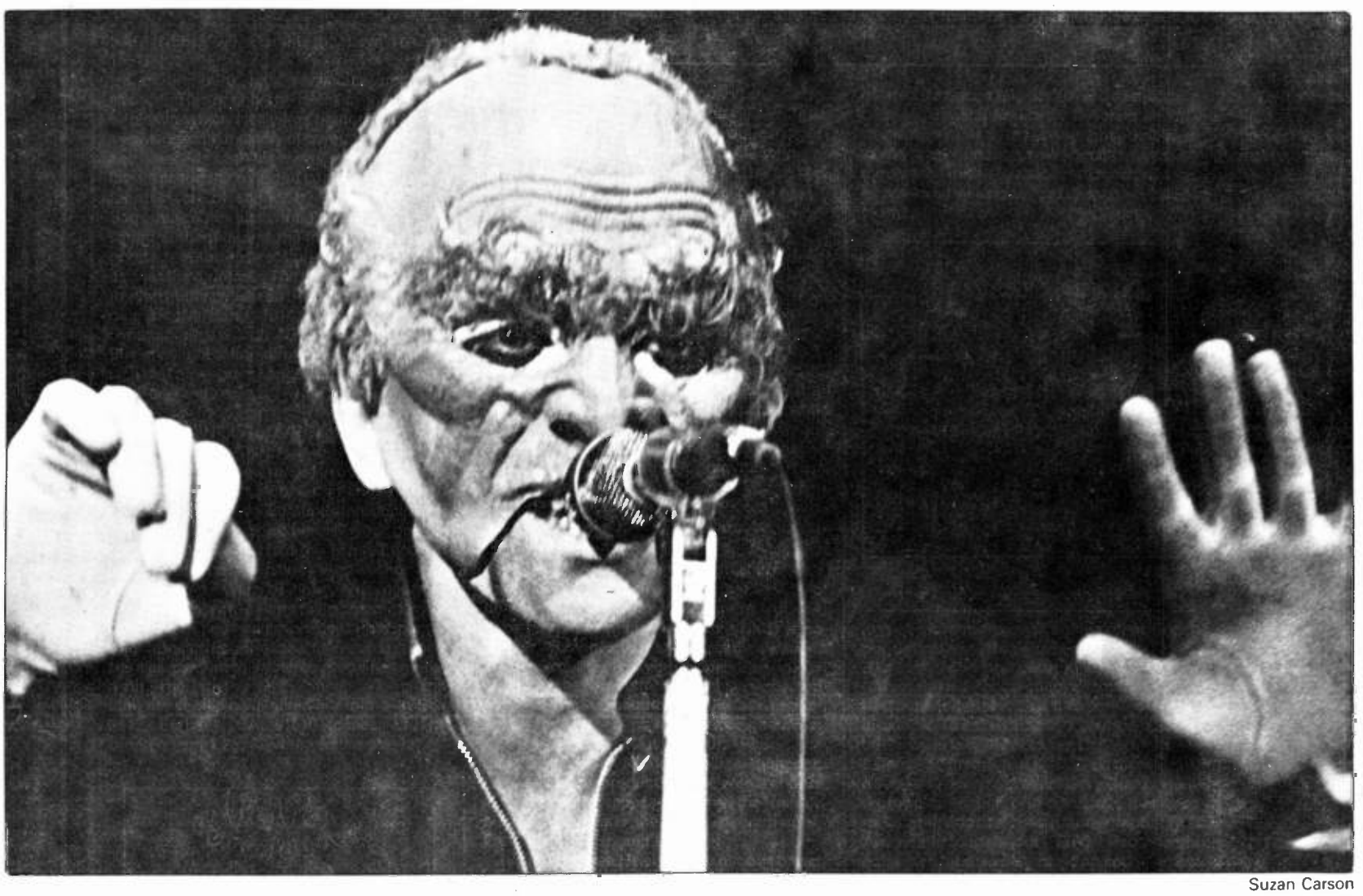
Not so much the sentiments of your standard model seventies sensation, such as Kiss or Bow-wow hisself, eh? Genesis' history is equally unique. Multi-instrumentalist Mike Rutherford, keyboardist Tony Banks, original guitarist Anthony Phillips, and lyricist/SINGER/flautist Gabriel all met at the

exclusive British "public school" Charterhouse. Their efforts to write their own material met with approval from hitmaker Jonathon King, now scion of U.K. Records and sponsor of 10cc. A public school lad himself, King gave them the name "Genesis" and got them a deal at British Decca, for whom they recorded one album, *From Genesis to Revelation*, recently released here for the first time by London.

After a change in drummers, Genesis came under the management of Tony Stratton-Smith, who had managed Klaus Voorman's first group and the Nice. Stratton-Smith formed Charisma Records as a haven for idiosyncratic and progressive artists such as Van der Graaf Generator and Monty Python's Flying Circus. Genesis' first album, *Trespass*, was issued in 1970 (in the States, by ABC Impulse, of all people). Produced by John Anthony, who would go on to record any number of nouveau psychedelic groups as well as Queen, *Trespass* consists in large part of mellow, atmospheric tone poems featuring Phillips' and Rutherford's acoustic guitars and Gabriel's reedy voice. Even more however, Banks' mellotron was a distinctive element, employed more tastefully than one would imagine possible given the Moodies' abuse of the instrument. The outstanding song is the "Knife," which remained in the Genesis concert repertoire as an encore until very recently.

group via FM airplay. While "The Musical Box" became an instant favorite, with its droll Victorian vignette of murder and revenging rape, Genesis' live act was greeted by some concert-goers with vociferous skepticism and shouts of "Boogie!!" during the quieter mood-building instrumental passages. Although Gabriel's cat-like grace, expressive pantomimes, and witty introductory monologues were exemplary, if esoteric, rock theater, Genesis' sophisticated sense of dynamics and pacing was hardly reminiscent of high energy rock 'n roll. Peter's bald streak and bass drum were either irresistable or ridiculous, depending on how seriously one took them and how seriously one presumed Peter took them. Nevertheless, his mastery of stagecraft was functional as well as singular.

"I didn't feel very at home on stage to begin with," he's confessed. "Audiences shocked us by not being very interested in the music at first. I started to wiggle about trying to personify the lyrics. I had my bass drum to hide behind." (He had originally been a drummer). The monologues were an additional means of bringing audiences into the fantasy while covering inexperience. "We started to use the monologues when we brought 12-string guitars into the act," Peter explains. "There were long embarassed silences while the guitars were tuned. The monologues gave me another outlet by which to express the fantasy. The way they should work is to get the audience's mind thinking of fantasy powers; to make the ordinary a bit more strange and vice versa."



Suzan Carson

With lyrics like:

"Now, in this ugly world,
it is time to destroy all this evil.
Now, when I give the word,
are you ready to fight for your freedom?"

and:

"Some of you are going to die,
martyrs of course to the freedom I shall provide."

the "Knife" gallops dramatically toward a violent climax. This final track on their second album establishes several of Genesis' most persistent themes so directly that they could come from the mouth of Rael five albums later. "Promise me all of your violent dreams/Light up your body with anger," Gabriel's persona demands. The ironic connection between violence, heroism, and freedom is one Genesis will explore humourously on *Nursery Cryme*, socially on *Selling England by the Pound*, and most comprehensively on *The Lamb*. Meanwhile, some time after *Trespass*, Phil Collins came in on drums and vocals, while Steve Hackett joined as guitarist.

The band's first tour of America coincided with Charisma's release of *Nursery Cryme* through Buddah, who made a strong attempt to break the

In this sense, the Gabriel-penned short story on *The Lamb* sleeve may be viewed as simply a super-monologue. "The story is printed on the album sleeve because it was too all-encompassing for all the songs to contain the action," says the author. "Initially we were going to try to tell the story in lyrics, but it became too much a matter of narrative action." So Gabriel's whimsical monologues have grown from being a listener's aid to become an integral part of the overall scheme of any Genesis project. The monologues work hand in hand with the show's lighting and the slides to provide as complete an ambience as possible.

At any rate, without any pretentious claims that it was a concept album, *Nursery Cryme* was a masterfully conceived and executed whole. Genesis did not attempt to recreate the musical style of the Victorian era, but to convey its obsession with mythology, croquet, romanticism, and repressed sexuality by building moods around fantastic stories. Along with "The Musical Box" were "Harold the Barrel," a funny little tale of suicide; "The Return of the Giant Hogweed," about a killer growth transplanted to England where it takes its revenge by ravaging the countryside; and "The Fountain of Salmacis," in which Banks' mesmerizing mellotron introduces a Greek myth whereby the demi-god Hermaphrodite becomes one with the water-nymph Salmacis. At the song's climax, he curses her "shimmering lake" after he becomes the first

"I think graffiti is great. Puerto Rican kids and their spray cans have really made the subways look good..." --Lou Reed, 1972.

approach to composition. "I think you can join any two pieces of music, provided you find the right bridge passage."

Steve continues, "Peter took more of a back seat in the early stages and just let us get on with it. He was much more concerned with the lyrical side. We did half the music before we decided that Peter should write a story to go with it. We'd been working with the vague lyrical idea of 'the lamb lies down on broadway.' That line seemed to stay with us. A great deal of music was written in the studio, which we'd never done before, because time was running out on us. Previous to that late stage in *The Lamb*'s development, much of the instrumentation was written in a house in the country and recorded with a mobile unit outside of a formal studio."

While the band was allowing for greater improvisational potential within *The Lamb*, Gabriel was consciously changing his lyrical attitude. In Hackett's opinion, "I think with this album, Peter felt a need to pu' himself outside himself more than he had in the past. He's felt that Genesis did 'feminine' music quite well; this time he wanted to sound more masculine, to be big and butch."

"Big and Butch" may not exactly describe *The Lamb Lies Down on Broadway*, but an edge of frustrated teen energy does render the plot's twists and turns more psychologically consistent. As for the unprecedentedly vivid visuals, Gabriel feels, "For any act to work fully, the audience has to be involved. We're not an audience participation group in the traditional sense. If you can make the visual images stronger, you can make the fantasy more real and involve an audience that way. I hope we make the best use of dramatic lighting and shadows. If you suddenly go from footlights to silhouettes, the whole feeling the audience gets can be changed by a switch."

Thus, music, lyrics, slides and costumes all clearly inter-relate to allow *The Lamb* show to shift suddenly from the realistic to the fantastic and back again. The visuals either reinforce the mood of the music and the meaning of the lyrics or counter them. Peter prefaces each of *The Lamb*'s four sections with a paraphrase of his short story, which is a remarkably intricate and many-leveled parable in itself.

Basically, having lead a life of gratuitous violence committed for his alienated ego's sake, Rael emerges one day from a graffiti binge on the subway only to be mysteriously absorbed into a "half-world" on the other side of an ominous wall, which settles on Broadway just as the lamb lies down (never to be heard from again). Once on the other side, he loses control of his destiny, but for his still strong will to survive. In the course of the narrative, Rael is buried or trapped several times, and encounters his brother John repeatedly, as well as a strange assortment of frightening creatures, including seductive snake women; Lilywhite Lillith, a blind guide who leads him out of one dilemma into another; the hideous Slippermen; the Supernatural Anesthetist (Death, "in a light disguise he made himself"); and Doktor Dyper, whose specialty is castration.

One of *The Lamb*'s most complete multi-media moments comes during the "Cuckoo Cocoon"/"In the Cage" sequence. Rael comes out of a coma to become aware that a bizarre cage of stalagtites and stalagmites is trapping him. As Gabriel sings, "I'm drowning in a liquid fear," Rael sees the face of his brother John outside of the cage. The slides depict, in almost animated form, John's face in two dimensions with red blood dripping down his black and white features. Gabriel himself has temporarily shed his jacket and jeans to perform half nude on a set that provides several different levels from which he can hold forth. As Rael peerceives a series "of cages joined to form a star," a spidery web of pale light engulfs the players. So ethereal is the music that it seems to emanate out of the air. No amplifiers are visible.

The staging of "Counting Out Time" provides a cleverly satirical counterpoint to the plot's heavier moods. As Gabriel warbles a tune "conceived as a light hearted look at the insertion of male organs into female organs," the slide screen offers various views of the female anatomy complete with arrows and guide numbers. "The Carpet Crawlers" sequence that follows is a montage of Shaw's design that reflects his familiarity with surrealist painting in plastic fantastic fashion.

Yet the burden of visual representation is not completely on the slide show. Although Gabriel intentionally chose conventional garb in which to portray Rael, he also takes on the character of the mutant Slipperman, with his inflatable dong and "lips that slide across each chin." Completely enveloped by the most revolting costume ever, Gabriel as Slipperman crawls out of a glowing pink plastic tube and proceeds to hop around around like a birth defective toddler.

At other points the lyrics and/or the slides refer to Marlene Dietrich, Caryl Chessman, Martin Luther King, Lenny Bruce and Timothy Leary, all in connection with Rael's plight. There are references to the Drifters' "On Broadway" and Del Shannon's "Runaway." Though *The Lamb* is in many ways as idiomatically American a work as *Selling England* was British, these references are not meant to be token allusions to rock and roll history or pop culture. "Most of us were too young to catch the '50s era and have a certain reverence for rock and roll," Gabriel says realistically. "There's a hell of a lot of bad music in rock and roll. I felt that the Beatles and the Stones weren't identified in my mind with rock and roll. When I was fifteen, I didn't want hand-me-down music. I wanted to find something new."

For a growing legion of fans, Genesis *are* that "something new." As Peter himself has pointed out about the "competition," "Alice Cooper's show seems to dominate everything. Everything, including the music, is subservient to the impression he tries to make on the audience. Bowie creates a fantasy situation and plays his songs from it, rather than building situations out of the songs, which is what we want to do. We are a band that tells stories with our material, with visual effects helping extend the mood. Genesis are the fantasies we set up." And what, after all, did Elvis and the Beatles have to offer, if not the fantasy of power, potent sexuality, and teen unity? These are not ideas foreign to Genesis, but Gabriel and company are expressing them in terms at once more lyrically conceptual and visually visceral. Genesis' peculiarly British aptitude for satire compares favorably with that of the Who or the Kinks, their musical approach is on a par with King Crimson or Yes, and Gabriel is easily one of the best actors in rock, along with Alice and Bowie.

Solo albums and perhaps film work for Gabriel appear to be in Genesis' future. Yet Gabriel remains committed to the positive synergism that Genesis as a band embodies. "Our creative process is a democratic one," he asserts. "Many roads lead to the same end. As long as the group has an auience, I won't worry about which aspects seem to stand out to different people."

man-woman. As trendy for 1971 as Bowie's *Hunky Dory, Nursery Cryme*'s dealings in sexual confusion were simultaneously more sensational and less sensationalistic.

Genesis' next album, *Foxtrot*, was universally acclaimed by the British critics and became the band's first substantial best-seller there. Side one opened with "Watcher of the Skies," a cosmically philosophical song in which Gabriel seemed to take on the persona of God Himself. Combining morality with melodrama, the number benefits from the sure interplay between Banks' multiple keyboards and Hackett's screaming guitar. The superiority of Phil Collins as a percussionist becomes more evident with each album. On *Foxtrot*, he is capable of bursts of lunatic ferocity that stop on a dime, changing tempo subtly yet constantly. Collin's musicianship is typical of Genesis: none of them wastes energy on virtuosity that fails to contribute to the collective mood. "The most important thing to us is the song," Tony Banks insists, "then the playing, and only then the presentation. We're not concerned with flaunting musicianship. Yes and ELP are more dependent on solos. I'm not a soloist as such. I think of myself more as an accompanist who colours the sound."

Foxtrot's "Get 'Em Out By Friday" is one of Gabriel's finest moments. Set at least as far in the future as "The Musical Box" was in the past, "Get 'Em Out By Friday" is the story of Styx Enterprises' fiendishly efficient plot to restrict "humanoid height" to four feet in order to create more flats in the same space. Gabriel impersonates any number of low or humble types, from the villianous Winkler to Mrs. Barrow the victim. In all, "Get 'Em Out By Friday" is as fine a mini-opera as any the Who have ever written.

"Supper's Ready" takes up almost all of side two of *Foxtrot*. Although it requires several concentrated listenings to follow the "plot," "Supper's Ready" reigns as perhaps Genesis' most popular and highly regarded work. Its thematic preoccupations are noble: love, hate, religion, war, illusion, reality and apocalypse are all covered by a multitude of symbolic representations. "Supper's Ready" is both "symphonic" and "classical" without sounding at all like symphonic classical music. Onstage, Peter pulled out all stops on "Supper's Ready," creating in the process his best known role, the flower-man of the "Willow Farm" segment, and his most breathtaking stunt, his flight through the air at the finale.

Following *Foxtrot* was a live set that did well enough in the British charts to confirm Genesis' growing reputation as one of rock's best stage acts, with a deeply loyal following. 1973 saw Charisma switch distibution in America from Buddah to Atlantic and with that switch came *Selling England By the Pound*, Genesis' best selling album in the States to date. While sex, money, and violence remain dominant themes, *Selling England* is comprised of separate songs. The ensemble playing is more spacious and the arrangements make the most of Genesis' more dramatic musical devices. Banks' piano is technically flawless and melodically beautiful, while in "After the Ordeal," Hackett's solos have the authority and electric fluency of the best of Beck or Ronson.

"I Know What I Like (In Your Wardrobe)" was Genesis' first hit single in England. "What I like about that song," Gabriel has commented, " is the fact that here's a character in a rural situation where he's being dominated by the people around him. He's lacking an identity of his own. He lives a life that is preconceived by the people around him and the only time that his own identity comes out is when he's actually on the lawn, mowing the grass. I mean, I get this tremendous, physical buzz by the sensation of cutters slicing through a whole layer of grass. There's really sort of a therapeutic ultra-violence in this act of mowing the lawn." Gabriel's pantomime depiction of this therapeutic ultra-violence" was as spine-tingling as any of Alice Cooper's baby bruising atrocities of the same period and perhaps more soundly conceived.

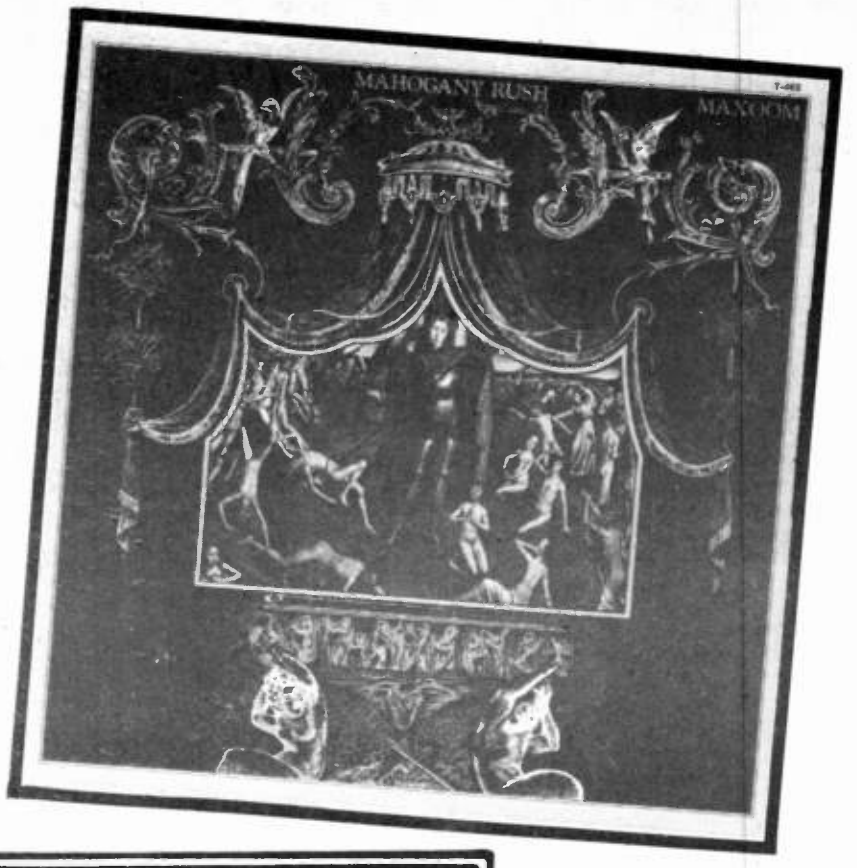
If "I Know What I Like" uncovers the violent underside of the underdog, "The Battle of Epping Forest" concerns the brutal exploitation of the timid. Unleashing a crew of thugs as colorfully crass and cockney as the cast of "Get 'Em Out," "Epping Forest" anticipates *Godfather II* by being taken "from a news story concerning two rival gangs fighting over East-End protection rights." The nearly twelve-minute long cut is boldly ambitious as it moves from a graphic description of the two gangs to a minister who is blackmailed by the organization into promoting "pin-up gurus" as a "karmacanic" for "Love, Peace, and Truth Incorporated." The social comment is scathing and Swiftian; the music is spirited and dances lightly through an amazing array of time changes. Though in some ways less bleak than *Foxtrot*, *Selling England* has a more morally satirical bent, and the expanded arrangements are among Genesis' most inspired and accessible. Produced by the group with John Burns, *Selling England* also has a strikingly clear and present sound that lends the album even greater impact.

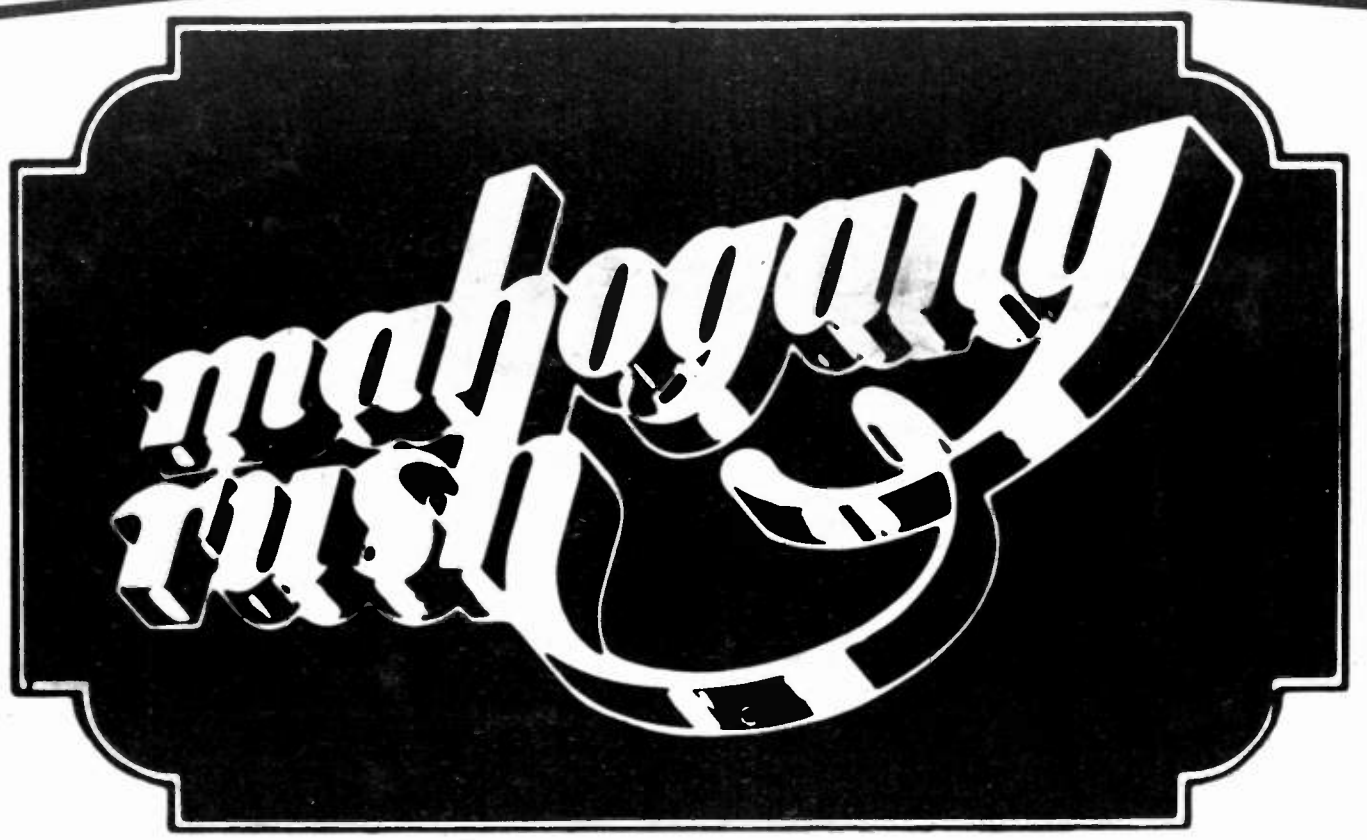
Viewed in retrospect, *Selling England By the Pound* was a transitional album for Genesis. Its songs run the gamut from the specifically British satire of "Epping Forest" to the medieval mysticism of the "Fifth of Fifth," working consistently with symbols of greed, hunger, power and passivity. The album's emphasis on these symbols fairly sums up the band's lyrical concerns before *The Lamb*.

Musically, however, *Selling England* pointed to Genesis' future. While the band had always conscientiously composed bridges between dramatic peaks, "After the Ordeal" was Genesis' first extended instrumental. The interweaving textures of Hackett and Rutherford's guitars were given much freer play, and the result is a refreshing feeling of musical release after the tension of "Epping Forest." This structuring of tense lyrical moments, followed by more relaxed instrumental passages, would prove crucial to the pacing of a much longer work such as *The Lamb*.

Because Rael was Gabriel's boy, so to speak, Peter ended up writing almost all of the lyrics, a major departure from Genesis' former "all titles by all" policy. "If the lyrical story was to continuous, one person had to write all the lyrics and that was Pete," reasoned Banks. The rest of the band concentrated on putting together more music than they had ever before attempted to compose for one album. "If you think in terms of a gigantic jig-saw puzzle, musical bits and pieces that were wrtitten months apart by different members of the group just seem to fit together," Hackett revealed about Genesis'

Genesis without costumes: just average boys.





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Feb. 14	Waterbury, Conn.	Palace Theatre
Feb. 16	New York, N.Y.	Philharmonic
Feb. 17	Trenton, N.J.	
Feb. 24	Washington, D.C.	
Mar. 4	Davenport, Iowa	
Mar. 5	Le Cross, Wisconsin	
Mar. 6	Madison, Wisconsin	
Mar. 7	Milwaukee, Wisconsin	
Mar. 8	Chicago, Illinois	
Mar. 9	St. Louis, Missouri	
Mar. 10	Fort Wayne, Indiana	Coliseum
Mar. 12	Atlanta, Georgia	Municipal Auditorium
Mar. 13	Charleston, So. Carolina	Civic Auditorium
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D O N O V A N

The Pied Piper of Flower Power is Back

By Bobby Abrams

How long has it been, glitter children, since you thought about Donovan; bought one of his albums; talked about him with your friends; wondered what he'd do next? What, not since 1968? If so, you're not the only one. It's been a long time since Donovan inspired that kind of interest, and not entirely by his own fault. Though his peak years were from 1965, when he brought the image of a gentle, wandering minstrel to the pop charts, to 1967 when he came to symbolize for many the ultimate model of the innocent flower child, and though he continued to release hit singles for a couple of years subsequently, by all appearances he had begun to slip after the summer of 1968, and seemed to be clutching at straws when he called on Jeff Back to add his talents to "Barabajagal," following which he resurfaced strongly with "Atlantis" in early '69, then sank without a trace beneath the billowing waves of an era that could no longer succor an artist of his sensitivity.

Or so some would have it. From another perspective, he merely took a three-year sabbatical, returning in 1973 with *Essence to Essence*, an album that showed him to be if anything more creative and more in tune with the times than ever. That this album made no impression on the public is an injustice Donovan is now determined to right. His latest release, *7-Tease*, is one of the year's most challenging releases, and it seems at last that Donovan will be heard, and understood, and respected again for the singular talent he is. Far from being ended, his long career is only beginning to fall into place.

Born in the sleepy Scottish town of Maryhill, near Glascow on February 10, 1946, Donovan Leitch, an Aquarius, personified the coming Aquarian Age of the late sixties. As a kid, he had the usual experiences guaranteed to make good copy for a living legend. Bob Dylan's first album spoke of his numerous attempts to join the circus; Donovan's legend includes two weeks at Strangeways Prison for allegedly filching 5,000 cigarettes from a local cinema. Along with a character named Gypsy Dave, our hero wandered around Cornwall and went to sea, like every good beatnik should.

Don's first song, released in early 1965, was a lighthearted ditty "Why Do You Treat Me Like You Do." Being a misogynist at an early age (that's what they called male chauvinist pigs in that past era), I had to love any song with a verse in it like:

There's just as many geese
And they're flying down south
As there are lies
*Just pouring out of your mouth**

Also noteworthy on this first effort is Donovan's very distinctive method of Travis picking, but more on that later in the story. Incidentally, it recalls an early Dylan song, "If I Had To Do It All Over Again, Babe, I'd Do It All Over You." The 'A' side of this record was "Josie." Herein was established the archetypal Donovan song--lots of earthy, flowery, flowing images and a tale of love, sometimes requited, sometimes not. I got my copy in Tampa, Florida--I don't have to tell you that it was totally unavailable in New York. Somehow Hickory was impressed with this record's sales and gave him another shot. That's all that was needed. This time out he got his first monster single hit, an oft-recurring pattern of Donovan's career.

"Catch the Wind" in retrospect contains no fancy writing or impressive guitar moves; in fact it is a mere restating of "Josie." Yet to an incipient folk/civil rights/peace movement, brought up on songs pregnant with meaning, we hung on every word. And what great pseudo-philosophical moves there were in this song--"In the chilly hours of uncertainty"; "I want to hide awhile/behind your smile" or the best "I may as well try and catch the wind." Two years hence Simon and Garfunkel would get away with the same easy lyrics. How existential! How foolish we were.

Donovan in the bullrushes...

That summer came the first Donovan album, titled appropriately, *Catch the Wind*. In case we missed the point that this here dude was the English Bob Dylan, the back cover photo shows Don in his Huck Finn cap, dungaree jacket and harmonica holder, an outfit patented by Dylan. Moreover the album art is identical to that of the first Dylan album. The only real difference is that Donovan wrote his own liner notes. There is the bow to traditional folk music in "The Alamo," "You're Gonna Need Somebody on Your Bond," "Keep On Truckin" and "Donna Donna" (one of my all-time favorite songs). Unlike Dylan, these songs are somewhat softer, less hard-edged, but like everyone else in 1965, I missed that subtlety. Also the tip of the hat to Woody Guthrie; no "Song to Woody" but at least an opening dedication as Donovan sings Guthrie's "Car Car (Riding in My Car)." A tough protest song, written by a fellow writer at Southern Music, Mick Softley, "Goldwatch Blues"; an equally tough original blues number, "Cuttin' Out" and the beautiful "To Sing For You" conclude the album. That whole summer was spent learning Donovan songs, especially the really fine picking, as he was the most melodic of all the folk singers.

It seemed that we had another Dylan in our midst; they sure made it easy for us to miss the point. And while Dylan had long since departed the purist folk movement by the time *Fairy Tale* was released in late '65, it certainly looked like Donovan was following in the master's footsteps, even to the point of consorting with Joan Baez, Dylan's immediate ex.

Fairy Tale represents a growth in the artist's range of capabilities. To refresh our memories, 1965-1966 saw a gaining momentum of the Vietnam War protest. This album has a fair share of protest material. Donovan "covers" the Buffy Sainte-Marie classic, "Universal Soldier," (also done, oddly enough, by Glen Campbell who had the hit) in a most credible manner, as well as his complex composition of protest against alienation and war, "Circus of Sour" based loosely on the William Butler Yeats' masterpiece, "Circus Animals Desertion." Another similar protest song is "Ballad of a Crystal Man," quite good and reminiscent of Dylan's masterful "My Back Pages." Especially outstanding is the chorus, "For seagull I don't want your wings/I don't want your freedom in a lie" and some solid blowing on his harp.

There are the inevitable love songs that are Donovan's main trump suit: "Colours," "Ballad of Geraldine," like a softer "Bob Dylan's Dream," the pretty "Jersey Thursday" and the remarkable (especially for its time) homosexual love song, "To Try For the Sun." A set of inevitable automatics are the Donovan collection of drug and drug-related songs. "Candy Man" is a reworking of the old John Hurt song and "Sunny Goodge Street" (later recorded by Judy Collins on her excellent *In My Life* album). The album title derives from a reworking of a Hans Christian Anderson story, "Little Tin Soldier," and two complex, mythic modern fairy tales, "Belated Forgiveness Plea" and "Summer Day Reflection Song."

With both the critical and commercial success of this album, Donovan was fully acclaimed as Crown Prince to King Dylan. Soon their careers would diverge in totally opposite directions, but at this point in time it is worth discussing their relative similarities, at least as then perceived. Both wrote folk songs that seemed to be poetry, spouted a lot of philosophy (especially existentialism) and seemed to be the revitalized moment of life and light for a dying Beatnik movement, both inspired an entire generation to imitate and follow them. On the other hand, Dylan represented the forces of rampant nihilism, raging hostility, whereas Donovan was a prophet of peace and love, English gentility. In their poetry, Dylan specialized in the hip phrase, the Blakeian metaphysic, the dark ominous underside of life as reported by Baudelaire. In contrast, Donovan preferred the lush romanticism of Coleridge or Yeats. Dylan was the hard voice of amphetamine consciousness; Donovan the gentle dope smoker.

By 1966, the furor over Dylan's "having gone electric" had simmered down and one would have thought the folk movement would have come to grips with the phenomenon of the Rolling Stones. One would have thought a lesson had been learned, but no, fascists are fascists and the gang from *Sing Out!* was intent on destroying yet another career, having failed in their efforts to erase Bob Dylan from the public consciousness.

Donovan acquired a new manager, the infamous pop hitmaker, Mickie Most, and a new label affiliation, Epic, and just as rapidly had a monster hit on his hands, "Sunshine Superman," which presaged the monster popularity of the *Sunshine Superman* album and firmly established Donovan in the pantheon of stars with mass appeal (read *AM* success). He also lost a good part of his audience with this release. As Donovan puts it, "The underground kicked me out. It was bad enough to make records, but if the record sold more than three copies, they were sure you had 'sold out'."

This album denoted at once a maturity in his artistic vision and a growth of naivety. Donovan progressed from retelling the simple stories of Hans Christian Anderson to reworkings of basic English myths, as well as American pop culture. It also revealed his susceptibility to the power of these self-same myths. Further, as an artist, his lyrics and phrasings of same became more important than his simple yet elegant guitar playing. From now on, in his career, he would rely more on sidemen for his musical flourishes.

YoramKahama

There are a bunch of hippy-dippy songs (the album design is San Francisco art nouveau), most notably "The Trip" and "Fat Angel." The former is ostensibly about LA, and the phrasing, the timing is fantastic. What isn't is the fact that it's an obvious cop of Sonny & Cher's "The Beat Goes On." Filled with not so subtle drug references, this song would never have made the playlist on the McLendon stations. Not to be outdone, John Philipps would later use this as the basis for "Creeque Alley." "Fat Angel" is a more sophisticated version of his earlier "Candy Man."

One of the most underrated of the many, many love songs of Donovan is "Ferris Wheel." Nothing spectacular, no big moves, just a lovely song. Another underrated gem is the merely majestic, baroque "Celeste."

A successful attempt at re-creating the court of King Arthur is "Guinevere." Not so successful is "Three King Fishers" which derives from the same general source. Equally unsuccessful on re-listening are the two hits, "Sunshine Superman" and "Season of the Witch" which both sound extremely mundane and substanceless.

When "Mellow Yellow" was released in the winter of 1966-1967, Donovan had shot his wad as far as I was concerned. This song was the most excessive glorification of a most ridiculous excursion by the counter-culture (the smoking of banana peels in an attempt to get high). As far as I was concerned, he was finished as a serious artist. As far as the consumer market was concerned, his career was just beginning. He would soon emerge as the guru of every ludicrous venture of the late-sixties youth culture.

Nor is the album any more enlightening. In fact, it is quite easily one of the worst ever made by a major artist. There isn't even one song that is merely adequate, passably listenable. Yet other performers have come back from such a disaster and that would include all our major recording stars, like the Stones, Dylan, John Lennon, the Beach Boys, the Kinks *ad infinitum*. *Hurdy Gurdy Man* is an album of out of sight love songs, the sixties equivalent to *Johnny Mathis' Greatest Hits*, and an album, which on the asesthetic side, brought Donovan back from the abyss of disaster (In fairness, it should be noted that *Mellow Yellow* was anything but a commercial flop; it was Donovan's most successful album to date).

My absolute favorite cut is "Jennifer Juniper," because my absolute favorite lady was named Jennifer. I've written several poems to and about her, many of which have won awards, and none compare with this song, which is absolutely perfect, so I'm quite jealous. This album in particular and much of Donovan's style derives from a legendary jazz trio, Lambert, Hendricks and Ross, whose vocal scatting style remain unique in the art of lyrical phrasing. "Hurdy Gurdy Man" is a prime example of this; even better is an obscure cut on this album, "As I Recall It." A similar move is "The Entertaining of a Shy Girl" which is a lighthearted readymade but awfully nice. "West Indian Lady" is one of the first reggae songs and is an extremely stylized move for Don. At the height of his success, Donovan appeared as a modern Pied Piper. "The Sun is a Very Magic Fellow" is a song Mr. Bluejeans (from *Captain Kangaroo*) could do, and its inspiration may even have been Burl Ives or Pete Seeger. Oddly enough, the album sounds much better than I recall it sounding when it was released. I remember an incident when someone left *Hurdy Gurdy Man* on a radiator overnight and how distraught my old lady was. I tried to cheer her up by saying "Hell, it's only a Donovan album" and I almost got my entire record collection broken over my head. While Donovan worked on his massive gift to his adoring public, Epic decided to release some more product, as Donovan was the hottest guru this side of Swami Satchidenada and so a live concert album was deemed appropriate. Don at this time appeared in flowing white robes (check out the picture on the album back) preceeded by fourteen vestal virgins sprinkling flowers in his path. Don't let me forget to mention the ten tons of incense burned at every concert. It was quite a spectacle. It also points out the man's incredible naivety when wondering why he was so soundly rejected by the "underground."

"When people used to come up to me," he recalls, "and say 'Wow, you are really influencing all these kids' I knew it was nonsense. The kids were influencing and producing *me*. I was just their singer. Every night in concert, we shared. We were just friends. I hoped that together we could build a new world."

Actually, as "live" albums go, this one is quite good. Recorded at the Anaheim Convention Center, the sound quality is excellent and there is just enough patter to make you believe it was *actually* cut there. For his fans it included a lot of previously unrecorded material and the whole is pleasant and unassuming enough. "Rules and Regulations" is a sophmoric piece of drivel in an English vaudeville style, the kind of stuff Ray Davies could toss off at a moment's notice. It was the kind of stuff his audience really went wild for--no wonder he went off the deep end.

'Widow With Shawl (A Portrait)" is a tight composition, one of Donovan's best, which is like a condensation of any Thomas Hardy novel about life in England in the nineteenth century and predates the widely acclaimed *French Lt.'s Woman* by about 3 years. It is also significantly better than the aforementioned work. Two favorites of mine are "Celeste" (discussed earlier) which is as good live, and "Poor Cow," which Don wrote for the movie of the same name. While Donovan's singing is not up to Joan Baez's rendition, still it is the only recorded version Donovan has done and it's a great song. Also included for the first time is "There is a Mountain," a song which the Allman Brothers transformed into "Mountain Jam" and thereupon a reputation built. The album concludes quite rightly with "Mellow Yellow" and Don is not only mad about saffron and electric bananas, but , as he sings "I'm just mad about fourteen year old girls/and they're just mad about me!" A little pedophilia certainly couldn't hurt with what was fast becoming his only audience.

All artists feel obligated at some point to create a magnum opus (cf. Peter Townshend and *Tommy*) and our hero was no exception. Heavily under the influence of the Mahareshi Mahesh Yoga (along with several other foolish rock stars), he felt he owed more than his art to his audience (perhaps he was overly worried about the kharmic debt he was piling up by his excessiveness) and so he called his next record *A Gift From a Flower To a Garden*. A more unwanted gift I can't imagine.

That the album is undistinguished is not its worst fault. Who could even get as far as playing this 2-record set amidst its revolting piety and hype? Furthermore, Epic, in a merchandising move straight out of the Moby grape debacle of the same [ED. NOTE: Columbia released six different singles simultaneously off the first Grape album]year, released each record separately, as well as the 2 album boxed set, replete with photos of the Flower Prince, or the Fairy King, as you will.

Phonograph Record/The First (as it is referred to) is also known as *Wear Your Love Like Heaven* and is by far the better of the two. I don't know if the title song alone could justify a 2-record set, but it did make a great commercial and that's more than you can say for "Rip That Joint." Two other songs on side one okay--"Mad John's Escape" and "There Was a Time"--but I missed the point, and I might as well add, there's a lyric sheet included!

Phonograph Record/The Second is alternately titled *For Little Ones*. Good reason--they're the only

ones who could accept this drivel. Not content with capturing the fourteen year old market, he intentionally strove to be number one among nine and ten year olds. I should think we might expect more from a seasoned professional releasing his seventh album.

To say that *A Gift From a Flower To a Garden* was an unmitigated disaster is to be charitable. His career was about to hit the skids only Don didn't realize it. The problem was that in broadening his listener appeal he had diluted that segment of his audience which bought albums and generally could be classified as hard-core fans. Mickie Most came up with a far-fetched idea. He had two superstars whose careers could use a little boost, so he encouraged Jeff Beck to join with Donovan on an album. This move ultimately destroyed whatever career Donovan might have been able to salvalge, but that's getting ahead of our story. The Jeff Beck stuff is a total mismatch, better forgotten even if Donovan didn't forget it. The album, *Barabajagal* had two hit singles: "To Susan On the West Coast Waiting" a modest hit, and "Atlantis" a supermonster by anyone's standards. The former incidentally is an updating of "West Indian Lady," a stock trick in Don's bag--the recurring use of the same melody. While "Atlantis" gave his sagging career a shot in the arm, it also paradoxically ended it, for it ruined whatever minimal credibility he had with an older audience. Those who were into Atlantis myths and Edgar Cayce and tarot cards and the occult and all the other trappings Donovan manifested, had long since abandoned these beliefs for a retreat back to quiet sanity as Richard Nixon's reign began in America. Times were a-changing and Donovan, like a dinosaur, was unable to adapt to the new climate. Further, while he may have succeeded in capturing the ten year old market, their attention span is quite limited and by the next week, they were raving over Bobby Sherman or David Cassidy.

Donovan liked the results of working with the Jeff Beck Group (surely he was the only one) and recorded another album with them, *Open Road*. And like the great isle of Atlantis, this stifferoonie of a record sank his career permanently.

In an attempt to keep something going, Epic slapped together a greatest hits album whose greatest feature is an eight page booklet of some rather intimate and intriguing personal photos. Of material not available elsewhere is "Epistle to Dippy" which is no great loss and "Lalena" which I do like (I guess Donovan isn't the only one suffering from a lush romanticism) and had thought was on about five other albums, but I guess not.

Donovan decided at this time to take a sabbatical from the music business and get back in touch with life and himself. He concentrated on his marriage and the raising of his three children. Finally he ended his reclusion in 1972 with the release of *Cosmic Wheels*. As the entire scope of the industry had changed in those three years, he made nary a dent in the marketplace, being ancient history. Nor did the album deserve a better fate. It's still a little hippy-dippy, even if quite subdued. The inside is a cosmic coloring-book for use with cosmic crayons. Cosmic crayons indeed! The best cut is "The Intergalactic Laxative," a Tom Lehrer type of song about the obvious problems of toilet usage in space. In perspective however, this was a successful failure for Donovan, for he seemed to have cleansed his writing of the horrible excesses he practiced in the late sixties. It also paved the way for the aesthetically successful *Essence to Essence* and the totally successful *7-Tease*. He also changed managers during this period which was probably the best move he could have made to revitalize his career. This is not to overly disparage Mickie Most, who has an unequalled ability to produce hit singles. Indeed, Donovan still speaks highly of him. "There were no problems with Mickie. I just need a change to pursue directions other than those Mickie had in mind. After all, I had had the same producer for almost ten years and I needed to experiment, room to stretch out." I think too that making hit singles wasn't Donovan's real milieu and it must have been exceedingly frustrating to be inactive and ignored during a period when the singer-songwriter was in ascendancy.

To take out partial insurance against failure, Andrew Oldham, Donovan's new manager and producer, enlisted the services of every session man in the business and included on the *Essence to Essence* album are: Carl Radle, Steve Marriot, Peter Frampton, Carole King, Tom Scott, Russ Kunkel, Nicky Hopkins, Leland Sklar, Bobby Whitlock and Jim Gordon.

"Operating Manuel for Spaceship Earth" opens the album and it certainly is a better tribute to Bucky Fuller than Sugarloaf's attempt in '71. Following this is "Lazy Daze" which is an exact reproduction of any Doug Kershaw song and excellently done. I guess over the past ten years Don learned that not all love affairs are perfect expressions of heavenly harmony and "Life Goes On" is a great pop rendering of the pain of a broken heart. Another song in a similar vein is "Boy For Every Girl." While my taste may be quaint, I especially like the last two verses:

Yoram Kahama

To lie at rest upon your bosom
Tongue still taste thy maiden musk
To lie within your woman warm
Upon your rising falling form

To lie at rest upon your bosom
Tongue still taste thy manna dew
To lie within thy loving calm
Upon the rising falling form *

I think he has handled a delicate subject extraordinarily well.

During this period, Donovan still remained hermetic and secluded. No hit singles emerged from the album, Epic didn't want to pour a lot of money into a reclusive artist and progressive stations were leery of getting burned by a Donovan who could just as easily turn around and be an AM teeny-bopper smash again.

David Bowie got together with Donovan in an attempt to do something for his career. Bowie in the seventies has been very active in working with talented artists whose careers were on the rocks (some examples that come to mind are: Lou Reed, Lulu, and Ian Hunter). He wrote and produced a single, "Rock 'N Roll With Me" but this didn't do the trick either. What is important to note is that an artist and talent scout of Bowie's stature would be interested in Donovan. The point is that Donovan is obviously a talented artist who just needs to find himself in relation to contemporary trends in music in the seventies. With his new album, titled appropriately, *7-Tease* (reviewed extensively in *PRM* last month), I believe he has found the groove.

Coinciding with the release of this album is an international tour. While the operetta concept of the concert is a little hokey, at least the flowers and incense are gone. And it's truly great to have Donovan back on stage performing, for he is a vital and exciting live act.

What *7-Tease* proves most and what we can learn from this retrospective of Donovan's career is not to give up on an artist. An audience as well as a creative artist must have faith in vision and talent. If a performer ever had validity, that validity is rarely dissipated. Donovan Leitch is an artist of enormous talent and if at times, one felt disappointed by the way he chose to apply it, there was always the knowledge that he could do it. He has throughout suffered from a hype (intentional or otherwise) that exposed him to image manipulation but he has always recovered. He also suffered from comparison to Dylan and expectations that no artist, not even Dylan, could live up to. Hopefully he has gained some perspectives in the course of his decade long career and he's back for good this time. I think Donovan puts it best: "I feel it's time to say hello and get together with friends again."

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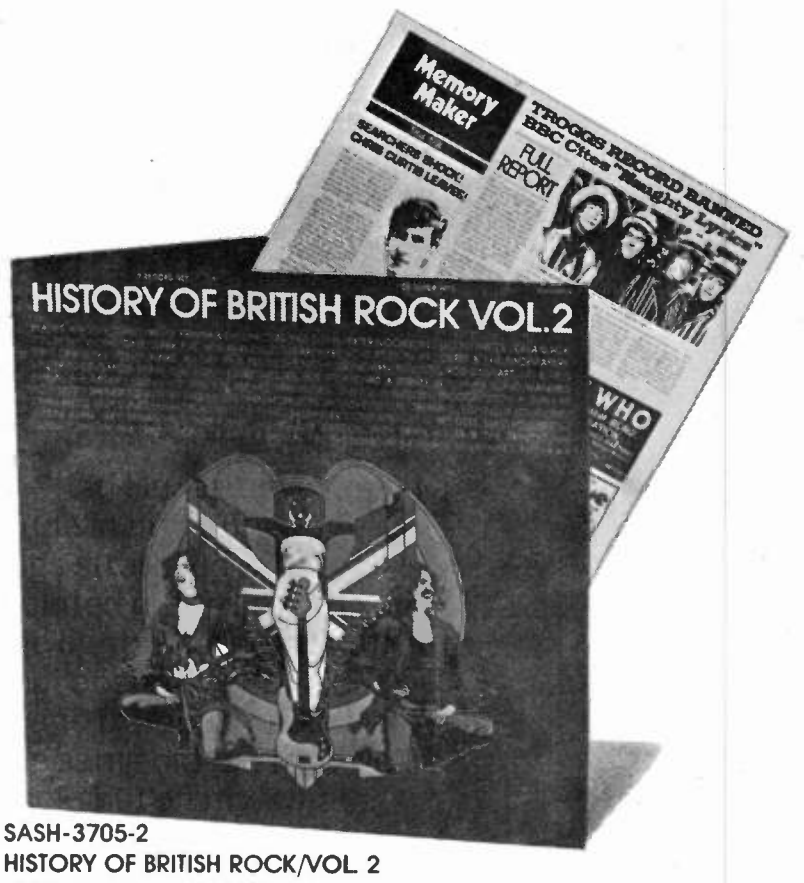

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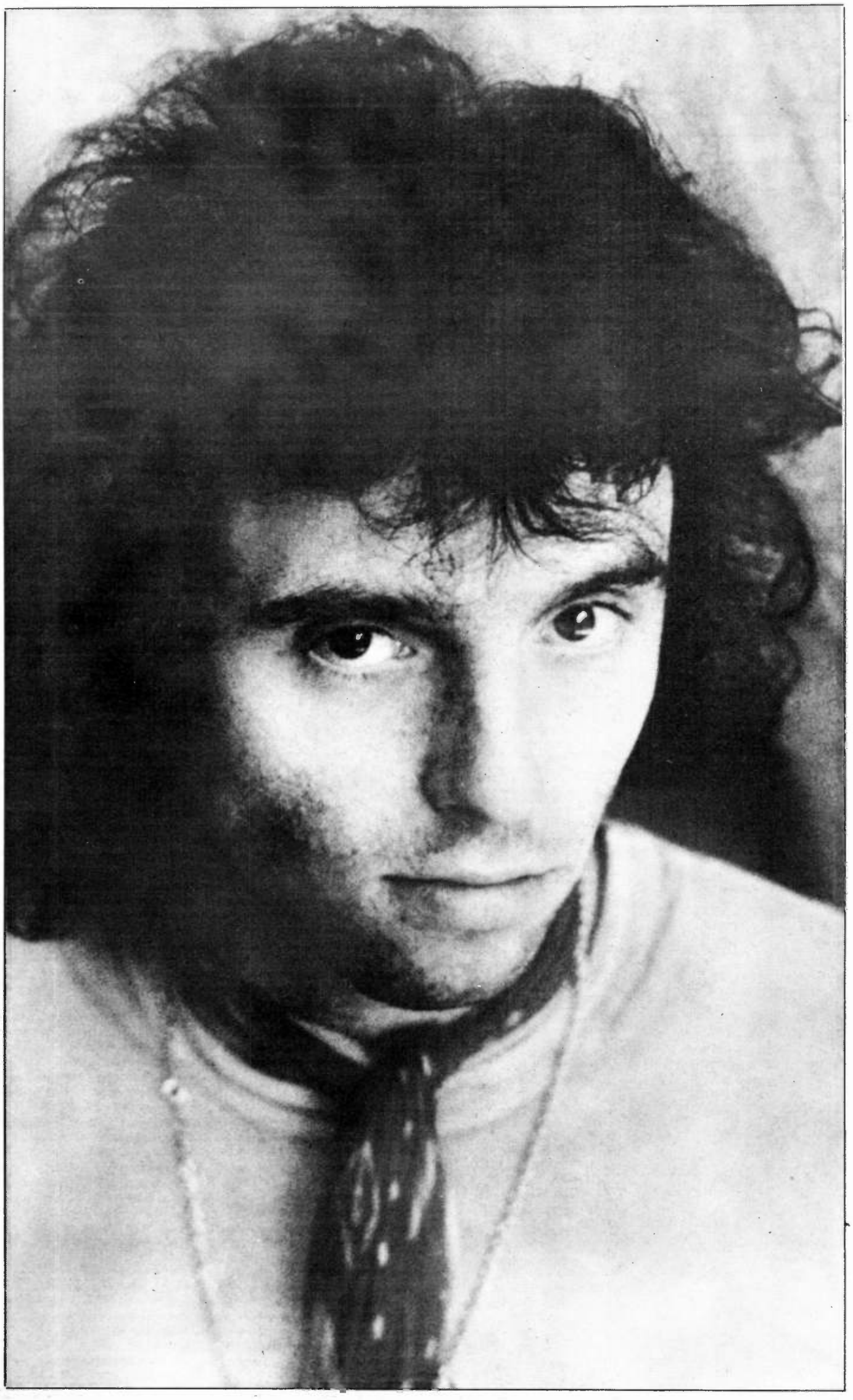

NILS LOFGREN
Nils Lofgren
A&M SP 4509

By KEN BARNES

Well, this is more like it. Nils Lofgren, in his first solo attempt, has come up with a smashing album that restores him to the forefront of rock & roll, '70s style. Unlike his last album (*Gone Crazy*, with the now-defunct Grin), the original material is first-rate throughout. Unlike the one before that (*All Out*), there are no ruinous gospel backing vocals. And unlike any album with Grin, Lofgren doesn't share lead vocals with the gruff-voiced vastly inferior Bob Berberich (Grin's drummer).

In other words, *Nils Lofgren* is in a class with Grin's brilliant first two albums (*Grin* and *1+1*). Neither of those .LP's afforded the Washington D.C. band any substantial capital gains, but they did get ecstatic reviews (especially *1+1*). They were 1971 albums, well before the Raspberries, Stories, *et al.*, started putting the snap and crackle back into pop and achieving some degree of success at it. Lofgren and Grin were slightly ahead of their time and went nowhere fast commercially. But the two albums (again, especially *1+1*) remain vitally important '71 American rock-works, along with the spiritually related *Crazy Horse* (a still-strong album on which Lofgren's contributions were extensive). All worth picking up if you haven't already.

"NILS LOFGREN IS STILL YEARS AHEAD OF HIS TIME..."

Lofgren on his own displays all his main strengths. His best songs are exquisite acoustic/electric, melodic/rocking parlays, exhilirating combinations ("Back It Up," "I Don't Want to Know," "Can't Buy a Break" and "Rock and Roll Crook" qualify in this department). On "If I Say It's So," he captures that deliberate, relentless, mesmerically repetitious rock sound at which Crazy Horse excelled, alone and backing Neil Young, when Young was still sufficiently energized to rock awhile ("When You Dance," "Cinnamon Girl," etc.).

Once in a while, Lofgren unleashes something really explosive--"Moontears" and "Please Don't Hide" off *1+1* are prime examples and so is "Keith Don't Go (Ode to the Glimmer Twin)" herein. Brilliant bursts of chord riffing and a frantic lead workout dominate the proceedings, but it's got a great melody and consists of a plea to Keith Richard to stick with the Stones--a class tune all around.

Lofgren also mines his usual lyrical lode of lovelorn teen anguish, notably on "One More Saturday Night" and the delightful "I Don't Want to Know." The teenage-trauma vein is pretty well played out by now, and is often a lode of crap if handled clumsily; but Lofgren's touch is still deft and his wistful lyrical/melodic fusions (combined with husky appealing vocals) are still irresistible.

Nils Lofgren isn't perfect by any means. "Duty" and "The Sun Hasn't Set on This Boy Yet" are on the ordinary side (though both have sparkling passages that you can program yourself to wait for); and his version of "Goin' Back" (on which he chooses to spotlight his nimble pianistic abilities) doesn't approach the Byrds' (or Dusty Springfield's for that matter; but then it's unlikely that it would have, and it's still a great song). There's also a slight excess of slide excess. Small matter, though; this is an exciting album and a sterling solo debut. The commercial climate for Lofgren's nfectious style of rock & roll hasn't really mproved all that much since '71, but nonetheless this album deserves to hit big. Artists who can rock *and* sound tuneful are a rare and wondrous breed--it's about time people started supporting the species.

PILOT
Pilot
EMI ST-11368

WHO DO YOU OUT DO
Lon & Derrek
A&M SP-4507

By GREG SHAW

Pilot is one of the new year's more pleasant debuts. Composed of three guys who met in a studio in Edinburgh and decided to form a group, Pilot seems to be a natural, harmonious blend of talents with a rare ability to compose bright, memorable songs and perform them in an inventive, slightly Beatleish manner. What they are is a sort of second-rate Hudson Brothers, falling short in personality and intensity, but surpassing in spontaneity others in the genre such as Splinter. Which already places them pretty high in the pop ratings.

There are twelve songs on the album, each of which tends to become familiar in very short time--always the mark of real songwriting. They're not all great; a couple are overly long, and several turn out to be insubstantial despite some pretty touches. But on the other hand there are two songs, "Just a Smile" and "Magic," that have to be called classics--if that's a word you'd use to describe the best of Badfinger or the Hudson Bros. It's that kind of stuff, with snappy tunes, spiffy production, clever hooks, and cute harmonies; when done properly, there's nothing more instantly addictive or deeply satisfying.

Also of note are "Girl Next Door," "Sooner or Later," "Over the Moon" and "Never Give Up," though none are of single quality. But it's a solid, listenable album, and when they take time to really hone their talents, Pilot should be an important group.

Lon & Derrek Van Eaton are no newcomers, having recorded previously on Apple--though without arousing much interest. On this Richard Perry-produced album, they prove that their time at Apple was not spent in vain; granting the existence of an "Apple sound," Lon & Derrek have it down pat. Unfortunately, they have a tendency to sing, play guitar, and write very much like George Harrison, where a similar influence from Paul or John might have offered far greater possibilities. This is illustrated in "You Lose," whose Paulish tone of buoyancy makes it one of the album's strongest cuts.

Paul's other appearance is in "Do You Remember," an overblown ballad intoned half-seriously while angels harmonize and guitars gently weep. This song establishes the Van Eatons' best claim to individuality--an obsession with teenage lust that goes a long way toward offsetting the pomposity of Harrison's influence. "Do You Remember" recalls the good old days in the back seat of the car: "You said wait a minute/I don't think I can do it/My mama told me it was wrong/But when I kissed you/We fogged the windows/ Do you remember, that was the night you gave your love..." Real Raspberries stuff, and while it sounds kind of odd in this musical context, it works.

A similar theme crops up in "All You're 'Hungry For is Love," with a funky rhythm that gives the sound of a Hudson Bros. outtake, and in "Baby It's You," whose large potential as a Raspberries-style teen ballad is somewhat marred by an overdose of *Abbey Road* cops. Of all the hundreds of great riffs and licks identifiable with the Beatles, one can only wonder why so many groups keep going back to their lowest point, those weary sounds of 1969.

When Lon & Derrek don't sound like the Beatles, they usually sound like somebody else--from Elton John on "Let It Grow," to the Looking Glass on "Music Lover."they seem unable to combine outside influences into any fresh synthesis of their own, which makes their songs come off as merely imitative. They seem also at times to lack imagination, allowing vocals to stand bare while they cry out to be double-tracked into the kind of harmonies this music thrives on. And yet, there are enough redeeming qualities to make this an album worth hearing, and the potential for greater things is plainly evident.

HOTTER THAN HELL
Kiss
Casablanca 7006

By ALAN BETROCK

Out of the ashes of the New York rock scene came Kiss. They have clearly been elevated (symbolically echoing the ascent their drummer makes during their stage act) from a bunch of NY street kids into the leaders of a new wedge in rock and roll. Kiss are not so much a heavy metal band as just plain heavy--the difference being in the amount of THUD--and Kiss, at their best, are pure thud.

Kiss are one of the few groups fighting against the trend of understandable rock and roll, which is precisely why they have succeeded. Too many bands these days want to be understood and accepted by the mass media outside of traditional rock scenarios. That's exactly what killed rock and roll since 1968. It killed the Stones. It killed Alice Cooper. It killed David Bowie. Once rock gets too serious or moves outside its milieu onto the pages of *Time* or onto the stage of the Metropolitan Opera, it's lost.

Kiss don't want to play Broadway in NYC. Kiss don't even worry about airplay or a hit single. It's not that they wouldn't accept a hit single, but they don't tailor their recordings to that end. They play night after night, month after month, in every city that will have them. They concentrate on those "secondary markets," often untouched by the "stars."

On this, their second album, Kiss have become heavier and tighter than on last year's debut platter. They still have a tendency to be overly repetitive or to dredge up stale licks or phrases, but thankfully, this is becoming less and less of a problem. "Got to Choose" is a good opener, and "Parasite" sounds just like one of those Rhinocerous instrumentals which used to backup auto-speedway commercials until Mountain came along, yet both could have been chopped by at least one minute each. The same goes for one of the only slower tracks on the album, "Goin' Blind" which is actually quite strong. "Hotter Than Hell" is one of my favorite Kiss tracks, rivalling "Strutter" off the first LP. Too bad I can't say the same for the Winter Brothers boogie influence on "Let Me Go Rock 'N Roll" which closes side one.

"All The Way" and especially "Mainline" are two of the band's catchier songs, but the sacrifice of heaviness and drive in the search for melody may not be a worthwhile trade. I like the Troggs-influenced "Strange Ways," and "Comin' Home" is probably the most successful combination of melody and heaviness on the album.

I just hope Kiss don't start taking themselves too seriously. That is, I do hope that they're serious about what they're doing, but that doesn't negate the occasional insertion of melody, satire, or even humor into their totality. One of the best things they've done was the single remake of Bobby Rydell's hit, "Kissin' Time," unfortunately not included here. Like their Casablanca sister band, Fanny, (who put out a remake of "I've Had It"), Kiss have the ability to make an energetic single, utterly disposable and totally entertaining.

Granted that you may not walk around humming Kiss songs to yourself, and you probably don't even know most of the titles either. The lyrics won't be quoted, and you couldn't possibly care who wrote or played what. But Kiss have a solidity, direction and stance which has to rate them as one of the most significant bands around today. They probably won't be around for many years to come, but who cares--they're here right now, and that's all that counts.

JUST A BOY
Leo Sayer
Warner Brothers BS 2836

By DAVID WILSON

Sayer's first album, *Silverbird*, and Roger Daltrey's solo album introduced Sayer, promising what appeared to be the emergence of a major new talent. Hopefully, now that Sayer has begun to establish himself, we won't have to wait another year and a half for the next album. On *Silverbird*, half of the Sayer vocals sounded like a diminuative Rod Stewart. On the other half, co-writing partner Dave Courtney's piano gave Sayer a recording style much like early Elton John. On *Just A Boy* a trio of Sayers dressed in blue, green and white, perhaps aware of their cameleon capabilities, laugh at the sheepish clown left over from *Silverbird*. Good riddance. On the American tour, the confused pathos of the clown personna got in the performer's way more than it added an extra punch to his lyrics. The songs of *Just A Boy* are even more in texture than the first album, though they still exhibit the instincts of a Vaudevillian. It's easy enough to imagine Sayer twirling his fingers, tapping the spot on his arm where his watch should be, and spinning his wrists like they belonged on ball bearings. *Just A Boy* is a record which is very much aware of its listeners. The songs alternate between sentimental, melodramatic asides to the audience, and the exuberant gutsiness of the choruses.

Sayer's lyrics are simple, accessible and immediate. The songs are as much an exorcism of Sayer's ghostly clown as anything else. The music on *Just a Boy* moves in an autobiographical, historical progression, proving Sayer's good humor in the face of adversity.


Suzan Carson

Leo Sayer: death of a clown.

"Telepath" open with a quavering vocal that sounds very close to Roxy Music's Bryan Ferry. Courtney's piano and Andrew Powell's string arrangement start the instrumental trademark with a subdued backing powered by Sayer's vocal gymnastics, ranging from a comfortable singing voice to a hysterical falsetto. "Train" returns to a central image from the Sayer iconography. "Innocent Bystander" on *Silverbird* began with the shouting--"Standing by the railway station, waiting for a train..." This time it's--"Train, Oh train, the journey ends, and starts again."

"The Bells of St. Mary's" is one of the most explicitly autobiographical songs that Sayer has penned. He almost sounds like Van Morrison with his--"He used to play mouth organ, in a folk club." Both of Sayer's hits from the Daltrey album are here, and "One Man Band" is next up. Sayer's version sounds more ambivalent than Daltrey's. He's laughing at the pain and the joke of his own helplessness as a one man busker while his harmonica threads its way into the last verse and chorus of the song.

"When I Came Home This Morning" is the most effective number on *Just A Boy*. Its chorus of "I Love You" phrases the words in as many different forms and emotions as might be possible. It leaves Sayer heir to Joe Cocker's old scream, and ends with the gasping cries from a painful, hurting and needing love. "Long Tall Glasses," the British single, is an uncharacteristic cut, light and funny, while "Another Time" reinforces the Cocker recollection. "Solo" takes the "of course I can dance" riff from "Long Tall Glasses" and uses it to an ironic purpose. The lyric still leaves us with a lighthearted acceptance of Sayer's musical path. Finally, "Giving It All Away" is the second half of the Daltrey hit , with Sayer giving his audience a more confessional retelling of the tale.

Just A Boy is a progression from, and a more unified effort than the first Sayer album, which came off as a collection of ripe singles. This album's lyrical irony, its sense that nothing is gained without loss, is a mature and unusual posture to find in Sayer's form of popular rock. Without knowing it, Sayer may be one of the artists who was supposed to come around and save rock in 1974. Maybe he'll start to do it in '75.

IT'S TIME
Bonnie Bramlett
Capricorn CP 0148

By BUD SCOPPA

Delaney & Bonnie made a bunch of fine records in rapid succession around the turn of the decade--if anything, the music on such albums as *Accept No Substitute, On Tour,* and *Motel Shot* has improved with age. The Bramletts have been apart for nearly three years now, and the taste and spirit so evident in their work together has up to now been noticeably lacking in the solo projects of each. Bonnie--even with the terrific Average White Band backing her--wasn't able to turn her first solo effort, *Sweet Bonnie Bramlett* (Columbia), into anything more than an intermittently pleasant, mostly mediocre album.

Since then, Bonnie has formed a band, worked live a great deal, and gone to Macon to record at Capricorn. It's particularly appropriate that *It's Time* should be a product of Bonnie's interaction with the Capricorn house crew (producer Johnny Sandlin, Boyer & Talton, several Allmans), since Delaney & Bonnie pretty much initiated the rock audience to the blues- and gospel-rooted Southern rock & roll that has more recently brought this label and its artists into prominence. And at Capricorn, there's a set-up not dissimilar in style and general rapport to the community of musicians that formed around D&B a few years ago.

Everything was so right for Bonnie this time that it just had to work, and--happily enough--it does. In these sympathetically professional surroundings, Bonnie reminds us what an exceptional singer she is. And in so doing, she puts several of her recently more celebrated contemporaries to shame. Although she's a white woman, she sings with a deep-rooted, unaffected blackness of spirit and style that completely transcends categorization. On *It's Time*, Bonnie's churchy voice and tambourine and her Stax-style horn arrangements drive the Capricorn musicians to their funkiest, most feverish ensemble work ever.

Bonnie's voice seems to have hardened a bit since the days of D&B--her gruffness makes her sound just a little tougher than before in hard-driving numbers like the Bramletts "Your Kind of Kindness" and just a little more wounded than before in dramatic ballads like Scott Boyer's lovely "It's Time." The material was extremely well chosen, although I'm not sure in some cases whether the songs are memorable in themselves or because of Bonnie's altogether inspired

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performances of them. There's certainly no question though about the quality of the Jackie Wilson hit, "Higher and Higher," which Bonnie does in a classic tent-show style or Ivory Joe Hunter's "Since I Met You Baby," which--if it weren't already familiar--would seem to have been written expressly for her.

And there's no doubting the strengths of the three key ballads, which provide the album with its emotional peaks: Boyer's title song (he wrote "Please Be My Friend," perhaps the best thing on Clapton's last album) gives Bonnie a chance to hold herself back and let nuance work for her; she does "Cover Me," written by Eddie Hinton and Marlin Greene of Muscle Shoals, with her full-blown gospel passion; and she turns Gregg and Janice Allman's brooding "Oncoming Traffic" into an explosion of torment and emptiness that is chillingly beautiful. Bonnie's performances on *It's Time* are consistently on the level of her best work with Delaney. At certain points, she actually surpasses her earlier work; at her most intense here, Bonnie recalls Janis Joplin in her power and depth of expression.

The merger was a fruitful one, both for the Capricorn musicians, who haven't broken any new ground in a long time, and for Bonnie, who I not long ago suspected of having lost her touch. For the mature, independent Bonnie Bramlett, this album should mark a new beginning.

SCORCHING BEAUTY
Iron Butterfly
MCA 465

By GREG SHAW

It's a well known axiom that one hit record is good for ten years of work. Just ask Fabian. A corollary to the axiom holds that a name, once established, always holds the potential for further milking. Just ask the Righteous Brothers. It also seems that no matter how far the members of a once-popular, defunct group try to go on their own, there's always more interest from the fans, the record companies, the booking agents, everybody... to reform the original act and try to recapture the magic.

The last few months have brought a veritable spate of such commercially-induced reunions. Steppenwolf, Moby Grape, Spirit, Love, Blue Cheer and now Iron Butterfly are among the more unexpected grave-robberies, constituting a sort of mini-1968 revival. While there are other California groups I'd have preferred to have back, such as Buffalo Springfield, the Charlatans, the Turtles, Jan & Dean, and the Everpresent Fullness, I can't deny the potential for diversion (at the very least, amusement) in this new trend.

In the case of Iron Butterfly's comeback album, I'm afraid amusement is about the most positive response I can muster. Perhaps the definitive one-hit wonder of the heavy grunge psychedelic-punk era, Iron Butterfly are known for having sold a billion copies of "In-A-Gadda -Da-Vida" (reportedly over 2 million were sold in Los Angeles alone...), although I doubt if anybody can name any of their other songs, or any of the group's members.

Most of the original crew has been reassembled for this album, with the apparent exception of the moose-throated individual who 'sang' "In-A-Gadda-Da-Vida" and guitarist Mike Pinera, the only ex-Butterfly to find any subsequent success (he most recently fought the "guitar battle of the century" with Ted Nugent). The sound is a little slicker, but basically the same kind of sludge. Three songs are listenable--"Hard Miseree" which has a fairly likeable beat, "People of the World," and "Before You Go," which might even be called well-produced.

Because they sold a billion records before, this record will sell; Iron Butterfly will get bookings, you'll see 'em soon with Black Oak Arkansas I'm sure, and I wouldn't be surprised if some people even like them. But if you're looking for the magic of yesteryear, I suggest you hold out for the Lovin' Spoonful reunion.

Iron Butterfly: taking a few lessons from Fabian.

SLOW MOTION
Man
United Artists UA-LA345-G

By GIL FERRER

Man are something of a schizoid rock band. Taken at face value, they're a pretty weird lot. Whether doing each other in, as on the cover of *Rhinos, Winos and Lunatics* or producing unintelligible liner notes, as on everything, they've given themselves the image of a bunch of boozy layabouts who, bored with success, have taken up the novel pastime of going insane. Note, for example, Deke Leonard. An otherwise sturdy young fellow and guitar player of some note, he has lately been having fantasies of himself, first as a World War One flying ace and then as a kamikaze pilot.

All such affairs aside, a listen to any of their albums proves that far from any type of outlandish Bonzoism, Man are solidly respectable citizens of the hard, good-timey genre of rock. While they're limited in their style by a dependence on riffs that borders on the neurotic, they do manage to convey a subtle power in their songs that is the result, more than any other cause, of the guitar of Deke Leonard.

On *Slow Motion*, keyboardist Malcolm Morley is gone, leaving only Jones, Leonard and rhythm men Ken Whaley and Terry Williams. The sound here is cleaner than on *Rhinos* and generally blander than that uneven but generally excellent album. What's lacking is a strong identity for each of the songs. "Rock and Roll You Out" chugs along a Chuck Berry beat, anonymous for the most part until the sinuous lead guitar manages to bail it out. "Bedtime Bone" has a Micky Jones vocal that sounds like Stevie Winwood and a beat that owes a lot to the Band's "Chest Fever."

Man throw their all into the two slow songs, "Grasshopper" and "Rainbow Eyes." Echo, strumming guitars and tinkling bells texture the two songs thickly, making one sound like a Bobby Goldsboroish remake of "Angel" and the other like Graham Nash trying to sing his way out of a convention of strolling violinists. But they mean well and Deke's vocal on "Grasshopper" is touching in the image of this big, raw voice trying to deal with the trauma of someone leaving.

Things really begin to move behind "Hard Way to Die." Here Man shows what they do best; taking a moderately paced, bluesy shuffle, putting the right touch of power with subtle guitar lines, and pathos with the loose, slightly off chorus harmony, and the cut begins to move.

As a hook it serves, but really effective are the final songs on each of the sides. "You Don't Like Us", an ode to bombing on stage, has an insistently defiant lead riff that pulsates constantly throughout the song while Williams' galloping drums and Whaley's hard throbbing bass set a fast clip. "Day and Night" begins pure funk, courtesy of Jones and continues with a quick and light mood bouncing along until it comes to crashing climaxes at the chorus.

The pluses outweigh the minuses on this album, but it would be interesting to see what Man could do if they really cut loose. They're capable of it; Man in concert is intense and freewheeling. Let's see if they can get that down on record.

PSYCHOMODO
Cockney Rebel Featuring Steve Harley
Capitol

By IRA ROBBINS

Cockney Rebel is a figment of Steve Harley's semi-sane mind. With glorious ambitions, he conceived of and created a band designed to be bizarre for success's sake, hence violin/keyboards, no lead guitar. (The rest of the plan involved a paradoxical mixture of Dylan/Ian Hunter lyrics, Hunter/Dylan/Bowie/Chevalier vocals, and music stolen equally from carnivals and beer halls, with no obscure base left untouched.) Thus armed with a product, he bragged the band into critical acclaim and finally up on the British charts. Rebel's first album, *The Human Menagerie*, was a smash in England and went unnoticed here. In retrospect, it wasn't terribly thrilling, but the potential was obvious.

Last spring, a stunning follow-up, *The Pyschomodo*, firmly established them as pop biggies, at least in Britain. In July, Harley decreed the band's dissolution and immediately reformed it, but gave his expanding ego star billing. Now *The Psychomodo*, recorded a year ago by a now-disbanded set of musicians, is finally released in America, but with a sleeve that matches the changes that have taken place.

To all appearances, this is a phenomenal album. As obnoxious a twit as Harley may be, he has written a brilliantly engaging, thoroughly unique set of songs, given them excessively affected vocals which are perfect, and produced the whole affair with the tracks running together in such a fashion that the album consists of two coherent sides, neatly bound up with a refrain that both ends and begins the album.

Each song is different, but they all follow a few guidelines--very erratic, complex tempos (best exemplified by "Sweet Dreams" and "Singular Band"), obscure, self-righteous lyrics concerning the difficulties of popstar life ("Tumbling Down" is Harley's condemnation of the music press), unidentifiable but terribly familiar melodies (the easy one is "Sling It"/"All Along the Watchtower"), and the unique blend of (predominately jazzy rock) strange music which the four avowed non-rock influenced sidemen subordinates create. The result resembles nothing previous, and it's far too good an album to ignore. Forget the hype and enjoy it.

BEAT OF THE STREET
Sutherland Bros. & Quiver
Island

By KEN BARNES

They open with a knockout and close like gangbusters. "World in Action" is an energy-overload rocker with a great bridge over doubled wattage, an electrifying leadoff. And the Sutherland/Quiver combine plants the three remaining topnotchers at the album's conclusion, leaving you ready to rave at record's end.

But *Beat of the Street*, like *Dream Kid* last time out, is still vaguely dissatisfying. It's hard to be specific--everything *sounds* good--definitely way above average by contemporary standards (low as they are). But minor disappointments keep cropping up--the hackneyed gospel rave ending on "Devil Are You Satisfied," or the trite rock vamp running through the title track. Sometimes their melodies just sound ordinary, uninspired, like "Saviour in the Rain" (the fine titular hook excepted) or the trivial, bluesy "Bone Dry." "Laid Back in Anger" is a thoroughly impressive song, its lyrical facility of the nimblest and some superb guitar riffs too--but the melody doesn't quite live up to their promise.

But maybe I'm quibbling because the Sutherlands are so good when they're on ('73's single "You Got Me Anyway" still being their reigning exemplar). "Last Boy Over the Moon" is dark, brooding, and highly effective; while "Living in Love" is light, catchy and heartwarmingly pretty. "Annie" is both pretty and a rocker, with a fine chorus and a neat unobtrusive pun: "I feel like a lion in the jungle late at night/Without my pride I'm just nowhere." And the playing literally crackles with enthusiasm, transforming even the average songs into special events--Tim Renwick's powerfully understated guitar work at the end of "Saviour" is a consummate *tour de force*.

Beat of the Street is a strong album, probably the group's best yet, and emphatically deserving of your purchase. But I'm still hoping for a Sutherlands/Quiver LP where all the tracks are as strong as "World in Action" and "Living in Love." Maybe next time?

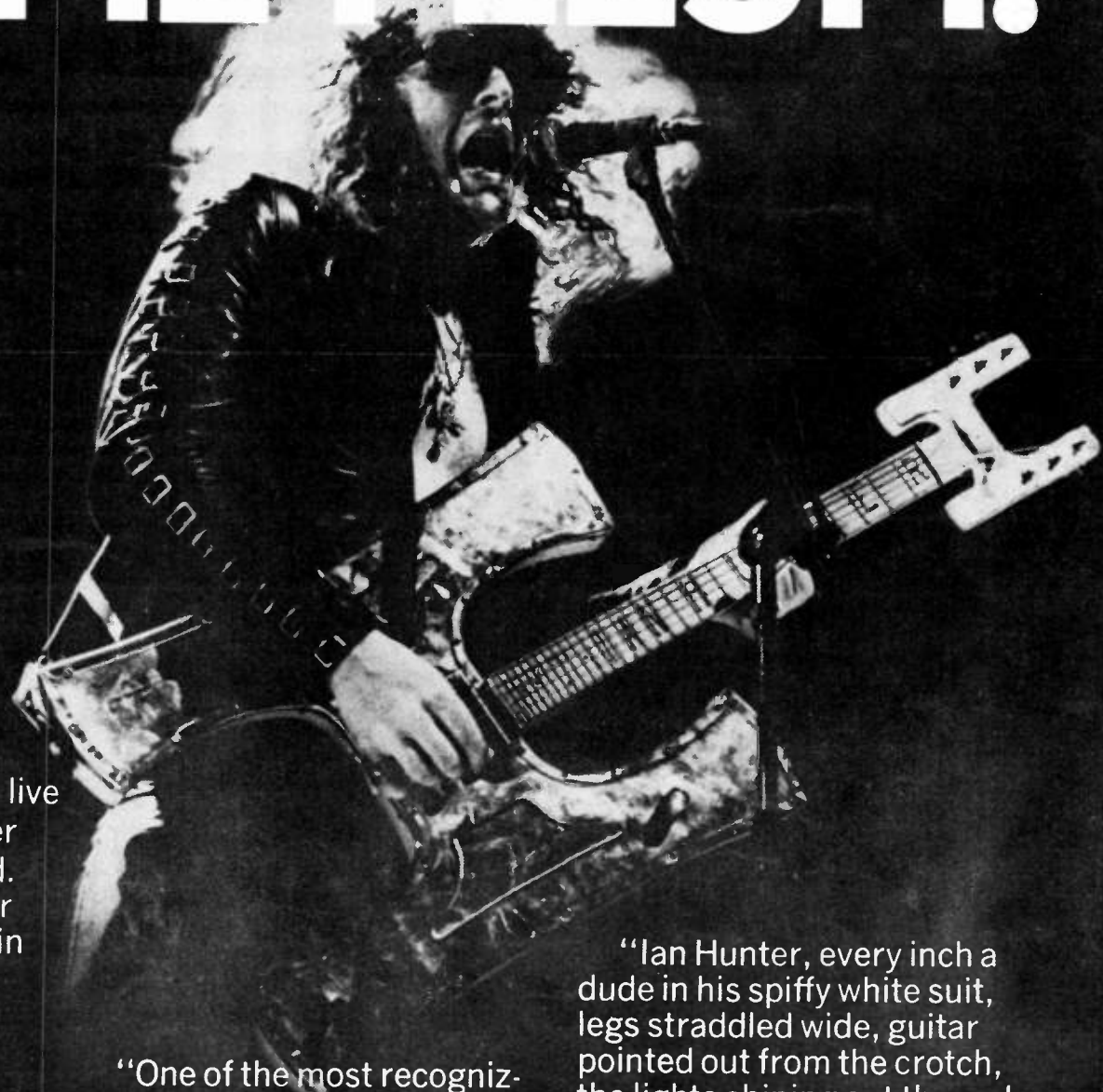
MELISSA
Melissa Manchester
Arista

By ED SCIAKY

Well, this should be the one, Clive. She did pretty well with her first two albums in some areas, but *Melissa* should get Ms. Manchester the national attention she deserves. It's a good solid album--Melissa's singing is excellent, the material (eight out of ten Manchester originals) is consistently good, and the production is right.

Veteran producer Vini Poncia has come up with some beautiful touches of simplicity to avoid the cliches of overproduction often found in the musical genre most influential on *Melissa*--pop R&B. Individual instances of taste and understatement add up to a

IN THE FLESH.



MOTT The first live Mott ever recorded.

The inimitable Ian Hunter and his merry men, caught in the act at their historic Uris Theatre date on Broadway, and at London's Hammersmith Odeon.

"Mott the Hoople Live" is all the finesse of Mott on record and all the flash of Mott on stage. With Ian Hunter, last of the great English rock crazies and the soul of the Hoople, out front all the way.

"Mott the Hoople Live." Thirteen smashing Mott-songs including "Rock 'n' Roll Queen," "All the Way from Memphis," and "All the Young Dudes."

"One of the most recognizable rock & roll stars of the decade." *—Hit Parader*

"Ian Hunter dominates the group, his voice and songs being the backbone of the group... Hunter can write some of the best and most simple rock lyrics ever heard." *—The Scene*

"Ian Hunter, who writes most of Mott the Hoople's material, includes a touch of the sentimental with a strain of hardness, compassion with outrage, and fragility with indestructibility." *—L.A. Times*

"Ian Hunter, every inch a dude in his spiffy white suit, legs straddled wide, guitar pointed out from the crotch, the lights shining out through that absurdly curly auburn mane framing the X-ray eyes: the same old Ian from years back, but oh my, what a different band now." *—Sounds*

"Ian Hunter is one of the few star lunatics of British rock." *—Melody Maker*

"Despite his daring, I don't consider Hunter's approach excessive, because, consciously or intuitively, he's in control of every drawl, mince, pause and mumble."
—Bud Scoppa, *Rolling Stone*

MOTT
THE HOOPLE LIVE
including:
All The Young Dudes
All The Way From Memphis/One Of The Boys
Rock 'N 'Roll Queen/Walking With A Mountain

"Mott the Hoople Live." Featuring Ian Hunter. On Columbia Records and Tapes

REVIEWS

meticulous and well-conceived showcase for a talent that shines on its own.

The strong first side opens with three killer tracks that could all be hit singles: "We've Got Time" (first of the LP's four collaborations with Carole Bayer Sager) starts things off in a soulful and intoxicatingly melodic mood.

"Party Music" (written with guitarist David Wolfert) is really what this album's all about: music that's fun and makes you want to dance. This one's so infectious you gotta sing it too.

"Just Too Many People" (co-authored by producer Poncia) is a gentle rocker with an impassioned vocal on a relevant lyric.

The next track is "Stevie's Wonder" a lyrical and stylistic tribute to Stevie, based on the opening riff of his "Too High" (from *Innervisions*). It's nicely done, though one line is mystifying and a bit embarrassing: ("I wonder what it's like making love to a genius").

A good choice to close side one is "This Lady's Not Home," a dramatic but rhythmic piece lyrically reminiscent of Melissa's first-album work with Sager.

Side two opens with Melissa-the-singer's rocker version of Stevie Wonder's "Love Having You Around" (from *Music of My Mind*).

The LP's final Manchester-Sager collaboration "Midnight Blue" is a stunning production with a great melody hook on "one more time" sung by a whole chorus of Melissas. I love it.

"It's Gonna Be Alright" (written with second -album collaborator Adrienne Anderson) is the album's only throwaway, a disco track with appropriately uninspired lyrics.

"I Got Eyes" (a solo Manchester composition) is a light and melodic piece made memorable by classy production.

Melissa closes brilliantly with a knockout performance of a Randy Newman song, "I Don't Want to Hear It Anymore," done against strings, piano and a sensuous sax. Whew! A fitting end for an honest hunk of vinyl.

IN THE BEGINNING
Roy Buchanan
Polydor PD 6035

By MICHAEL DAVIS

You know, I'd really figured that Roy Buchanan would have pulled a Johnny Winter by now. Like Winter, he's a guitar picker with massive talent and he too was plucked from a local bar scene because of feedback from other musicians. And, as you may remember, it took Johnny a few years to chuck his stiff Texas rhythm section, find Rick Derringer, and get down.

But it hasn't happened for Roy yet, although he's switched personnel a number of times. This time around, as on his previous albums, you get a lot of string-stretching, whining-gear guitar, but not much music of note.

The grotesque imbalance found here starts off with the first couple of cuts. Both "Rescue Me" and "I'm a Ram" are competent, ignorable white soul performances until the guitar solos hit when whatever idle foot tapping you may be doing at the time changes to rapt attention as Buchanan goes to work, bending notes until they shriek at you, playing above the finger board, and sundry other outrages cemented together with a profoundly emotional and musical sense of structure. Then he eases off as the last verse starts and your mind begins wandering off again...

The rest of *In the Beginning* (three blues cuts, three instrumentals) is much the same: when Roy's wailing, he all but searches your ears off; when he's not, they wax inattentive. It really makes you wonder how this man can get so worked up when those around him are merely playing perfunctorily and what he could accomplish if his sidemen were as inspired as he himself is.

This album offers no clues as to this latter speculation because Buchanan has changed bands since it was recorded so the possibilities are open once again. If his new group don't do the trick, well, maybe he could do a *Play Guitar With The Ventures* in reverse and record an album of nothing but guitar solos and let his fans provide the accompaniment should they so desire. It couldn't hurt.

LUCKY DAY
Jonathan Edwards
Atco SD 36-104

By DAVID JOHNSON

The hot rumor around the time this album was recorded (in concert, last March, at the now-defunct Performance Center in Cambridge, Mass.) was that this was going to be Jon's farewell record. He was retiring, they said; going off to live as a landed immigrant in Canada, on his farm in Nova Scotia.

The rumor was quickly squelched, and it's a good thing, too, because this would be an unfortunate album on which to end a once-promising career. After he became a one-hit wonder with "Sunshine," Jonathan Edwards had failed to connect--commercially, at least--with the two fine albums which followed his debut. But he had demonstrated convincingly, through his own writing and his sensitive interpretations of tunes written by a group of friends who form the New England country-rock/good-timey axis, that he was a refreshingly folksy talent in a region that has been dominated by blues 'n boogie bands.

Jonathon Edwards: still a one-hit wonder.

In theory, *Lucky Day* is the culmination of the longtime musical friendship between Jon Edwards and Orphan, who back him here and were recently backing Tom Rush. Edwards and Orphan had each released three albums prior to this one, and they were just finishing up a tour that was billed by their management as "The Let The Good Times Roll Show."

In practice, *Lucky Day* is a solid argument for having a solo performer round up the best session men he can, because the musicians who stand out here are not Orphan, but rather guitarist Al Anderson, pedal steel and banjo picker Bill Keith, and violinist Stuart Schulman. All three have worked extensively with Edwards in the studio. Although Eric Lilljequist and Dean Adrien of Orphan contribute some vocal harmonies, the Orphan instrumentalists tend to hurry through numbers that they are now overly familiar with.

This is not a good album. It offers nine re-runs of previously recorded Edwards tunes, and only a couple gain from their new settings. The humorous introduction which is vital to Edwards' parody of the soul hit, "Have You Seen Her?," is not included here, so the listener is left with some mysterious giggling from the audience during a seemingly straight rendition of the song.

The title tune is the high point of what might pass as a souvenir for those who want their stars captured in live performance. On it, Edwards sings vigorously and sincerely about one of his favorite themes--getting back to the earth, where life can regenerate. As for the rest of the album, it was not that lucky a day after all.

THE HANDSOME DEVILS
Hello People
ABC DSD-50184

By JOHN MENDELSOHN

I'm far from entirely convinced that I would trade everything I own to be in Hello People's shoes, or greasepaint, for it seems the sorry fate of said group always to appear inconsequential in comparison to their loyalist and most celebrated patron, T. Rundgren.

Think back, for instance, to early 1973, when as members of what amounted to The ToddRundgren Revue, they got to perform a couple of numbers on their own while Todd Himself momentarily abandoned the stage to slip into something more ludicrous. Their singing--featuring much harmony--was at least a little pleasing to the ear, their playing perfectly capable, and their mime schtick far from distasteful. And yet I must confess that I didn't then, nor do I now, perceive myself as being alone yearning for the return of Todd Himself: while not even remotely insufferable, and in fact even kinda fun, Hello People on stage were a few long strides short of arresting.

As they are too on *The Handsome Devils*, their first album since 1968. While the material is invariably at least a little engaging, as well as pleasantly-sung and competently-played, all that clings tenaciously to one's pychic craw even after repeated meticulous auditions are the guitar and synthesizer bits, which I find myself supposing are the work of Todd Himself.

Debatably, the most attractive track on the album is it s opener, "Future Shock," whose insistent syncopated organ riff is quite irresistible. And yet, irresistible as that riff may be--and engaging as the tune itself and the group's performance of it may be too--what'll continue to resound in your mind's ear long after everything else is forgotten is the sublimely hilarious synthesizer solo, which will put you in mind of the saxophone breaks on your favorite Coasters classics.

Perhaps the biggest obstacle to the People's ingratiating themselves to trillions of rock buffs both here and abroad is their lack of a really distinctive vocalist, which deficiency is for me most harrowing on their rendition of the venerable soul weeper "Cry Baby." Whoever's singing does so in nothing resembling an insufferable fashion, his and the harmony singers' intonation is unimpeachable, and he even tries his best to phrase like an authentic colored person. Ultimately, though, he sounds too white and middle-class and well-scrubbed. Nowhere on the album does a voice jar, excite, or even outrage one, let alone cause the little downy hairs on the back of his or her neck to become erect. One must wait for the synthesizer and lead guitar for that.

In conclusion, then, I shall have to suggest that those whose habit it is to demand that an album be more than quite listenable in rather a low-key way turn elsewhere, though I don't for a millisecond dispute Todd Himself's contention that Hello People deserve to have been immortalized on vinyl and magnetic tape. Not everyone can be George McCrae.

FLAVOURS
The Guess Who
RCA CPL 1-0636

By MARC NATHAN

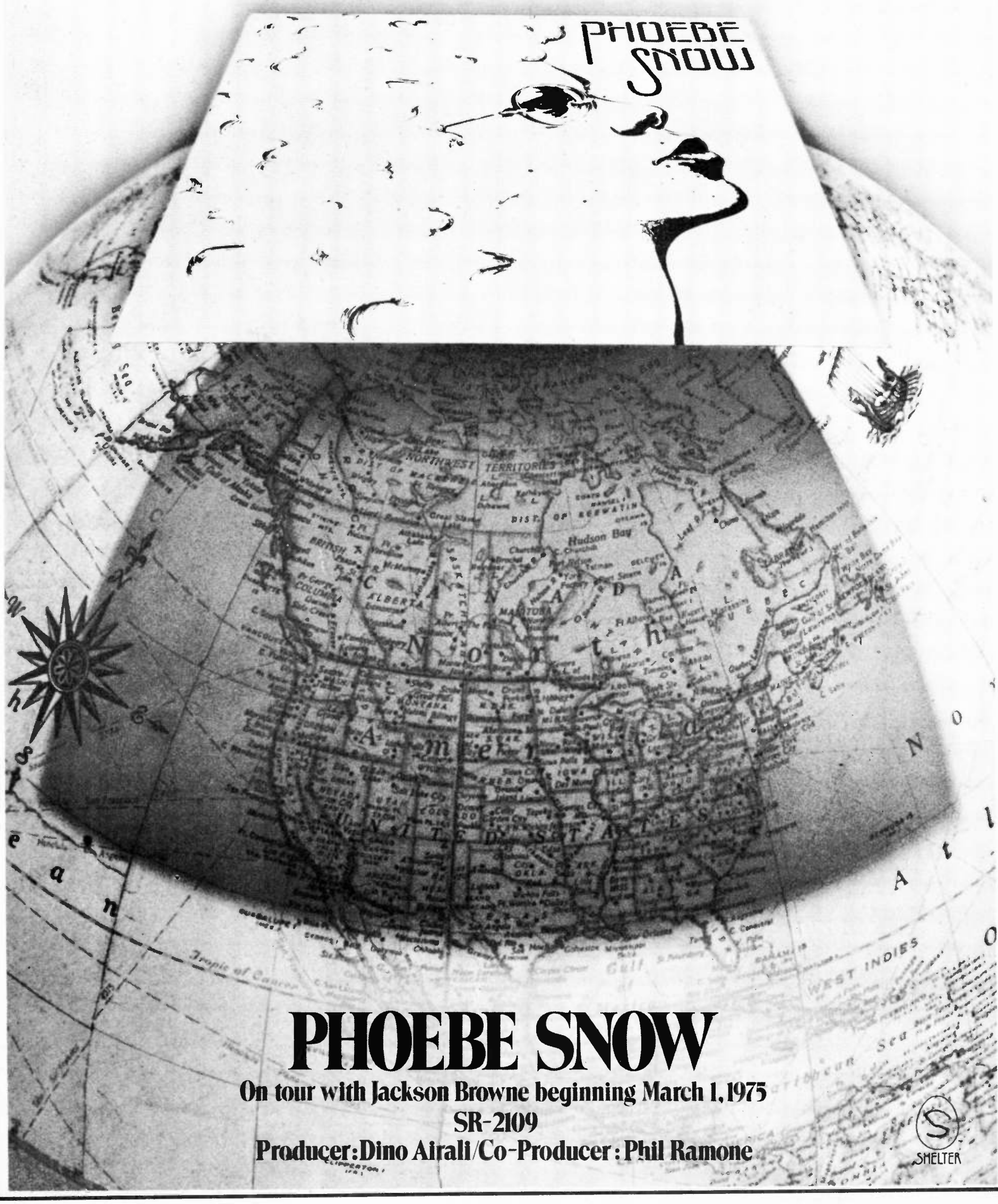
For some people the number thirteen can only bring thoughts of bad luck, misfortune and trouble. But in rock and roll the number thirteen holds some interesting connotations. If there are thirteen members in your group you probably have exorbitant hotel bills when on the road. If your latest album (or single) is thirteen on the charts then you are assured of a reasonable amount of success.

If your group has recorded thirteen albums (on the same label) that's a whole 'nother story. It could mean that the group is just churning out stale tunes on equally stale vinyl. It also could be that the group has achieved an enormous amount of acceptance and so each new release is eagerly awaited by countless millions. Or you could be the Guess Who.

Flavours is the group's thirteenth album for RCA and it contains their most recent almost smash, "Dancin' Fool." This is the first Guess Who record with Dom Troiano, the guitarist who has enough licks to fill the shoes of the two axe beaters that preceded him. Gone are the rotound Kurt Winter (who set the world's record for the most photos taken in a grey sweatshirt) and Don McDougall who only made it harder to remember just who Greg Leskiw was. So, now the lin-up includes Dom, Burton Cummings (the focal point of the group, the voice that crooned "These Eyes," "Laughing," "American Woman" and all their other chart records), Billwallace, bass player for the last four studio LPs and the ever-present drummer Gary Peterson.

Now we have a new record, hot on the heels of their recent and successful *Road Food* LP. There is no gimmicky single like "Clap For the Wolfman" to attract the super-boppers. There is only fine music and it's not as if that wasn't enough in today's market. "Dancin' Fool" and "Diggin' Yourself" seem to stand out as the most marketable from a singles standpoint while "Dirty" will satiate the appetites of the FM-consciousness crowd. "Long Gone" is an eight-minute "Canadian hatred song" that seems as if it belongs around Randy Bachman's neck. Though Burton Cummings has always written with a cynical approach, this song bordrs on being a bit macabre. Speaking of how he would "gladly give everything he's ever owned just to be able to stab you from behind." Randy take note, this guy means business. If I were you I'd quit saying those rotten things or else... One tune is dedicated to the memory of Gram Parsons and it is a stunning Guess Who type vocal in a country motif. Ah...speak of flavours. This group is anything but stale. It is as if that chewing gum that you left on your bedpost last night had been magically transformed into an eight-course meal. Come to think of it, isn't that what the Guess Who are all about? Weren't they once a bopper band that churned out some suspiciously commercial singles and then followed them with albums

POETRY MAN
is covering the country
SR-40353



PHOEBE SNOW
On tour with Jackson Browne beginning March 1, 1975
SR-2109
Producer: Dino Airali/Co-Producer: Phil Ramone

SHELTER

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that satisfied a limited group of devoted fans? Didn't they try to grow up a few times before?

Now it's going to happen all the way. The singles will come when they have to but now more than ever it will all rest on the merit of the album and believe me this album is what's got it. *Flavours* is just that, a tasty eight-course meal that will surprise a lot of people who think they've already made up their minds about the Guess Who.

MODERN TIMES
Al Stewart
Janus JXS 3063

By MICHAEL TEARSON

Past, Present and Future was a powerful if doomy record, placing all of twentieth century history in the context of its future as prophesized by Nostradamus in the 16th century. A hard act to follow, to be sure. For *Modern Times* Al Stewart has turned the focus of his songs from events back toward people and poignant situations.

The groupie-type of "Carol" parallels the pathetic trendy hanger-on in "What's Going On?"--"You walk like Greta Garbo, but you talk like Yogi Bear." The song that appears between these two, "Sirens of Titan," features the hero of that Kurt Vonnegut novel, Malachi Constant, as he chronicles his hapless cosmic pinball life, "The victim of a series of accidents/as are we all."

"Apple Cider Re-constitution" is somewhat more tasty than its namesake. It is primarily a tribute to *Blonde on Blonde*, borrowing both the railroad imagery and the very tune of "Absolutely Sweet Marie." As "Marie" is a highly imagistic song of coyly shattered love, "Cider" is about homelessness and companionship in small town and cold, wet London.

"The Dark and Rolling Sea" is somewhat of an enigma. Replete with lyric and musical visions of great wooden sailing ships of antiquity, it stands fully apart from the metallic and plastic imagery of the rest of *Modern Times*. As a grand metaphor for a person-person relationship it works splendidly. The sinewy swaying tune richly played, complete with a lovely accordian part, builds a brooding, forboding mood for what is obviously meant to be the album's cornerstone, the song "Modern Times."

Musically, *Modern Times* is more direct than *PP&F,* a tribute to the spotless yet spirited production of Alan Parsons, particularly on the second side. Clean, strong rockers like "Carol" and "Apple Cider" nicely pace the acoustic intricacies of "What's Going On?" and "Next Time" against the pure production of the "Dark and Rolling Sea" and "Modern Times." The playing is nothing short of masterful from Tim Renwick's emotional guitars to Pete Wingfield's classy keyboards especially his piano performance, and the tasteful percussion of Barry da Souza, Gerry Conway and Tony Carr.

Al Stewart with *Modern Times* has emerged from writing the "me" songs of lady loves on his early British albums through the "it" songs of places and things on *Past, Present and Future* to the "you" songs of people on the new album; a hazardous transition, yet Al has emerged with success. Both his modern times and future times look glorious.

DOWN TO EARTH
Nektar
Passport

By RICHARD CROMELIN

Nektar's smooth move from cosmic progressivism (though it was more genuinely rock-y than that of past practitioners of the style) to a more straightforward rock 'n' roll sound is both a surprise and a pleasure. After all, you can only take so much of bluebirds from outer space, whereas you can never get enough of the real stuff. Down to earth indeed.

Side one doesn't show it that much. It opens with "Astral Man," Nektar's strongest live number, captured here in all its rolling energy and reminding of the Yes of several albums ago when they still had some vitality. This one could be a single. "Nelly the Elephant" couldn't, mainly because it's an instrumental and it's not Barry White. It is fairly funky though, with some good horn charts, not to mention the breathtaking bleat of an actual pachyderm.

"Early Morning Clown" is familar Nektar, the kind of thing you would have expected the whole album to be. Not bad--nice melody, solid execution. But it's not especially striking, due largely to its uncomfortable closeness to the Yes formula (gentle acoustic guitar strum behind graceful, bell-clear synthesizer line).

It's on side two that the surprise sets in with a vengeance. "Fidgety Queen" sounds like, of all people, Mott the Hoople--lead guitar sliding and slithering its riff (akin to the lead on Mott's "Violence") over a thick backing and fast, powerful, drums. They aren't especially adept at taking it to the heights that its opening promises, but they do sustain it well, and vocalist Roye Albrighton, echoey and aggressive, finally sounds like a rock 'n' roll singer.

"Oh Willy" keeps up the pace as it chugs its quasi-disco way into the picture. The album slows down a bit with "Little Roy," lyrically vapid and slightly sticky melodically--strictly in the Simon and Garfunkel tradition. "Show Me the Way" gets it kicking again with a Stone's-like intro which bridges into one of Nektar's better tunes.

Nektar has made a good first step toward the realization that assertiveness is vital to good rock 'n' roll. If they can keep that in mind and still retain the imagination and melodic instincts they've displayed in less satisfying contexts, they stand a good chance of attaining more than marginal recognition. Let's just hope that their exchange of winged sandals for dancin' shoes doesn't signal any spiritual degeneration. But don't worry about it.

Nektar: "Are you sure this is how the Beatles got on Ed Sullivan?

Bitter Sweet

DESOLATION BOULEVARD
The Sweet
RCA (import)

by GARY SPERRAZZA

For a band prophesied to be one of the major forces in pop in the Seventies, the Sweet still remain the most misunderstood band of the past three years. Racking up the most incredible string of 45's since the Who ("Little Willy," "Wig Wam Bam," "Blockbuster," "Hellraiser," "Ballroom Blitz," "The Six Teens," Teenage Rampage," and the new one, "Turn It Down"(, the stifling pressures of American and British press judgement have cornered the Sweet into shunning their singles side in favor of extended album cuts of "more substantial musical worth." The results are never really bad, but always pale next to their singles

Still in all, the Sweet's last album, *Sweet Fanny Adams* checks into 1974 as the best heavy metal pop album of the year with an overabundance of chilling riffs, logically effective arrangements, and unmatched conciseness. And it had no released singles on it. *F.A.* was the Sweet's first attempt at an album(the previous two albums being singles compilations) that let them flash their talents in their own territory rather than around Chinn/Chapman's British pop monopoly.

Since *F.A.* was released last summer, it was quite a surprise to see a new Sweet album so quickly; *Desolation Boulevard* culls its title from the lyrics to "The Six Teens,"their best single since "Hellraiser." It opens the album on a high note, constantly fluctuating between moods of majestic presentation and slicing Ronson-esque guitar work. Setting the tone of the album, the Sweet move to "Solid Gold Brass," a perfect example of the direction the band is moving toward: street pop, gutter pop, pounding bassy rhythms with lead singer Brian Connolly rapping his street-jive. Guitarist Andy Scott dips, swirls and rockets his guitar in and out of the proceedings, taking time out to lace the song's center with an old Elastic Band(with whom he once played) jazzy interlude.

"Turn It Down" is the band's curent single, already banned by the BBC for its controversial lyrics, although(as with the Troggs years ago) the decision seems to be based more on the Sweet's rebel reputation than anything contained in the lyrics themselves. It's a ballbusting riff-rocker that sets itself above the murk via Connolly's refreshing vocal characterizations and Scott's loud and intentionally obnoxious guitar break. Andy Scott ends side one with two of his compositions, "Medusa" and "Lady Starlight," the former a Deep Purple meets the Who rave-up and the latter a gorgeous acoustic medium-paced rocker with Andy Scott's lead vocals threatening to force their way out of the speakers.

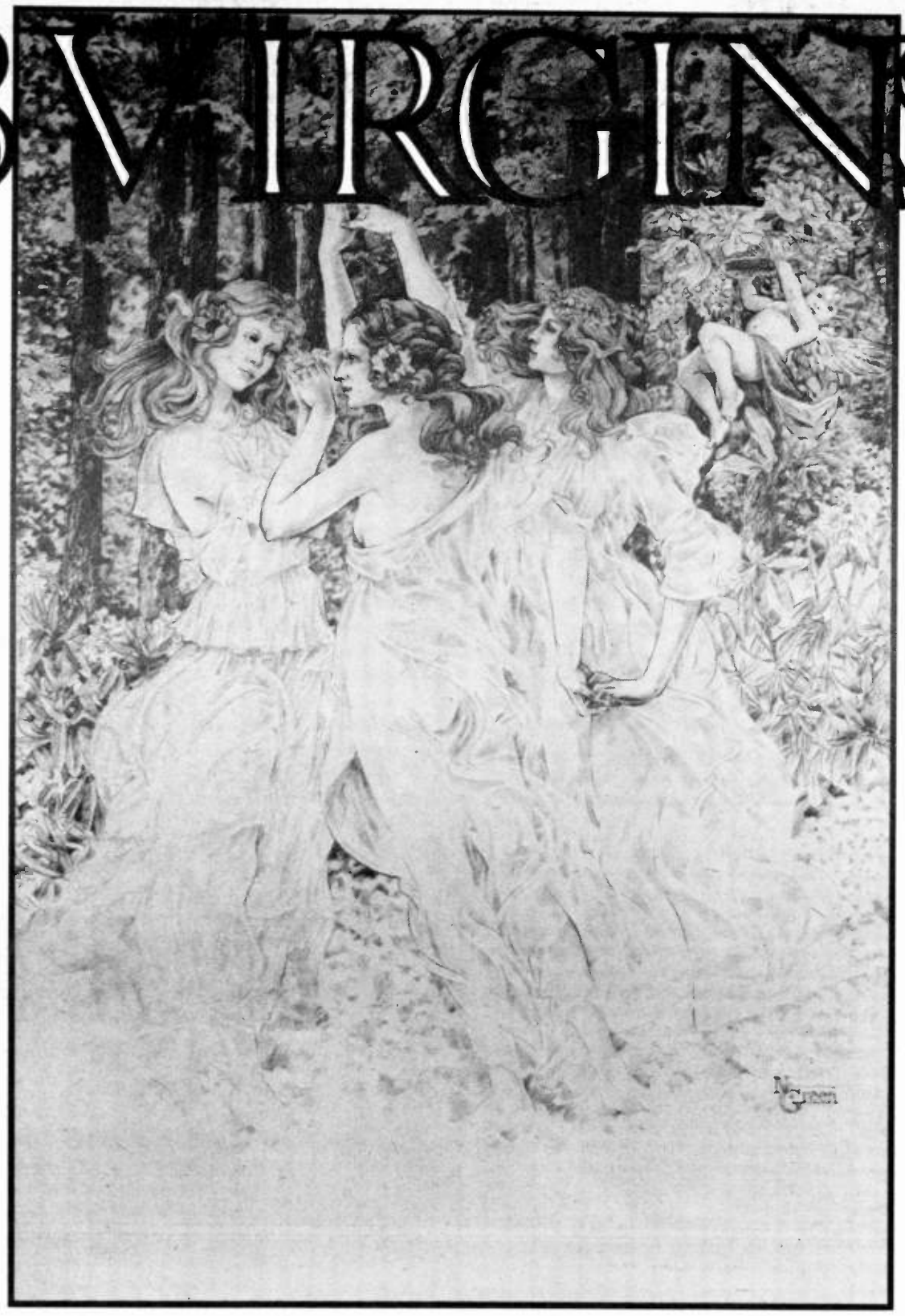
Side two doesn't hold up as well, especially since it begins with a Mick Tucker drum solo. Now, granted, it was a neat idea to base it around "Man with the Golden Gun," but a drum solo is *still* a drum solo and solid Sweet fans will begin to tire of the band's constant attempts to *prove* themselves to their audiences.

The album ends with a Stones-ish pounder with touches of the Yardbirds' "Shape of Things" called "Fox on the Run," a tight but spotty "Breakdown" and a note-perfect version of "My Generation"(Townshend is Scott's favorite guitarist, by the way) that sounds as full and powerful as the original, although I'm sure the Sweet would admit that the original is still the best. It breaks down in the end to the sound of bells clanging(probably the same as those on the cover of the Who's first album) and amidst the din of noise, someone is singing "You Got Me Singing the Blues."

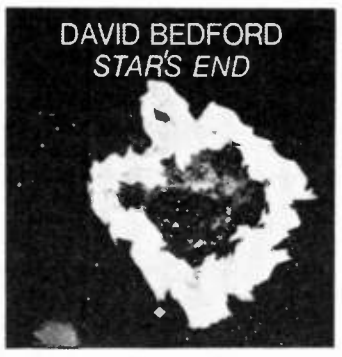
Since Bell had dropped the band with no official announcement, *Sweet Fanny Adams* was never released in the States. The band's "threatened" tour in the U.S. was cut short when Connolly was jumped outside of his home, putting him out of action for a few months. Two-thirds of the band's current tour was cancelled, and the BBC won't play "Turn It Down." Don't you think it's time for the Sweet to hit the States, boys? All in all, *Desolation Boulevard* is nowhere near the excellence of *Sweet Fanny Adams*, but a Stateside exposure for the band, even with this album, will still knock audiences for a loop. When the Sweet finally make it over here(a tour is in fact being planned), the change of atmosphere might be the vacation the Sweet need to re-inject the energy that the English pop machinery is successfully draining.

NOTE: A compilation of Sweet Fanny Adams *and* Desolation Boulevard *is scheduled for U.S. release soon, on Capitol.--Ed.*

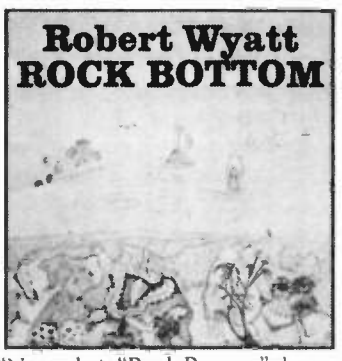
3 VIRGINS



You don't know them until you've heard them.



"...this is the first notably successful fusion of modern and conventional instrumentation... it's an impressive work constantly interesting and surprising... Despite Star's End being a formal classical piece, it's accessibility and (Mike) Oldfield's very presence on the album, should bring it to the wide audience it deserves."
New Musical Express



"Not only is "Rock Bottom" the album you've been hoping Robert Wyatt would make for years, it is one hundred percent better than you dared hope it would be. Welcome to critical overkill – bear with me – but for once I think it is justified." *Sounds*

"When it comes to rock orientated improvisation there are very few outside of ye olde San Francisco school that can hold a candle to Gong in full flight. All told, easily their finest album to date and highly recommended."
Melody Maker

On Virgin Records and Tapes

Distributed by Atlantic Records

BLIND DATE

This month's surprise blind date is Eric Carmen of the Raspberries, who agreed to listen blindfolded to some specially selected records.

Edited by ALAN BETROCK

Cher--"A Woman's Story" (Warner-Spector) Produced by Phil Spector

Well, it's obviously Cher. Who produced this? It's certainly the best I've ever heard out of Cher. That's really nice. Usually I am not crazy about Cher's voice, but she sounds pretty tolerable. I don't think it would be a hit, but it might get played a lot cause it's Cher.

Bryan Ferry--"The In Crowd" (Island)

(Laughs) Well, it must be Bryan Ferry. Sort of terrifying because I've read so many good reviews of this guy that I'm scared not to believe. To me it sounds absolutely horrible. I cannot find anything to like about him at all. People talk about his wit, his humor--to me it sounds like he has a horrible voice and just doesn't know how to sing. There were two bands in my high school. One was mine who played all the Beatles, Stones, Hollies and Byrds songs. And the other band was the Cellmates. And they used to play "Knock On Wood" way better than Bowie or Ferry redo these old songs. We were thinking of recording "Locomotion," prior to Todd Rundgren seeing us do it at Carnegie Hall, and giving it to Grand Funk, which is all right. But there are a couple of other ones that I have in my mind to do. I don't wanna divulge them right now, because uh, Todd Rundgren would read this and go record them...It's a nice idea if you have the right song and you can have some sort of new feel for it.

Pagliaro--"Some Sing Some Dance"

I've heard this before. (It's from Canada). Is that Pagliaro? I remember hearing this on AM radio in Cleveland. I tried to get a copy of it when it came out but never did. I love it, excellent record. That record has more personality than about any 10 records I heard at the same time. It just knocked me out.

Pilot--"Magic" (UK EMI)

Sounds like the bass player of Chicago. Sounds English. It's got an interesting production. Some nice chords too, but the middle part doesn't exactly knock me out.

Jonathan King--"Kung Fu Anthem" (UK)

It's gotta be an English record. Follow up to "The Universal?" It's something I've never heard before, that's for sure. I've had enough.

Earth Quake--"Friday On My Mind" (Beserkely).

Ah, "Friday On My Mind!" It's nowhere as good as the original, but pretty good. That's another one of those songs that I thought about doing at one time or another, but just can't do justice to the original--that's because they don't make Vox amps the size of Marshalls, that you could actually play to get that guitar sound.

Cyrus Erie--"Get the Message" (Epic) (Eric's pre-Raspberries group)

A powerhouse vocal! Wasn't bad for the ten minutes it took us to record. I think it would have a better chance of being a hit if it came out today. We spent something like 90 hours doing three songs. And this was the last thing we did, and the whole thing from start to complete finish took under an hour. The drummer, Michael, dropped his stick in the middle, and they said, "keep going, this is the take."

The Hollies--"Devi Avere Fiducia In Me" (Italian Parlophon)

Sounds like Allan Clarke backed by Freddie and the Dreamers! Los Bravos on 78 rpm?!? Enough! The Hollies? They were my favorites (musically that is). I've been thinking of recording a song especially in a foreign language, like for Japan, because the market is just so huge.

Lance Romance--"California Summertime" (NOW) Written and Produced by Kim Fowley

Sounds like Kim Fowley? It is! Only Kim Fowley could make a record like this. Who would believe it?! Called "Teenage California Dream" or something like that?

James Spina

"It's okay to be intense about sex or world war or something, but rending your heart out for no reason seems a waste..."

Smyle--"It's Gonna Be Alright" (Polydor) (Dutch Lennon Imitation)

I like it whatever it is. A little blatant imitation isn't it? Sounds like it could be Tom Evans of Badfinger singing lead. I like the sound. Sounds just like something off an early Beatles album--it's really amazing! It's a cross between John Lennon and Tom Evans. I don't think Lennon sounds that much like Lennon. We should release that with every one of our records that comes out, so everyone could say "now that sounds like the Beatles, not Raspberries..."

Creation "Making Time" (Planet)

More Who cops!! And a band that can't even keep time no less! The sounds are reminiscent of the Who but I don't like it. Sounds like the ultimate riff for every basement band. I still like the Who. People grow up and Townsend could only go on so long writing teenage love songs. Townsend's a neat producer, and my favorite guitar player too.

Four Seasons & Jan & Dean--"Coca Cola Jingle"

Sounds like the Four Seasons! Hilarious!!! I liked a lot of Four Seasons things--Is that Jan & Dean? I love them, they made great records. It's really amazing how great their records sound on the radio; and sometimes how poorly they sound on your home stereo.

The Jook--"Crazy Kids" (UK RCA)

Can't guess who they are. The Jook? I've read about them. I don't like the guitar player, but I like the vocals. The lyrics are sort of overdone, and not too subtle. But then again who am I to talk of subtlety? They just sound too serious.

Shadows of Knight--"I'm Gonna Make You Mine" (Dunwich)

If I didn't know better, I'd say it was the Shadows of Knight. Is this a recent record? I like the singer's voice--he's into glitter rock now, but he has a real punk, greaser, teenage voice. The Rolling Stones were the only "punk" band that influenced us.

The Rolling Stones--"I Wanna Be Your Man" (Decca)

Great! Who could that be, I suppose? It's a gas. Get Michael (McBride) in here and he'd flip out on the walls. I like their new album; there's a couple of things like "Luxury" that I really like.

The Barons--"Since You're Gone" (RCA) Written and Produced by Jimmy Ienner, 1967.

I think I know what this is. It's Jimmy Ienner. I just heard this about one month ago when Don (Jimmy's brother) played it for me. Anyone that wants to slam me for copying things, I'll refer them to my producer from now on!

The Trems--"Make or Break" (UK Epic)

It sounds like an English record, with an American production. It doesn't really knock me out too much. I hate records that are really intense about nothing. It's okay to be very intense about sex, or World War or something, but rending your heart out for no reason seems a waste.

Pat Boone--"Little Honda" & "Beach Girl" (Dot) Bruce Johnston & Terry Melcher production and backups.

Sounds like a very early surf record. Good backup. Sounds like they did the vocals first and then sped them up to 78 for the backup. I don't know who it is, but sounds early. Bruce Johnston or somebody? Pat Boone?!? I can't believe it. It's the best he ever sounded in his life. Anything that sounds like the Beach Boys can't be bad. Great harmonies and music on the flip. Sounds like "Don't Worry Baby." That's Pat Boone?!?

Davy Jones--"You've Got a Habit of Leaving Me" (UK Parl) Bowie in 65.

It's an old English record, 63-64, maybe. (It's early Bowie). I like it better than any stuff he's done recently. It sounds a lot like the Zombies, and the Kinks. Crazy break--sounds like the Yardbirds doing "Wipeout." Sounds a lot like "Who'll Be the Next in Line" or one of those early Kinks records.

The Charmettes "Please Don't Kiss Me Again" (Kapp)

Another one of those '62 Phil Spector production imitation jobs. The only problem with those supposed Phil Spector-type records is that none of them have any hooks. They get that sound from bar one, and then they just sit there for two minutes; when they should be breaking into castanets, beserkness and 60 part harmonies using only the echo tracks.

Jerry Landis--"Play Me a Sadsong" (Warwick) Early Paul Simon

Sounds just like Paul Simon. It is!?! I think he has one of the neatest voices ever. You just want to sit him down and pat him on the head, like a little teddy bear. That reminds me of a record I just have to get--it's "Got a Girl" by the Four Preps. It was the first 45 I ever bought in my life.

The Troggs--"Strange Movies" (UK Pye)

Oh boy, I love it already! Lyrically it sounds like a Sweet record. The Troggs?!? Boy do they stink! I saw them on television and they destroyed me; they sound like a badly produced Alice Cooper.

Barry Blue--"Dancing on a Saturday Night" (Bell)

The English Cowsills? Marc Bolan with the Cowsills? Sounds like a real BBC hit.

Peggy Lee--"Let's Love" (Atlantic) Written and Produced by Paul McCartney

Sounds like Doris Day. Ah I know what that is; it's Peggy Lee. I haven't heard this yet. It's a very interesting track. This sounds like a Bee Gees intro. I think the arranger gets the credit here. The piano sound is almost a Beatle piano--it sounds like Peggy Lee singing on a Beatle track. I really like Lennon's new album a lot--some of the best post-Beatle things any of them have done. As to McCartney's stuff, I'm still waiting for him to blow me away.

Cher--"Baby I Love You" (Warner-Spector) Flip of "A Woman's Story"

Cher is sounding real good on this stuff. Who arranged these? Jack Nitzsche?! Nino Tempo! Allright! At least it isn't "Half Breed!" These tracks hold together really nicely. Fine production!

JOIN THE ARMY.

(The Baker Gurvitz Army)

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JUKE BOX JURY

POP SINGLES FOR THE '70s

By GREG SHAW

ABBA--"Ring, Ring" (Atlantic 3240)

The follow-up to "Honey Honey" is more in the vein of "Waterloo," with solid ringing chords, echo-blasted vocals and synthesized "la la las" that befit a Neil Sedaka composition, which this partially is. Abba's had two solid hits already, and this has all the makings of a third, being their strongest single yet. Considering all three are from their first album, the group would seem to have incredible potential, which is borne out by "So Long," their new single in Europe. A hundred times more dynamic than anything they've done yet, it just may be the most exciting record of the last two years. More about that when it comes out here...

SAM NEELY--"I Fought the Law" (A&M 1651)

Can the punk rock revival be upon us already? This is only the latest of a series of singles in which Neely has demonstrated his knowledge and mastery of several pop idioms, and it heralds both his arrival as an important hitmaker and the renewed commercial market for this sort of sound. It's a good record; Sam's voice has just enough Texas twang to sound authentic, and the lead guitar does a good job with those rolling Tex-Mex figures, as does the drummer. The only fault is with the rhythm guitar, which on Bobby Fuller's classic original (Mustang 3014) supplied a taut, dynamic edge which Neely's version lacks. But in all, it's a fine remake, and hopefully a sign that other great songs of the same era are due for a retread.

THE FLAMIN' GROOVIES--"You Tore Me Down" (Bomp 101)

This is the first new record in over two years from the Groovies, recorded in England with the legendary Dave Edmunds producing. If you've heard any of Edmunds' work before, you don't need to be told this is a full-fledged wall of sound, bursting with echo and reverberating layers of noise. The genre is early Beatles, with a slight melodic similarity to "She Loves You" and prominent Phil Spector undertones. It's an excellent recording, and the clearest shot this veteran group has had at a hit. The label is a new independent, and inquiries should be directed in c/o me, at Box 7112, Burbank, CA. 91510 (copies can be ordered for $1.25; $2 with picture sleeve).

February continues to see plenty of strong releases coming out and doing well on the charts. Good releases from two of the most inconsistent Beatles, John (with "#9 Dream," Apple 1878) and George (with "Ding Dong, Ding Dong," Apple 1879), the latter a Christmas record that doesn't seem to be suffering for its late release. Another Holiday-oriented record that didn't fare so well was the Beach Boys' "Child of Winter (Christmas Song)", a Brian Wilson composition (Brother/Reprise 1321) with a good healthy dose of that old sound.

And speaking of the old sound, who should have their first release out but Pa Pa Do Run Da Run, San Jose's answer to Jan & Dean and the hottest surf band in the land right now. This pastiche of old surf titles, woven into a pleasantly catchy new tune, also appeared on Jan & Dean's *Gotta Take That One Last Ride* album; now you can get "Sunshine Music" (World 001) with a summery picture sleeve, backed by a fair original called "Healthy Lady"--she eats health food and takes vitamin E, as do all modern surfer girls. Fun, fun, fun...

Bad Company's "Movin' On" (Swan Song 70101) and BTO's "Roll On Down the Highway" (Mercury 73656) look like the two biggest boogie rockers of the next few weeks, and both a little more tolerable over the long term than their predecessors. This month's best new boogie record is "Macon Woman Blues" by Kip Carmen (Mach 12105), with a hot big band sound and some tasty piano. And keep your eye on A Foot in Coldwater, Canada's latest sensation and a likely crossover. "(Make Me Do) anything You Want" (Elektra 45224) has pop potential beyond its boogie basis; solid vocals and production make it one of February's more impressive debuts.

Still another promising first effort is from a group whose name recalls the great East L.A. punk bands of 1966. "It Happens All the Time" by Thee Image (Manticore 7001) is no punker, however; it's a clean-sounding, almost -soul ballad with some pop guitar work. And as for soulfulness from unexpected quarters, don't be surprised if Freddy Fender comes up with a hit in "Before the Next Teardrop Falls" (Dot 17540). Fender, a legendary Texas/Mexican blues guitarist, turns in a sweet production here with a chorus in Spanish but appeal beyond the merely ethnic. If "Chico & the Man" is commercial, Freddy Fender should be a star.

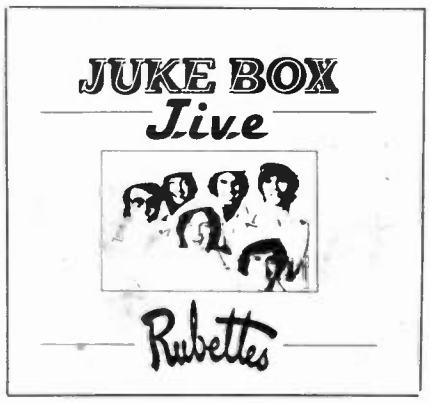
It's good to see Helen Reddy get out of her standard bag and into a real song like "Emotion" (Capitol P-4021). Happily, she's chosen the Patti Dahlstrom translation, and while not up to Patti's own magnificent rendition, Reddy's will at least get the song heard, which it richly deserves. Which is more than I can say about Todd Rundgren's "Wolfman Jack" (Bearsville 0301). Todd's writing and production are excellent as always, but the Wolfman is allowed to dominate the record even more than he did on the Guess Who's "Clap for the Wolfman" (RCA 0324), and if you ask me, his one-dimensional personality became trite as far back as 1968. Todd doesn't need to stoop to this.

The Hudson Brothers' follow-up to "So You Are a Star" (one of 1974's best) is an up-tempo album cut full of the sparkle and verve which makes these boys such a refreshing addition to the pop scene. "Coochie Coochie Coo" (Casablanca 816) is not, however, likely to go as high (Top 20), if only because it lacks the kind of strong hook that makes you thirst to hear it again and again without limit. My choice for the next single is "Cry Cry Cry," which literally cries to revolve at 45 rpm.

After all that anticipation, "Tonight" by the Rubettes (Polydor 15092) turned out, on its belated American release, to be a near carbon copy of "Sugar Baby Love." Different enough to be enjoyable in its own right, but there simply aren't enough new touches to satisfy me. Not so in the subsequent British release, however, so let's hope "Jukebox Jive" comes out here soon.

PICK TO CLICK

This month's top-rated single is by a new Dutch group called Heart. "Lovemaker" (EMI P-4008) is neither the light pop or the heavy metal yodeling we've come to expect from this country, which has been threatening for years to erupt as a pop center, without ever quite doing so. This is like nothing we've ever heard before from the Continent, although the sound is certainly familiar. Remember when Slade were at their hottest, churning out a new single every six weeks, each more dazzling than the last? Remember feeling the pure adrenalin madness of "Cum On Feel the Noize" for the first time? What we have here is a slightly more restrained version of that, with the added twist of a female singer who sounds more like Suzi Quatro than Ricky Wilde ever did. It would be ironic if this record made it after the failure of thoes whose music it's taken from--but it wouldn't be the first time.



Coming to these shores soon, we hope...

A quick romp through some recent British pop piffle: "Somebody's Been Sleeping in My Bed" by Jack & the Giant Killers (UK 49025) revives the old "ooga-chucka" routine, with a basso giant intoning "Fe fi fo fum" over this discotized remake of an old soul hit. Clever, but it wears fast. "Make Me a Dollar, Make Me a Dime" by Brendon (UK 49027) is more like it, a sort of Croce vocal over heavy Buddy Holly drums and enough of a distinctive quality to make you want to hear it some more. First American release for GTO Records (a combine of some of England's most consistent pop originators) is rather disappointing; "I'll Never Say Never Again Again" (GTO 1001) by Sparky sounds like an ultra-slick Little Jimmy Osmond, which is about the last thing we need. The flip, a John Pantry song called "Sweet Lies," is better, but I was expecting more.

Steve Harley & Cockney Rebel may have a chance with "Tumbling Down" (EMI P-4023), which sounds like David Bowie produced by Barry Manilow. Good sound, and one of their accessible songs. Even more likely to be heard is a new version of a Zombies classic by a trio of girls called Band of Angels. "He's Not There" (Mums 6035) mixes Who guitars with synthesized Barry White strings and loud vocals, thankfully avoiding horns--a decent update.

There's no shortage of oldies, that's for sure. They're coming from everywhere. Kristine Sparkle contributes to the girl group revival with "It's In His Kiss" (London 1057), not bad. Charlie Kulis offers the zillionth remake of "Runaway" (Playboy 6023), not the greatest, but tolerable. Buddy Alan has a very enjoyable C&W version of "Chains" (Capitol 4019), and hey, wouldn't you like to hear Linda Ronstadt do "Don't Say Nothin' Bad About My Baby"? Pat Boone hopes to compete with the Carpenters' "Please Mr. Postman," but no way. His version (Motown 1314), while closer in arrangement to the original, lacks both the Marvelettes' grit and Karen's gloss. The Cain Mutiny has an engaging version of the almost-forgotten Joey Dee song "What Kind of Love is This" (GDB&C 101). Without the gospel touches, this song could be a great vehicle for the kind of bubblegum treatment that creeps in around the vocals and guitars. A group like Sweet Dreams could do wonders with this.

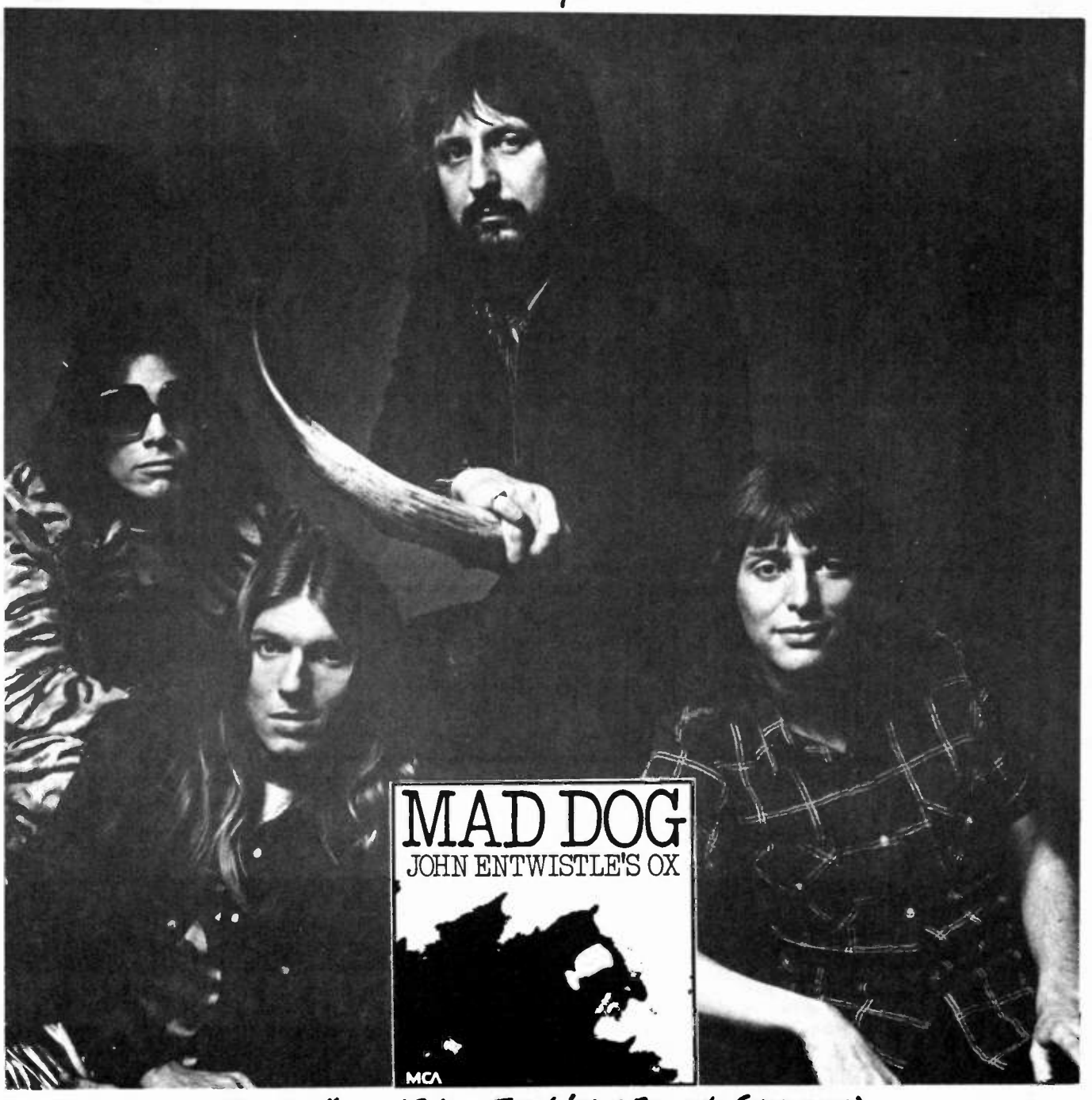
Names from the past abound this month, too. Country Joe (remember him?) has "Dr. Hip," which ought to appeal to Berkeley residents anyway. Irma Thomas has her first in a long time, "Coming From Behind" (Fungus 15353) which occupies both sides and ends in a killer medley of "I Wish Someone Would Care," her great '64 hit. Always good to hear Irma...Giorgio, of "Son of My Father" fame, has his first American release (he's German) in years with "Born to Die" (London 212), which has a sort of "Long Cool Woman" sound, and did well over there. And Don Preston's no oldie (though he is old) but "(Keep On) San Francisco" (Shelter 40279) is the first ode to flower town since the good old days, which makes it nostalgia fodder on some level. And how about Sugarloaf, who look like they have a hit with "Don't Call Us, We'll Call You" (Claridge), a genuinely amusing poke at the A & R end of the record business.

Odds & Ends: "Do Me Good" by Yellowstone & Voice" (Mercury 73613) is an intriguingly anonymous record with great mid-Beatles cops and delightful Liverpudlian vocals over a sort of Leo Sayer circus march beat. Great fun. The first release on Arista is "A Rock and Roll Song" by Robby Benson (0100), which first off isn't rock & roll, and secondly is a classic pop ballad in the old Bell tradition (sorta like Manilow's "Mandy"), which is odd since you'd expect the debut on Bell's new label to be one of those heavy meaningful artists Clive Davis is known for. A good record though, and I'm glad to see the Bell spirit living on in some form. The Tokens, after a stint as Cross Country, are back to their original name with "Penny Whistle Band" (Atco 7009), nothing exceptional. Johnny Rivers meanwhile demonstrates his renowned talent for spotting raw material once again with "Get It Up For Love," a (Atlantic 3230), a Ned Doheny song which Johnny has transformed into a blazing hot recording that's his most distinctive offering in ages, with a strong dance beat and full disco appeal.

It's a great many years since I've seen a record from Harry "the Hipster" Gibson, one of the original beatniks who first offended polite society in the '40s. Now he's back with "Inflationary Blues"/"Hipsters Boogie" (Mile 101) with a sound that hasn't changed--simple boogie-woogie piano and crazed singing. Welcome back. Gary Paxton, known for his novelty records when not turning out country hits, has a pretty strange one in "The Clone Affair" (Private Stock 45,007) in which the Alley Oop narrator tells of an affair with a test tube carbon copy of himself, against an Isaac Hayes backing. Inevitably, love turns to hate and from there into a corny, moralistic ending. I think this may be the most ridiculous record of 1975 so far. Here's hoping for more...

John Entwistle's OX

Who's John Entwistle with a brand new group named "OX". Watch for them in February on a national U.S. Tour!



"Mad Dog" new LP from Track/MCA Records (MCA-2129)

Rainbow

BLOOD ON THE TRACKS
Bob Dylan
Columbia PC 33235

By BOBBY ABRAMS

I first made my acquaintance with Bob Dylan roughly 12 or 13 years ago. Growing up on '50s rock and roll, I had slowly drifted into folk music at the turn of the decade. He was playing at one of the sleaziest folk clubs, Gerde's Folk City, and had just released an album. Alright so on first listening he did have an odd voice, but it was contagious and I loved every golden rasping nasal note he sang.

I was at an impressionable age, and Dylan had a tremendous effect on me; it might be justly said that he changed the course of my life and that of my generation. He brought his multitude of followers into the civil rights movement and taught us about another side of love, the side distinctly not dealt with by traditional rock and roll fare.

We all go through changes. Music got better in the mid-sixties, we got older, the Vietnam war which split the country in half was finally concluded, Bob Dylan had a motorcycle accident, got married, mellowed out. As the soporific seventies descended upon us, we laid back, allowing much of our intensity to dissipate. Dylan came out with 2 great albums after he recovered from his accident: *Blonde On Blonde* and his demo tapes, affectionately called *The Basement Taes*. These are his masterieces, the culmination of a recording career which had gotten better with each subsequent recording. From that point on, each succeeding album became more insipid and though there were several bright lights in this period, Dylan became less and less important as an artist to me. No longer did I anxiously wait to see what our greatest poet had to say about contemporary society. Maybe it was my fault, our fault, in projecting our adolescent hopes, aspirations, ideals onto Dylan. We thrust him into a leadership role he shunned.

I had just about given up hope that Dylan could ever duplicate the brilliance of his early recordings, but I've gotta say that *Blood On the Tracks* is as solid a piece of art as any of his greatest classics. I've been playing it constantly since it came out, and I feel like I have a *real* Bob Dylan album on the turntable, the first since 1967.

The album deals with, of all things, the state of contemporary mores, *vis a vis* divorce, marital infidelity, suburban sexuality. Dylan has become a moralist of sorts, he is writing once again of outlaws like his classic *John Wesley Harding* album (which *Blood* resembles in so many ways). And Dylan has summed up his admiration of outlaws in his great line "to live outside the law you must be honest" (from "Absolutely Sweet Marie"(. Honesty is important to Dylan; much of his *oeuvre* has concerned itself with hypocrisy. Gone, fortunately, is the overbearing misogynism of the early Dylan songs of women and love. Like a musical John Cheever, he has focused his considerable poetic talents onto the middle class, and with his acerbic wit, he has captured in flash images the modern times.

There are two particularly outstanding cuts. My favorite is the simpler "Lily, Rosemary and the Jack of Hearts". It is a traditional ballad, and Dylan has never had any trouble handling this form. The immediate predecessor for this song is "The Ballad of Frankie Lee and Judas Priest" and like that song, "Lily, Rosemary and the Jack of Hearts" has an essentially literal story line. Dylan often has playfully adopted the persona of "the kid" and like Sergio Leone has done in all those great spaghetti westerns, he has woven a portrait of today through the allegory of the past. This song has every great western reference in it (dance halls, mine owners, bank robbers, hanging judges, Colt 45's, killing, love triangles, white hats, black hats) and would make a great movie--all this compressed into nine minutes! It is perhaps the most imaginative piece Dylan has ever undertaken (that's imagination as opposed to creativity--complex metaphors strung together, as for instance in "Ballad of a Thin Man" or "Desolation Row" or even "Sad Eyed Lady of the Lowlands" is nowhere near as difficult to pull off as is the telling of a unified story on a linear level, with four-dimensional allusions, as his style dictates).

"Idiot Wind" is the other masterpiece. Dylan has always had a fine sense of humor and I'm flipped out over the second verse:

> *"They say I shot a man named Gray*
> *and took his wife to Italy.*
> *She inherited a million bucks*
> *And when she died, it came to me,*
> *I can't help it if I'm lucky.*

What a wry comment on his career. "I'm just lucky." This song is autobiographical, detailing his battles with the small-minded, the all-pervasive press, the loss of privacy and the attack on his individuality, identity, and very existence as an artist. Unlike "Positively 4thStreet" this is a mature statement. This is not a whining, self-pitying song; it is a sophisticated work of art. Unlike "My Back Pages" with its fanciful, surrealistic metaphors,Dylan is working with the basic tools of English literature. His voice is great; the music is solid *Blonde On Blonde* type instrumentation with those great organ fills.

The remaining eight songs are simpler; basically concerning themselves with some facet of love. "You're Gonna Make Me Lonesome When You Go" is a zippy tune, opening with Bob back on harp, playing in his unique style, sounding like something off the *Nashville Skyline* album, but with a bit more life.

"You're a BigGirl Now" is pure poetry, both melodically and lyrically, and is one of the most beautiful pieces of writingDylan has ever done. His voice sounds just like it did on "Just Like a Woman" and indeed, this is the mirror image, missing twin positive side to that song. Another beautiful song is "If You See Her, Say Hello." It's in the tradition of "Boots of Spanish Leather" and "Girl of the North Country" and I've always loved this soft side of Bob. Sentimental but not insipid; just some warm thoughts for a once-loved woman gone but not forgotten.

Bob has always had a fine, sharp-edged sense of irony. He proves it's still operant in "Shelter From the Storm", which is full of those old Dylanisms of total abstraction, yet thoroughly impregnated with meaning. Another longish song is "Tangled Up in Blue", which is an involved story of romance, affairs, re-unions and an examination of the institution of matrimony. I had a sweetheart once just like in this song. She used my strength to help her get out of her marriage and the scenes are almost one-on-one. I haven't seen her in years, but I am one hundred percent sure she wound up a bar maid in some low-life bar and if I had any doubts, they've been resolved by this song.

There are other songs, other interpretations to add. These are the highlights of a nearly perfect work of art. Part of the fun of Dylan is trying to decipher his multiple meanings, connotations of which change as time goes by. If one could fully capture aDylan album in a few short words, there would be no need for a Dylan, nor would the author have to write mere record reviews. I have no such pretenses; I only want to report on an event--the triumphal return of one of the most powerful voices in the land.

MILES DAVIS, ARETHA, COLTRANE, RUFUS

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

SOUL & JAZZ

Booker T. & The Evergreens

RECORD MAGAZINE 8
Feb. 75 Vol.1

Including reviews of the latest soul and jazz LP's, singles & performances

Dear Diary,

Harold sure is one sweet dude. On Valentine's Day he gave me a box of candy and the Temptations' new album, "A Song for You." He was so sweet I didn't tell him I was dieting. I put the Tempts album on the turntable, sat down on the couch real close to Harold . . . and popped a chocolate-covered cherry into my mouth. About halfway through the first side, after "Happy People" and the rockin' "Glass House," Harold slid his arm around me and whispered in my ear, "Quit eatin' the candy and give me a kiss baby." But it was too late. I was hooked. I don't know whether it was the Tempts or the candy, but by the time we heard the soft, sensuous blues "A Song for You" (a cream-filled bon-bon) and the moody "Memories" (chocolate-covered caramel) I was half through the box and Harold was through with me. He's gone now, diary, but I still have half a box of candy and the Temptations' "A Song for You." Heart and soul.

MOTOWN®

SOUL&JAZZ

THIS MONTH

COLUMNS & REVIEWS

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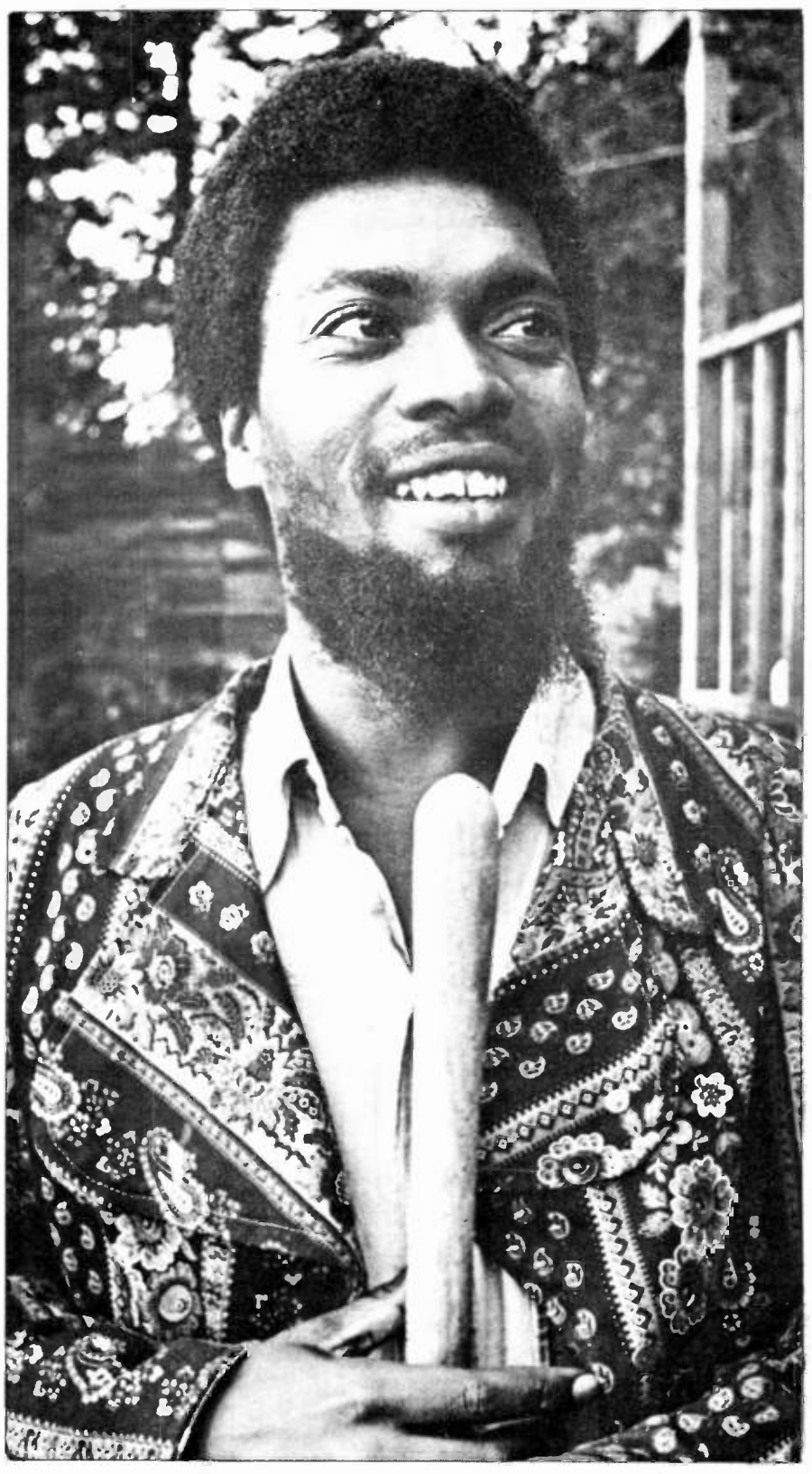
THE COVER:
Booker T. has the smile of a man who's found inner peace at last. This month's cover story tells how he accomplished that difficult feat.

Photo courtesy of Patrick Salvo

BOOKER T & THE EVERGREENS



By Bobby Abrams

For years Booker T. Jones was a superstar. He was responsible in one way or another for every piece of material--album, soundtrack and single--that came out of the Stax Record Company. He was on every cut playing organ, piano, woodwinds, percussion; he wrote and arranged the bulk of the catalogue. As head of Stax's permanent studio band, he provided the musical backing for an incredible number of hits, like: "Walking the Dog" (Rufus Thomas); "Hold On I'm Comin' " and "Soul Man" (Sam and Dave); "Knock on Wood" (Eddie Floyd); "Midnight Hour" (Wilson Pickett); "Who's Making Love " (Johnny Taylor) and all the Otis Redding hits, like "Dock of the Bay" and "Try a Little Tenderness." Booker T. was what the Stax sound stood for--he was Mr. Stax.

In whatever spare time was left, his band, Booker T and the MG's (for Memphis Group), rang up their own share of hits, and "Green Onions," "Time is Tight," "Hip Hug-Her" and "Hang 'Em High" are still big oldies sellers today. He was more than just a musician; Booker was a friend to Otis, a catalyst and inspiration to the owners, a humanistic link in the chain. But superstardom and the "pressures of being a robot" in the Stax organization took their toll on Jones. From that flourish of sixties activity cooped up in a claustrophobic studio in a sweltering city, Booker now spends much of his time hiding away in his forest.

He had become somewhat of a mysterious figure, cutting himself off from civilization and the tensions and frustrations of his superstar status. For a time, some at Stax felt that he was dead; as it was no one there had any contact with him once he left. He just disappeared. Was it drugs? Had he gone crazy? No one knew; he couldn't be reached. At any rate, Stax hasn't been the same since...

"I don't even have a telephone," says Booker about his California retreat. It's a 230 acre redwood ranch, two hours by car from Sausalito. Evergreens are everywhere; it's the kind of setting a forest ranger or hermit would live in. Rolling mounds of earth lead to the recently completed main house which sits atop a hill. "I haven't even explored the whole area," Booker confesses. "It's mountainous, basically a horseshoe with a creek at the bottom; we have lots of springs, redwoods, oaks and elms. The only electricity I have is supplied by a portable generator. There are three houses. Priscilla's father is just finishing his house, putting the roof on. He's the one who's done all the building. My parents live in a mobile home on the land. We're all one big happy family."

It's a big change for Booker. Coming from the urban areas of Memphis, Malibu, and the San Fernando Valley, he's now chosen an untamed, desolate area miles from anything. "The land is just a part of my blood," he explains. "My family contains a great many teachers and farmers from Mississippi--my grandfather had a big farm back home. I spent a lot of time there, and felt I should go back to the land."

The change in surroundings was quickly followed by a change in life style, both physical and mental."There's more solitude, and you can get closer in touch with yourself. You don't have any distractions. You only listen to your own thoughts. You don't have to listen to someone else's thoughts. It's very educational.

"It's kind of hard to relate it. I know what it's all about to me, and you know what it's all about to you. It's different things to different people. I was looking for some answers, and I found some, but they're my own personal answers. They're not answers for everybody. I just know myself better. I think I can relate to people now better than I could four or five years ago. I understand people now, understand what causes their pains and their happiness."

"I'm not white-conscious or black-conscious, I'm all mankind-conscious. That's why I meditate. To make sure that I'm coming from the biggest place there is to come from. I relate to everybody who's human. How black-conscious am I? I'm human conscious. If a brother is in pain, I don't care what color he is. I can't feel any different. I couldn't respect myself if I did. It's the same thing. All men are brothers.

"Black musicians now, I don't really know if they have advanced. I haven't been out on the road in years, and I don't know how black musicians are being treated. I feel like things are changing, but I don't know because I haven't been out there to see for myself."

As humanistic as Booker seems,he shuns benefit performances, even for black causes. "I won't do any benefits at all, because one benefit leads to one hundred, and one hundred leads to one thousand. Besides, I've found out that benefit monies don't always reach their cause. That's just the facts of life. If anyone asks me to do a benefit, I'm going to say 'No.' That's because then you're in the position of being a judge. One group here that says 'Do this,' and another group that says 'Do that.' Both their causes may be right, but I don't want to judge. Let them be their own judge. I don't want to be put in the position of promoting their causes."

AS much as Booker and his family are isolated, having only the deer, birds, and bears for company, he doesn't feel cut off from civilization. "I have as much civilization as any man living in the middle of New York. I don't feel cut off, because I can turn back on to it any time I want to.

"The solitude helps my creativity. There are a lot of interferences in the city. I create in my mind, just about anywhere I am. If you have music in your head, that can be a problem in the city. You can't play the piano in an apartment, you can't rehearse a band, and you can't really let go."

Despite his reclusive existence, Booker doesn't feel he's missing much in the way of musical developments. "Maybe I do lose the pulse of what other people are doing, but I'm not losing my pulse. Maybe that sounds egotistical. I listen to the radio. I buy records. Mainly I think it's as important to keep up with what my own musical thoughts are, as other people's . You have to be an individual to put out something unique, to put out something new that no one else is doing."

But Booker is not an isolated hermit, rocking back and forth on his porch, contemptuously frowning at the world. Back in Memphis he was married to a black woman, Willette. (They had a child, Booker T the third.) "She liked music, but she wasn't a musician. We just didn't have the right chemistry going." For the last few years of his life, Booker has found the desirable chemistry with his present wife, Priscilla, a white woman. (She's the singing sister of Rita Cooledge, who is married to the country singer-songwriter Kris Kristofferson.)

Booker reflected on his second marriage as he sat nervously drawing on a cigarette: "I didn't consider her as a white woman. I considered her as a human being and anyway, just a woman. We were attracted to each other by the same thing that attracts any father to any mother...No, I haven't had any problem with fans over my marriage to a white woman. And if there was any bad feeling, I didn't know about it. But if there is, every individual has the right to live his own life as he pleases."

Booker and Priscilla met in Memphis where Priscilla had been singing on radio and in clubs while Booker was isolated with the MGs in the recording studio. The seedier side of Southern night clubs and record companies became too much for Priscilla to bear, and just before she decided to pack it all in, she met Booker during a session. They've been together ever since.

They were married in Beverly Hills, and Priscilla wrote the "Wedding Song." "That was my wedding present," she says. "After my father married us, Booker took us all into the den in the house we were living in. He said, 'Sit down,' and then he played the 'Wedding Song.'

"When Otis died it was a turning point for me"

"My family were spics in the South. My father is an Indian. There was a certain amount of resentment, but then an overwhelming amount of love that counteracted that resentment, just a limitless love that few people experience...Booker and I were considered the freaks down there both in terms of the way we thought about things and because of the racial situation. We came to California for a breath of fresh air. Here we've been able to work creatively for the first time in years.

"Priscilla is interested in music and studies all the time. She studies the occult, and that interested me. It's been a strong link between us. I was totally oblivious to anything occult until 1968, but now we both study it a lot. We lead our lives by Tarot cards, the horoscope, and the stars. If the stars are negative, we just don't do what we've planned."

Born in Memphis on November 12, 1944, Booker's family was loaded with teachers. His musical talent surfaced early, and he learned the clarinet in elementary school. The sax and oboe came next, then the trombone. Stax Records was just beginning to happen when Booker was in 11th grade, and he soon became a regular studio musician there, playing piano, organ, and baritone sax. In fact, that's Booker's baritone you hear on Rufus Thomas' "Walking the Dog." "Stax was a neighborhood theater renovated into a studio," Booker recalls. "It didn't look like a big recording operation. There was a record shop in front that Estelle Axton operated. I'd be in there pretending to listen to records, but really listening to what was happening in back. I'd see who was in there, and wished I was back there too."

Jones joined the musicians' union and formed the MGs with some high school acquaintances: Steve Cropper, Al Jackson, Jr., and Louis Steinberg. Steinberg played with them on "Green Onions," but problems forced him out of the group, and he was replaced by Donald "Duck" Dunn. In contrast to the then dominating frantic twist rhythms, the sound of the MGs was restrained, reflective, yet surprisingly, compulsively rhythmic. The unique quality in the sound was the result of a shift in emphasis from drums to bass. "Green Onions" became a hit, and at 17 Booker had his first million seller.

Although the MGs were busier recording now more than ever, Booker elected to go to college--Indiana University--and majored in trombone. He took a full course load, played in the band at achool, and flew to Memphis on weekends to record for Stax, usually spending the entire weekend in the studio.

He played on the Stax/Volt Revue tours of Europe, and flew in to do those too. Summers were also spent in the studio. "I feel really old behind all that," Booker says today. "I did a lot, but I wasn't a machine. I kept respect for myself, and I didn't do anything I didn't really want to do. I was really disciplined.

"But there was no room for the individual there; there just wasn't the time. We used to have big meetings discussing the latest trends in music. This was before psychedelic music, but there was a lot of talk about directions. We used to discuss what Motown was doing. There was competition because Stax people would get Motown records and say, 'Oh, they did this and they did that, but we do this and we do that.' But you know, it was friendly. Some of the Motown sound penetrated Stax for a while."

Booker earned his BA in music, played in the school concert band, mastered music theory and the techniques of composition and scored a Bach fugue for a full symphony orchestra.

Booker's music improved, and the MGs' albums were more musically satisfying; Stax's output was more creative all through the Memphis label's first Golden era--1965-1967. The MGs hit their peak on the *Melting Pop* album. "This may sound strange," says Booker, "but up till that point I hadn't realized that music can affect people, and that I as a musician had the power to play music that can do that and control it."

But the group's days were numbered. "Eight years was a long time for that group to be together. We just became so close and tight that it just blew up. It was like a balloon getting too big--either somebody's gotta bust it or some air's gotta come out. But it can't stay the way it is.

"After such a long time with something you lose your perspective. When I was involved in it, I was too intensely involved to make that kind of an observation. When you're involved you can't think about it. You can't be objective as to say whether you're excited about it because you're just in the music."

In 1968 Otis Redding's plane went down, and Booker, after "Green Onions," dozens of gold records and a feeling of claustrophobia, started to think about his future. "When Otis died in the plane crash, it was a turning point for me. We were really close and spent a lot of time together, and I realized that life is short and there are so many things to do. The magic disappeared. It was still there, but Otis was the nucleus of that particular magic. He didn't start it, and he didn't end it, but he was right at the middle of it. It just broke everybody up. Everybody's heart was broken because it was an unfair thing to happen. He was what? 29 or 30? And then all the young guys were killed too. It broke the heart of the company." Soon after that Booker T went underground. So in a way, not unlike Marvin Gaye's departure from show biz when Tammi Terrell died mysteriously in his arms, Booker T. Jones took a career hiatus when his dearest friend Otis Redding passed on.

"I decided to leave Stax because I wanted to expand musically. I didn't want to stay on in the dance group slot--I wanted to do other, different kinds of music, such as you hear on my new album." And in walking out, he really walked out, he hasn't seen or talked with any of the band since.

"It was one of the biggest decisions I'd ever made, but I never thought about if I would fail or succeed. I never thought of it that way because I never had any specific goal in mind when I left. It wasn't so much them telling me what to do, it was just that what had to be done was just so similar to what was done the day before. I didn't have musical freedom. I don't think you could understand the particular grind that was going on, and what it can do to the mind. You would have to experience it. I could have stayed and might have been happy, but I preferred to go."

Just then Booker's manager, a young Jewish boy topped with a ponytail, suggested that Booker could even be a lot happier if he could secure the million odd dollars worth of royalties that his old company allegedly owes him. It seems that Isaac Hayes wasn't the only Stax superstar to be financially duped in the last few years. When the question came up about his old company going bankrupt and the weird stories about people running out with money, Booker displayed complete ignorance of the situation. "This is the first I've heard about it. Like I said, I haven't seen those people in years and I have no desire to do so." Booker half smiled at Priscilla over their organic Japanese dinner and took a hard gulp at his drink. The Stax case was obviously closed.

After leaving Stax, he came West with Priscilla and signed with A & M, the record label that both Priscilla and Rita record for. Three Booker and Priscilla combined efforts ensued, all produced by Booker. Those albums reveal a lot about their relationship: they both feel repulsed by the record industry, of not finding their room keys at 3 AM after concert dates, and by the whole scene. They recorded a cover version of Bob Dylan's protest song, "Maggie's Farm," except they put in their own words: "I ain't gonna work in Hollywood anymore, I ain't gonna work in Memphis anymore." Dylan's message was that he wasn't going to work for the establishment anymore, and the Jones' twisted the song to reveal their distaste for the Memphis and Hollywood recording scenes.

Booker T. & the original MG's in 1964.

"I learned a lot on those LP's," says Booker. "We both learned a lot. I had never been into vocal music before, and singing with her helped me to find myself. I've never worked on an album that wasn't hard work. It was a different experience in the first place. I'd never worked with vocals before. I don't think I would be doing vocals now, if it hadn't been for Priscilla."

During this period, Booker experimented as a producer. "After producing Priscilla's *Gypsy Queen*, I found Bill Withers. Bill's was one of the type things I wanted to experiment with at Stax, but couldn't have done. He was an airplane factory worker, and nobody would listen to his songs. I did, and I heard that something was there. I didn't really have to do much for Bill at all. I just played the piano and commented on his performance. I just helped him with the instrumental tracks. It was more of a moral thing, or a supportive thing, than it was a productive thing. I just told him, 'I think you can do it.'

Booker also did some scoring for a movie, the black remake of *The Informer*. "At that time, I'd had an operation on my leg to have a tumor removed and I was in a wheelchair during the recording of the whole film. I wasn't in on the beginning of it, so I didn't know what the purpose was. I was just hired. Being in the hospital, I took a movie-ola home and I watched what they'd shot. When they shot a scene, they sent it to me and I'd play it on the movie-ola, and then write down my impressions of it musically. At the end, I just got all of those together. It was probably the first black exploitation movie. I dug doing it a lot, and if I had been physically able, I would have done a better job."

Booker's new album is *Evergreen*, named after his ranch. It speaks of happiness and country days away from needless "institutions." Booker displays a fine, attractive mellow vocal style as he sings about such things as "Tennessee Voodoo" or brother-in-law Kris Kristofferson's "Why Me." There's an excellent ragtime piece, "Front Street Rag," and some rather sophisticated MG-ish instrumentals, such as the title tune and "Flamingo." "Jamaica Song" is a reggae based tune, and for a piano player, Booker's vocal and lyrics are fantastic. Included also are two autobiographical pieces, "Country Ways," which details Booker's disillusionment with city living, and "Song For Casey" written about Rita and Kris's love affair and subsequent marriage.

Coming from a hit factory like Stax, Booker could have followed the same commercial music philosophy. "No, I'm not using the same formulas musically, because I don't have the same ingredients. Music is people, and I don't have the same people. It was structured differently, because the people were different. There's no way the same formula can work."

Booker reaffirms that he's through with the Stax philosophy and doubts that the MGs will ever reform. "I don't talk to any of them. Unless there's a widespread need for nostalgia, I don't see the purpose of getting back together." He asks nonchalantly, "Is that a nostalgic era in sound now?"

Booker will be touring with his band, the Pacific Coast Group (the PGs?) which includes: Fred Burton, lead guitar; Peter Milio, drums; Doug Killmer, bass. While *Evergreen* will be their main concern, Booker mentions that the band will also perform oldies like "Green Onions," "Hip Hug-Her," "time is Tight," "Groovin'" and Hang 'Em High."

"First you do your own music for yourself. Then, when you discover that someone else is listening, you appreciate it. I guess in that sense I do have a sense of communication, because I do appreciate. If someone listens, they're saying, 'I like what you're doing, because I'm spending my time listening to it.' It's a compliment if they even bother listening to it. That communication is really important. It really is. I haven't really spent a lot of time thinking about it, but subconsciously I guess it really matters a lot. But I guess when you live in the country even listening and talking to the birds is communication, isn't it? It sure beats beating your head on the concrete."

A CONVERSATION WITH KEITH JARRETT

By Michael Davis

"I don't believe in Art. In that sense I am not an artist. I believe in music to the extent that *it* was here before *we* were. In that sense, perhaps I'm not a musician. I don't believe in Life, but whoever deeply considers the question will resolve in the same key. I don't believe that I can create but that I can be a channel for the Creative. I *do* believe in the Creator...as to what I should be called, I don't remember Him calling me anything in particular."

Words from Keith Jarrett, included in his brilliant *Solo Concerts* package. Words that help explain his tremendous diversity: how he has been able to be a solo pianist, a singer/songwriter, an orchestral composer, and a multi-instrumentalist leading his own band, and how he has managed to sustain his own music-making while playing in other people's groups.

Like the majority of jazz's leading figures, Jarrett began his career (after a period of schooling) by going to New York City and gigging and recording with a number of artists including Art Blakey and Roland Kirk.

It wasn't until he joined Charles Lloyd, however, that he really began to make a name for himself. The relationship was a fruitful one; Lloyd's popularity increased dramatically but there were many people who walked away from his concerts more impressed with the little guy at the piano.

A couple of years later, Jarrett again appeared in a star sideman role, this time for Miles Davis. Hovering spiderlike over two electric keyboards, he punctuated the band's steady rhythmic approach with sharp thrusts of sound, often pushing the soloists to unexpected places.

These days, Keith doesn't like to talk much about playing for other leaders; instead he emphasizes that he's had his own band since the first session with Lloyd in '66 and that Charlie Haden and Paul Motian have remained with him the entire time (Dewey Redman joined in 1972).

If pressed, he will admit that occasionally he was brought together with musicians whom he wouldn't have met otherwise but in the main, his learning experiences in those associations were negative.

"I learned what I didn't want to do as a leader, "he relates. "It had to do with business, the way of feeling with people in a band. I learned the things that have enabled me to keep my band together for eight years.

"Sometimes together was only spiritually. We were together; we weren't always working. Those things are not interchangeable.

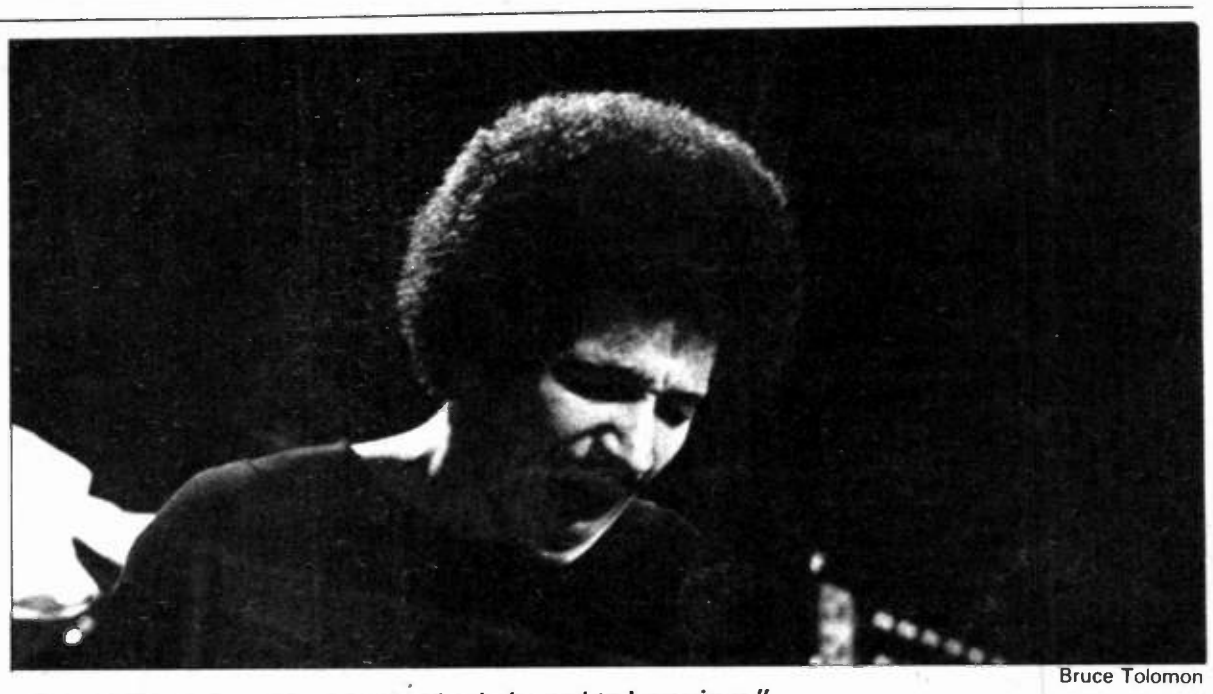
"But that's exactly what's true with most bands; they are interchangeable. When someone asks you, 'Who are you with?' you answer, whoever you're working with. When you're not working, you're not with anyone. There is no constant there. How can you develop a sense of value that way?

"In any event, there is something to be learned from the fact that it can be done. And also something to be learned why other people's music can't be as permanent to an audience if it isn't coming from a special place, if it's coming from just anybody that happens to be around."

Permanence is an important value to Jarrett; he is not the type of bandleader who will hire someone because that person's style fits in with what he's doing. "Style is the absence of knowledge," he states, and then goes on to explain why he will not use what he calls "hip players" (musicians whose styles have been widely emulated but who don't, in his estimation, have any musical values of their own) in his groups.

"I've always avoided hip players. Even if they are the best, I wouldn't use them. They have an atmosphere around them that they don't create, that they usually can't deal with, especially if they're young. It makes them very susceptible to praise.

"And the hip players are playing with everyone. When they finally get to put their own group together, things fall apart most of the time. They don't have any music or direction. The values were all sapped out of them because they allowed themselves to work with all these other groups because they were so happy with their own success."



Bruce Tolomon

"It feels like a piano. No, take that back. It used to be a piano."

Jarrett himself has avoided the temptations of his own success by simply saying no; he estimates that he has turned down one hundred recording dates in the last eight years.

As for his sidemen, Keith feels that the distance between the music they make with him is sufficient to keep artistic contamination from setting in.

"I know that Dewey and Charlie don't play anything like they play with Ornette when they play with me," he says. "That's why they're able to do it. They are choosy enough musicians to know that they shouldn't be doing two things that are very close to each other because if they were, they wouldn't be able to separate them."

Regarding the music itself, Jarrett doesn't exactly present the image of an overbearing leader. He sees himself as writer, director, and participant but not necessarily the central figure in the band. With talents like Redman and Haden, he can certainly get away with it and this attitude has undoubtedly contributed to the group's stability.

As leader, however, he has other responsibilities, notably, reaching an audience. His concept of recruiting fans is quite diffeent from those of many current jazzmen who are tailoring their sound for the new electric jazz audience. Since leaving Miles Davis, he has renounced electric pianos and thereby, turned his back on untold potential followers. "Electricity goes through all of us and is not to be relegated to wires," he writes succinctly.

Permanence again seems to be the main factor when he rejects the success factors of the Hancock/Weather Report/Return to Forever bands.

"First off, they're reaching a larger but more temporary audience," he states. "The quicker you gain an audience, the more temporary it is. The quicker the solution, the less permanent it is.

"The problem is that they think reaching an audience is pretty important. I think it is the only thing that is important. But I don't want an audience that comes to hear us because we're a group that happens to be around. I want an audience that will come whenever we play after they discover us, which is exactly what we have."

But being discovered is also a problem, what with tight playlists and all and word-of-mouth tends to take a long time. Jarrett prefers not to be on the club circuit for long periods of time so the only alternative is concerts. He has participated in some of the Impulse concerts staged back East but he has not been all that happy with the results.

"Those weren't organized very well," he remembers. "I think mainly there wasn't enough money. Plus having three groups at a concert is not my idea of an ideal situation. You can't listen to our music even with another group because we have too much to play. We always go on first whenever we play with someone because if we tire the audiences out, at least they've heard us. The other way around, they'd be tired out maybe halfway through our set, just when we were getting hot.

"And there's another thing. People put groups together like they were playing cards from a deck and they all had the same backs, just different numbers on them. We don't have the same backs as any other group that's playing right now. So there has to be some sensitivity as to who they put us with; there has to be the same solo somewhere in their card.

"But I have found out that if people want to hear the music, they're gonna do whatever they have to to have it. If they don't really want to hear it, I would rather not play anyway."

Many record companies would no doubt be upset by an artist who is not consciously seeking a mass audience but Keith is fortunately tied to two companies who respect his artistry to the extent that they don't try to influence his music. He records his quartet for ABC/Impulse and does "special, non-conflicting projects" for ECM, distributed in the USA by Polydor.

He sounds happy with both associations; ECM's Manfred Eicher is a close personal friend and the people he deals with at Impulse have gone along with his ideas about packaging and release dates. *Treasure Island*, for instance, was put out to coincide with Jarrett's club dates in Los Angeles and San Francisco.

This brought up an interesting possibility; what about a series of solo dates to promote *Solo Concerts*, an album that has enchanted even those who don't usually go for piano music.

Keith acknowledged that he planned three dates in Canada but that nothing was scheduled for the West Coast. "I'm afraid I have to say that one of the chief reasons is that there are no pianos to play on here," he explained.

As if to underscore the point, he walked onto the Lighthouse stage a few minutes later and began tuning the piano while talking to the audience in a bemused tone of voice. "Well, it looks like a piano," he smiled wryly. "Kind of feels like a piano. No, I take that back. It definitely used to be a piano. It says Steinway on it so it oughta be okay."

PERFORMANCES

THE PERSUASIONS
The Bottom Line
New York City, New York

By GARY KENTON

The Persuasions' most recent couple of records (on A&M) have introduced instrumental accompaniment for the first time. Yet, while the marriage has received mixed reviews and the added orchestration is regarded in many circles either as a gargantuan boo-boo or merely a superfluous concession to commercial pressures, their *a capella* (without instruments, that is) live show has remained intact. The stage set-up continues to be the same as it has for the ten years or so that The Persuasions have been together (with only one personnel change): just five black men with voices that were made in one of Heaven's more finely crafted workshops. As the title of their latest album, *I Just Want To Sing With My Friends*, suggests, The Persuasions are basic, straightforward and a bit cornball. But they are also the best vocal group in the world (twice as dynamic as the Dixie Hummingbirds or the Mighty Clouds ofJoy) and if all they want to do is sing, there ought to be some sort of national resource subsidy from the government to keep 'em at it. Their live performance has its ups and downs (they *are* human, although doubts spring into your mind when you watch them sing), but the ups are euphoric and the downs are still better than everybody else's ups.

The main reason for the Persuasions' superiority in the vocal category is Jerry Lawson, their lead man and baritone. In this writer's humble opinion, there is no better male singer in all of soul music. No one this side of the King himself, James Brown, can touch Lawson in terms of sheer energy, enthusiasm, agility and sweat. To watch him perform is a treat, albeit an exhausting one, and it is impossible not to become involved in each song, whether it be one of the Persuations' "topical" songs (about the ghetto, racism, drugs, war etc.) or one of their more familiar romantic tunes. Even the most trite, over-worked songs (their stage repertoire often includes such syrupy strains as "He Ain't Heavy, He's My Brother," "You've Got A Friend," "Lean On Me," and others of that ilk) turn to heart-wrenching odes of redoubtable sincerity in the hands of Lawson & Company.

In addition to Lawson, the Persuasions have bassman Jimmy Hayes (who makes Johnny Cymbal's "Mr. Bassman" sound like a soprano), Willie C. Daniels (first tenor, occasional lead), Joe Russell (second tenor, occasional lead) and Herbert "Tubo" Rhoad (baritone, occasional lead). These men are masters of their trade and are capable of making anything sound sweet; their show consists of a smooth mixture of new arrangements of 50's and 60's standards, semi-obscure songs by well-known artsists (they do especially well by Curtis Mayfield and Sam Cooke), unadulterated gospel, and top hits of the day.

At New York's Bottom Line (which has replaced the now-defunct Max's Kansas City as the top music club in the big apple), the Persuasions drew from all six of their albums, ranging from a Temptations medley to the religious "The Christian Life" to Leiber & Stoller's "I'm a Hog for You Baby"and so on. The four-day engagement drew good crowds who were treated to Booker T as the opening act.

Rainbow

The Persuasions: if all they want to do is sing, they should be declared some sort of national resource.

MOSE ALLISON
The Lighthouse
Hermosa Beach, California

By BOBBY ABRAMS

Jazz reached its period of greatest acceptance in the fifties. Jazz greats Dizzy Gillespie and Charlie Parker had done their most impressive work in the previous decade and a whole new generation of future jazz giants, heavily influenced by their pioneering ground-breaking, had arrived.

I recently had occasion to see a favorite of mine from that period, Mose Allison.

On stage, Mose is performing as if accompaniment to the ring of the bar's cash register. Though this scene, this frozen instant in time, may be a relic, it is an important relic. Several of our most important musicians today have recorded Mose Allison's work and acknowledged his seminal influence on the ever-changing interpretation of the blues. These musicians include the Who ("Young Man Blues"), Brian Auger ("If You Live"), the Yardbirds ("I'm Not Talking"), John Mayall, Blue Cheer and countless others ("Parchman Farm"). It is incredible, the influence this man has exerted on an entire generation of musicians.

Mose, originally from Mississippi, is so laid back he has no problem wandering around the club between sets .While performing, he sits calmly at the piano, doing the eight or so numbers in his hour-long set. He starts off with a few jams (he has a trio with him now, a stand-up bass player and a drummer) and in recent years, these instrumentals have taken on a classical tinge as he has developed the role his left hand plays in making music. Then as he started to cook and the audience began swaying and moving to the rhythms, he went into his real strength--those tantalizing vocal compositions and interpretations. There was no disappointment, for in the course of the evening he performed all his classics: "Seventh Son", "Parchman Farm", "I Love the Life I Live", "Young Man Blues" and many more. His direct, relaxed country blues are as valid today as they were when he first started out back in the fifties--Mose Allison is indeed a consummate musician.

IN THE SEVENTIES Jazz

By ED WARD

I can always tell when Miles Davis puts out a new album. Nearly everybody I know is or has been a Miles fan at one time, and when the phone starts ringing, I know he's done it again. "Did you hear the new Miles Davis album?" they ask, and then comes the inevitable "How can he get away with that?" question, which is either asked with a tone of disgust or a tone of awe.

For my part, I really don't know what to make of Miles. He is, I guess, an innovator--but then, he has been ever since *Birth of the Cool*. His records are also immensely popular--but then, they always have been, no matter how off the wall they were. The folks who left the fan club with *In A Silent Way* were replaced with an equal number who would never understand *My Funny Valentine*, and those who bailed out with *Bitches Brew* certainly aren't being missed by Miles' accountant.

But the recent records, it seems to me really do deserve the criticism they've been getting. Sure, it's easy to say that a work is too complex to be grasped on first hearing, or that an artist is progressing more rapidly than his audience. That's the old defense of avant-garde art--so old, in fact that I believe it was Stravinsky's fans who first used it. But--and I daresay Stravinsky wouldn't argue this point--that doesn't give an artist the right to use the you-aren't-ready-for-me-yet argument as a smokescreen to hide the fact that he's not really doing much. Miles is doing something, understand, but I don't think he's doing as much as his more vocal defenders would have us believe.

Putting aside the artistry, Miles' recent efforts have been technical nightmares--a turmoil of wah-wah distortion and murky mixing which give the listener nothing more than a headache and an ulcer from the churning, but static, rhythms. Miles' trumpet playing, like the solo contributions of every other member of the aggregation, is limited to occasional bursts of sound.

Artistically, I'd say that Miles started to lose it with the abysmal *On the Corner* album, and I'd all but given up on him when his latest, *Get Up With It* (Columbia KG 33236) started my phone ringing again. *Get Up With It* is only a partial success, but I had despaired of getting even a partial success out of Miles any more. There are some impressive pieces here, and one real monster, which, unsurprisingly enough, is "He Loved Him Madly," the tribute to Duke Ellington.

Of course, there's nothing so simple as an Ellington quote or imitation holding this piece together, just a brooding, pervasive sense of near-doom, the kind of lost, hopeless feeling the death of someone close to you can bring. The piece is structured around some uncredited (but probably Miles) organ chording, and the three guitars (Reggie Lucas, Pete Cosey, and Dominique Gaumont) tossing ideas back and forth like a chorus.

The other side of the same record has three very interesting pieces, "Maiysha," a mellow piece of work; "Honky Tonk," a tape left over from several bands ago, which features John McLaughlin and Billy Cobham and the inaudible keyboards of Keith Jarrett and Herbie Hancock, and which is funky enough; and the all-out rhythm assault of "Rated X," in which Miles fools around with the studio console to good effect.

I wish the other disc was as good. Its sole surprise attraction is "Red China Blues," a bizarre piece of funk with the standard New York studio crew (Pretty Purdie, Cornell Dupree) and one Wally Chambers wailing on harmonica, and eventually playing along with the simple lines Miles introduces. It's short and it's really a great idea. The rest of the disc, though, is the same tired old thing, recorded nearly as badly as *On the Corner*, and distorted even more (as the whole album is) by trying to fit so much high-volume information (each side is over thirty minutes long--at least you get value for your dough with Miles) on one side of an album. Still, I'd recommend *Get Up With It* to anybody interested in what Miles is doing nowadays, and that's more than I could say for any of the last couple years' crop.

And if Miles/Mahavishnu is your cup of noise, you should know about a fine spinoff from the original Mahavishnu Orchestra, Jerry Goodman and Jan Hammer's *Like Children* (Nemperor NE 430). If you wondered who in the Ork was responsible for some of those remarkable ostinato rhythm jams, check these guys out. In fact, the album confirms my theory that some of that band was canned for having a sense of humor. A real good time.

Since I spent quite a bit of time recently raving about Earl and Carl Grubbs (the Visitors, as they bill themselves), I should inform you that the two Philadelphia brothers have another album out, still on the remarkable Muse label. *Rebirth* (Muse MR 5047) doesn't strike me as being as strong as their first album, *In My Youth*, but it is still very refreshing, extended Coltrane-style music, with Carl and Earl picking up on each other's musical thought-waves like...well, like brothers, I guess.

And speaking of extended Coltrane-style music, there's the new Sonny Rollins record, *The Cutting Edge*, (Milestone M-9059) to talk about. Recorded at Montreux last July, it shows Sonny hanging in there, perhaps not quite with as much fire as he once has had, but strong as ever, and driving the audience to heights of frenzy with his playing. With the able assistance of Music Inc's Stanley Cowell Rollins turns in a set of originals, and closes with a remarkable 15-minute "Swing Low Sweet Chariot" featuring bagpipe jazz artist Rufus Harley, who shows that with all his instrument's limitations, he can still swing with the best of 'em. And Sonny is certainly one of the best of 'em. If you don't believe me (or you were mad about my comment about his losing his fire) RCA is re-releasing some of his classic work on a 2-volume re-issue, The *Bridge*, in the next couple of weeks. Watch for it.

SOUL & JAZZ REVIEWS

GET UP WITH IT
Miles Davis
Columbia KG 33236

By GEORGE WANAMAKER

This album (one can envision Davis smirking now, a la *Miles Smiles*) is full of surprises, including his record debut on organ and acoustic piano. This writer, for one, never expected Miles to record a twelve bar blues ("Red China Blues"), replete with chord changes again.

Miles' choice of song titles are as varied and diverse as the music and musicians that enhance this presentation. From "He Loved Him Madly" (the album is dedicated "For Duke") to "Calypso Frelimo," "Rated X," "Honky Tonk," and the abovementioned "Red China Blues," the titles seem to provoke questions as to just what is going on in his head politically.

This two record set has got to be one of the record bargains of the year. Side one is consumed by "He Loved Him Madly." Miles recorded this piece less than a week after Ellington's death last May. Though it doesn't represent the Duke's style thematically, its slow ethereal beginning and development could be a reference to the maestro's meticulous compositional style. The middle, march like, section is highlighted by a mournful, wailing trumpet solo reminiscent of "Solea" on the old *Sketches of Spain* album.

"Calypso Frelimo," another side long masterpiece is a kaleidoscopic blending of African rhythms, electronic imagery and controlled polyphonic chaos. Frelimo is the abbreviation for the Mozambican freedom fighters organization.

Miles' piano and organ work is limited to simple chord accompaniment throughout the album. "Rated X" is a schizophrenic array of pastoral keyboard sustenuto, supplied by Miles, against a frantic keyboard percussion ensemble punctuated by odd, uneven rhythm breaks. "Billy Preston," as the name implies is a rock oriented reference to the R&B vocalist/keyboard artist. Though the piece is 12 minutes long, it might find quite a bit of jazz station airplay. "Mtume," named for the African percussion of the group, and the beautiful "Maiysha" are examples of Miles' familiarity with complex African rhythms.

Miles chose to use more than one major keyboard player on "Honky Tonk" as he did on the *In a Silent Way* album a few years back. This time the keyboard/synthesizer arsenals are manned by former sidemen Keith Jarrett and Herbie Hancock. Billy Cobham is featured on drums and John McLaughlin plays guitar.

If James Brown is the "Godfather of Soul," then Miles has got to be "The Godfather of Small Group Jazz." If this album represents his future direction, to combine a little of the old with the best of the new, then fans as well as reviewers will have a nice time following his latest trend.

Rainbow

Miles Davis responds to critics of his new music.

ATMA
Michal Urbaniak's Fusion
Columbia KC-33184

By DALE HARDMAN

This is Michal Urbaniak's second release for Columbia in this country, and reflects the influx of Eastern European artists such as Miroslav Vitous, Jan Hammer, and now Urbaniak, and the influence they are beginning to make on music in this country.

The nucleus of the group's members are all from Poland, and as such their music has been influenced to a large extent from the strength of Eastern European folk forms. Their music is truly a "fusion" of indiginous roots and contemporary improvisation, such that this crossbreeding of musics and cultures does much to diffuse constricting labels and therefore makes them more accessible.

The unusual instrumentation of the group features Michal Urbaniak on electric violin, Vi-tar violin, and soprano saxophone; Urszula Dudziak on percussion and vocals; Czeslaw Bartowski on drums, Pavel Jarzebski on bass; Wojciech Karolak on keyboards, Fender piano, Moog, Farisa and clarinet; and Ray Mantilla on conga, drums and percussion.

On *Fusion*, their first stateside release, there was more of an unsettled tension that dominated the recording. On *Atma*, Urbaniak has relaxed the tension somewhat so as not to restrict the colorful cohesiveness they exhibit as a group.

"Mazurka" features those elements of their music that are constant throughout the album; elements such as swing, articulation, timing--all play an important part in their overlapping of sound textures. On "Butterfly," the piece begins with a piano intro, followed by Urbaniak bowing a subdued upper register. Urszula (Urbaniak's wife), then enters voicing wordless phrases through an echochord, bringing to mind Flora Purim's free singing. The tension builds slowly at first, until Bartowski and Mantilla propel the unit forward with their swirling percussion interplay. Then Urbaniak sweeps in from afar bowing madly, while Karolak extends the intro to provide support at first, then taking off himself into a brief "pulse" run on keyboard.

"Largo" is an apt title for this piece, as it is a slow, and broad pastiche featuring Urbaniak's full and soulful sound on violin.

"Kama (Part I)", is more representative of the group's development in Europe, and features Ursula at her best, as she creates the spontaneous voicings that contribute so much coloration to this music.

The last selection, "Atma," is a suite that reflects their European development, then moves into their present music, and in the last part of the piece, suggests where their music might be headed. Karolak's understated touch on the Moog on this piece, together with the hint of an r&b base, suggest some interesting possibilities to develop as a group.

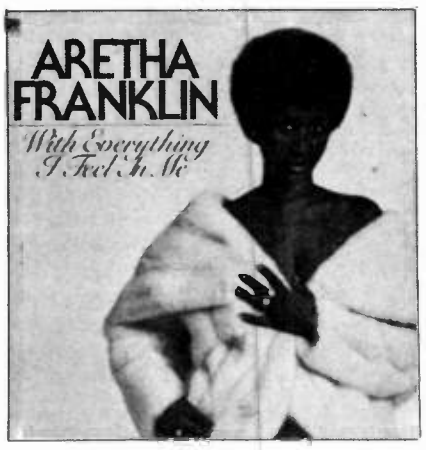
The acceptance of groups such as Weather Report, Chick Corea, Herbie Hancock, Miles, etc., by people with diverse musical interests, may mean the beginning of wider recognition in this country of artists who are attempting to broaden the spectrum of musical dimensions, without regard to labels, such as Michal Urbaniak's Fusion. It will surely mean better music.

WITH EVERYTHING I FEEL IN ME
Aretha Franklin
Atlantic SD 18116

By BOBBY ABRAMS

Within the scope of my off the wall taste in music, I include a passion for those rare moments when Aretha Franklin is truly the greatest singer of all times. The Italians talk about *la belle canta*, the beautiful voice, and when this gal's on, she's right up there with Billie Holiday and Barbra Streisand, 'cause no one gets down like she does when she takes care of business. If you're skeptical, just listen to Aretha's recording of "Precious Lord," cut for Chess when she was fifteen years old. In terms of sheer pain (which is what the blues is all about, or so they tell me) not even the heaviest Billie Holiday song, dripping with heroin addiction, can match the power of Aretha's vocals. Unfortunately, Ms. Franklin has not often matched the height and glory of that recording. Moreover, like most R & B artists, she has often in her career been content to do the obvious, the easy, the automatic. She must be running scared these days, or something, 'cause she really gets it on for a good part of this new album.

Aretha has lost at least a ton of weight, and she's both looking good and singing well these days. It is to producer Jerry Wexler's credit that through thick and thin, he has never lost the faith. Speaking of Jerry, I remember one summer when we engaged in friendly arguments as to who was better, Aretha Franklin or Dionne Warwick. While Dionne did not have the style moves of Aretha, she most definitely had better material, and handled it real fine. Any collection of Dionne Warwick golden hits is a great record. On this record Aretha attempts to demolish that myth. While she doesn't have the silken, polished style of Warwick, she does invest the two Bacharach-David numbers,



"Don't Go Breaking My Heart" and "You'll Never Get To Heaven" with energy and "soul" that they've never seen before. The former was a minor 'B' side hit for Dionne (it's the flip of "Trains and Boats and Planes"). Aretha's version bears no resemblance to the original. She's tripled the speed and added so much tongue pressure, one fears that Ray Charles has permanently lost his title. No longer is this a song about a chick pleading to get her man back after cheating on him. This here chick is *demanding* the dude come back and give his love to her. The moves are perfect and I personally wouldn't have believed that a Bacharach song could have so much soul. But then when Aretha is as hot as she is on this cut, she could probably make "Mary Had a Little Lamb" into a soul classic. She also adds some guts to "You'll Never Get to Heaven," showing Dionne what one can really do with all those la-las. All I can say is I don't want to mess around with this broad.

The album opens with "Without Love" which is stock Aretha soul material, written by her sister Carolyn (also a singer of some note). It burns, it sizzles, and Gladys Knight never sounded so hot. In a similar vein is "With Everything I Feel" penned by Aretha herself. This is real typical soul stuff circa 1966-1968, but then those were the golden years for Aretha weren't they? "When You Get Down To It," a pretty ballad by Barry Mann (which includes, for nostalgia freaks, a typical Stax-Volt build circa 1965) rounds out the first side.

Side two unfortunately is very stock, stale Aretha. One of her cardinal virtues (and flaws) is that she is always so superior to her material that it matters not whether she's working from a solid foundation. If she's hot, she's hot. Hence, when she isn't making moves, she tends to flatten everything like a steamroller and can't be carried by an otherwise good song. I say all this to emphasize the fact that the material on this side is not inherently weaker than side one, merely her performance. That side and that performance is so superior however, that I have no qualms in saying this is without a doubt the best Aretha Franklin album in years and heartily recommending its purchase to any serious lover of either soul music or *la belle canta*.

SOUL & JAZZ REVIEWS

RUFUSIZED
Rufus featuring Chaka Khan
ABC Records ABCD 837

By GEORGE WANAMAKER

Having just completed a successful U.S. concert tour with Stevie Wonder, their mentor of late, this set of songs provides a fitting sequel to their hit *Rags to Rufus* LP. With effervescent song belter Chaka Khan now receiving feature billing as well as plenty of attention from prominent song writers, the group blends an equal amount of its own originals with material from others, most notably Bobby Womack.

Indeed Ms. Khan is the focus of Rufus, one of the few Black songstresses to emerge in the past few years. With all the air play and publicity they've received in the past few weeks it's hard to believe the group was practically unknown less than two years ago.

Part of that rapid rise to fame is due to the benevolent and creative hand of Stevie Wonder, who wrote their most successful record to date, "Tell Me Something Good." Not totally free of Stevie's influence however, "Somebody's Watching You" still reflects his touch, their sound is more and more becoming identified with them.

Side one opens with the hard driving, uptempo "Once We Get Started" which is just now receiving heavy airplay. This is the best of the Rufus originals. "Pack'd My Bags" and "Rufusized" offer an adequate but repititious rehash of their previous successes. Enjoyable though, was Kevin Murphy's florid acoustic piano on "Bags" and a funky unidentified tenor sax solo on the title track.

The album's social redeeming value is on the second side. Opening with Washburn's "I'm a Woman" (not to be confused with the Leiber and Stoller song popularized by Maria Muldaur or Helen Reddy's "I Am Woman"), Ms. Khan is comfortably effective with both the interesting lyrics ("I can bear your children and be your mama too") and the music.

"Right is Right," which is followed by such a surprising lyric as "wrong is wrong," and "Half Moon" are more of the standardized Rufus stuff. "Please Pardon Me (you remind me of a friend)" is my favorite. It's nice to hear a song about something other than lost loves or broken hearts. Bobby Womack's "Stop On By" is a good conclusion to this offering by a group on its way to much better things.

FACING YOU
Keith Jarrett
ECM/Polydor 1017 ST

By MICHAEL DAVIS

ECM has a rather bizarre problem; they have more good music than they can successfully market in this country. The German jazz label had built up a substantial library of fine recordings before they were able to find an American distributor and now they are caught in a bind: whether to put out only recently-released albums and thus keep up with their artists' current achievements or wait until an album has demonstrated through critical commentary and import sales that there is indeed an audience for it. Their latest release package of three LP's--Circle's *Paris Concert,* Paul Bley's *Open To Love* and Keith Jarrett's *Facing You*--indicate that they are choosing the latter path, at least for the time being.

Facing You is one of the classic solo piano albums of the decade and its U.S. release at this time (in place of the originally-scheduled *In the Light*) undoubtedly has a lot to do with the universal acclaim awarded Jarrett's *Solo Concerts* set which has even been nominated for an award in the industry's annual lopsided merry-go-round, the Grammys.

One of the things that makes Keith's music unique is that he conceives of it as flowing through him rather than emanating from him. Thus, his career has not been concerned with finding a distinctive style that he can call "his" but rather, with playing what he feels at a given time, in any one of a number of settings he has chosen for himself.

Facing You was Jarrett's debut solo disc and instantly established him as a master of unaccompanied improvisation. You won't hear anything really radical on this record since everything he plays sounds somehow familiar but the way each piece develops, from the introductory statement of a theme through countermelodies spun off from the original one, rhythm changes, and subtlety altered theme restatements make a thoroughly logical yet highly original whole. Each cut is distinct but Keith's way of choosing melodies, his full, gospel-oriented chording, and his touch on the instrument give the album a pleasing unity.

MORE, MORE, MORE
Latimore
Glades 6503

By MIKE FREEDBERG

Latimore's second album picks up the directional indications of the first, much like the Stones' second LP moved on from their first; now some of Ben Latimore's own compositions begin to appear, as well as licks from T.K. Productions gifted guitarist Little Beaver. But Latimore retains, tightens his attachment to the blues idiom as a format for the commercial cuts on the album--as well as for the straight blues numbers that fill it up, particularly Willie Mabon's "I Don't Know" and the early '60s Bobby Bland hit "Ain't Nothin' You Can Do." This, in a singer who is presented to the "soul" markets which seem so resistant to blues work presented in old-fashioned packages as another sexy brother, spiffy in Muhammed Ali fight-goer clothes and hair styles.

The hit from Latimore's second effort is, of course, "Let's Straighten It Out," which flew to a number one position on every R&B chart during the fall, and ostensibly is only another angle on the crumbling-marriage theme. Here it's the husband in bed gently asking his wife to get straight with him and say what he is doing wrong. Latimore works the lyrics without effects--easy to comprehend over a lo-fi radio--but the blues preference is there both in Little Beaver's guitar complement, reminiscient of piano accompaniments in the Chicago format, and in Latimore's moody melodica. "Let's Straighten It Out" was a successful enough hit that it's brought Latimore that bane of the successful R&B act--an imposter, whom T.K. has been chasing all over the country.

Being a blues nut, I prefer the straight indigo cuts and hope that you'll get into the album, not just the hit single. The blues are in danger of becoming precious, a sort of '70s folk music deserted by its original audience and taken up, as was folk, by the eastern urbanites of today. That's not the case with Latimore, who regularly works the Chitlin Circuit as part of the T.K. (Miami Sound) Family of artists, who originate in the Deep South and have until now done most of their lives touring in the old Confederacy.

Playing sundry keyboards and singing too, he's more like a male Aretha Franklin or perhaps a jazz piano singer such as Fats Waller or Victoria Spivey. His inflected, cavernous voice has affinities with work by Bobby Bland or Clarence Carter. Latimore's work in this album is very close to what the term "rhythm and blues" orginally meant.

IN THE BEGINNING
Gladys Knight & The Pips
Bell 1323

By GREG SHAW

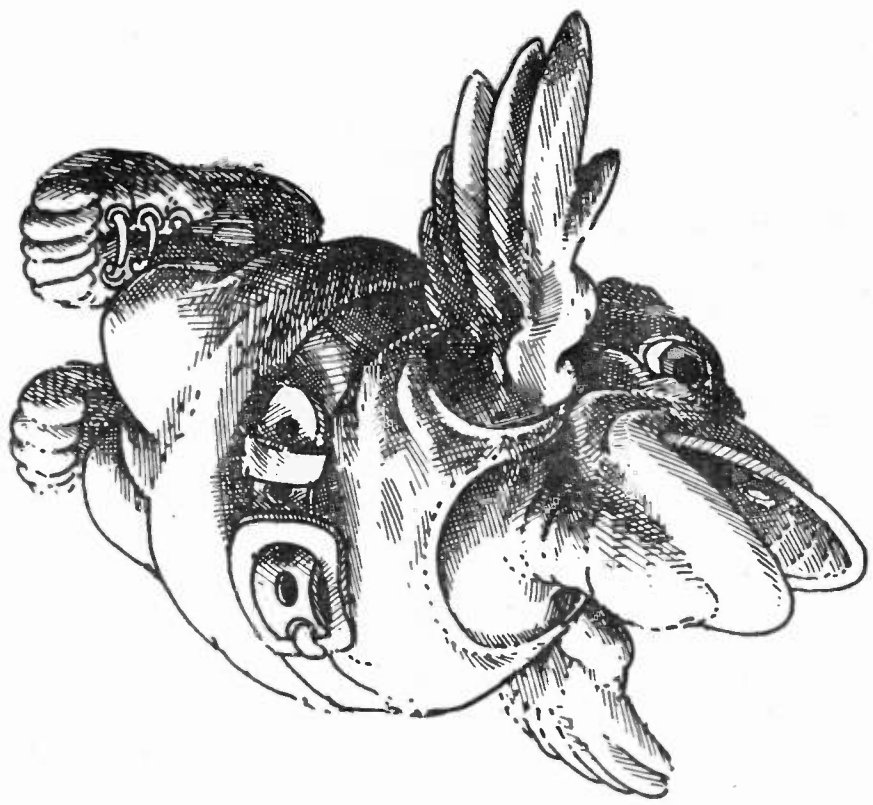
Gladys Knight's rather sudden acceptance as America's reigning songstress not only caught many by surprise, it also created for her an audience that in all likelihood has little idea where she came from or what she did before "Midnight Train to Georgia." Her work for Motown during the years 1967-1970, including "I Heard It Through the Grapevine" and "If I Were Your Woman," is fairly well known and certainly deserving of equal praise, but what of the seven years before that?

This album will serve to introduce a new generation to early classics of one of our oldest surviving R&B vocal groups. Previously released in 1968 under the title *Tastiest Hits*(Bell 6013), it includes the best of their pre-1967 work. Included are their first recording(1961), a Johnny Otis song called "Every Beat of My Heart", which reached #6 on the Billboard chart and earned a gold record when released on Vee-Jay by the Pips, while the identical recording got to #45 on the group's rightful label, Fury; as with the Troggs' "Wild Thing,"(on Fontana and Atco) it was a rare case of a record competing against itself.

"Every Beat of My Heart" was standard doo-wop fare, but the young Gladys Knight even then had the husky, emotion-drenched voice and superb sense of phrasing to turn it into a classic. The follow-up, "Letter Full of Tears" was likewise a stunning performance of a basically ordinary song that also benefitted from a Drifters-inspired arrangement employing full strings and booming tympani. The next release on Fury, "Operator" barely dented the charts, and after a few more flops they left the company for Larry Maxwell's Maxx label, where they cut a series of sweet ballads with a strong Dionne Warwick influence. "Giving Up" and "Lovers Always Forgive" were their only chart hits on Maxx, though the company was unable to get Gladys topnotch material and media exposure necessary to launch her in Warwick's footsteps as a pop crossover, and neither record got near the Top 40.

While Gladys Knight was technically one of the finest singers around in the early '60s, it's clear in retrospect that a lack of direction kept her from emerging sooner into the mass spotlight. The material on this album indicates that Gladys was always most effective when allowed to let loose, as the two Fury hits are the strongest things here. It's all good, though, and the legions of newly-converted fans will both be surprised and impressed to discover the roots of this monumental group.

Gladys Knight & the Pips, back then...



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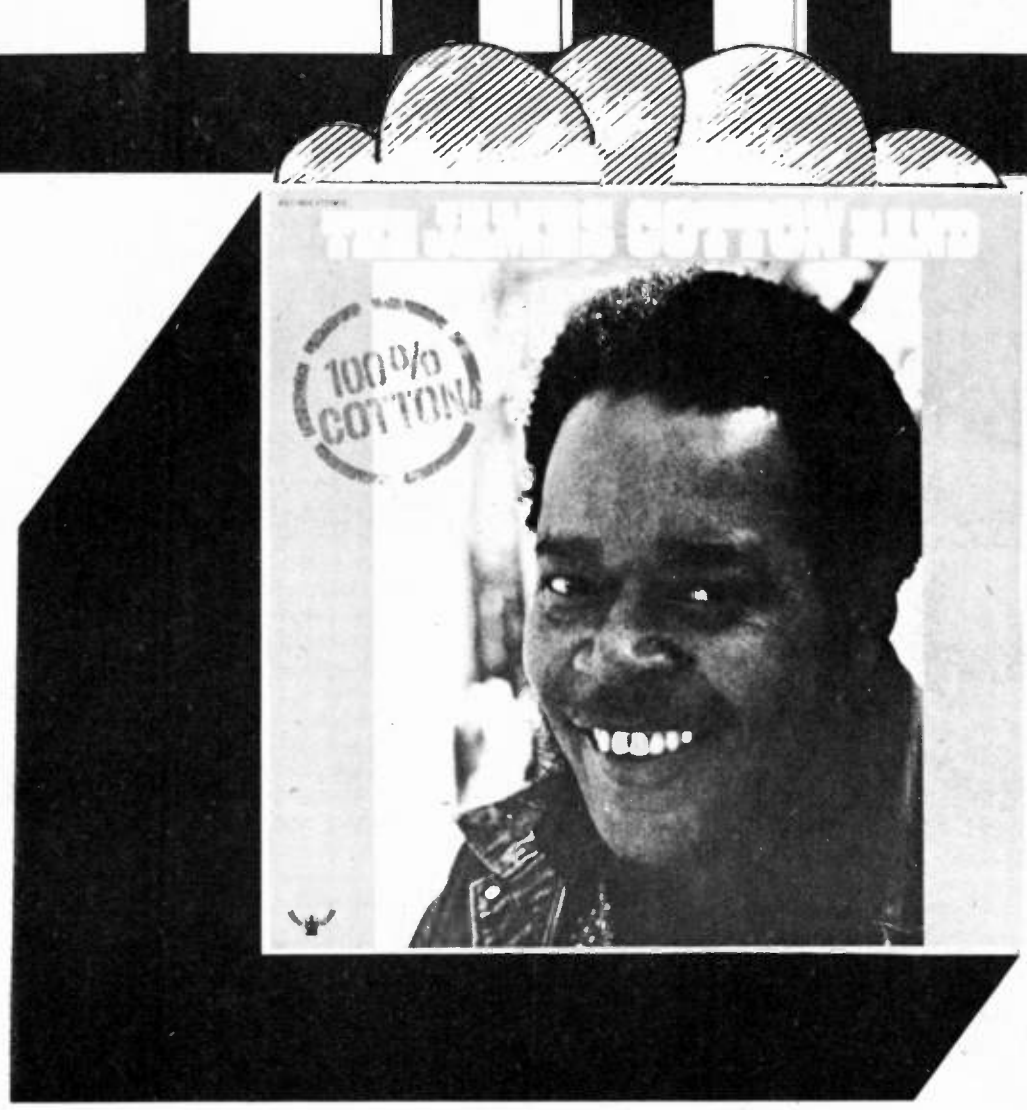

ON BUDDAH RECORDS FROM THE BUDDAH GROUP