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by Tom Nolan

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Plus Soul & Jazz
Record Magazine

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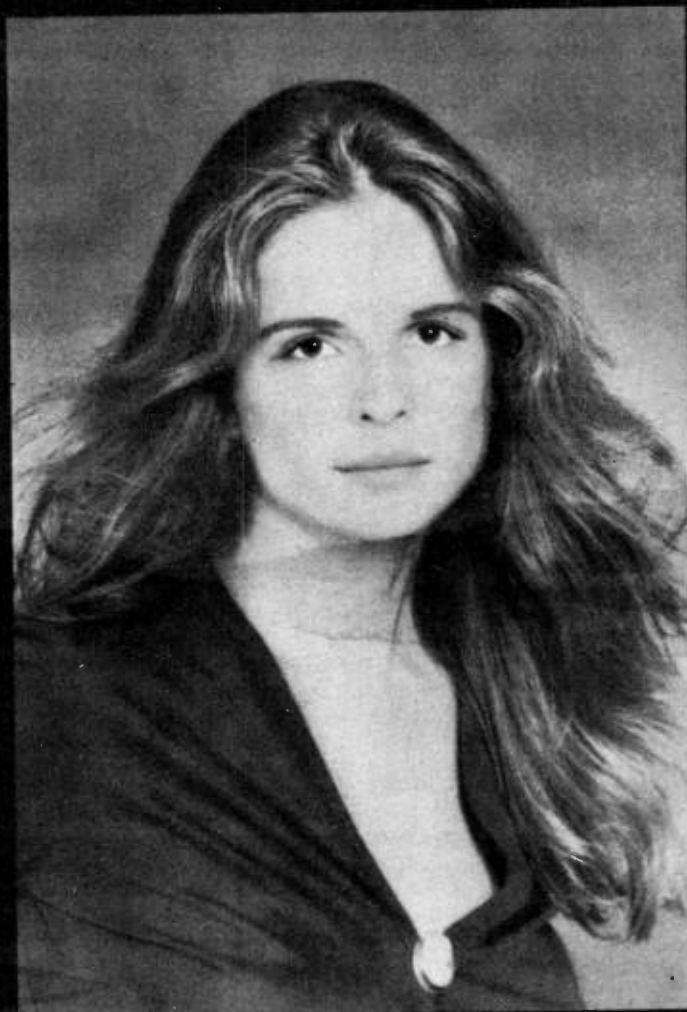


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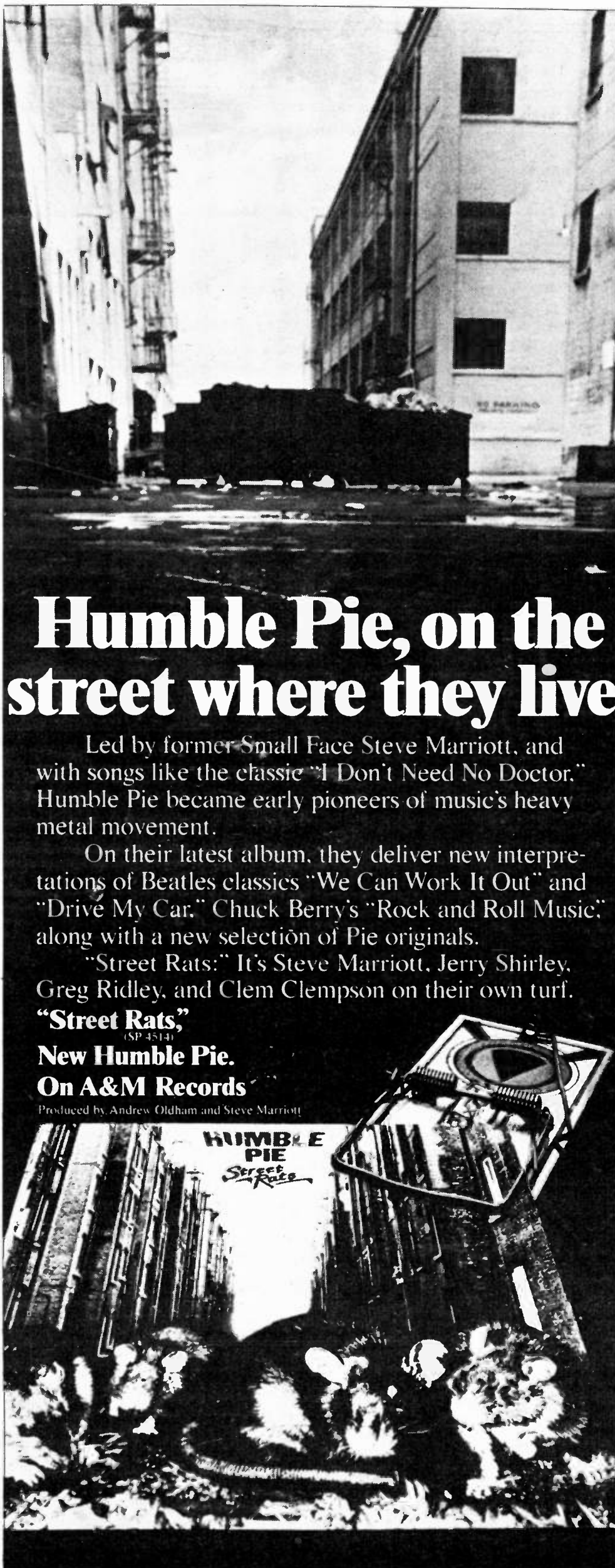
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PERFORMANCES



FLO & EDDIE
The Roxy
Hollywood, California

By RICHARD CROMELIN

Perhaps the most absolutely heart-rending of the many touching moments provided by Flo & Eddie during their show at the Roxy came early in the set when the duo and their band (the Turtles), all resplendent in harmonious pendleton shirts, paid tribute to John Denver. With a precision that would put most so-called "theatrical-rock" groups to shame, each performer reached into his pocket, pulled out a pair of steel-rimmed eyeglasses and fixed it at the appropriate point on his face, thus evoking, more vividly than slides and cheaper than holograms, the very essence of the minstrel of the mountains. None of them, especially Flo, actually *looked* like Denver, mind you, but what was missing in physical resemblance was made up for by a devotion so thick and palpable you could choke on it.

The song that followed, a litany of the joys and travails of mountain life, was set in a Poco/Denver/Nitty Gritty Dirt Band musical framework, as pure and fresh as a mountain stream, and was but one of the many unexpected aspects of the team destined to be recognized as rock 'n' roll's bottomless pit. During the course of the set they would touch on a spate of the million-selling sounds of the day, deftly flitting from Sky Saxon to Marc Bolan, from Led Zeppelin to Joni Mitchell (and of course eventually to the Turtles and Flo & Eddie), dangling before the audience the promise of a virtually infinite array of delights. Glaring in its absence, however, was the band's version of "Live and Let Die," which features Flo's breathtaking impression of Linda McCartney—in itself worth a portion of the admission price.

They've got what you want, and they'll give it to you, as a come-on for one of the neighboring massage parlors might say. It's fantasy-fulfillment time with Flo & Eddie—all you have to do is shout out your musical desire of the moment, and if it catches their fancy, they'll whip it off like the pros they are. New to the set this time were snatches of the mighty Zep's "Whole Lotta Love" (properly furious) and Sparks' "This Town Ain't Big Enough Etc." (dainty), both of which supplemented old standbys like "Bang a Gong" and the lads' salute to War, highlighted by their subliminal Afro-percussion break (torrid).

But it's not all cover material. Far from it. No, the versatile pair showcased some songs that they actually wrote themselves. One wistful ballad, on which Flo bares his chops

as a high-altitude vocalizer, was reminiscent of David Crosby, and perhaps the emotional force of Flo's performance here can be traced to the fact that Crosby's "Almost Cut My Hair" inspired him, at the dawn of the 70s, to let his grow, which ultimately changed the course of his career. The other new tune, a moralizing, hard-rock diatribe at the decadent popstar lifestyle, rang false only because of the notoriety of Flo & Eddie's own sex and drug habits.

Spanning years as well as tastes, Mark and Howie (as they're known on their contracts) dipped into the bulging Flo & Eddie songbag and extracted "Nikki Hoi" (the one with the captivating "diving for pearls" chorus), which gave Flo the opportunity to shake that thing (all of it!) and during which Eddie, extending the exotic motif, read the mysterious legend of the Brass Monkey from the back of the bottle, which receptacle he then tossed blithely to the very floor on which Neil Young and Tower of Power have stood, where it shattered in a cathartic moment of rock 'n' roll violence (this was to result in a tense, dramatic moment a little later when Eddie, in the guise of Robert Plant, crawled on hands and knees among the shards, abandoning all fear and ignoring danger just so the rapt audience would get almost its money's worth; the only word for it is trouper—or maybe stupid).

They closed the set (all too soon) with the Turtles' "Happy Together," which was introduced by a dialogue in which the suave Eddie ("Have you ever had it from a guy with a beard? It's like a thousand tiny fingers.") tries to get a little action from the demure Flo's expertly-played female music fan ("Just because I went down on all of Uriah Heep's roadies doesn't mean I'm a groupie!" "No," seconds the band, "we just like musicians for friends!"). Like Nell in bondage riding along the belt toward the buzz saw, she resists her suitor's brandishments, right up to—well, not quite to the end. But then Nell might have been more than willing to lavish some affection on the villain had he the sense to sing her a song like "Happy Together," with which play the seductive Eddie wins her over.

Flo slipped out of the sweet-young-thing role before things got really disgusting onstage and re-teamed with his partner on this *piece de resistance*, offering some sweet harmony and juggling the tambourines with an alacrity that would put most so-called "circus acts" to shame. At this particular point of the weekend's final set, they coaxed David Cassidy out of the audience to help out on the tune, creating one of those rare scenes of spontaneity and good cheer that seem to make everything else worthwhile. But then, it could have been a hologram.

KINKY FRIEDMAN & THE TEXAS JEW-BOYS
Liberty Hall
Houston, Texas

By MICHAEL POINT

The music coming out from Kinky and the infamous Jewboys was the sort to satisfy the heart of the most rabid country music fan while at the same time the lyrics and circus sideshow visual antics connected with it were far more likely to cause coronary arrests in those same fans. Hidden behind a Groucho-like cigar of massive proportions, a bright red guitar, a pair of blue Hollywood sunshades, and any number of eye-catching headgear selections, Kinky was offering up such country classics as "They Ain't Making Jews Like Jesus Anymore" and "Ride 'em

Jewboy" as the audience broke up into two reactions, nervous embarrassment and amazed hilarity. As a banner bearing Kinky's name and a star of David hung behind the stage such stellar musicians as Snakebite Jacobs and Little Jewford Shelby contributed their talents on a variety of instruments that included the accordion and toy saxophones. Meanwhile, Kinky made credible sales pitches for "souvenir four-color ball-point pens" between songs.

Despite the polished country sound generated by Kinky's six-man back-up band, his stage act was obviously not that of one of the multitude of "cosmic cowboy" bands that haunt the Austin hills. Kinky acts as if his curiously constructed musical world is perfectly normal and perhaps if you close your eyes and don't listen to the lyrics, he's right. As soon as your eyes take in Kinky's red, white and blue chaps and his purple feather boa guitar strap, however, the pretense of normality and/or sanity is destroyed. After opening with a straight-forward rendition of the traditional country favorite, "Amelia Earhart" Kinky launches into "Wild Man of Borneo" and "Homo Erectus," a song you couldn't pay a country DJ to play.

Since the concert was being carried live on the radio Kinky did his best to blow out fuses with a quick-witted rap before "Homo Erectus" that seemed like a Lenny Bruce/Groucho Marx merger. For the benefit of the Liberty Hall audience Kinky explained that the tune "is not really a great song but it's sure gamey enough to liven up a radio broadcast." The proceedings were further energized by the drummer playing with American flags attached to his drumsticks on the patriotic ditty "Carrying the Torch" and Kinky modeling a full-scale Indian head-dress for one number.

Kinky Friedman and Co. are a permutation of country music that bears little resemblance to anything past or present. The level of the band's musicianship makes it accessible and Kinky's cultivated eccentricity makes it attractive to many people who would otherwise dismiss it all as another kicker act. Kinky says he is going to be taking a more serious approach and that he is tired of being called "the Lenny Bruce of country music" but his usual mind-warping set here seems to suggest that the craziness might just be too much fun to stop.

Would you buy a used car from this man?"



•The craziness might just be too much fun to stop.

ELVIN BISHOP

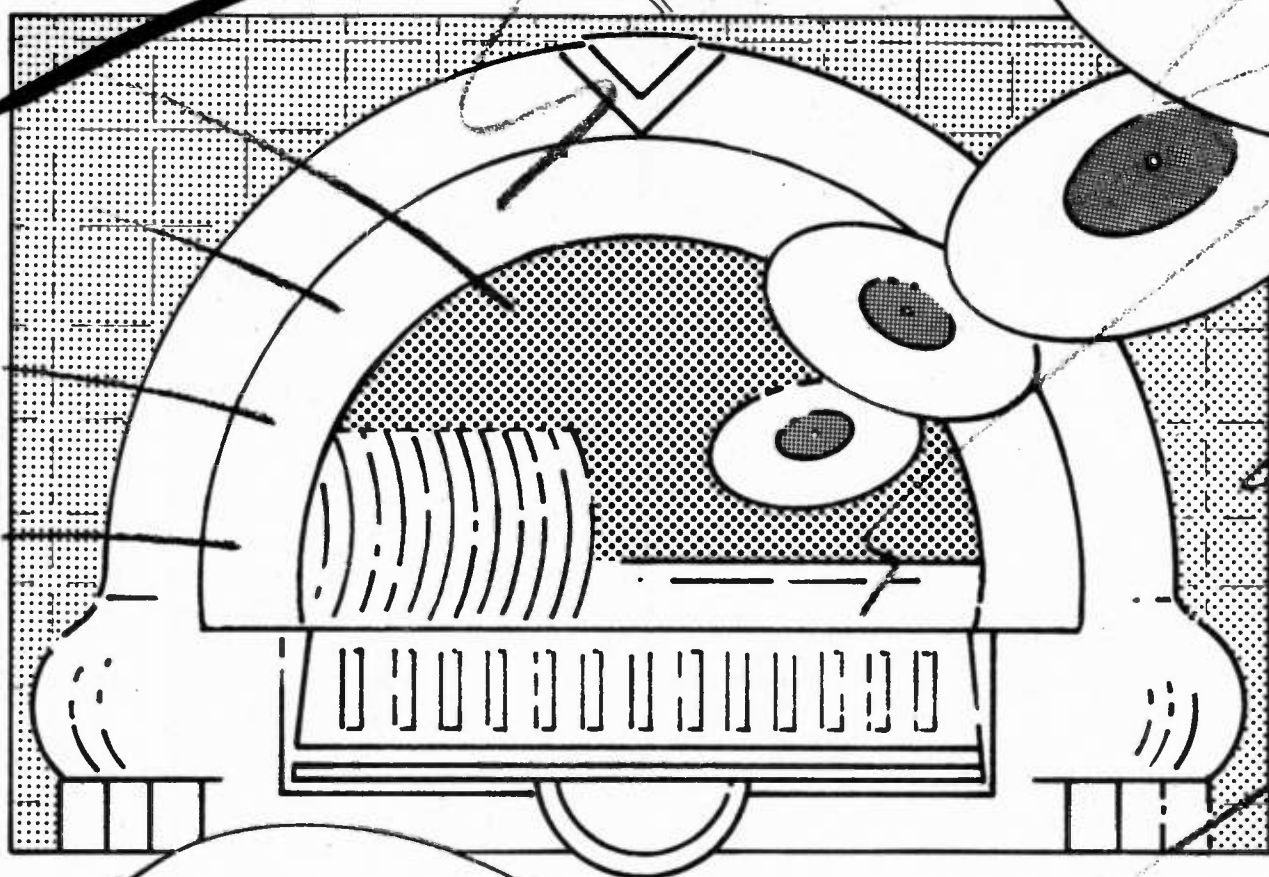
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PERFORMANCES



•Jo Jo Gunne in Bowling Green is like pigs in...

JO JO GUNNE
ARGENT
Anderson Arena
Bowling Green, Ohio

By DAVID FANDRAY

Listening to Rod Argent the afternoon before the show, it was impossible to escape the feeling that even he did not expect the evening's performance to be particularly inspiring. Since Argent was opening the show, the band had to make do with a PA system meeting the headlining band's specifications. Argent had to set up its equipment around the headliner's. And, perhaps the biggest handicap, Argent had to face a crowd that had most likely come to listen to the other band's boogie music rather than Argent's subtler brand of jazz-flavored rock.

When Argent mounted the stage, and worked its way into the first strains of the title cut from the band's new album, *The Circus*, it became apparent that the group was to be faced with additional problems. Bowling Green's Anderson Arena is another gymnasium. It has a lofty metal ceiling that seems to have been tailor-made to suck up any nuance in the music performed on the gym floor. Even nature seemed to be working against Argent. Thanks to daylight savings time, daylight streamed in from the arena's numerous windows. Thus, whatever bits of mood could have been maintained through darkness and lighting effects were destroyed.

Perhaps it was the sum of these problems. Perhaps it was something more basic. Whatever the cause, Argent's performance was sorely disappointing. On record, the band has been able to produce music that is intelligent, interesting at the very least. Onstage, however, numbers like "Highwire," "Trapeze," and "Music of the Spheres," came across as mere parodies of Yes compositions.

The band seemed to be sacrificing musical quality for the sake of its show. The guitarists moved about the stage in a manner grotesquely reminiscent of Slade or Kiss. Rod Argent ran from one keyboard to another—sometimes playing two at once, sometimes sitting on one while playing another with his feet. Visually interesting, perhaps, but it was a bit ridiculous-looking considering how poorly the band's music gelled.

The only point in the show that inspired either the band or the audience was the spirited rendition of "Hold Your Head Up" which served as the finale.

Jo Jo Gunne, as might be expected, came on as a total contrast to Argent. Leader Jay Ferguson and company plunged straightaway into the sonic assault rock and roll that is Jo Jo Gunne's hallmark. Never known for subtlety in its music, Jo Jo Gunne had a major advantage over Argent: there was no nuance to be lost in the cavernous arena. All

that was required of the band's music was that constant rocking thump that characterized all of its songs.

As Rod Argent had feared, this was what the audience had come to hear. A set of driving rockers that all seemed to blur together in a frenzy of energy and echo. A few songs did stand out—most notably "So...Where's the Show," "She Said Alright," and "Run, Run, Run," which were those songs marked by the most distinguishable riffs. But, the energy was all that really counted, and there was more than enough of that for everyone.

Ferguson was the center of attention. His voice and piano playing blended facelessly into the overall sound. His visual energy, however, perfectly complemented the band's music. The pianist was constantly busy—jumping up, sitting down, clapping, mugging for the audience, and punctuating various points in the music by tossing his piano bench about the stage.

In all, the evening was a triumph for good, old-fashioned, foot-stomping rock and roll. The band that took its music seriously fell flat, while the band that revelled in its unabashed raunchiness stole the show. It was an unfortunate night for Argent; but, perhaps, the night made a good statement about the true nature of live rock music.

P.F.M.
Music Hall
Houston, Texas

By MICHAEL POINT

Standing backstage, the difference in the Italian approach, or at least the P.F.M. approach, to live performances and the American/Anglo approach is rapidly apparent. At a time when many successful groups seem to have the attitude that live gigs are a large imposition made on them by their fans and merely an occupational hassle, P.F.M. has to be almost restrained from going on stage too early. When they do hit the stage it is in a solid blast of energetic enthusiasm that easily conveys itself not only through their actions but also their music. It's a dose of good old-fashioned rock and roll excitement made even more interesting by the fact that P.F.M. is operating on a little bit more complex musical level than most groups.

"Celebration" is the opening shot and while the lyrics are in the way of the rush of music occasionally, nothing stands up to the controlled chaos P.F.M. creates by adding a layer of rock flash over their own brand of multi-textured and tightly structured music. Mauro Pagani becomes the main focus through his sizzling violin work although the ebb and flow of the music allows each member of the group ample time to shine without becoming a burden on the ears of the audience. Flavio Premoli's keyboard

manipulations provide the link to both classical and electronic influences while guitarist Franco Mussida contributes the hot rock licks in style while the rhythm section boils along underneath everything. This leaves Pagani free to throw in a fantastic variety of truly masterful violin phrases as well as offering up some restrained flute passages.

"Mr. 9 to 5" and "Four Holes in the Ground" break the band into different components as a spiffy little flute/percussion duet emerges before the rhythm section and guitarist Mussida get to do an extended rock and roll power trio rave-up. Franz Di Cioccio assaults his drum-kit from all sides, including a leaping attack from atop the amplifiers behind him, without ever losing his firm grasp on his time-keeping duties in the band and bassist Patrick Djivas is impeccable in the supercharged musical atmosphere created by the mixture of well-rooted talented and solid rock energy.

Pagani's solo spot with the violin brings people literally out of their seats with an almost maniacal musical assault that wrings out great slashing bolts of sound before being joined by the rest of the band for a romp through the "William Tell Overture" with the stops at various rock and jazz locations before the end. Their first exposure to a Texas audience was an immediate success as they left over 3,000 fans calling for more. After all the arty rock bands delving in more complex music have given themselves up to performing as if they were at some sort of serious academic recital it's refreshing, both musically and mentally, to find a group like P.F.M. that doesn't mind working up a sweat on stage.

PAGLIARO
McGill University
Montreal, Quebec

By GARY SPERRAZZA

Even though Pag has played only two concerts here in a few years (one was with the Wackers, New Years Eve, 1972), he's been making records that have been well-received by virtually everyone who's heard him. His contract with Canadian RCA has ended, but his four-album stay contains the peak works of his career so far.

Michel Pagliaro's albums have been so good, it's a crime that he's been confined to Quebec all these years. He's a cordial chap that, in keeping with a true rocker's posture, seems more interested in the dynamics of girl-chasing and drinking than sitting still long enough to discuss his music. He's right in his way; hell, it's only rock 'n' roll. But put him in a studio and with the accompaniment of his producer/manager George Lagios and the many fine musicians that have drifted in and out of his circle of friends, he makes the best rock 'n' roll around. Contrary to his ego, I doubt he even realizes it.

At the Union Ballroom, the spotlight was indeed split between the performer and the musician. In front of drummer Frank LaRusso and an unidentified bass player was Pag and his new guitarist, Walter Rossi. Pagliaro, looking sharp with his new short haircut, wearing shades, belting out the lyrics to "Riot in Cell Block #9," feet planted firmly onstage. An odd combination of Eric Carmen and Rick Nelson (whom he lately resembles).

Walter Rossi is a stocky, bearded Italian. Comparisons with Mick Ralphs and Mick Ronson hold ground listening to "Slow Down" on *Pagliaro* as there's a characteristic Mott feel in the guitar work and production (dense, a la Guy Stevens). Nonetheless, Rossi is hot! Seemingly discontent with his contribution, he plays and plays and plays. During "J'entends Frapper", for example, Rossi plays fast, clean and imaginative licks, but his occasional overplaying is like watching Hendrix playing with the Stones. When he practices self-restraint, during songs like "Some Sing, Some Dance" and "Lovin' You Ain't Easy", he's a different man altogether. I happen to like *nasty* guitarists, so he's a guy to watch in months to come.

Aside from the apparent fact that Pagliaro is a well-rounded songwriter and performer in his own right, it's to his credit that he's providing a showcase for a lot of other fine musicians that'll go on to pave their own streets and inject a

much-needed shot of rhythm'n' blues back into the rock 'n' roll scene. The Pagliaro show at McGill was an experimental one, but watching all the talent that hovers around him only escalated the total experience of the show. It'll be too bad if his ego closes him to this fact.



DAVID BROMBERG
DOC WATSON
Avery Hall
New York City, New York

By LITA ELISCU

Doc Watson opened, accompanied by Merle Watson and his band, Frosty Morn. This bunch of acoustically-furnished musicians picked and played and performed and drove the crowd wild. Doc Watson's flatpicking ability is awesome, and Merle's effortless technique covered slide, blues, and some equal runs on fingerpicking. Even "Orange Blossom Special" sounded good. Does Doc Watson still need an introduction? In the realms of traditional, "country" acoustic music, especially as interpreted on the guitar, the Doc has peers but one would be hard put to find his better. His ability to pick doubletime in the cleanest fullest runs this side of the swamp is a beautiful thing to enjoy. Merle, his son, who would be one of the most featured guests on anyone's album and is not, plays as his daddy does, as well as the aforementioned styles, and also mandolin and bass. Those who know more about such matters than I say that Merle cannot play as well as his daddy. I say shuttup and listen, and don't open your mouth again until you play as well as Merle.

It was especially nice that evening, because one knew that the Watsons were a-gunning for the rival gang, the Bromberg clan who appeared onstage about 15, 16 strong and all *plugged-in* to various electrical outlets: enough to make Doc Watson's teeth walk out of his mouth and play "Jambalaya" backwards. Anyway, Bromberg was possessed, and of powerful spirits, the magic kind and no other. Perhaps it is the result of his latest album sessions going well—one hopes so, it will mean an extraordinary album. I have never heard Bromberg play as he did that night. Whatever he has been searching for as his stage personality, it came shining on through the worn velvet of his usual lopsided grin and diffident manner. He attacked a fiddle and tore through several numbers on it, along with a stand-up quartet of fiddlers to stage-right. He changed off guitars as though each song made the one he was holding too red-hot to handle. He sang in the best voice he has yet found, and the most comfortable—to his throat and my ears. The crowd got more and more happy as each number virtuoso'd its way through the amps. Phoebe Snow sang back-up in an impromptu trio on stage-left, and then did a solo number which brought people to their feet. She was in rare form too, her voice sliding around its full quota of octaves, from bassoon low to tenor sax high, hitting notes she didn't even know she had before the song started. Her delivery does not get better, it just stays super-fine, easy rapport, sweet sense of the audience and the musical input backing her up.

Bromberg's encore, "Sharon" had visual impact as well: a young woman appeared from off stage and proceeded to act out the verses. "She walks, she talks, she crawls on her belly like a reptile" and so forth. It was, for a moment, like a 1969 Grateful Dead concert, a multi-sensory complete-media experience, and everyone was indeed pleased, including all the musicians.

NAZARETH

BEFORE

AFTER

"HAIR OF THE DOG"
NEW FROM NAZARETH
On A&M Records

On A&M Records

NEW

HA

THE BAND'S SONG, "THE NAZARETH," WHO ARE ALSO DRINKING THEIR STRAIGHT, DELIVER WHO TAKE THEIR NAME FROM THE NAZARETH..."), AND IN THEIR ROCK AND ROLL SOUNDING STYLE.

STARSHIP TAKES OFF



The excitement around the Airplane Mansion is real. It's in the very woodwork of this huge home in a once-fashionable section of San Francisco, where it all began so many years ago. The Airplane, some time back renamed the Jefferson Starship in honor of one of co-pilot Paul Kantner's sci-fi fantasies, has just received word that its most recent album, *Dragonfly* has gone gold. It's the first such plateau for any Starship-related product since *Long John Silver*, released in 1972; product that involves "solo" albums by group members Paul Kantner and Grace Slick, by the band Hot Tuna, and a number of other, more obscure artists.

"I'm only a musician on the session," deadpans Marty Balin, the long-absent co-founder of the original Airplane. "I joined for *Dragonfly*, and we got a gold album for it. I'll record two more gold albums with the band, and then their commitments to RCA will be finished and we can all decide what we want to do."

To many, Balin's departure from the band in 1971 signalled the end of what had been one of rock and roll's most significant groups. It was Marty who had originally conceived the idea of performing what was passing, in 1965, for folk music with electric instruments. "We hadn't even heard of the Byrds back then," recalls manager Bill Thompson, along for the ride since the very beginning. "It was Marty who wanted to bring in a girl singer; there had been one in an earlier group of his, the Towne Criers." The Airplane was the first San Francisco group to be signed to anything resembling a major recording deal; fair enough, as it was the Airplane who had pioneered the whole dance-hall concept that became the basis of the San Francisco scene.

The original Airplane included Balin, singer-guitarist Paul Kantner, vocalist Signe Toly Anderson, drummer Alexander "Skip" Spence, bassist Jack Casady and lead guitarist Jorma Kaukonen. Of that crew, Balin, Kantner, Casady and Kaukonen remain in business association. Anderson, first to leave the group, when she got pregnant, is now working as a singer in Portland. Spence joined the Moby Grape as guitarist and later cut a solo album. Today, he's in San Francisco looking for work and accepting an occasional "advance" from

Marty Balin returns to the fold

by Todd Everett

Grunt Records. Anderson and Spence were replaced with relative ease by Grace Slick and a succession of drummers. Balin's departure, following the completion of the Airplane's first album for their Grunt label, *Bark*, was more traumatic.

As founder, lead singer and chief songwriter for the Airplane, Balin gave himself most of the credit for their success. As politics within the band changed, however, Balin found much of the power taken from him by Kantner and Slick, who had by then become what the gossip-mongers term an "item."

One of the reasons for Balin's departure, according to all accounts, was strictly musical. Balin's pervasive interest was—and still is—in r&b, soul music. "He wanted the Airplane to be like Otis Redding's band," recalls an associate from the early days, "and they weren't up to it or into it."

"Yeah," agrees Balin. "I was the resident nigger."

More important, according to Balin himself was the matter of attitude. "We had signed a contract to do more albums during a specified time than we could really handle. The band wasn't into spending a lot of time working on material outside the studio; they'd prefer to book time, and fool around inside the studio writing material and jamming. Somebody would start the tapes rolling, and then turn them off when a number sounded like it was over. Those last albums were almost totally improvised, without any rehearsal. I was the only guy who objected to that. Music means more to me than just jacking off in the studio." There was also considerable use of chemicals amongst the various group members, who had come to be known as leaders of the psychedelic revolution; a role they accepted with pleasure. Except, say he, Balin.

"Toward the end, Marty would just get totally impatient with Grace and Paul," says one of those anonymous associates. "He'd just tell them that they were both assholes

and then walk out of the studio."

Today, the Starship personnel seems to have settled to include Slick, Kantner and (though he denies it) Balin; plus violinist Papa John Creach, an Airplane associate for several years after having been discovered playing in a Los Angeles nightclub; drummer John Barbata, one-time chief driving power behind the Sentinels, a prototype Los Angeles surf band ("Don't say I was with the Turtles. *Everybody* says that I was with the Turtles. Tell 'em something different!"); Pete Sears (an English session musician, also with the Quicksilver Messenger Service in their last days) and David Freiberg (roommate of Paul Kantner before the Airplane days; later he co-formed Quicksilver), both doubling on bass and keyboards; and guitarist Craig Chaquico. From Sacramento, Craig was ten years old when the Airplane was formed. He was thirteen at Altamont. "I hitchhiked there, all the way from Sacramento. I saw the Hell's Angels bust Marty's face."

Kaukonen and Casady have split from the Starship permanently, to concentrate their efforts on a new edition of Hot Tuna that also includes drummer Bob Steeler and guitarist Greg Douglas. "Towards the end," recalls a nameless associate, "Jorma would just refuse to play with the Starship. Then he and Jack would go ice-skating in Europe; we'd never know when, or if, they'd ever come back. It was probably their decision to finally leave the Starship full-time that did as much as anything to bring the group together."

Personal differences aside, there's a great deal of enthusiasm around the Grunt offices for the Tuna's new album: a highly-electric effort that smacks (though they'd never admit it) of psychedelic bubblegum: there's not a Rev. Gary Davis lick on the platter. "It's really good," sighs the same associate. "It's too bad that they're such assholes."

Until joining the Starship for one

song—"Caroline"—Balin had settled in Mill Valley. "The addicts and the tourists took over San Francisco years ago. It's all happening on the other side of the bridge." He's been playing with various local musicians, from time to time concentrating on one-time projects like Grootna, of whom he was not a member, and Bodacious D.F., of which he was. Both groups recorded; neither sold. Though Balin claims to have saved a good part of his share of the Airplane funds, the income from "Caroline" is obviously welcome.

For the upcoming Starship album, *Red Octopus*, something like a dozen songs were recorded, of which Balin wrote or co-wrote six. Five of those are included on the final, ten-song version of the LP; making Balin's claim of being just a sideman on the session seem fairly hollow; more an allowance for easy exit should things go wrong.

Signs are that they won't. The Starship spent a month in rehearsal before cutting any of the *Octopus* tracks, and they are working with a genuine producer (Larry Cox) for the first time in years. Cox doesn't seem like the kind of person who would allow much of what Balin terms "jacking off in the studio." A Texan, Larry was just getting ready to go on the road with Buddy Holly when The Day the Music Died came. He's seen it all, and ain't impressed by paper roses.

Too, the drug problem seems solved. Slick hasn't touched any mind-benders since the birth of daughter China, four years ago. Kantner one day decided to drop his pursuit of the cocaine god; he's been clean ever since. The rest of the band seem more interested in alcohol and marijuana than in anything harder.

More to the point, though, is the band's musical direction. With Balin back in there, the change to a rhythm and blues influence is strong; so much so that it appears on tunes he didn't even share in writing. "Sweeter Than Honey," which Balin *did* write (with Chaquico and Sears), sounds like a vintage Holland-Dozier-Holland tune, with Grace Slick playing Martha Reeves!

The circle turns. As Freiberg, who's been watching from the sidelines since the beginnings, observes, "I think that the sound we have on this album is the closest we've ever been to what Marty had in mind in the first place."

Come up and play.



Nobody explores the upper reaches of rock and roll like Aerosmith. Their first two albums of unrelenting energy and the sheer force of their live appearances heralded Aerosmith as the new generation of rock and roll. Now there's "Toys in the Attic." Something new to play with from Aerosmith.



**Aerosmith.
On Columbia Records
and Tapes.**

*Produced by Jack Douglas
for Waterfront Productions Limited
and Contemporary Communications Corporation.

O vernight success. It's one of the most bitterly ironic phrases largely because it's so often such a bald-faced lie. Al Stewart's *Past, Present, and Future* and *Modern*

Times albums have set a lot of people buzzing with the thought and eloquence of the songs with *Modern Times* rocketing up the proverbial charts as a result. Still, America barely knows about Al Stewart. Neither album gives much of a visual idea of the fellow. Indeed, the dominant image on both covers is a photographic treatment of Marvel Comics sorcerer hero Dr. Strange.

What the albums do reveal is a songwriter possessed of the rare combination of highly refined craft and intelligence. His songs inhabit that hyphenated nether world between so-called folk music and rock.

Past, Present and Future is what once was called a concept album. Its seven songs take incidents from 20th century history and juxtaposes them with the future history of the world as Nostradamus, the 16th century prophet, wrote it. The opener "Old Admirals" is the story of Admiral Lord Fisher, an excellent turn of the century naval warfare expert, and his obsolescence in World War I. "Warren Harding" contrasts the average Joe of the Roaring 20's with the collapse of the lonely, scandal-racked President. The stunning "Roads to Moscow," a grand panorama of a song, is a thoroughly researched portrait of the Russian front in World War II from the view of a Russian foot soldier who had been a captive of the Germans for a day. Al recalls reading a lengthy history book to get the one line about General Guderian accurately. The album keystone, "Nostradamus," which was three years from the original idea to the completed song, relates his chillingly accurate prophecies first published in 1555. The man anticipated Napoleon, Hitler, and Spain's Generalissimo Franco by name, plus the three brothers from "The new lands of America...Two alone are born to rule but all must die before their hour."

A s imposing an album as *P.P&F* is, *Modern Times* is a more-than-worthy companion and successor. The focus of the songs in this collection is quite dissimilar.

Rather than event-laden scenarios, the songs focus tightly on people like "Carol" an eternal pop hanger-on, or in "Sirens of Titan" Malachi Constant, hero of Vonnegut's novel who was driven by a peculiar fate all over the Solar System. "The Dark and Rolling Sea" and "Modern Times" run together as a moving finale. From a grand metaphor of a sailing ship as lover, sea sounds dissolve cinematically into a crowded bar scene and a chance meeting of long lost friends. One is a regular New Yorker, the other a frustrated and bitter one-time pilgrim to Nepal—"I've got no use for the tricks of modern times/They tangle all my thoughts like ivy." "Modern Times," incidentally started as a song by Al's friend Dave Mudge called "Lowly Lowly Low" of which the refrain remains and just about all the rest is pure Stewart.

Both albums are lovingly produced works featuring top-notch musicians both from England's folk and rock worlds. Quiver's Tim Renwick and Peter Woods are featured throughout both. Rick Wakeman appears on *P.P&F* as well as the earlier *Orange* which hosted Renwick also. From the folk world come Fairporters Dave Swarbrick and Simon Nicol plus England's greatest concertina master Alistair Anderson and ace guitarists Peter Berryman and Isaac Guillory, an Anglo-American former member of Chicago's mid-sixties band, the Cryan' Shames.

Al Stewart is Glasgow born but raised in Gloucester (Southwestern England). After a couple of years working in groups and odd jobs largely around seaside Bournemouth he moved to London to starve as a solo in the traditional manner. Eventually experiences began turning into songs of lady loves and suburban hypocrisy that later appeared in 1967 on an album called *Bedsitter Images*. A song called "Baleeka Doodle Day" on that album became an anthem at the club Les Cousins it mentions.

W ith his second album *Love Chronicles* Al freed himself of soupy strings that buried the first, brought a classy bunch of musicians into the studio including Jimmy Page (then between the Yardbirds and Led Zeppelin) and produced what *Melody Maker* named as 1969's Album of the Year. The album remains a source of controversy, having recently produced a venomous article in *Melody Maker* this past March accusing *Love Chronicles* of single-handedly provoking nearly all the pretentious crap of this decade. The focus of the attack is the album's title track. It is an epic 18-minute composition relating the singer's loves from "Stephanie/in kindergarten arithmetic classes" to his first kiss "with Christine when I was ten" through school days and onto adult love. The song is a powerful *tour de force* that fast became the kind of albatross that takes years to overcome.

"I was jumping to conclusions when one jumped back."

In England, a third album, *Zero She Flies*, had appeared three months before *Love Chronicles* was issued here. Neither it nor *Orange* which followed in 1972 burned up any charts. However, these records enabled Stewart to be as busy as he wished playing club dates, concerts, and festivals, and to build him a following as one of England's premier folk attractions.

Between *Orange* and *P.P&F*, Luke O'Reilly, a DJ at WMMR in Philadelphia had returned home to England. Always an Al Stewart fan, he took over Al's management from his long-time friend and advisor Julia Creasy, and after legally extricating him from his American contract, signed him to an excited Janus Records. Janus was looking for fresh, strong talent with which to bolster a new image. Stewart was perfect and had an album in the can to boot.

W ith the relative success of his two latest releases in America, Stewart has put his first 4 albums behind him and feels he is starting anew at home as well. "The last two

albums are the only ones I can listen to. I feel I'm in the process of improving, hoping the 10th album will be really worthwhile," he says. "For now I'd like to combine the song quality of *Past, Present & Future* with the zip and bounce of *Modern Times*. Feeling that although songs like "Manuscript" and "A Small Fruit Song" on *Zero* hold up, production on those early albums is sadly lacking and only on the newest pair has it really begun to be right. "People today commonly get better production on their first album than I got on my third and fourth."

Things are certainly looking up. "Carol" the single off *Modern Times* is taking off in a few selected markets like Philadelphia, Seattle and Portland. With airplay, this song should be a slow, but steady seller. The album itself has been solidly ensconced on the charts in the number 30 position for the last two months. For the foreseeable future, Al Stewart is living and working in America to gain the exposure he needs to break into the ranks of the superstars of the seventies. Having been here a time or two, he's aware of some peculiarities that England just doesn't present. "They tell me there are cities I could never hope to crack, like Detroit, but it does look good though. There seems to be an atmosphere now in America that is receptive to my type of music, emotional ballads with substance. You know, you can become huge in some areas and not be known ten miles down the road. An artist like me would have to repeat the process at least three times before people really begin to recognize you. By the end of the fifth tour, though..."

Al Stewart is a modest man with an immense talent. To many observers, it seems the long wait for recognition is just about over.

AL STEWART'S RECENT TIMES

Michael Tearson



There's one in every crowd.



**Eric Clapton's new album
On RSO Records and Tapes.**



Distributed by Atlantic Records
Produced by Tom Dowd, by arrangement
with the Robert Stigwood Organization

CARLY SIMON



NORMAN SEEFF

by TOM NOLAN

ATTITUDE DANCING

The house was set back behind a stone wall, at the end of a *cul-de-sac* off Coldwater Canyon between Beverly Hills and the San Fernando Valley. A gate gave access to a circular driveway, and the home was placed in Canyon fashion amid half an acre of hillside ivy and eucalyptus trees. A young woman housekeeper opened the front door on her way to a station wagon parked in the drive, and I walked through an entranceway into a gameroom dominated by a large pool table. At a coffee table to one side sat Art Garfunkel, Jacob Brackman and Carly Simon. Toddling nearby, *sans* diaper, was Sarah Maria, daughter of Carly and James Taylor, who were renting this house while in Los Angeles working on new albums.

Carly excused herself from her guests and led the way into the living room. She wore highwaisted blue jeans and a green turtleneck sweater, a thin green scarf with pale red and blue crescents, and hemp sandals. Her toenails were painted dark red. She is, in person, more interesting-looking than beautiful. The planes of her face are unusual, not always especially attractive, but they allow her a striking variety of expression and account at least in part for her great affinity with the camera. Beauty is included, of course, in her face-to-face self; and when she breaks into a broad grin, the sight is dazzling.

"I'm pleased with the album," she began, "or at least with 85% of it, which is a high percentage for me. I'm usually super-critical. It's probably looser

than my other albums; it rocks a little more. I see all the songs as being about sex, except for the one which is about politics. It's kind of an album about sex. Not necessarily the act of sex, but relationships between men and women. Body feelings. It's a sensual album." She got up to fetch a laminated blowup of the album cover, a provocative Norman Seeff shot of Carly in baby-doll lingerie, kneeling as if to pounce upon something off-camera. "I think it's representative of the feel of the record. He's good, Norman. He's very good at bringing people out, making you feel as if you're attractive enough to show your real self. And other sides of you."

Significantly, she makes a distinction between her "real" self and the Carly Simon that has been communicated to some millions of recordbuyers, the Carly Simon of "You're So Vain" and the other distinctly Richard Perry-stamped rockers that she admits to being, if not uncomfortable with, unsure of. (*No Secrets*, her most successful album until now, was for a long time her least favorite.) This same Carly Simon will be reemphasized, perpetuated by this very cover.

It's a familiar problem for recording artists, especially those who begin their careers with relatively modest aspirations—to make a living as a "folk singer" or "singer-songwriter"—and eventually find themselves resembling some kind of rock star. How to reconcile the private self with the overemphasized and necessarily partial public image? How to retain personal feelings while filtering them

through art which is digested by millions of strangers; how to avoid being overwhelmed by the enormous energy generated by what began as the humble endeavor of one unknown artist. My questions and her answers kept touching upon different aspects of this phenomenon.

Her writing, for instance. "My songs," she said, "used to be almost like entries in a diary. I would write down pretty much what had happened to me. But this past year, my experience has been primarily as a mother. I didn't want to write all about that because I was almost too close to it. I had no perspective on it; nor would I want to fill up an entire album with lullabies about my child. So I drew on hypothetical situations more than I have done in the past. For the first time I put myself into the role of a story-teller, drawing not specifically from own experiences but from experiences that I might have had, of might yet have."

Yet fear of boring her listeners with lullabies is hardly the whole of her new approach to her lyrics. Her past year's experience has been as a wife as well, and she admitted the difficulties of putting that relationship into song. "I can't really write about James, either; I have no overview of that situation. When I'm living something I can't write it. The writing comes with reflection, or...something else." (Appropriately, a James Taylor song in some recorded form insinuated its presence from another room). "It's true, I have trouble writing songs about

James, or Sarah, or my married life. Does that seem strange to you? I really don't know why. Yes, I do. It seems so terribly terribly personal to me. It seems so terribly private. There's a part of my life which I do not want to invade for the commercial market.

"I've written many songs and poems about James which I wouldn't necessarily want to publish. One of the reasons I write songs is to work out problems that I'm having, to figure out what's going on. Or, if I've got the blues, to get it off my chest, put it out *there* so it's no longer attached to me so directly. Some of the songs I've written about James are out of a need to work out problems that are too personal to put on disc. It would lack consideration. Certainly most of the people who buy my records are aware that I'm married to James Taylor, and it's obvious in these lyrics, extremely obvious, who I'm writing about. Very often those things remain lyrics; I don't even bother making them into songs.

"But I don't exclude the possibility of doing something with them in the future. For instance I just read a lyric that I'd written about a year ago as a result of a fight that James and I had had, which at the time seemed to me to be terribly important, and around which my life revolved. Now I look back on it and laugh at how crucial it seemed. Now, I might be able to do something with it."

Being married to another musician, she said, is "very familiar. It's like an extension of my home situation as a child, with all sorts of people around making music, and a certain amount of sibling rivalry:

"At times I feel like a slave to my own chauvinistic emotions"

"Oh God, why does Lucy have to be playing the piano when I want to be playing the piano? Sometimes I laugh at it; like when James wants to borrow my guitar, and all of a sudden I get very possessive about my guitar. 'I don't want you to borrow my guitar. I'm using my guitar.' It's kind of funny, but it's nice. There are predictable problems, but I love being married to James. I really do."

And those problems?

"Well, role-playing between men and women. The old-fashioned chauvinistic idea that the man has to be on top, has to be better than the woman if they're both working in the same field. If James and I have albums out at the same time and mine does better than his, there's this tremendous insecurity on his part and anger at me. And I kind of feel the same way. It's still the sibling trip.

"It comes out in certain of my songs. On this album, there's one called 'Slave,' which Jake wrote the lyric to but which I can really identify with. The main line in it, which I'm sure is gonna cause a lot of women to be really down on me, is, 'I'm just another woman, raised to be a slave.' I feel that often myself, as if I myself am very old-fashioned. I mean other times I feel terribly modern and very equal to my husband. I demand equality, and he gives it to me. But at other times I feel just like a slave to my *own* chauvinistic emotions. It's not something I necessarily admire or try to cultivate in myself; but there it is.

"Now that song, 'Slave,' could just as easily be about a man. Because men get just as hung up about women and about their own roles. Which is the argument I plan to give to women who come up to me and say, 'How dare you!'"

As a child of one of the founders of the Simon and Schuster publishing firm, Carly was raised in what was apparently a loving, cozy, relatively carefree atmosphere which included summers in the same Martha's Vineyard community she and James now live in. Her upper-class upbringing is evident in her graciousness, for example, which is so genuine it could only come from a lifetime's practice; and in the way she slurps honey into her tea straight from the jar, without bothering with the economy of a spoon. Still her childhood was not without pain. Vying for attention with a talented older sister and a talented younger brother, she developed that sense of sibling rivalry which is so keen to this day. Her sharpest memory from her twelfth year is a severe stammer which in a curious way was responsible for her starting to sing.

"At twelve I was very shy," she remembered. "I've always been shy and outgoing at the same time, the outgoingness being a way of hiding the shyness. The shyness embarrassed me. In fact, I was shy about being shy! I had a terrible stammer and I could barely talk. It helped develop my vocabulary, though, because for all the words I couldn't say—some beginning with vowels, others with consonants—I

NORMAN SEEFF



PLAYING POSSUM

Carly Simon

Elektra 7E-1033

By BOBBY ABRAMS

I'm sitting here at my typewriter trying to figure why in hell I'm reviewing this latest Carly Simon album. That she is an important artist within the context of the music business is an undeniable fact. Her previous albums are gold, and as a prominent member of the rock and roll jetset, her every action makes news. She is so much of a 24-carat commercial entity that she is the cover story in this month's issue of *Phonograph*, the subject of a rarely-granted interview at her Los Angeles abode.

She is the object of an intensely loyal cult of followers who find solace and inspiration in her perceptions on the problems and joys of being a woman. Because of her infrequent concert appearances (due, apparently to incurable stage fright) the release of a Carly Simon album then is the type of thing that thrills record store owners as the fans flock into their establishments demanding this latest vinyl classic. If you're a member of Carly's coterie, you will at least have less to apologize to your hip friends about, since this album has a pretense of being a rocker. On the other hand, you'd better be prepared for the inevitable retort from the hardcore music freaks that this album has as much to do with rock and roll as Lani Hall! Even the as usual excellent production by Richard Perry and inclusion of several top session musicians can't disguise the fact that this is an album of lullabies for the now-retired activists of the sixties. Indeed the title song, "Playing Possum" is about just this: how middle-class we've all become. The lyrics are so obvious that even John Lennon could have written them in a moment of heightened political consciousness. In a similar vein is the hauntingly beautiful "Sons of Summer."

Or the probable single, "Attitude Dancing," done in typical, once-you've-heard-one-you've-heard-them-all, Carly style, guaranteed to garner maximum AM airplay. I'm looking directly at the lyrics and the song still has no meaning. All I want to know is why she bothered to have Jacob "That's the Way I've Always Heard It Should Be" Brackman co-write this meaningless song. I personally prefer "Waterfall" with lyrics as vacuous but a better beat, a more accessible hook (it already sounds like a commercial) and it'd be perfect for any Top 40 station that plays a hit every fifteen minutes.

Ms. Simon, now happily married to another rocker of no small stature, states this is an album that deals with sexuality. No programmer need fear; this is definitely not an X-rated album. For that matter, it's not even PG. "Love Out in the Streets" is another of her patented, substanceless love songs that people who've moved on from Rod McKuen find so endearing. Nor is "After the Storm" a song that any parent could object to, even if its coda line "After the storm/and your body feels so warm" is a bit risqué. Finally, for all the frustrated gals in the audience, there's "Slave" which makes no attempt to resolve the eternal dilemma of womanhood, but pinpoints it with facile phrases.

Yes, so what we have here is stock Simon, a bit more adventurous than usual, but not so much as to cause any fan to say she's sold out to Mott the Hoople. It's always good to see a new Carly Simon album, if only to confirm the fact that she's still a full-fledged member of the sensitive singer-songwriters union.

developed alternate words. A consonant word for a vowel, or vice versa. God, so many tricks I devised!

"If I were given something in school to read out loud, I would beg the teacher not to call on me. It was so humiliating. I would stand up and stare at the book...I couldn't get any words out at all, just *eh...eh...eh*. Until one of my teachers, this terrific French teacher, said, 'Carly, you have such a wonderful voice, why don't you sing your answer.' And I did, I sang it in French, it was great. It made all the kids laugh, but they were with me. It was fun.

"And for a long period of time, I used to sing an awful lot of what I wanted to say, at school and at home. My mother also encouraged that device.

"I always thought of that stammer as something that people wouldn't like me for, as this terrible handicap. But when I was 16, my boyfriend of the time told me he thought it was charming. And once I thought of it that way, rather than something to pretend I didn't have, I got it pretty much under control; it just started to go."

By then singing was a habit with Carly, as well as with Lucy, her sister. Its pull was strong enough to take her from college, where she studied Russian and comparative literature with a vague aim of becoming a teacher. "I thought of myself as being an intellectual. I never really was, but I liked that self-image for a while and tried to cultivate it. Then Lucy and I started to sing together, and I thought that was lots more fun than going to school. So I dropped out, I thought, just for a year. Then it was such a relief not to have to turn in papers and

"Art really is a business"

everything, I never went back at all."

As the Simon Sisters, Lucy and Carly cut two albums for Kapp Records, played the campus circuit and folk clubs like New York's Gaslight and Bitter End, and even had a regional hit single, Lucy's composition, "Winken, Blinken and Nod." (Lucy, in fact, after marriage and two children and years of not singing, has just made an album with producer Joel Dorn which will be released by RCA this summer).

When the Simon Sisters ended their partnership, Carly drifted into a period that she now considers to have been essential because of its very fruitlessness. It was a void of four or five years in which she felt herself stagnating in odd jobs she didn't enjoy. Answering letters at *Newsweek*. Being an incompetent secretary for a New York production company. Being down on herself. Gaining weight. Teaching guitar at a music camp in the Berkshires, where she met Jacob Brackman, later to become her occasional collaborator. "He and I became very friendly. One of the first things I did then was my song, 'That's the Way I Always Heard It Should Be,' which Jake wrote the lyric for. Our relationship sort of represents to me the start of my career on my own."

A respectable coterie of fans swelled to true star proportions with the success of "You're So Vain" and her marriage to James Taylor. Now she finds herself having to make all kinds of curious choices, of maintaining her equilibrium while balanced between two very different styles of living.

She speaks fondly of her seemingly placid life with James in Massachusetts, nestled in a congenial community of two generations of Simons and Taylors, befriended by local residents whose trades are non-musical and who feel no obligation to treat their famous neighbors with special deference. Yet there is the Carly Simon who visits Hollywood and New York, which trips tempt her to worry about her appearance, to watch the charts as closely as anyone and to wonder, even as she scolds herself for doing so, what the equation is connecting her popularity with the number of chic parties and fashionable movie sets she visits.

"Art really is a business. There's something heartless about it. I'm really afraid of it. I don't like the side of me that caters to it. It's annoying. It's the way I was in sixth grade, worrying about my popularity. I love working in Hollywood—the best studios are here, and probably the best musicians. It's great, if you can avoid being swept off your feet by all that propaganda. 'Oh you're so fantastic, you have a number one album,' and then you're not heard from for a year and you're nothing. It's a false reality."

Then there is the disparity between Carly Simon, that tough rocker I hear on my radio, the sexy person grinning aggressively at me from a slick three-color page; and Carly "herself," who is not always all that comfortable assuming those stances.

"No Secrets was a very exciting album for me to do, even though I didn't like it at the time. I guess I was afraid to look at that side of me. I was intimidated by trying to be a rock and roll singer when I didn't feel I was one at all. That thing of comparing yourself to someone you like better and you don't sound as good so...get back there where you feel safe. I wanted to play safe then, and that's why I didn't like the album, I suppose.

"Sometimes I think that people were fools for buying it. Then sometimes I think that maybe I'm wrong, that I can't really see myself. You know how you adjust your face when you look in the mirror. People have these unrealistic reasons for not liking the way they look. Or sound.

"For instance, 'Attitude Dancing,' on the new album, is not at all the way I see myself, but a lot of people love it. 'Gee,' I say, 'but is that me?' Of course it's me; but not the me I'm used to.

"But I like the idea of not playing it safe, even though I often do. I like 'Attitude Dancing' because it takes me further in a direction which I only took little steps in before. I don't think I sound that good on it, but maybe I'm not the best judge of how I sound good. I can identify more with a song like 'Look Me in the Eyes'—then I say, 'Oh yes, that's me for sure, that's Carly Simon.'

"Richard (Perry) is very good for me in that respect. He does push me in directions I'm reluctant to go in, because he does believe in me as a rock and roll singer. Or he believes in himself as a rock and roll producer, so I had better conform to his taste!"

The most difficult paradox of all, given the exigencies of pop stardom, is Carly's love of performing coupled with her hatred of appearing before more than 250 people.

"It becomes very impersonal. If I can't see the expressions on peoples' faces, if I can't relate to them directly, it's like...It becomes a kind of sea of mysterious reactions, and for some reason I become frightened of it. I don't know where the fear comes from, but I know I don't like it. I love to perform for small groups, that's where I really shine. But I'm too popular—I think I am—to play small clubs. You know? I've been told that the people who couldn't get in would be so angry, they would...cause a riot or something.

"I just feel downright frightened in front of a huge crowd. It seems so unreal, somehow, so remote. I get stage fright to its phobic extreme. I feel everything is a matter of energy. I'm giving and receiving this incredible amount of energy, and very often it's not grounded; so when I'm standing up on stage with all this energy coming at me, it seems to strike me, like a bolt. And I can't ground it, so it goes to my head; and it shocks me. I panic. If I could learn somehow to use the energy, have it go through my body and back to the audience...But I haven't learned that trick.

"I know that an awful lot of performers feel that,

and that they take something for it—alcohol, pills, whatever. I've never been able to drink or take any kind of drug. If I could find a drug that would mellow me out I wouldn't have any scruples at all about taking it. I mean I wouldn't shoot heroin. But I would probably snort cocaine if it would get me out on stage feeling less uptight.

"Rock and roll audiences really are very very large. I think the whole thing has somehow gotten out of hand."

As a result of her feelings she has done little performing during the past year, except for touring with James to appear briefly in one portion of his concert, during which it is reported she consistently set the hall on its ear.

One solution to her dilemma is the television special she will soon tape, to be aired in September. As for live appearances...

Carly entertains a charming fantasy of performing in obscure cabarets under a false name...To open at some restaurant like Hollywood's Greektown, under the name Frau Himmell. Going on to the next unknown club as soon as anyone recognized her. Not be Carly Simon, but still entertain the people at close range. Tour cities like that, with

"Very often I agree with people if they don't like me."

no advertising or billing. "If you're totally unknown and you're out there, you've got to win the people over because they've never even heard of you. So there's this *thrust* of will: 'I'm going to get these people on my side. I'm going to make them like me. Plus there's no expectation on their part, no hype. You needn't live up to their preconceived notions of you. You can just stand up there. Feeling centered. Giving what you can, nothing more; what you know you can do well.'"

How satisfying if she could carry off this fantasy! The only obstacle she sees is in getting a band to go along with her quixotic plan. "I would sort of like to be a gypsy, roaming around with James and Sarah from town to town, playing these small clubs. I mean it's not impossible. Another fantasy we have is touring the world by boat. Taking musicians with us, and maybe an eight-track machine. Touring the world, playing harbors. Wouldn't that be fun? It's a possibility. We'd like to do a lot of traveling before Sarah gets to be of school age."

"Is being liked important to you?"

"Yeah. Sure it's important to me. Very often I agree with people if they don't like me. 'Yeah, they're right. I'm not a very good singer. My lyrics are weak.' I'm almost more ready to agree with people who don't like me than with people who do. Because I'm

so insecure. I'm sure it's boring to hear that, since everyone's insecure. But...that terrible feeling when you read a review that puts you down...It's just awful...It's really painful.

"It doesn't bother me as much as it used to. It used to be, if I had an enemy in any part of my life, I would work really hard to make that person not my enemy. But you do have to harden yourself up a little bit. Like when you have people coming up to your door, as we do in Massachusetts during the summertime. I used to ask every one of them in, and be very courteous. I didn't want any one of them to think I was—"Carly cleared her throat, "—arrogant or haughty, or uptight. So I would be especially nice. And end up, of course, being angry. Now I maintain a distance. And if they can't understand I need my privacy, then I'm just sorry."

The title song on the new album, while in part an autobiographical reflection on some people from an earlier time, was also, Carly said, an attempt to come to terms with the plateau her life had settled upon.

"The song came out of a sadness, a concern about turning thirty, and about how things that once seemed so important lose their magic as more practical things take over. When I turned thirty I was also having a baby, so it was all those things—being a woman, turning thirty, being married; having a baby, a house. Being comfortable. Thirty, itself, is a very definitive age somehow. Whatever the expectations were when you were growing up, when you're thirty—there you are. That's what all your life you've been aspiring to. You reach a small crisis. Is this where you're going to stay? Laying back in your comfort? Or do you get restless again and want to make a change?"

"I was asking myself what happened. How was I so involved with politics, and with this guy who started this newspaper, and his friends...And where did I drop out, and where did he?"

"Or did we drop out? Are we just playing possum. Is 'now' just a segue into something else. Will we realize that there is a way we can change the world, or whatever. Will something happen to excite you, to make you burn again the way you did in your early 'twenties. You really did burn; you burned with the excitement of your youth, of your life."

It was getting late, and the interview had come to its logical conclusion. I telephoned for a taxi, and Carly made me some tea in the kitchen, speaking lovingly with the baby while the housekeeper fixed Sarah's meal. We returned to the living room to listen to dubs of new mixes of "Attitude Dancing" and "Love Out in the Street." Jacob Brackman reappeared and sat on a sofa. Carly turned the volume up very loud, and her voice swelled from the speakers she hunched between. She could not decide which of two versions of "Love" she preferred. "Yipes!" she said. "What am I gonna do?" Her shoulders moved in rhythm to the beat as she savored the choices to be made.





Songs that move your mind and your matter.
"Lost Generation." The new album by Elliott Murphy.

RCA Records and Tapes

Leon's Tulsa Turnaround

by Bobby Abrams



Several years ago, Leon Russell became one of the first recording artists to have his own label. Shelter Records, co-owned by Leon's producer, Denny Cordell, began some five years ago and was initially distributed by Capitol Records by way of a production agreement with Blue Thumb Records. At first Shelter acted primarily as a marketing company for the latest Leon Russell album and one or two side projects through the years involving such acts as J.J. Cale, Don Preston and Freddie King. It's only been in the past twelve months that Shelter has taken off and become a full-fledged company, currently with three titles on *Billboard's* best-seller charts.

The destiny of Shelter Records will always be closely aligned with Leon's future. No matter how successful other divisions and other projects are (e.g. ShelterVision Vidiotape, Skyhill Publishing), it is Leon who provides the major focus for the company. As you read this article, Russell's latest release, *Will O' the Wisp* will probably have been certified gold, and rightly so. Most observers feel this is the first Leon Russell album in a long time that at least sounds like Leon Russell. Everytime I write about the man, I feel a compulsion to confess that I personally don't enjoy his style or his approach to music. Yet professionally I have an obligation to rise above personal likes and dislikes and deal objectively with the material at hand. This is a great Leon Russell album, certainly as good as *Carney* (which I didn't like) and certainly the equal of his early work, which I found quite impressive: And in contrast to his country and black tangents (Hank Wilson, the Gap Band) of recent memory, this recording is a welcome return to the basics.

The record starts off slowly. The title cut is a keyboard exercise employing synthesizer piano and clavinet. If nothing else, Russell is an excellent technician. "Little Hideaway" opens with a similar sound, and as Leon starts his vocal, we know this is no Hank Wilson nonsense, but rather, hardcore Leon Russell. I wouldn't be surprised if this cut receives the lion's share of FM airplay. He is joined on this cut, as he is on "Can't Get Over Losing You," a bit of a country rocker, by Mary McCreary, another member of the Shelter talent stable. "My Father's Shoes" is a tearjerker, a real soulful ballad and accompanying him are masters of the form, Steve Cropper and Al Jackson, former members of the MGs. Leon is again joined by the MGs including Duck Dunn, on "Stay Away From Sad Songs" which is typical Leon Russell (i.e. the stuff I personally find boring, repetitious and superfluous).

Side two cooks in the patented Russell tradition. "Lady Blue" again is the soulful side of the artist, already earmarked as the probable single, while the rest of the cuts are superheated musical jams. My particular favorite is "Laying Right Here in Heaven" which utilizes practically the entire Shelter artist roster and features Mary McCreary on lead vocal.

But the return of Leon Russell as Leon Russell is by no means the entire story here. The significance of *Will O' the Wisp* cannot be underplayed, for like several other musicians this season, Leon, too, feels it was time to return to making the music he best

knows how to create and to stop experimenting in esthetic diversions. Yet Shelter has, in the past year, developed another talent of mammoth proportions—Phoebe Snow. Recently, by virtue of her hit single, "Poetry Man," her debut album was certified gold. This is the first gold record Shelter has garnered outside of Russell's work.

Phoebe is an important part of the Shelter complex because she proves that this is a record company, with an A&R department that hears music created outside of Tulsa, the corporate headquarters. She is a self-contained artist, writing all her own material and it will be interesting to watch the follow-up album to see if all the hyperbole surrounding her is valid. It should be noted, however, that management and contracts disputes between Phoebe and the label have held up work on a succeeding album and its appearance is in doubt at the moment.

Another important project that Shelter is involved in is an album of reggae material called *Feelin' High*. This is an area that Denny Cordell has always been active in, from the days when he and Chris Blackwell would scour shantytown in Jamaica looking for material. This album is being test-marketed by Columbia Telehouse in the Boston area and contains material that had been tied up in ownership disputes between Cordell and Blackwell when they dissolved their partnership. Another project of theirs, Mango Records, which is co-owned by Shelter and Island, is currently bulleted on the charts via a re-issue of Jimmy Cliff's "The Harder They Come" b/w "You Can Get It If You Really Want." It should be added that *Feelin' High* is probably the best reggae anthology readily available on the market, highlighted by performances by Pluto, Bob Marley, Desmond Dekker, the Maytones and others.

Before we finish the Shelter story, there are still a few more artists on the roster of more than passing import. The Tulsa boys are still going strong, with both Don Preston and J.J. Cale finishing up albums. Mary McCreary's album, *Jezebel*, a gospel and blues based work of her own material, shows the potential of being as big a seller as Phoebe Snow. Larry Hosford is a cowboy out of Salinas, the artichoke capitol of the world. Recently signed Dwight Twilley could be the sleeper of the year, as his "I'm on Fire" rockets up the charts.

Richard Torrance and Eureka are a group that again represents a lot of potential. Playing transplanted Southern blues, Torrance and company are still looking for the hit single that will kick them into the big time, although it should be noted that they are quite popular on the East Coast. In the Baltimore-Washington area, *Belle of the Ball*, the group's second album, sells as well as *Physical Graffiti*.

Shelter is in the process of expanding from a little ranch in Tulsa. By the end of the year, they will have a full-fledged recording studio here in LA, as well as mobile video facilities for the newest branch of the company, ShelterVision. All in all, it's mighty exciting to see an independent label come of age and emerge as a real factor in the highly competitive record business.

"I said, 'could you relate to our quarter track tape, You know the band performs in the nude.'"

He said, 'Uh-huh, don't call us, child, we'll call you...'"

Claridge Music/Corbetta Music, ASCAP.

SUGARLOAF'S REVENGE

Don't call us, we'll call you
by Gene Sculatti

There have been a lot of hit records about making hit records and the pitfalls of trying to break into the hottest game in town: "So You Want to Be a Rock and Roll Star," those Stan Freberg parodies and Billy Joel's "Piano Man"/"Entertainer" saga. But Sugarloaf's "Don't Call Us, We'll Call You," for all the sour touch tones and Jerry Corbetta's insinuating glucose vocal, may be the best. It's surely the most insightful and by far the silliest song in the genre.

As it turns out, the ingratiating little record has plenty of reason to be both clever and ridiculous and extremely effective in making its point. The tune was written by a sublime master of ridiculous lyrics, John Carter (a Capitol A&R man responsible for both the Rainy Daze's "Acapulco Gold" and Strawberry Alarm Clock's "Incense and Peppermints"), together with Sugarloaf front man Jerry Corbetta, whose experiences in "the business" parallel the "Don't Call Us" protagonist's all too closely.

If the song took a long time coming together, the inspiration wasn't wanting. Born, blown apart and reborn in Denver, Sugarloaf's story is fraught with the kind of bad breaks that shouldn't befall a month-old garage band let alone an enduring musical unit whose roots go back to 1965 Colorado punkdom and then some.



•Sugarloaf: Are they a two-hit wonder?

At 17 an eye injury caused him to leave the drums for the keyboards, a situation which reversed itself within two years when he joined Denver's #1 local combo, the Moonrakers. Both Bob Webber and Joel Brandes, who now play guitar for and manage Sugarloaf respectively, were Moonrakers. Coming from the other side of the tracks, the Moonrakers took some getting used to. "I had the Corvette, they all drove MG's. They were part of the upper middle-class, I guess." Geography also had something to do with Frank Slay's entering the picture. Slay, a veteran producer with credits like the Rays' oldie "Silhouettes,"

Freddie Cannon and others, often came to Denver seeking out new talent. Slay encouraged Corbetta and Bob Webber in their music, though the team soon realized the Moonrakers, signed to Tower Records and L.A.-bound to cut their first album, weren't destined to be the Next Big Thing.

Webber and Corbetta bolted the band in 1969, headed back to Denver, specifically Sugarloaf Mountain Ridge, where they formed a new band, Chocolate Hair. They built a local reputation almost instantaneously, re-contacted Slay who took them to L.A. to cut an album and got them signed with Liberty/U.A. Liberty wisely suggested a namechange and Sugarloaf, barely six months old, but primed and ready, sailed into the Top 5 in August of 1970 on the silky jazz-tinged "Green-Eyed Lady." That's when the trouble started.

"In a way, 'Green-Eyed Lady' caught us

off-guard," Corbetta explains, looking back on the overnight sensation. "It was a cart-before-the-horse kind of thing as we hadn't really worked for a hit record. All of a sudden, we were out on the road, with Jethro Tull and Leon Russell, with just one AM hit. A lot of people labeled us bubblegum..."

Which charge would hardly have stuck in light of Corbetta's classical keyboard training and Sugarloaf's obvious proclivity toward a free-winging light jazz forms. The band released an adventurous second album, *Spaceship Earth*, toured and recorded but couldn't sang a strong followup to "Lady." Despite Corbetta's candid appraisal of the situation ("I wanted a hit; I got it, but I didn't know what else I'd get in the deal"), Sugarloaf continued as "a strong support act" until 1973 when the group extricated itself from the Liberty/U.A. contract of 1970.

"I had 'contract-itis' so I became very cautious about where we went next. We talked with a dozen companies, some of whom wanted to sign us and most of whom had absolutely no idea how to handle us. "Once again Frank Slay came to the rescue, ushering the band in to record the *I Got A Song* album which eventually came out on the now defunct Brut label.

"That was over a year ago," Corbetta sighs, less tired with telling the by now familiar tale than with the cumulative effect of the events he's describing. "Unfortunately, Brut went bust before the album had a chance to get off the ground. They thought launching a new record company was like marketing a new perfume or something; you throw some product out there and if it doesn't blow the lid off the market after two months you give up on it.

Somehow, Corbetta, having now invested half his life in an on-again/off-again musical apprenticeship, wasn't prepared to call it quits. The broken promises and hollow contracts added up to something more than a record run of bad luck. back in Colorado last year following the Brut fiasco, he got the idea for "Don't Call Us." The title and chorus came immediately, he worked out the music in a flash, then contacted lyricist John Carter. Carter scribbled off the mini saga of an aspiring rock group in no time and Frank Slay showed up to produce the session.

"In one sense or another, the story is autobiographical," Corbetta admits. "It's about Sugarloaf's experiences in that it's about any band looking for direction and luck and the people you meet who are trying to help but who end up hurting you. It's about how tough it is to move from being the local hotshot band to making it in Los Angeles. It's about all those things."

From the turgid touch tone intro to Corbetta's off-handed "anyway..." aside midway through, it's hard to mistake "Don't Call Us" for anything other than a near brilliant, momentarily transfixing pop record; it's repetitious, bright, trivial and all too true.

"I don't know where all the touch tones come from in the song; one is Columbia Records' number in New York, one is from when we rang up the White House and some of it is John Carter's home phone number. The idea to use the tones was Frank's," Corbetta smiles.

All things considered, it's unlikely Sugarloaf will have to be content with enduring any more "don't call us" type situations, what with the single's chart progress and the album's release. Corbetta hastens to point out "We're a lot more than 'Don't Call Us,' though."

The new Sugarloaf album, the first on the vintage Claridge label resurrected by Corbetta and Slay, should put away anyone's notions about the band being "two shot wonders." It presents the four-man Sugarloaf handling a variety of styles comfortably, from the Yes-ish roundabout of "Myra" to the funky "Wild Child" and the solidly commercial "I Got a Song."

If Corbetta has it his way, the "Don't Call Us" phase of Sugarloaf is just another step toward bigger and better things. While he's temporarily shelved a writing project ("I was going to do a book about the music biz called *Don't Call Us*), he's in and out of the studio in Denver and in Los Angeles. Already under way are the debut album of soul singer Larry Wilkins and Jerry's own solo album.

His music, he hopes, will be the kind that is able to embrace "AM, FM, and MOR audiences" with comparative ease. "It's a matter of learning to broaden your musical experience in general," he explains, hopeful there'll be a receptive audience for Jerry Corbetta music, both in and out of Sugarloaf, for a long time to come. "We've been able to enlarge the scope of our music all along with Sugarloaf. It was imperative. I realized a long time ago that if I didn't grow, I'd have to be content with becoming some kind of musical postage stamp, touring off one or two hits until I went deaf or died."

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THE SOUNDS OF THE CITIES

A Report on the Domestic State of the Art

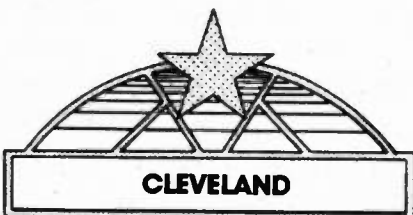
In May, 1974 *Phonograph Record* published the first installment of this multi-segmented annual feature whose namesake is derived from a book by Britisher Charlie Gillet. The original text dealt with period rock and roll (e.g. "New Orleans in the Fifties"). This dialogue, while occasionally touching upon rock history, is by and large a report on local, regional and national music scenes as they exist at the present. In some instances there are projections for the future.

Local groups, those discovered, those waiting to be, and those that never will be, are discussed along with radio, clubs, concert promoters, retailers and most everything that is shaping the 1975 music scene. Significantly, each section is the reporting of a local individual.

Historically, the finest moments in pop music occur when local and regional artists are allowed to flourish without the talent fleeing their home ground for a tin pan alley in some coastal city thousands of miles away. With the help of independent program directors on local FM stations, music publications and local booking agents, local artists now have the opportunity to work, grow and even pay rent in their own territory. The result has been a rapid growth of music communities from the LA County line to Ft. Lauderdale.

This is a healthy time we're passing through where American rock and roll is concerned. The reasons why are itemized herein.

—Martin Cerf



The prevailing mood in Cleveland has changed from the optimism of early last year to a wait-and-see pessimism. This is partly due to the economic slump and partly due to the absence of big local hype like last years Circus and Left End. Though numerous bands have broken up, several are on the verge of moving up.

The demise of the Raspberries will surely have an effect on the local atmosphere, but, as the official public announcement is only a day old as this is written, it's too soon to tell what that effect might be. It could depress spirits still further or it could shake up old attitudes and introduce some fresh air. Everyone is eager to see what the combination of Raspberries' lead singer Eric Carmen, backed by Cleveland's most competently non-descript copy band, Magic, will be like.

The James Gang plugs on and recently recorded an album at Cleveland Recording, but the doings of this group do not seem to have much effect upon people in their own home town.

The just-released album from the Michael Stanley Band has been much awaited here, as the group is the most popular home-grown concert act. The band is about to embark upon a national tour, and success for them could be a boost to local confidence.

Also releasing an album is Atlantis Philharmonic, stalwart classical-rock duo, whose first effort is on Chicago-based Dharma Records. Canton's Joe Vitale, late of Joe Walsh's Barnstorm, released a solo album on Atlantis in February and used this area as a base to put together his band, Madmen, which consists mainly of other ex-Barnstorm members. And a local dance band, Rapsallion, put a single on their own label early this year.

But it is a sort of Cleveland tradition for kids to feel there's more going on every place else, and for bands to feel that in other cities, there are no crooked or unreliable managers and agents and that clubs, promoters and audiences are always receptive to the most creative original material.

As for something happening, any given week will usually see at least three concerts. The major promoter in town is Belkin Productions, as it has been for more than eight years. Others come and go, and most concerts are Belkin-sponsored.

Concerts are held in the Allen Theatre and Music Hall downtown, both holding several thousand and in downtown's Public Hall, capacity 10,000. The new Coliseum in Richfield between Akron and Cleveland was the site of some large fall-winter concerts (seating 20,000) but local residents are pushing to have rock concerts banned. The Indians' Stadium on Cleveland's downtown lakefront is used in summer for the "World Series of Rock" including the largest single concert of all time, Crosby, Stills, Nash and Young, who drew 88,000 last summer. In Akron, the Civic Theatre, similar to the Allen, is used for concerts.

All the large colleges in the area hold concerts from time to time in gyms that can handle a few thousand. Cleveland State, Case Western Reserve, and John Carroll in Cleveland, Akron University and Kent State all hold concerts. In heavy concert season, there may be three concerts the same night, and almost all concerts are well-attended.

The Agora, Cleveland's major downtown dance club, has been running concerts on Mondays for several years and of late, has been scheduling Tuesday concerts as well, with acts of the calibre of Peter Frampton, Argent, Eric Burdon and Rush.

On the near west side, the Smiling Dog Saloon with a capacity of several hundred, has jazz, blues and folk acts every Tuesday through Saturday. Headliners are people like Ellen MacIlwaine, Sun Ra and George Benson.

As for the drink-and-dance side of things, discos have failed miserably in Cleveland so far. The Agora tried a disco one night in March and it bombed. Discos remain primarily for the older, singles set.

•Suzi Quatro is as at home in Cleveland as in England.



"Cleveland needs a Phil Walden to pull all the pieces together"

Cleveland's most venerable dance club is the Agora which began as a college club at Case in 1965 and moved downtown in 1967. Large and comfortable if not plush, it hosts concerts on Mondays and sometimes Tuesdays and the best and best-known dance bands Wednesday through Sunday. It tends to tolerate a bit more originality in song selection than the other big dance clubs in town. Downstairs, the Mistake presents smaller and/or softer bands such as a 1968 psychedelic style trio, Empire and the popular Jimmy Ley's Coosa River Band. Touring bands in town often stop in at the Agora for a drink and a game of pool, as it's close to downtown concert halls and hotels.

Up the street, the Piccadilly Inn Penthouse was revived as a rock club late last year. Years ago, as the Versailles, it was a home-away-from-home for Terry Knight and the Pack. Originally called "the English Disco", though it never was a disco, it was hyped as an "in" spot for "glitter" people and booked wretched entertainment. Since then, it has gone to booking the better bands in town and has provided a place for the music people in town to go on Fridays and Saturdays when the college kids take over the Agora. It is also open on Wednesdays. The management will soon open a disco underneath it, to be called "Studio B."

Also downtown is the Roundtable, plushiest rock club in town, booking bands on Friday and Saturday and softer entertainment upstairs.

Major suburban clubs include the Corral on the west, the Stables and Utopia on the East, the Longhorn on the south and Filthy McNasties in Kent. These tend to stick to bands with the stock BTO-Bad Company-Doobie Brothers-Grand Funk repertoire. The Longhorn is a last stronghold of Uriah Heep-Deep Purple heavy metal.

There are over two-dozen other small rock dance clubs where young bands can break in, and countless high school dances.

A couple of smaller clubs host more adventurous bands. The best established of these is Viking Saloon downtown which books an array of bands Tuesday through Sunday-a dance band one night, a country or blues-oriented band another. The Cellar Door in Cleveland Heights on the east also books blues and country-rock bands.

Folk clubs come and go, and stick closely to campuses, as the Olive Tree at Case-Reserve. Popular area folk acts include John Bassette (who released an album and EP on his own label, Tinkertoo), Jim Glover, ex of Jim and Jean, and Alex Beven who released an album on Big Tree in 1971. Cleveland is not a strong folk town.

Most of the dance bands have been around for several years without making any bigger breakthrough. One Yere, Fully

Assembled, Eastwind, Reigh and Sweetleaf are still kicking around. Left End, Blue Ash and Rainbow Canyon are all back on the local bar grind after unsuccessful albums.

The town's top dance band is Magic, a faithful copy band with a broad repertoire who will be leaving the circuit this summer to become back-up band for Eric Carmen. After them is Circus, a new band having two members and little else in common with the Circus of last year. This band is an energetic, cheerfully commercial group focussing on the strong personal stage style of singer Phil Alexander. Jasper, Bock and Rapsallion all mix some Beatles influence into a 70s rock potpourri of Mott-Queen-Bowie. Dynamite, who began as a spinoff from the Raspberries over a year ago, play solid funky rock including some originals.

Less well-known, but promising, is Peter Panic who blends '60s anglo-rock with early soul and also do some good rock originals. One of its members is Dan Klawon who wrote "It's Cold Outside," for the Choir.

Jicky Zaar was elected, probably through hanky-panky, top local band in entertainment mag the *Scene's* readers' poll, but aren't very good and suffer from revolving door personnel.

Outside of the commercial dance clubs, there's a spate of country-style bands, among them Good Company from Kent, Buckeye Biscuit, Scarecrow and Rick Kennedy (from Eli Radish)'s latest aggregation. Jimmy Ley's Coosa River Band have a traditional r&b flavour. 15-60-75 from Kent play rock and blues classics and also some originals in their own frenzied style. Freewheelin does danceable blues-oriented material from Taj Mahal to Allman Brothers to AWB. Coconut from Youngstown is a funky white band who do Hendrix, Stevie Wonder and O'Jays and are enormously popular in southern Ohio, West Virginia and Pennsylvania.

Also from Youngstown is I Don't Care who prefer jazz-oriented material but can and have played anything. Slaughter is a hard rock group who play about 70 danceable originals and no cover material. Rocket from the Tombs is a critics' in-joke band that doesn't seem to have decided what the joke is. Its most promising member is singer-songwriter-guitarist Peter Laughner who should give up rock writing and form a good band.

Cleveland's tastes in out-of-town bands are broad. Cleveland supports most of what the rest of the country does, including some southern boogie, some country-rock, some heavy metal, some English cosmic. Its own taste is for semi-theatrical, lyrically sophisticated, often whimsical bands like the Hello People, the Sensational Alex Harvey Band, Cockney Rebel, Sparks and Roxy Music, with a strong penchant also for hard rock a

la Queen, Rush and Mahogany Rush. Cleveland was the town that broke David Bowie and Lou Reed and is true to that tradition, supporting acts like Mott the Hoople and the Kinks as well, though straight glitter is passe. The New York Dolls never did go over.

R&B has been filtering into the tastes of rock fans for over a year. AWB and Labelle are big with Cleveland rock lovers. Local bands like Freewheelin, Jimmy Ley, Coconut and 15-60-75 all lean towards r&b and even dance bands like Dynamite, Circus and Peter Panic are influenced.

The diversity in tastes and the number of artists who have stronger support in Cleveland than elsewhere is attributable to WMMS-FM, a free-form progressive rock station that has been instrumental in shaping and reflecting Cleveland tastes. It has been the most popular rock station in town for over two years and two current challengers have so far been unable to make any inroads. The station has used its position of popularity to break artists ranging from those listed above to Suzi Quatro, Aerosmith, Lucifer's Friend, Phoebe Snow and Lynyrd Skynyrd.

The station is much involved in the local music scene, sponsoring most concerts in conjunction with Belkin, broadcasting concerts from the Agora and the Smiling Dog and hosting a weekly "Coffeebreak Concert" featuring original local talent. WMMS has pushed Cleveland-area record releases, such as the Rapsallion and Dragonwyck singles and promoted Joe Vitale and Michael Stanley heavily. Top air personalities include Denny Sanders who runs the highest-rated show, balanced and professional, and Kid Leo who ardently espouses the outre, whether it be Roxy Music or the New York Dolls. WMMS also plays many imports, many never available in this country.

With WMMS creating the demand, several record stores provide the supply. Almost an institution in itself is Record Revolution in Cleveland Heights. It carries an incredibly complete stock with imports, and some jazz, classical and soul. Melody Lane in Lakewood supplies the west side with off-beat items, imports and even obscure, trendy singles. Record Theatre has five suburban locations and a fairly complete range of soul, classical and rock staples.

Cleveland's musical press coverage is not extensive. *The Scene*, a weekly entertainment paper that will be five years old in July, contains concert and record reviews, interviews, a stereo column and theatre and film features. Other than a gossip column which tells you what band's roadies ran the truck into a ditch, its local music support is pretty low. The two dailies, the *Press* and the *Plain Dealer*, feature music coverage in

their Friday entertainment supplements. The *Press* includes concert and dance announcements and syndicated *Rolling Stone* features. The *Plain Dealer* gives Jane Scott, an enthusiastic middle-aged woman who also writes golden-age news, many pages to run featurettes, interviews, news of upcoming events, top record charts of numerous radio stations, "dance chance" listings and an occasional feature called "Rock Reverberations" in which a Cleveland music person speaks out upon any music-related subject he feels is important. The *Plain Dealer* supplement also features a column by yours truly covering a local band or some facet of the local music scene each week. Cleveland always has a bi-weekly alternative publication, and the current one, *Exit*, like the others, tends to favour social-political coverage over music. It has two pages of record reviews and one or two music features per issue.

The most frequently voiced complaint in town, other than the traditional, vague "It's better every place else," is the tightness of local dance clubs regarding songlists and the associated reluctance of local booking agents to push bands that are even a little off the beaten track. Bands would at least like to be able to play a broader range of popular commercial dance material. And kids often complain that bands are repetitive and boring; in some places, club attendance has dropped. Despite this, more bands seem to be successfully pursuing independent styles than ever before.

Musicians feel that personal contact and communication between bands is absent and would like to see backbiting replaced by exchanges of ideas and friendly competition.

Although there are several adequate studios in town (Motion Picture Agency, used by Maureen McGovern and Cleveland Recording, used by Grand Funk, Brownsville Station, Bloodrock and the James Gang), many feel Cleveland needs a local label. Strong, creative management is also lacking. Said Michael Stanley, "Cleveland needs a person like Phil Walden in Atlanta to pull it all together."

The scene is healthier than most people choose to recognize. The talent is here and the audience is here, primed by WMMS, one of the most open rock stations in the country, but the men in the middle seem to be keeping them apart.

There will never be another Raspberries, but there almost certainly will be something else. The breakout of another big artist possibly the Michael Stanley Band, could provide the encouragement and self-pride that Cleveland needs.

—Anastasia Pantsios

Anastasia Pantsios is a contributing entertainment journalist to *Exit*, and *The Cleveland Plain Dealer*.



THE LA VENUE VOID

The end result is, on a rock level, LA has no "Rock Palace." We've got a street life that's grotesque, damaging and negative; which some kid grounded in the suburbs can't wait to come and splash in. We have no rock "Extravaganza" where the new filth of the future can radiate. The Whiskey a Go Go has closed because it's vaguely trying to become a discotheque. Rodney Bingenheimer's English Disco has ceased. Rodney meanwhile, has entertained offers from Gazzari's—still as tacky and bee-hive hairdo-oriented as ever. Elmer Valentine has been thinking of matching up post-glitter and East Coast black disco music. Meanwhile, the Whiskey has turned into a rehearsal hall during the day for the New Order, a band composed of ex-Stooges and MC5 members.

So much for our most creative showcase for rock music. Everybody from Jim Morrison and the Doors to Buffalo Springfield, to the first American appearances by Cream and Jimi Hendrix...Chicago, Three Dog Night, and the ill-fated Hollywood Stars; they all came out of the Whiskey. It was the Liverpool Cavern on a Hollywood level. Sadly there's been no replacement.

We do have the Roxy, which is pretty snob-oriented. The New York Dolls fans trampled a glass door there once and so

"It's lonely at the top, forgotten at the bottom"

rock 'n roll ain't happening there. How can you have rock 'n roll and cleanliness together?

ROCK AND ROLL ON THE STRIP

The only thing rock 'n roll left on the Sunset Strip right now is the Rainbow Bar and Grill. Your favorite high-school pretenders to the throne of slop, all show up per usual, still *ooing* and *ahhing* over aging, English married men in splinter rock bands.

The dancefloor upstairs at the Rainbow looks like an ashtray that's splitting at 10,000 seams in the midst of hell on roller-skating rink. Lockerroom cologne stinks time. There they are dancing to everything as diverse as "Do Ya" by the Move to some horrible eleven-minute Chess/Janus record about the ghetto, back to back.

If you ever wondered what happened to Thee Midnighters, all you have to do is see their duplicates up at Gazzari's doing the Anglo-Chicken dance in reverse.

We move down the street, past the massage parlors, and people throwing-up in the gutters, rushing all the way down the Strip you can't help but smell the Continental Hyatt House, which still offers riot potential and all sorts of people eating delicatessen garbage, and waiting for a member of Led Zep to come through the door, or the road manager of a German space group who is looking for 52 year-old women to whip. That's what happens at the world famous Continental Hyatt House. It's been discussed before.

Bouncing back across the street and working your way up Sunset, one can't help but notice the one bit of chicness and class the city has come up with—Oscar's Wine Bar. When you walk in there, you'll find it's merely a four-table restaurant, and the people who eat there are generally from New York or London; and God help you if you're a slob from the valley trying to get laid.

What else is going on? The Starwood. The Starwood still features the most boring bands in the world, although it's going to become the Whiskey by default. Rumor has it that Columbia Records is going to make a showcase out of the place. If so, we'll see a lot of marginal groups like Journey, with late 1960's validity.

LA OUTSIDE HOLLYWOOD

Hollywood doesn't necessarily represent Los Angeles. What else is here? We have in world-famous Agoura (home of the Renaissance Pleasure Faire) the world-famous Mineshaft. A lot of great fights in the parking lots, and a lot of marginal bands that will never get anywhere; all playing their imitation of Steely Dan. Half a mile away is the Sundance Saloon, which on Tuesday night features the best of periphery country-rock and whatever's left in LA that hasn't died or sold itself. Tuesday night's the big night.

The Valley has a lot of wife-swapping clubs, but there's really nothing there of any significance unless you're into wife-swapping or have a sidewall haircut. Speaking of decadence...there's something in Orange County. It seems all the kids from Orange County who couldn't get away with lying to their parents about going to Hollywood, have come up with their own metaphysical, bisexual Sunset Strip. The D.O.K. in Garden Grove would make Lou Reed's "Waiting for the Man" sound like "Welfare Cadillac."

In Huntington Beach, we've got the Diamond Horseshoe. A lot of petty-theft vibes ring through the place. Smokey Stover's in Newport Beach fluctuates between new divorcees, and the young, bisexual imitators. Charlie's Chili in Newport Pier is the pickup spot of Orange County 24 hours a day. The Santa Ana Clubhouse has the dumbest broads, if you ever need a dumb broad while visiting the South Bay.

Golden West Ballroom in Norwalk? If you ever wanted to know what Dick Dale and the Deltones were like in 1962-3 at the Rendezvous Ballroom, then go there. They don't have a permanent band there yet, but the Gazzari's circuit groups all play there. 3,000 kids come rain or shine, and stand around dancing self-consciously to the music. There is a spot for any aspiring band to break out of: as soon as somebody realizes it's there, and has a piece of meat to toss to the hungry, qualude gobblers.

San Diego County is as dry as a dead dog's back. Apparently nothing is happening but closet homosexuality, and Eno. No pun intended.

HOLLYWOOD VALIDITY

What's so good about Hollywood? Nothing. Why are you there Kim? Well, even garbagemen make money, don't they?

The problem is that you don't have to work here; just standing and holding your drink is good enough. If you know how to insult, and act aloof, even if you're a dummy, you can come up with an instant image. And you'd better change your name. Everybody will believe you. *Hollywood is the only town in the world where an imposter or an imitator can get more acceptance than the real thing*; who would be dismissed as being a phony. We really hope that some other town does it. I'm sure it won't be Austin, Texas; because they have Hollywood-itis on another level. I live in Hollywood, and it's awful. So awful I continue to stay here. It has a negative beauty that is essential, because it's boring in the shopping centers of America. Who in the hell wants to be honest in Meridian, Mississippi; when you can be full of crap in Hollywood?

HOLLYWOOD'S NEW FACES

Now then, let's discuss the new artists. The new artists are as follows: there aren't any. Why aren't there any new artists? There's probably a lot of deserving people in the area here who will not be seen. Just like in Sweden in 1970, I didn't see Abba playing anywhere. They were all in their bedrooms writing songs. So I'm sure the bedrooms of frustrated Trenton, New Jersey; and those of Hollywood have an equal amount of superstars. The group Hollywood Stars last year were the closest thing to a local phenomenon; but even they broke-up before the fact. Out of the Hollywood Stars, a cross between the original Move and the early Who, came "Escape" which Alice Cooper is currently using on his LP. Credit Alice, who re-wrote the song with Mark Anthony and myself (Mark was the rhythm guitarist with the Stars), for incorporating it into his highly successful stage act and LP.



•Kim Fowley: Poet Laureate of Los Angeles.

The drummer and the lead guitarist are now in the reformed Blue Cheer. The bass player Kevin, is in a group that Dunhill is supposedly interested in, called Five Easy Pieces. Mark Anthony is going on Capitol as a solo artist. Scott the lead singer, who is in a group called Hero. Hero are working out of the Robbs recording studio, which used to be MGM Studios.

Tony Sales, Hunt Sales, Nigel Harrison, and a mystery musician are thinking about putting a band together. A member of Badfinger is supposedly trying to hustle guitars down on La Cienega. He is somehow broke. A group called Pop are going into the studio with Chris Hustin. They sound like the Drifters and the Bee Gees. Tornado have the interest of several labels in town, and they boast a portrait-artist lead singer, and a highly competent rhythm section. Shaun Cassidy is reputedly going on Warner/Curb Records.

A hot, hot yet unnamed of Michael Desbarres, ex-Silverhead lead singer; Denny Seiwell, ex-Wings drums; Chrissie Stewart, ex-Spooky Tooth bass; as well as Michael Monarch, original Steppenwolf lead guitar; is worth catching. I have heard the band. They make Bad Company sound like the Osmonds.

LA DISCO

The discotheque scene in Hollywood, since the demise of the aforementioned Rodney Bingenheimer's is very interesting in reverse. We've got the Other Side. The best nights for pickups are Friday, Saturday and Tuesday. It helps to be bisexual, gay, or pretending. A lot of smiling faces who hope for the best. The Paradise Ballroom across the street might be a little too dark, but maybe not light enough for some. The most crowded and vigorous discotheque would be the Cabaret, which would make Helmut Berger blush. After Dark is lonely loggers looking for male companionship. The Studio One actually boasts a 29-year-old woman who was blown out by a Chubby Checker record.

Going down to Tana's and the Troubadour, you find nothing but nouveau riche bullying. Going into Pip's, My Place, and the Candy Store in Beverly Hills, you find many Dean Martin-types seducing young chicks who aren't even young. A lot of people living in Beverly Hills and the canyons of Beverly Hills are from England, like Deep Purple, and some ex-Beatles and Keith Moon. So what. England is passe. As is the concept of making a Sunset Strip in the Valley. If you don't believe me, ask the people who tried to open Hag's Place that just closed down. The Palomino continues to go strong because they've got taste, not waste.

LA EPILOGUE

It has been said a thousand times. Los Angeles, California is the suburb in search of a city. Our combined root is the aircraft industry and the film industry. A lot of unemployment and welfare, more Texans than Downersville, more lawns than Dork City. The sons and daughters of people who have failed elsewhere have come to this city. They hold their children prisoners and hostages in these falling-apart-at-the-edge tract homes. These children sneak off at every opportunity, lie, connive, and rush to the golden freeways, hop on trains, planes etc. They ride to the aforementioned clubs in this article, and areas, and parking lots.

It seems that people can come to Hollywood by hook or by crook, or by sneak, or by dedication, and they all end up in the same place. It's lonely at the top and forgotten at the bottom, and the in-between is hard-pressed. The talented people in Hollywood are like talented people anywhere, they do a good job if they're disciplined; and if they're not disciplined they jump out of windows, and masturbate in their bathrooms. Which might be a good deal when you consider that once they've made it, if they go out on the street they're too visible and are dismissed because they're too available; and if they stay at home they're called snobs. And they can't talk to their fellow superstar because they'll be accused of stealing ideas from the guy's next record or movie. Speaking of movies, the movie colony and the rock colony are now very incestuous; and so now there's more room for being hurt, ripped, stolen, or psychologically raped and processed.

The music in Los Angeles as reflected on the radio is just as Greg Shaw would describe. Hey man, the best records are still in the bargain bins, or in people's imaginations. Radio personalities continue to be just that—personalities on the radio with few exceptions. Record stores like Licorice Pizza and Tower really make an effort to find hard-to-get merchandise. The local press is really local.

Predictions for the future, and what kind of change that should occur in the market is: we better get a club and a group and a manager and a songwriter and a producer and a publisher and a booking agent and a record label who can work as a team. And when we do, we will have something valid. Until then we have too many colleges, too many phonies, too many recording studios, too many people, and too much mediocrity. I'm sure there are cities in America, that if they had the glamour of Hollywood, could become the Athens of the Midwest. From what I can gather, St. Louis and Cleveland have more vitality than Hollywood does at the moment. But Hollywood has the vibe and the jive. If you make a good presentation in Hollywood, you stay alive and survive.

—Kim Fowley

Kim Fowley is a writer, producer and recording artist who has lived in and around the Hollywood area for the past twenty years.

Tony Orlando And Dawn.



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He Don't Love You Like I Love You. On Elektra Records & Tapes.



Produced by Hank Medress and Dave Appell



The recent SNACK benefit concert at Kezar Stadium, during which the area's superstars and assorted outsiders came out to play for charity, tells a great deal about the current musical situation in San Francisco. For one thing, it confirmed, as if anybody still had any doubt, that Bill Graham is the Godfather of Bay Area rock as surely as Francis Ford Coppola rules over its cinematic interests. No other promoter could have amassed such an array of bands and have the show come off so flawlessly. Audience response to the various acts also told an intriguing tale. The ovations for such SF legends as a reconstituted Grateful Dead, Jefferson Starship and Santana were like cheers for Joe Louis at ringside at an Ali-Foran match. It's good to see the old dude, but the real action is elsewhere. At Kezar, it was the young Turks: Tower of Power, Graham Central Station, and especially the Doobie Brothers, that got the 60,000 kids off, with their straight-ahead blasts of funkified rock.

One other result of SNACK was that it brought out of the closet all the San Francisco chauvinists, who took the opportunity to trumpet the magic of the city by the bay. The *Chronicle* and the *Examiner* were filled with gushy praise for the event, and a few weeks after the fact, Ralph J. Gleason reiterated: "The whole rock scene flowered in San Francisco because of the special nature of this city, its institutions and its people." The concert did prove that there is still a musical community here, at least in its hierarchy of bands, but the nature of it has become harder to pin down, and its impact on the outside world is questionable. It is no longer the Summer of Love, but Paul Kantner is still talking about free concerts in Golden Gate Park, and they just might happen.

The last time this writer (who is not without prejudices of his own, refusing to believe that the current SF environment, with its conspicuous lack of intensity, could produce a New York Dolls equivalent, a Bruce Springsteen or a Patti Smith, 'tho it probably is also incapable of such embarrassments as Manhattan Transfer) spent an extended period of time in San Francisco, it was possible to see, within a few weeks, Quicksilver outdoors, an acoustic configuration of the Grateful Dead at the Lion's Share, a reformed Big Brother and the Holding Co. at Fillmore West. Needless to say, many things have changed (record companies aren't snapping up every group with a moderate reputation), but a visiting New Yorker cannot help but feel a sense of *deja vu* as he reorients himself to the sounds of the city.

The names are familiar, the cast of characters remains relatively constant, it's the contexts that are being altered. Most of the bands that are making local noise are either old standbys who have been playing the club circuit for ages, spin-off bands from the original pioneers, or otherwise new groups with personnel who have had other professional affiliations. Moby Grape is back together, after a fashion, and the newly reunited Beau Brummels is just starting to make the rounds. The Hoodoo Rhythm Devils, Cold Blood, Sons of Champlin and Earth Quake seem destined to hang on forever, and the second-generation bands, Kingfish (Bob Weir and Dave Torbert), Journey (Gregg Rolie), even Hot Tuna, are using former credentials to help establish a new foothold.

There is certainly a lot of music in San Francisco (too much to assimilate in an article), much of it worthwhile, and the drop-in, have a drink, hear a couple of sets attitude of many local clubs is conducive to making rock more life than event. This casualness, which is so crucial to the area's appeal, works in contradictory ways, however. As Chico Marx might have said, sometimes a lot is too much, and sometimes too much isn't enough. As it happens, many of the people in the city are in some stage of oncoming panic, in transit, or on an edge

"San Francisco is a city without a pop tradition"

that they counteract by staying in motion or going to the opposite extreme and blissing out totally. The question is whether the city's music confronts that tension or sidesteps it, choosing to idealize the image of a carefree existence.

More than before, the black influence is felt on the mainstream music of the area. Part of the reason for this, of course, the resurgence of the disco, the urge to get dancing in a far different manner than the feet-rooted-to-the-floor boogie. There is also a sense in this music that the urban walls are finally closing in on San Francisco, that Oakland's racial problems, unemployment and other plights of the 70s are giving a darker tone to this city (although not to Marin to quite the same degree). The great success of Tower of Power has spurred a new rash of soul bands with horns: Soundhole, who once backed up Van Morrison, and who do uninspired renditions of "Work to Do" and James Brown's "Out of Sight"; Niteshift, a big, vocally strong organization; Ana Rizzo and "A" Train, about whom more later; Big Mitch and Baby Fat, the perfect disco machine, doing note for note versions of the most danceable hits. The Tof P influence can also be felt in the newest installment of the Sons of Champlain.

While many of the discos—Olympus and Orphanage—rely strongly on recorded music, the live music scene in San Francisco, on the local band level, is remarkably strong. As indicated before, in the big time Bill Graham still runs the show, presenting the top national names at Winterland, Berkeley Community Theatre or, when the act warrants it, the Cow Palace. It is indicative of the current economic middle-range rock environment that two potentially excellent 400-500 seater rock clubs are being used for other purposes. The Great American Music Hall rarely presents a rock act, sticking mostly to jazz, and Keystone Korner, where one of the Flamin' Groovies danced and pranced, is now one of the best jazz clubs in the country. Only the Boarding House is committed to acts with national reputations who might be considered rock or pop oriented.

San Francisco excels in those small places where, for the price of a drink, one can wander in, catch a group and either saunter out or plant oneself at the table for a night of music. Some of the best spots for this kind of listening are: Mooney's Irish Pub, where the excellent Steamin' Freeman can usually be found and where, as an added attraction, there is a pinball machine (Bally's Monte Carlo) that dreams are made of; Clement Mixer and the Last Day Cafe, both on Clement, both worth stopping in to hear Elvis Duck or Sneakers; Yellow Brick Road, a disco where the above-mentioned Baby Fat are likely to be, and on Monday nights they present "The Best of the Bay Area" (Alice Stuart, Lightyear). Other clubs that come highly recommended include Country Road, Garden of Earthly Delights, the Scene. Over in Berkeley, at the other Keystone, the cream of the local crop appears, among them the hard-driving Earth Quake, whose two singles on Beserkley, one of them a powerhouse version of "Friday On My Mind" are consistent sellers, Axis, Hoodoo Rhythm Devils, Richard Torrence and Eureka (a likeable band with two albums on Shelter and good original material) and a ubiquitous oldies outfit, Butch Whacks and the Glass Packs, who seem to be everywhere in town at the same time, spreading their 50s routine much too thin.

One element that the San Francisco area has in abundance, and its eternal credit, is rock women. The female voice is an integral part of the musical atmosphere, be it on the radio (with Dusty Street on KSFX, Miz Rachel on KSAN, Katy on KCBS) or on stage. If any force breaks out of this city to become a national name and restore glory to the Bay Area, it'll be one of the singing women, probably Ana Rizzo. The lady came from Baltimore seven years ago, played in Country Joe's band, and about a year ago formed "A" Train. The band is very good: a tough, tight outfit who brings life to the r&b formula, but the woman is extraordinary. Within a basic blues format she shifts from gutsy shouters to gospel to devastating ballads ("Mirror Mirror") with skill, control and power. She can be down and dirty or crystalline, and she sounds ready to record. Most of the material is band-generated, but

she handles outside songs like "Love Makes a Woman" and Gil Scott-Heron's "Lady Day and John Coltrane" with sensitivity. Close behind her in the woman's sweepstakes are Alice Stuart, who keeps getting better and better, rockier and rockier, and Naomi Ruth Eisenberg, a former Hot Lick who, with her 3-piece jazz combo Hot Lips (a.k.a. Bourbon Street Irregulars) hold court at the Old Waldorf. Her tenor sax and piano players are superb, and Naomi does spiffy versions of such timeless oldies as Ellington's "Satin Doll." With some original songs added to her current repertoire, she could catch on. Other local femmes are more familiar, including Terry Garthwaite (ex-Joy of Cooking), Patti Santos (ex-It's a Beautiful Day, now with Silver), Lydia Pense (still with Cold Blood) and Kathy McDonald.

As in many relatively large cities nowadays, there is a cultural split in San Francisco that prevents it from coming through with a strong musical identity. There are at least four distinct audiences, and only occasionally do they coincide. The gay community is asserting its personality in much the same way as it is in New York, with a concentration on disco music and deco sensibility (Labelle and Streisand co-exist in Polk St. record store windows and jukeboxes). Gays don't respond to rock and roll per se (and there's really no reason why they should—it's rarely spoken to them directly), and so make up a splinter group. Alongside them is the black community which, as noted, is becoming more and more prominent. Together, the gays and blacks are probably responsible for KSFX's switch to wall-to-wall black disco music. There are other factions: the left-over hippies who are determined to dance at a Kingfish concert, no matter how lame and sluggish Weir and Torbert's recreation of "Shop Around," and the mellow Marin residents who continue to respond to the laid-back vibes of Jesse Colin Young.

Radio mirrors this division somewhat, even though by and large the medium has become so homogenized that one city sounds pretty much like another. KSFX's new format is one example of what S.F. now sounds like. It also sounds like KSAN, a loose, personality-oriented station with the spirit of '67, and like K101, an erratic pop station, but the only place in town where you can hear Johnny Rivers' "Get It Up for Love" in the same set as Steely Dan. AM stations are not even worthy of mention. The most imaginative programming in the area goes on Saturday nights on KPOO: Reggae Express (4 to 7PM) and Blues by the Bay (10PM to 2AM). If you hang out in the record stores, reggae seems to be getting popular (Tower Records makes browsing a pleasure by playing *Natty Dread* and *The Harder They Come* non-stop), but on a small scale.

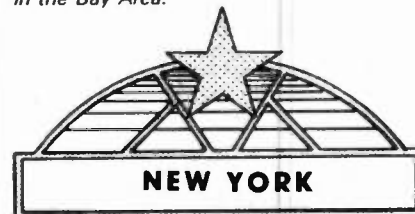
San Francisco is a city without a pop tradition. In the 50s and early 60s, when other major cities were putting their stamp on various genres of rock and pop this city, without a major record company or a dynamic rock independent, went unrepresented (unless one wants to count Johnny Mathis). The bands that emerged in the late 60s, therefore, had to create a scene of their own, and were conspicuously closer to blues, folk and jazz roots than their counterparts to the south and east. This purity, and the musical integrity it implied, gave the San Francisco bands their aura, as did the street culture that they reflected. But significantly, when it came to making a national commodity out of that image, the promotion was done by outsiders (at least until *Rolling Stone* took hold). The song that told the world to come to San Francisco with flowers in its hair, and the musical event that was the quintessence of the whole atmosphere, were both the products of Los Angeles. In the conflict between music and media, SF was on the side of the music, and so it lacked some of that show-biz rock and roll flash. (It may be acquiring it. The most exciting single now on the air is "For All the Right Reasons"/"Gorilla" by Greg Kihn/The Rubinoos, respectively; both wonderful, bubbly pop songs on Beserkley records that will appear on the label's *Chart Busters* LP. Watch for it). At their peak, the Grateful Dead were a special combination of spontaneity and ritual. Most current local bands have one or the other, but it will take another fusion to allow the city to remain a vital national music center.

One final word. Through the 8th of June,

a very important music/film event is going on in San Francisco for the benefit of the Pacific Film Archives, in association with KSAN and *City Magazine* (THE essential area publication, with Greil Marcus, Ed Ward and Michael Goodwin, and a comprehensive guide to the cultural city). It's called "Music and the Movies" and it features over 130 musical films from *Billie Holiday* to *T.A.M.I. to Tommy*, with many rare, precious promo films and other rock and roll delicacies. It's a model for other cities to follow. Please.

—Mitchell Cohen

Mitchell Cohen is a contributing editor to *Good Times*, a *Long Island* entertainment bi-weekly. He spends several months a year in the Bay Area.



Although New York is considered by many to be the "big time," it is precisely this bigness which often works against real creativity and imagination. In such a large metropolitan area, the mass media often lowers its goals or direction, attempting to widen their base trying, and appeal to a larger segment of the "market." Radio stations become more bland, and soon they all begin to sound the same. As it stands now, few have any real personality, and imaginative programming is almost impossible to find. The local press suffers from the same disease, usually finding it adequate to re-cycle press releases, or interview the same predictable performers over and over again.

Of course the economic reality is such that New York probably has the highest costs in the nation for just about everything—rent, labor, food, advertising, printing, etc. so businesses apparently need a wide base to pay their bills. Yet recently a new segmented-appeal market has begun to emerge, a development which is most heartening. Vince Aletti discusses one aspect of this fragmentation, and I'll try to deal with another.

A few years ago, there was a distinct scene which grew up around the Mercer Arts Center, and then spread out to Max's Kansas City, Coventry and elsewhere. With the downfall of the Mercer, and Max's quickly following suit, the 'third generation rock scene' (as it became known) was in a state of obvious disorganization and confusion. Out of the debris, Kiss was the only band able to achieve any real measure of success, and the apparent failure of the Dolls to break through made it even tougher for the rest of the local groups. Couple that with the economic slowdown, and it's easy to understand why New York's local scene almost ground to a complete stop.

In last year's *PRM* Sounds of the City survey, I discussed the history of the New York rock scene, and examined the current club and group scene. Nothing much has changed those perceptions—save for the fact that some of the clubs have folded and some new ones have opened. The names have changed, but the faces remain the same, so to speak. It would be basically repetitive and of no real consequence to rehash those areas. What is most valuable and exciting is to talk about the just blossoming group explosion centered in a small club on the Bowery at Bleeker, called CBGB's. In the last year or so, a distinct new selection of bands and hangers-on has developed and there are now well over a dozen highly imaginative and talented groups on the scene. Along with the 82 Club, and the newly opened Little Hippodrome, this is really where it's all happening.

One of the most highly touted, but as yet unsigned bands, is Television, a group which some compare to the Velvet Underground, although group leader Tom Verlaine draws, "I really don't think we sound like the Velvets. I can best describe our music as really intense." Television's brand of pulsing, sensual rock caught the ears of Island Records who sent Eno over to check it out. Eno cut about eight demo tracks in a Manhattan studio with the band, but the results were inconclusive: "He was an

**With the pressures
and problems that turn
nine-to-five workdays
into prisons of pain,
there's comfort
in knowing that when
quitting time comes,
someone
is there who can
put back what the
day took away.
Jim Dawson.
He'll bring out
the human in your being.**



Produced by Cashman and West

RCA Records and Tapes

"The action is downtown, in the street where it's always been"

interesting guy" continues Verlaine, "but we just had a different idea of where our music was going..." Television seem content now to perfect their sound, waiting for the right arrangement to come their way. Meanwhile they have been playing weekly at CBGB's, along with poetess-turned-rocker Patti Smith. Verlaine's association with Patti is quite an intimate one, and he has co-authored some material, and often sits in during their sets.

Patti has just been signed to Arista Records, and has received some alarmingly good notices. This may come as a surprise to those who only know Patti from her legendary poetry readings, but she has grown into a riveting performer, intertwining her powerful lyrical imagery with a totally original musical backing. Lenny Kaye, guitarist with the group, explains their outlook: "We are intentionally a slow moving band. This gives us time to explore and experiment more. I think we have something original to say, and also think we could be quite commercial." Disagreeing strongly with their past radical-cult image, Kaye asserts: "We're not music business rebels!" Kaye, a long-time observer of the New York scene, visualizes great things ahead: "I do wish that there were more places in the city to play; more outlets for talent—but at least now (with CBGB's), we have a focal point like the Mercer was. It's



•Patti Smith could be the Ellie Greenwich of the 70's.

an honest scene and one with real potential...and it's totally rock 'n roll oriented."

While Television and Patti have been the centers of attention, new weekday showcases have proved to be valuable training grounds for up and coming talent. Blondie, a female trio with musical backing, is attempting to fuse a new totality out of sixties and seventies girl-group rock, without being a "nostalgia" band. Blondie (the lead singer as well as the name of the group) has a fine voice and a strong charismatic stage presence, but has found it difficult to find the right combination of material, arrangements, image and backing group. "We've been working really hard," she whispers, platinum hair askew, "and now we have a repertoire of about thirty songs. I think we're first starting to jell right now—it's gonna take some time."

Lance Loud's Mumps has been performing what Lance labels "teenage anthems" for the last few months, but seems to have trouble finding a distinct persona. The band's influences are such that their direction tends to change depending upon who they are big on that month. Is it Bowie? Is it the Beatles? Is it Steve Harley? Despite this lack on concreteness, Loud's performance is energetic and some of the originals like "Cliff Hanger" and "You Shoulda Seen His Face (Before the Accident)" show strong promise. Marbles is a young quartet who just made their first public performance recently. The lead singer/guitarist often looks astonishingly like a young Brian Jones, and their sound is most akin to middle Beatles. Their set is well-rehearsed, tight, energetic, and imaginative, and their numerous original songs exhibit an obvious commercial brilliance. Although they lack a stage image and performer-audience interaction, they are still my bubbling-under pick hit of the week!

Among the other units in New York are the long-lived, recently revamped units like the Fast and Planets. The Fast are a self-styled power-pop band to the extreme, sometimes hindered by making their influences just a bit too obvious. The fan-ish fanaticism for the Small Faces, Who, Kinks, Move, Creation *et al* has slowly given way to a more intense love and drive for their own original material, a step in the right direction. The oft heralded Planets are a band whose influences also were a bit too strong. After numerous personnel reshufflings and group breakups, the band has regrouped and become more professionally dedicated. With their affectation for the Who playing a more secondary role, guitarist Binky Phillips seems a likely candidate for stardom. Wayne County, the bizarro to end all, has done some recording recently, and reworked his act, which will debut shortly. Wayne is a much under-rated performer and composer, and may yet see his aspirations for fame fulfilled.

Two bands not really a part of this scene have already recorded, and their first releases have just hit the racks. The Dictators (Epic) are attempting to fuse humor and satire with seventies heavy-metal punk. Their influences, as band spokesman Adny Shernoff reels them off "include the Supremes, MC5, Jan & Dean, Black Sabbath, the Who and Richard Meltzer, just to name a few..." Their excellent *Dictators Go Girl Crazy* has received generally favorable, and often ecstatic reviews, but whether the public at large will embrace their unorthodox approach remains to be seen. Shernoff understands this more than anyone, but is willing to take the risk: "The Dictators will not be content just to be another rock 'n roll band. Either we make it as we are, or we flop. There isn't going to be any in-between for us!"

In direct opposition, at least in terms of image, are Milk 'n' Cookies, a Long Island quartet signed to Island Records in England. Their album is in the can, but they are waiting for a hit single to break in England. The debut 45, "Little Lost and Innocent" indicated the band's sound to be hard, with ample doses of the Beatles, Dolls, Small Faces, and Who. A second, "Tinker Toy Tomorrow," has just been recorded and it is an out and out attempt for a British hit. The confident unit (some have labelled them arrogant) is just waiting for the opportunity to bring their music to the public. They haven't performed publicly in well over a year, but judging by their stance, love 'em or hate 'em vocals, and recordings, they will soon be a significant force to be reckoned with.

Perhaps finally signaling an end to the first and second waves of New York 70s rock was the recent breakup of the Dolls. Sad a fact as their breakup is, I'm happy to report that the various group members are still alive and kicking. Guitarist Johnny Thunders has formed a new band, with the working name the Heartbreakers, along with Dolls drummer Jerry Nolan, and ex-Television bassist Richard Hell. They are currently looking for another guitarist and keyboard player to round out the band, but rehearsals have already indicated a brash freshness in the writings of Thunders. Not only are his rockers strong, but some softer, slower material fares equally as well. David Johansen and Sylvain Sylvain plan to continue as a writing team, and form a group as well. They're excited about the prospects of playing and touring, so the demise of the Dolls may spawn and solidify three new groups.

There are other talented and promising bands around, but none seem so strong as the Ramones, a group which has lots of folks really excited. Their tunes, all teenage rockers, sound the same, but they're so great and energetic that no one seems to notice or care. The group's goal is "to make a million dollars," which they seem confident of being able to do on their own. (C'mon guys, even the Beatles had Brian Epstein...). Lisa Robinson, the prolifically pubescent prognosticator of pop, gushed forth with superlatives after seeing them for the first time: "Aren't they fabulous?!?! haven't seen anything so exciting in years. The Marbles, they're cute; but the Ramones, oh they're simply faahbulous!!!"

Take it from Lisa and me, the action ain't at Madison Square garden or at tiring spots like the Bottom Line. It's downtown, in the

street, where it's always been, and where it always will be. New Yawk, you're my kinda town!

—Alan Betrock

Alan Betrock is editor of *The Rock Marketplace*, a record collector's publication out of New York.



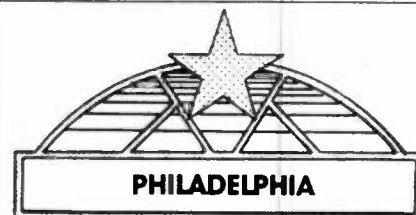
After the Pop Culture Sixties, when a media star's social life seemed to revolve around the dance floors at the Peppermint Lounge, or later, Arthur, Ondine's and the Sanctuary, discotheques went back underground to the hardcore dance, dance dance crowds—blacks, Latins, gays—but in the last few years, they've emerged again, especially in New York, and quickly become Big Business along with the style of music they've nurtured and promoted. If discotheques aren't the most stable or long-lasting enterprises (average life span: one to three years; some fold within months), they do have a kind of instant-on appeal: you walk in, hit the dance floor and spin for a few hours; the environment and the action is ready and waiting, you don't have to sit through tune-ups or intermissions, and you leave when you've had your fill, not when some group decides its set is over.

New York's most visible discotheque is Le Jardin, with one room in the basement and one on the roof of an old hotel in the Times Square area, both furnished in a tacky elegant style—lots of fake palms, big pillows, low lounges and mirrors—that many subsequent discos only aspired to. Le Jardin started out as a gay club—there were constant rumors in the early days of women being charged double admission or turned away altogether—and was picked up very quickly by the chic slumming crowd who edged it into the pages of *Women's Wear Daily* and *Interview*. Though the gay crowd has all but deserted it in the wake of out-of-town gawkers and young couples from Queens and Long Island, Le Jardin remains the New York disco and the celebrity drop-in spot. Trailing not far behind, each with their own crowd, are the well-publicized Hippopotamus, Hollywood and the Sound Machine, whose disc jockeys, like those at Le Jardin, are considered tastemakers—among the first to discover and break new records.

Then there are at least a hundred other discos—ranging from the straight, white, singles-bar set-up to mostly black parties that settle into a new hotel ballroom each weekend—with some of the most interesting being private, membership clubs run out of huge loft spaces, often in warehouse sections of the city. The majority of these are gay, each opened for a particular crowd and their friends, each creating an identity of its own. Three of the best of these are on the upper edge of Soho: Flamingo, the largest, most elegant and innovative space in town; Nicky Siano's Gallery which is a little tight but has a reputation for its DJ's fabulous mixes; and David Mancuso's Loft, one of the first private party places now installed in larger quarters and still inspiring a family loyalty in its "guests" quite unlike any other place I know. Members or guests at these decidedly underground discotheques (the buildings in which they are located are as anonymous as possible, they don't advertise and contact their members by mail or word-of-mouth) pay \$4 to \$6 at the door and are given constantly replenished supplies of fruit juices or sodas and light food like pretzels, chocolate kisses or fruit piled high on a tray. No liquor; bring your own high. Usually open until six or seven in the morning and only on weekends—sometimes only Saturday nights—these loft discos seem to be a response to the commerciality and aboveground popularity of places like Le Jardin, opened by people who want a place all their own—no tourists and no WWD socialites popping in for a bit of low culture.

—Vince Aletti

Vince Aletti is a contributing editor to *Record World*.



The days of American Bandstand are long gone here, but Philadelphia continues as a great city for music, in both production and consumption. The legacy of the Cameo-Parkway production machine of the 50s and 60s is the phenomenally successful Gamble-Huff-Bell r&b factory of the 70s. But while "The Sound of Philadelphia" has achieved world-wide fame for itself and Sigma Sound Studios, it doesn't begin to tell the story of the music scene here.

A remnant of the folk-club coffeehouse scene of the 60s, the eleven year-old and still liquorless Main Point in Bryn Mawr carries on as gracefully as ever. With its seating expanded to about 275 and its repertoire expanded beyond folk to just about anything, the Main Point is more than ever a major stop on the national club circuit of the 70s.

In center city, the Bijou Cafe (the Showboat jazz bar in a former life) has become in two years a major showplace for new talent and old favorites. It's about the only place in town for new comedians to try out, and others spent time developing here and keep coming back, while new faces like Bill Crystal, Andy Kaufman, Franklin Ajaye, Ron Douglas and Charlie Fleischer also get exposure to enthusiastic audiences. The Bijou presents a range of artists from Tracy Nelson to Melissa Manchester to Sun Ra to Manhattan Transfer in an alcoholic, show-bizzy club atmosphere with great success. Another club, Grendel's Lair mingles music with mainly cabaret-theatre shows. Just Jazz (on the site of the Trauma, the city's first "psychedelic" club) mixes jazz with jazzy r&b and also presents cabaret-theatre.

The club scene in effect feeds the concert scene. Larry Magid and Allen Spivak's Electric Factory Concerts named after the late "psychedelic" emporium operates the Bijou, often using it as a testing ground for acts on their way up to concert status. Electric Factory promotes concerts in such varied halls as the University of Pennsylvania's strange Irvine Auditorium, the newly reopened legit Erlanger Theatre, the grande olde Academy of Music (home of the Philadelphia Orchestra and finest hall in the country), and most importantly the Spectrum, the 20,000 seat hockey arena said to be the top rock hall in the country in number of shows and admissions per year and the best of its type. Electric Factory does shows in other cities, and has lately begun co-promoting some at the nearby Trenton Civic Center with Hollow Moon Concerts, who mainly use the fine, smaller Trenton War Memorial Theatre. Aside from all of this, Rick Green's Midnight Sun Company continues to present medium-sized acts at Upper Darby's deco Tower Theatre (a functioning movie house) and occasionally at the nearly-abandoned Philadelphia Civic Center.

Concerts at the area's many colleges, local musicians performing in bars and coffeehouses, the renowned and always memorable Philadelphia Folk Festival (held every August in Schwenksville, Pa.) and other Folksong Society events, Philadelphia Orchestra concerts, the stringbands of the Mummer's Parade on New Year's Day, and just plain streetcorner music add to the incredible abundance and diversity of live music.

Adventurous radio combines with the wide-open music scene to help new artists find an audience. Philadelphia has always had the reputation for "breaking" artists nationally. There are many artists who found their earliest support in Philadelphia and continue to find it their biggest market, including, strangely enough for a city known r&b, English artists like Steeleye Span, Fairport Convention, ELO, Strawbs, Al Stewart, Genesis, Renaissance and Caravan. Add to this long-time favorite Janis Ian, Billy Joel (via a legendary WMMR radio concert performance of "Captain Jack"), and Bruce Springsteen, whose frequent and incredible live performances have made him nationally.

Ace's High.



You've probably heard Ace's hit single, "How Long." It's from their American debut album, "Five-A-Side," which shows the band is a full house of talent.

Ace—they're number one.

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•Philadelphia Freedom unleashed: l to r. Bruce Springsteen, Ed Sciaky of WMMR, Janis Ian, Billy Joel

Early success here has in the past been important to the careers of such national biggies as Elton John, David Bowie, Yes, Humble Pie and recently, Barry Manilow.

The local music scene has also produced some artists of note besides the Gamble-Huff-Bell roster: Todd Rundgren (formerly of the Nazz), Jim Croce, Tim Moore, Essra Mohawk, Duck Soup.

Forest Green, Duke Williams & the Extremes (with T.J. Tindall), Good God, Linda Cohen, Dialogue, Lon & Derrek Van Eaton, Mark Jordan and Freebo (both late of Edison Electric Band), and Daryl Hall and John Oates, plus producers Joel Dorn, Michael Cuscuna, Tom Sellers and Todd Rundgren (again). Currently unrecorded are groups like Musica Orbis, Johnny's Dance Band, Slim Pickens, and Snow.

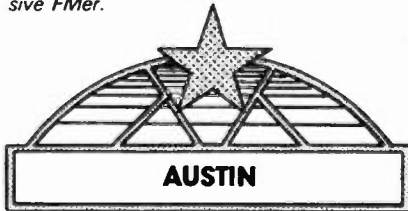
The amazingly large number of concerts demonstrates the great interest in music here, and that's reflected in extensive press coverage of music, both live and on record, in the three daily papers, the *Bulletin*, the *Inquirer*, and the *Daily News*, as well as in the weekly *Drummer/Lively Planet* and *Concert Magazine*, an excellent music monthly.

Philadelphia can "break" records—it's a large and important record market, accounting for over four per cent of national sales (in the case of an artist the city goes crazy over but hasn't broken nationally, like Bruce Springsteen, the figure can hit twenty-five per cent). There is no one dominant retail chain—several large chains share the business: Franklin Music, Listening Booth, Record Museum, Jerry's Wee Three, Keller's and Sam Goody. Many of their stores are in huge suburban shopping malls, where chains like Korvettes and Sears also sell lots of records.

While the endless suburban communities of Pennsylvania and southern New Jersey continue to grow, the city of Philadelphia itself has seen a very real renaissance in the last few years. Whole sections of the downtown area have been redeveloped or restored for both business and residential use. New stores, restaurants, and "bistro-theques" abound, but the character and identity of the city survive. As we prepare to be inundated by Bicentennial-seekers, there's a real feeling that somethin's happenin' here, W.C. Fields to the contrary.

—Ed Sciaky

Ed Sciaky is a top-rated air personality over WMMR-FM, Philadelphia's leading progressive FMer.



Someone once observed in the *Texas Observer*, appropriately enough, that Austin is the spiritual and aesthetic, as well as political capitol of Texas. Now that's a tall tale, but it's generally true that whatever happens in Texas usually happens in Austin first.

This is partly because of the cultural influence of the University of Texas, with its attendant hot-lines to other centers of learning and activity. Basically, though, it's because of the people who live here. They're the kind of people who make community happen. Most people in Austin are tolerant of other's lifestyles, and a wide diversity of lifestyles exist. Austin has 11% blacks and 14% chicanos. In a town of about 300,000 there are over 45,000 college students. There is some industry, but most people make their living from government-related jobs and small businesses. Add in a generous helping of natural physical beauty—Austin is a little jewel set in stony hills and green meadows—and you have an environment that is cosmopolitan without being metropolitan.

People love music in Austin and there is much.

Progressive Country Music, whatever that is, is hot. Commander Cody has sold out Armadillo World Headquarters so many times I've forgotten how many times they've played. People like Waylon Jennings here. On any night in Austin you are almost assured of being able to go to a club and see a first-class country act. Although lots of famous country people have never played here, many people say that there isn't a better country music club scene anywhere in the U.S. Country acts that play Austin regularly include Jerry Jeff Walker, Willie Nelson, Asleep at the Wheel, Michael

Murphey, Willis Alan Ramsey, Doug Sahm (country?!), Rusty Weir, Ray Wylie Hubbard and Greezy Wheels. Plus there's a whole heavenly host of unknowns who play here every night, hoping to ride to fame and fortune on solid musicianship. Among the better country bands without recording contracts are Buckdancer's Choice, Marcia Ball and the Misery Brothers, and the wierdest band in country music, Alvin Crow and the Pleasant Valley Boys. A&R people, get out your pens.

In contrast with all this, jazz, too, has captured the ears of Austin's music lovers lately. Jazz lovers are no fad here. In the mid-sixties Rod Kennedy, whose main gig now is promoting the Kerrville Folk, Country and Western, and Bluegrass Festivals every summer, put together the Longhorn Jazz Festival. The LJF was held for several years, attracting nice crowds to hear traditional and emerging jazz artists. Recently, the rise in popularity of the new jazz in Austin is due to several factors: good record stores, KUT-FM and *Fred Bourques Jazz*, and all the musicians who have brought the ears and imaginations of Austin's rock audiences more in tune with the essentially improvisational nature of jazz.

Rock music is, of course, popular. But the emphasis of attention is on the established major performers, whereas jazz and country fans have bands right here they can dig. There are two fairly good jazz bands here: 47 Times It's Own Weight and the Electromagnets. The Electromagnets have a particularly great guitarist, Eric Johnson. By contrast, the local rock scene is colorless and unexciting.

Rock fans started lining up at 1 A.M. the other night for tickets to the Beach Boys May 1st date, now sold out. The Doobies sold out recently. Led Zeppelin would sell out undoubtedly, too, except it is unlikely they would play here. There's no place to put them. Or Elvis either. But even if there were a good hall, it's questionable how much rock would sell in Austin. The Pretty Things couldn't even sell 500 tickets when they played Jim Franklin's Ritz Theatre. You gotta be famous like Jackson Browne. The real investigative interest in rock is just not there. Austin rock and rollers go to Houston to see the New York Dolls or Dylan or Led Zeppelin or the Stones. They'd go see

Bowie, too, but he won't play Texas or something. Austin has no plans to build a concert facility, and since the University postponed plans for building a Performing Arts Center, we're stuck with Municipal Auditorium, a tub.

I must mention the Black and Chicano Music in Austin. The bands here are some of the best in the state. Whole articles could be written about just these musical lifestyles. Their influence is major and they have colored Texas music for years. I recently asked Augie Meyer what kind of music he listened to and he said, simply, "Mexican."

Radio in Austin is both good and bad. The two progressive-rock stations, KRMH (licensed to San Marcos and Austin) and KLBK (guess who's?), fall far short of their potential. You can rely on these two to play the hits, but there's not much innovation in programming.

There are two really good stations in Austin, KOKE-FM and KUT-FM. They are radically different, but each station has integrity several notches above the usual.

KOKE-FM recently copped *Billboard's* Trendsetter Award for Radio. The award was given for devising and implementing a progressive country format. KOKE is an FMer tailor-made for Austin's Cosmic Cowpersons. Seriously, the whole operation is run by people who know what they're doing, which is rare actually. They've got some really good announcers, two of which, Speedy Perez and Joe Gracey, are really top entertainers.

KUT-FM, a Public Radio station, is licensed to the University of Texas; it's now housed in the new Communications Complex on the campus. KUT has the smoothest airsound in Austin and will soon be the best equipped station technically. KUT does more live broadcasting than anybody around, and in the recent past they have broadcast Dave Brubeck live from the Paramount Theatre, Chick Corea, the Julliard String Quartet, Chuck Mangione, as well as scores of University-related concerts. KUT does public affairs and informational broadcasting in the afternoon. Weekday evenings they are formatted for jazz and R&B.

Record stores are in abundance here, and mostly the people who work in them are knowledgeable and helpful. My personal favorites are Inner Sanctum and Discount Records.

Inner Sanctum is one of the most famous and unique stores in Texas. I.S. was opened in 1971 by Joe Bryson on a shoestring, and, because of low prices, friendliness and Lady Luck, it's now a prosperous operation. The store is managed by Cowboy (aka James Cooper) but it's Bryson that provides spiritual guidance. When *Texas Monthly*, Texas' prestigious feature magazine, needed a prototype photo of a Cosmic Cowboy they called on entrepreneur Bryson to pose. And it's easy to see why: Bryson embodies a generous roperdoper spirit, and he's a pioneer. Now Inner Sanctum is running a revolutionary new exclusively classical record store, while featuring a fantastic jazz selection in the original store. The great thing about Inner Sanctum is that it's a classic hangout for record fans, a place where you can hear tall tales, musical and otherwise.

There are no really state of the art recording studios, and it is a shame too. I don't think Austin could really become the nouveau Nashville that has been touted and shouted until there are some really first class studios. Where are you, Studio People???

Clubs worth frequenting here include, of course, the one and only Armadillo World Headquarters. I have had several really memorable nights at AWHQ. Ravi Shankar... Bette Midler...Steeleye Span...Frank Zappa... Mostly it's a steady diet of progressive country again. But Eddie Wilson says that country pays the bills, so you can't argue with that, although we'd like to see Manhattan Transfer, Bowie, and T. Rex occasionally. The Texas Opry House used to offer a little more varied fare, but their doors have been closed for nonpayment of debts. Often the Opry House was just doubling up on Armadillo's country gigs, but we did get to see Maria Muldaur, Ike and Tina, and others there. If you're into a more intimate scene there's Castle Creek. Lots of fine performers have played in this small, reasonably priced club. The artists that come to mind are Little Feat, Townes Van Zandt, Tracy Nelson, Tom Rush, Jerry Jeff Walker, Steve Fromholz and others. C. Mark Markley is booking Castle Creek during her Austin sabbatical. C. Mark used to book the Troubadour. You can go to the Split Rail

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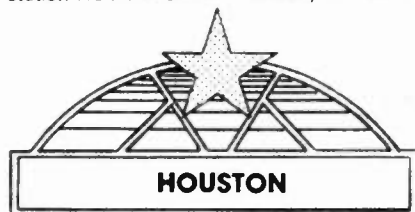
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and hear some *real* C&W, and eat Bar B-Q and drink beer...preferably Lone Star or Pearl. You can drop in on any of several chicano bars and hear some good conjunto groups, or dance at any of several discos. There's one combination disco/restaurant designed by the set designer for the film *Cabaret* called...The Cabaret. It's on the first floor of Austin's greatest landmark, the Driskill Hotel. If you want to really move inside the Cowboy myth, you can get loaded at the Soap Creek Saloon, where Clifton Chenier has played several times already this year and Doug Sahm regularly rips the joint with his own delicious brand of TexMex rock.

Sixth street, Austin's main drag in the 1850's is now a blooming restoration project with bars, galleries, restaurants, theatres (not movie, but legitimate theatres where you can see surprisingly good drama), and cafes. One of the Great Pleasures on sixth street is dining at the Exchange Club. Dancing, too, in the evening. The Exchange Club was Austin's cotton exchange a century or so ago.

—Kirby McDaniels

Kirby McDaniels is music director for radio station KUT-FM of the University of Texas.



Recession or no recession, Houston continues to grow at a staggering pace. And, in doing so, it threatens to lose one of the qualities that made the city's music so great—namely, its irreverent funkiness.

In other words, there are thousands of people in the city for whom "music" means a sweaty Friday night at the local disco, or small bar where a house band grinds out copy material.

They seem blissfully unaware of the rich blues tradition, the Gulf Coast Cajun and Zydeco sounds and the gutsy Texas dance-hall country music that still exists throughout the area. Each style has its own following, of course, yet there is no supremely dominant "Houston" sound.

But some of the old funk-makers are still around to remind us that plastic discos aren't everything. Black record mogul Don Robey is still fairly active and is the city's largest black concert promoter. At one time, Robey's Duke and Peacock labels gave us great R&B from Johnny Ace, Bobby "Blue" Bland, Gatmouth Brown, Big Mama Thornton, and gospel from such groups as the Swan Silvertones and Mighty Clouds of Joy.

And Huey Meaux, the "Crazy Cajun," is still plugging away cutting down-home R&B and country records that still sound as though they were cut in somebody's broom closet (would you want 'em any other way?). Meaux scored heavily in the charts this year by recording the legendary Tex-Mex artist, Freddy Fender, on a country number entitled "Before the Next Teardrop Falls."

Huey, who followed up Fender's success with a hit version of "Mathilda" by Donny King, still wails away each Friday night over local Pacifica station, KPFT. It's an old-time jive-jock format (which Meaux is a master of), and features records by everybody from Lazy Lester to Doug Sahm.

The Crazy Cajun's recent good fortune has been surpassed only by that of rockabilly artist Mickey Gilley, who spent 14 years in Spencer Highway clubs before achieving national stardom on the country circuit this year. Gilley, a cousin of Jerry Lee Lewis, plays piano and sings in the pumping, rocking Lewis style—which even country ballads can't disguise. Mickey still plays frequently at the vast club which bears his name, even though he's usually on the road with the likes of Conway Twitty and Loretta Lynn these days.

But, while it's nice to see that such old hands as Gilley and Meaux are getting some return on their dues-paying, it's obvious that their work appeals to an audience that's much older than the pop music norm. The truth is that there are no such recent success stories in the local rock scene; things are much more fragmented and complex there.

For the past several years, the Austin-based "Cosmic Cowboy" sounds of Michael Murphey, Jerry Jeff Walker, etc., has enjoyed enormous popularity in Houston. The movement was highly influential on

local musicians, yet seems to be fading away a bit now. B.W. Stevenson, Walker, Rusty Weir and all the others still attract sizable audiences, but even the most fanatical progressive country fan realizes by now that Austin music is simply not going to "sweep the country."

As the Cosmic Cowboy continues to bite the dust, local musicians may turn elsewhere for inspiration—exactly "where" is anyone's guess.

At the moment, Houston pop artists fall mainly into these few stylistic categories—Z.Z. Top-style boogie bands, "soft" or country-rock groups, or simply folk-based solo artists. Heavy metal and glitter bands are virtually nonexistent.

The best of the softer groups is Wheatfield, whose C,S,N&Y-style harmonies and interesting original compositions may help to carry them above the limited regional circuit.

Boogie-wise, the best known group, Navasota, continues to play (rather badly), but not to grow.

There are, however, a surprisingly large number of talented folkies in Houston, led, of course by the devilish Don Sanders. Sanders, who's released and merchandised several records on his own "Mean 'n' Low" label, continues to turn out delightfully funny songs spiced by his own perverse wit, and is continually growing in his ballad-writing skills. Why he hasn't been snatched up by some major company is a complete mystery to his fanatically-devoted local audience.

Another interesting folk performer is Vince Bell, whose songwriting shows the same sort of stylistic split as Sanders—wacky, irreverent satire matched by very beautiful love songs.

Aside from these few glimmers, the local pop scene is quite predictable. Rock concerts have increased in number throughout the recession, however, and the city's rock audience is receptive to ALL kinds of music, even if some styles are not represented on a regional level.

Both Hofheinz Pavilion (10,000 capacity) and the Sam Houston Coliseum (around 11,000) do heavy duty for the big tours—Harrison, Led Zeppelin, etc.—but bands such as Earth, Wind and Fire, Lynyrd Skynyrd and the Doobie Brothers have sold out shows in the big halls this year.

There was a brief flirtation with putting rock in the Astrodome (thanks to Howard Stein), but after a few concerts, the idea seems to have died. The biggest place for such a super-event is Jeppesen Stadium (50,000), which is used several times each summer.

The ideal concert hall remains the Music Hall (3,000) which has the best acoustics in town while retaining a comfortable, lived-in atmosphere. Some of the finest performances of the year occurred there in 1974, from the likes of Van Morrison, Lou Reed and Bruce Springsteen.

Club-wise, Liberty Hall is still the premier rock place. A wide range of performers appear there, from Cosmic Cowboys to Lightnin' Hopkins, comedian Robert Klein, Taj Mahal, Proctor and Bergman, the New York Dolls (one time only), Billy Joel and Tim Buckley.

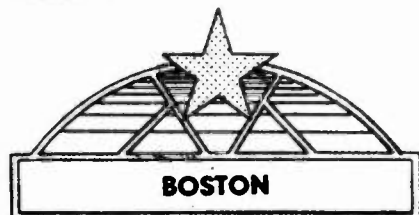
The Hall may get some competition from The Sweetheart of Texas Concert Hall and Saloon, even though the newer place has more of a country and folk focus, and spotlights more regional and local performers.

Finally, there's La Bastille, which—despite its ersatz bohemian decor—is still one of the finest jazz clubs in the Southwest, spotlighting such people as Stan Kenton, Chick Corea, Herbie Hancock, Cannonball Adderly, Bill Evans, McCoy Tyner, Weather Report, Freddie Hubbard and the Thad Jones-Mel Lewis big band.

Overall it's a rich and varied music scene, even though, like the city itself, it often seems unfocused and sprawling. Still, any city that can lay claim to a Huey Meaux or Clifton Chenier is not about to be completely run over by national fads.

—Bob Claypool

Bob Claypool is a music critic for the Houston Post.



The Boston-Cambridge music scene is

facing a crisis of confidence. In the three or so years preceding 1975 groups and individual performers proliferated and went national almost as a matter of course. Emerging from Boston were the J. Geils band, Bonnie Raitt, Aerosmith, Livingston Taylor, Jonathon Edwards and the James Montgomery Band. Clubs featuring local acts succeeded in increasing numbers, creating opportunities to perform (if not to get rich quick) for jazz, blues and rock. And the Performance Center, two rooms with 350 and 700 seat capacities, was bringing in a rich variety of national acts and was bidding to become the promotional showcase for the Eastern seaboard. It was pervasively expected that the Boston music scene would soon be nationally important. As WBCN's Norm Winer said in this space last year, "I wouldn't be at all surprised if Boston became the nation's next big trendsetting market."

Then a series of symptoms began to manifest themselves. The Performance Center closed its doors, the victim of either mismanagement or financial sabotage, depending on whom you listened to; reggae, Cambridge's latest infatuation (*The Harder They Come* played an overly extended engagement at a local theater and reggae imports were grabbed up like so much ganja) failed to make it nationally; the James Montgomery Band and Orchestra Luna, with two Warner Bros. and one Epic album under their respective belts, couldn't break out of the local picture—the blues-based Montgomery Band eventually lost its lead guitarist and has been hibernating, while the jazz-theatrical Luna now finds it hard to pull down even good regional gigs; Bonnie Raitt, darling of feminists and blooze hounds alike, moved to Los Angeles; the J. Geils Band began to falter badly and has been replaced by Aerosmith as king of the Boston mountain (or, more realistically, Bunker Hill); three of the most exciting bands—Roomful of Blues, recreators of R&B of the '40s and '50s; Duke and the Drivers, jovial imitators of the funkier R&B of the '60s, and the Chris Rhodes Band, an innovative blend of swing, Stevie Wonder, Curtis Mayfield and rock—failed to land recording contracts and were relegated, for the time being, to the local club treadmill; Livingston Taylor and Jonathon Edwards remained successful on their own modest terms, but kept such a low profile that Bostonians couldn't identify with them.

Many local groups are having trouble "breaking out" because the club scene (Jacks, Zircon, Brandys I, The Club, Bunratty's, and occasionally Paul's Mall, Boston's one important night club, is just too comfy. Competent groups can make good money in Boston-Cambridge without playing Top 40. Even a solid '60s-type jazz band like John Payne's can find good homes in fact, before the sorely missed Debbie's closed down, it combined with the Zircon and the Oxford Ale House to provide a rather supportive jazz axis. Without strong pressure to break out of the local scene, many bands have indulged a narrowing of sound and appeal and, at times, ambition (both John Payne and John Lincoln Wright and the Sour Mash Boys, a superb country unit, have put out records on their own tiny labels).

More importantly, though, is the fact that Boston-Cambridge is more tied-in with the national media than most cities of its size (around 700,000 in Boston proper and 3,000,000 in the metropolitan area). We're a haven for nationally known music critics (Jon Landau, now in New York, Stephen Davis, Ken Emerson, Jim Miller, Ben Gerson, Janet Maslin, Bob Blumenthal, Russell Gersten) who also write or have written for the two local weeklies, the *Real Paper* and the *Boston Phoenix*. Moreover, Boston-Cambridge has an absolutely huge academic community, which contributes to the area's cosmopolitan, and widely-informed, unusually discriminating tastes. The upshot is musicians and listeners who think they're more nationally important than is actually the case, and a musical sound that generally appeals to the most refined ears. Reggae is a good example of Boston's over-reaching: our community and its writers, thinking they spoke for the nation, pronounced this Jamaican R&B the next big thing—when in fact it appealed mostly to Boston's blend of radicalism and love of R&B.

Also important in causing the current and inevitable ennui is this: Boston is one of the country's largest music markets, and yet there are no major or even independent record labels located here. So when Bostonians look to record, they shuffle, hat in hand, out of the "hub of the universe"

and into New York. The Boston-Cambridge music scene, if it is to grow and prosper, must learn to swallow its pride.

—Peter Herbst

Peter Herbst is a music critic for the Boston Phoenix.



Historically, St. Louis has produced no few important acts. Notables include Chuck Berry and Ike Turner, not to mention lesser knowns such as Gail McCormick and Bob Kuban & the In Men.

Up until the last two years, however, St. Louis hasn't continued to exercise much leadership as a trend-setting music community. But that's all changed now. We've become a second home for the many German bands that are now realizing immense popularity throughout the States. Acts like Nektar, Kraftwerk and Triumverat have all risen to national prominence due mainly to their initial radio and concert exposure in and around the St. Louis area.

As for local talent, there are many bands starting to break nationally out of St. Louis as well. The most obvious one that comes to mind is Pavlov's Dogs, whose debut ABC-Dunhill release, *Pampered Mania!* figured prominently on *Billboard's* best-seller LP chart. Other acts, which are quickly developing a large following here are Starcastle, the Road Gang, and Mama's Pride. All draw very well at local clubs and as second billed acts at local concerts, and it's only a matter of time before some intuitive record company A&R department picks some of these artists up as well.

An act who can't really be considered a local band in the literal sense but is at the present time one of the hottest here, is a group called Headeast, out of Champagne, Illinois. Interestingly enough, rather than going through normal channels, the act elected to manufacture their own album. The first release (*Flat as a Pancake*) which sounds like a cross between Joe Walsh and Brewer & Shipley, was pressed up on their own label (Pyramid Records) and seems to be moving quite well in all St. Louis area record stores due to heavy local airplay. You won't find a distributor out of the St. Louis area for Pyramid Records most likely, so if you want a copy, write to the group directly at Headeast, Inc., Box 2486, Station A, Champagne, Ill. 61820.

Other than these local acts, new artists who figure very well in the total sales picture for St. Louis are groups like REO Speedwagon, Kiss, Marshall Tucker and Kansas. Kind of a mixture of Southern Boogie and Industrial Rock. Geographically, St. Louis is south of Detroit and north of Atlanta, and musically the local tastes lie somewhere in the center, too.

The concert scene in St. Louis is stronger than ever these days. The two main facilities are the Keil Auditorium with a capacity of 12,000 and the St. Louis Arena which can hold 18,000. Smaller concerts are held at the Ambassador Theatre, the Fox Theatre, and Keil Opera House. Different from the larger halls in the city, these rooms have excellent acoustics and are ideally suited for the folk and more traditionally flavored artists. 90% of all concerts here are produced either by Ron Powell's Panther Productions, or Iv Zuckerman's Contemporary Productions. Powell is also deeply involved in the artist management end of the business, guiding the careers of Nektar, Pavlov's Dogs and Man.

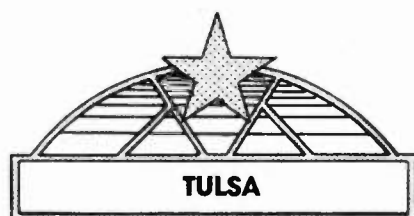
Heretofore a dormant city for clubs, St. Louis now has many new night spots showcasing an array of local and regional live talent. Places like Stonehenge, Muddy Waters, the Fifth House, and Rusty Springs are all doing a thriving business.

Nationally St. Louis is known as one of the most fertile radio markets, with two important FM progressives, KADI and KSHE, who are consistently breaking new acts.

St. Louis, like few other mid-western cities, is growing monthly in the world of 70s pop, with such a strong local concert, radio and group management scene it can only become an increasingly more important trend-setter as the months pass.

—Peter Parisi

Peter Parisi is music director of KADI-FM radio, St. Louis' leading progressive station.



Right now, it's hard to grasp the true definition as to where music in Tulsa is heading, due in part to the many ideas being experimented with. Most cities of any size have their share of rock stars. Tulsa is no exception, holding birthrights and permanent residences to the likes of Leon Russell, J.J. Cale, Elvin Bishop, Don Preston and Ex-Derek and The Dominos, members Carl Radle and Jim Gordon, plus present Eric Clapton band members, Dick Simms, Jamie Oldaker and Marci Levy.

A good portion of Tulsa's musical capabilities can be attributed to Leon Russell, whose Shelter Church Studio presents names like Phoebe Snow, Willis Alan Ramsey, Richard Torrance, J.J. Cale and Russell, himself. The Church Studio alone holds the possibility of making Tulsa a Midwestern recording center.

Tulsa's concert facilities are more than adequate for a town of near a half million. The largest is the Assembly Center, holding a capacity 9,600 people. It has sold out, or has come close several times, with names like George Harrison, Led Zeppelin, Elton John, ELP and Jethro Tull; although less popular and more moderately priced acts have been termed as "successful shows" at the Center.

The Fairgrounds Pavilion with room for 8,000 people has played host to groups like Robin Trower, Humble Pie and Bachman-Turner-Overdrive. Tulsa's Municipal Theatre on a smaller scale, has housed the likes of Ted Nugent, Alvin Lee, Ozark Mountain Dare Devils and Gentle Giant, with room for about 2,800.

As is probably to be expected of a Midwestern city, country rock is making an impression these days on Tulsa's musical taste. The recently re-opened Cain's Ballroom, a timeless honky-tonk that has housed country and western shows for many years with their famous spring-loaded dance floor, has played a big part in establishing country rock roots in Tulsa. Don't be surprised if you drop by Cains some night and hear the sounds of Jerry Jeff Walker, Waylon Jennings, Michael Murphey, Vassar Clements with John Hartford, or some blues by Freddie King. The club with the most mellow atmosphere in the City would have to be The Nine of Cups, offering country, jazz, rock and progressive music on the most part, from local talent including the jazz excellence of Essense, Home Brew and New Rodeo. Other clubs offering live entertainment include Magicians Theatre, Whiskers, The Jail Saloon and Shadowfax.

A new form of entertainment for Tulsa is in its tenth week at the Inferno Club. The local American Theatre Company is presenting "An Evening with Joyce Martel in Africa," an improvisational, musical, satirical comedy review which puts Tulsa's American Theatre Company on a par with the popular Ace Trucking Company, Boston's "Proposition," and Chicago's "Second City." The show is similar in type to National Lampoon's Lemmings, and has been improvised by the cast and the musicians in the show. This hard-hitting funny show about politics, religion, sex, money and national and local current events is a welcome change of pace in comedy and musical entertainment.

Local talent is in abundance here, but due to the lack of sufficient club settings for local talents, most groups have really made "the big time," and they include the early Teegarden and VanWinkle, Gap Band and El Roacho.

Tulsa's nightlife is small but growing with Oklahoma being a "21" state; "legal", social activities of younger people are somewhat limited although local promoters are doing their best to bring talent to take away "the nothing-to-do, blues."

Tulsa's newest FM rocker, KMOD, the only station in the area with an overall rock sound has been instrumental in introducing and relating good rock music to Tulsans, working on a format that flows, trying to not stray too far to one side of rock or the other, allowing the audience time to pick their own likes and dislikes.

I don't foresee a recognizable "Tulsa Sound" in the near future, but a receptive

medium is being reached. Hopefully, hatched from this musical shell that has been in the shadows for such a long time, Tulsa will become a new musical center for the Midwest.

—Mark Dempsey

Mark Dempsey, a writer and announcer for KMOD-FM, Tulsa's adult rock station.



Memphis is a city of 623,530 people, half of whom are black. Its music tradition dates back to W.C. Handy and the blues of Beale Street in the early 1900's.

Sam Phillips brushed the dust off the Handy heritage in the 50s, refined Southern black music through white artists, and called it "Memphis Music." It was the best of rock 'n roll—Elvis Presley, Jerry Lee Lewis, Carl Perkins, Johnny Cash and many, many others.

In the 60's, Stax Records let Southern blacks perform their own music and called it "The Memphis Sound."

Today Memphis Music means two things: (1) the local scene of nightclubs, concerts, radio, and records and (2) Stax Records, Hi Records and the national publishers, booking agencies, recording studios, and promotion companies—the Memphis Music Industry.

There are 125 nightclubs in Memphis. That's counting all the soul and country-western clubs, and the lounges.

But the only concentration of nightclubs featuring local rock bands and name acts is in Overton Square. The Square is a collection of bars, restaurants, and specialty shops in the midtown area and holds the title of number one entertainment attraction for tourists and locals.

In the middle of Overton Square is the best rock club in town, Lafayette's Music Room. It's a good house, seating about 300 people on the ground floor and in the balcony, with no seat more than about 100 feet from the stage.

Lafayette's is less ambitious about booking name acts than it was six months ago. They have a house band Tuesday through Saturday and book name artists only on Friday and/or Saturday nights.

With hard times upon us, the excitement at the club has cooled a bit, although Phoebe Snow, Jerry Jeff Walker, Leo Sayer, and Henry Gross have resurrected it a few times.

The only place to hear the blues in Memphis is also in the Square at Jubilee Jazz Hall. Every Saturday night Big Sam Clark and his combo play the music that made this town famous. They've got Ma Rainey and a harmonica player named Sonny Blake down there. And occasionally Furry Lewis does a set.

Down the street a few blocks from the heart of the action is High Cotton. It's a smaller club than Lafayette's, but pretty wild. High Cotton does a fine job of showcasing local bands.

The first dance craze to grip Memphis in ten years, the Bump, has brought a few disco clubs into existence. The two most popular are Mr. Bojangles and Expo. Both places are about what you'd expect—packed with dancers bumping to the records of Gloria Gaynor and Love Unlimited played by a disc jockey. Expo also features a drummer to reinforce the beat.

Memphis has always had a glut of musicians looking for work, and now is no exception. Hard times have also caused a greater than normal number to be without record contracts. The downfall of Ardent Records left Alex Chilton, the Hot Dogs, and Spencer and Hardy peddling their unreleased material to other companies. David Beaver and Combinations is in similar shape.

Larry Raspberry and the Highsteppers, probably Memphis' most popular local band a few months ago, is no longer with Stax Records. They've been playing all over the Southeast and have resorted to selling their own albums at their concerts.

Two new groups, Target and Glider, have attracted numerous local fans. Target is hard rock in the British tradition and has some material recorded. Glider has a softer sound and features the jazzy voice of Nancy Bryan. They were the house band at Lafayette's for three months and excited a lot of people with their own incredibly good songs.

One place for local talent to reach an audience potentially larger than any club is

on a weekly live broadcast over WLYX-FM radio. Local folkies have been playing on this educational station for over a year, but bands just couldn't fit into their small broadcast studio. This month a new program called "Sittin' In" was begun with live broadcasts from a local club, The Thirsty Elephant. If successful, "Sittin' In" could help Memphis musicians get more work.

WLYX-FM means more to Memphis, however, than just exposing local talent. It's the only radio station that can be described as progressive anymore. WMC-FM has gone totally top-40, as has WQUD-FM (formerly WAID-FM, easy listening.) Added to WHBQ and WMPS, these stations are certainly covering top-40 music here.

Besides WLYX-FM, the only chance to hear albums on radio is a three hour show, four nights a week on WMPS-FM. Album cuts from new releases are featured.

In spite of the large black population in Memphis, the number one radio station is WMC-AM, a country-western station. It carries a lot of weight in the national radio industry because of its strong popularity here.

Though WMC-AM dominates in radio, black music accounts for the largest record sales. Sure a lot of pop records are sold too, but a black single can sell 30,000 copies without airplay.

Pop record sales are mostly on national superstars like John Denver and Elton John. The exceptions are a handful of pop artists who have done well in local concert or club appearances. Barry Manilow, Billy Joel, Pure Prairie League, and Leo Sayer are the best examples. All played Memphis and sold lots of records before they were nationally known.

Pop may not be the biggest music style in radio or record sales, but the Memphis concert scene is almost completely pop. Three halls are available—The Mid-South Coliseum, Ellis Auditorium, and the Cook Convention Center—and all are kept pretty busy.

Concert-goers seem to have unlimited money. Clapton and CSN&Y were here last summer and demanded hefty ticket prices. Between now and June, the Kinks, the Eagles, Alice Cooper, America, LaBelle, Lynyrd Skynyrd, Hunter and Ronson, Kraftwerk, and Elvis will play. Recession or no recession, Memphis audiences seem to have the money to make all these shows successful.

As you can see, Memphis can't really be pegged to any one musical style. Although the excitement has been less exuberant than a year ago, the local music scene has done quite well in hard times.

The same cannot be said for the Memphis Music Industry.

Memphis Music is strongly hinged on the two record companies, Stax and Hi. Hi Records, famous for Al Green and Ann Peebles, has remained relatively untouched by economic trouble.

Stax however, which claimed Isaac Hayes, The Staple Singers, Eddie Floyd, The Dramatics, and Johnny Taylor, and reportedly made \$17 million a year in record sales, bogged down totally last year in lawsuits and a distribution standoff with CBS Records.

An agreement was reached in March which will allow Stax to resume business, but during the dispute 50-75 employees were laid off and others left when they weren't paid. Isaac Hayes, Jonny Taylor and unconfirmed sources say, the Staple Singers have all left the label.

Several local recording studios such as Ardent, TMI, and Hot Buttered Soul shut down or are operating in the red. Fringe businesses like advertising agencies and art studios closed.

Stax is one of the two big dominoes in the Memphis Music Industry. When it leaned, it knocked over several other businesses and affected nearly everyone. And it hasn't stabilized yet.

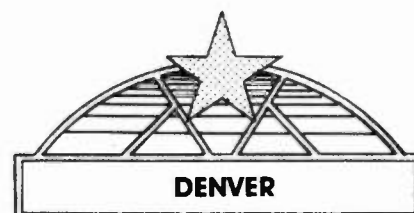
A reshuffling is taking place in booking, publishing, the recording studios, promotion and other areas. The artists can wait it out, but many of the people in the business end of Memphis Music are selling shoes right now.

How will this affect you? Well, when people are hungry, they hustle. Memphis songwriters are hungry, and you can already hear the positive effect it's having on their new songs. Musicians who were too young to play on sessions during previous Memphis Music booms are maturing and playing better.

It looks like the real talent in Memphis will turn its attention toward the only goal it should ever have had—making hits records. If it does, you'll hear the benefits.

—Steve Rhea

Steve Rhea is a freelance music journalist.



BEYOND THE CARIBOU

Actually there is more happening musically in Colorado than the Caribou Ranch and John Denver. But to bring you up to date on those things, Jim Guercio has adamantly denied that the famous ranch studio at Nederland, 10 miles west of Boulder is for sale. He has also signed his first Colorado-based act, Gerrard, which he reportedly discovered at the now defunct Tulagi club in Boulder one night when some filming of Chicago live was being done. Gerrard is a large group with several vocalists, horns of course, and a basically pop-commercial style. The story is that their first LP, produced by Guercio, will be a double-record set. Sound familiar?

Now that John Denver's favorite candidate for Colorado's governor, Richard Lamm, is in office, he is showing every sign he'd like to end up there some day, too (is that nature's way). He is serving on some governor's youth commission...actually serving as opposed to just lending his name to the project...and has recently made a film asking for citizen input on one of the environmental issues of the state, a route for a new highway that has been a minor controversy for years. You might find it interesting that his live lp is not selling as well in Colorado as it is in most parts of the country. Perhaps because the locals are angry he used tapes from California concerts rather than the ones recorded at Redrocks, the magnificent natural amphitheatre 10 miles west of Denver (you can still see the scrawls "I Love John Lennon" from the days when rock was allowed there.) But the lp is probably slow here because Coloradans have heard enough about being lost and alone on some forgotten highway.

WHITE LIGHT IN THE ROCKIES

There are some very interesting things going on here that national readers might not know about yet. In the last year the Planetarium in Denver has become a major gathering place for young adults, mainly because of the radical programs of director Mark Peterson. In an effort to have his Planetarium survive, Peterson abandoned the traditional fancy lecture hall atmosphere and began producing elaborate science fiction shows. The current one is about a joint expedition of the eleven intelligent civilizations of the galaxy into the space time vortex of a collapsed star (black hole.) Far out indeed, well produced, and definitely a smash. The Planetarium has also hosted the Laserium show put on by a company in L.A., and shown in several cities. That's basically a *doo-wah* light show manipulated live from a single laser and accompanied by pre-recorded music.

Colorado remains a hide away for several artists. Michael Murphey lives in Pine, we assume Stills is still at Gold Hill, although no one here has heard anything from him for a long time either. Dan Fogelberg recently moved to Boulder, Flash Cadillac sometimes hides in Boulder, the Nitty Gritty Dirt Band is strung between Evergreen, Idaho Springs, and Aspen. Joe Walsh hides out somewhere around here. Although these people rarely take part in local music scenes, there is a strong local vibe for their kind of music. I don't know if that's what attracts them, or if it's the mountains which both attracts them and sets the local music mood. Anyway the folk based rock and the country based rock do very well here, in terms of record sales, concert attendance, and radio play.

Another interesting local phenomenon is Biscuit City records, a project headed by folksinger Jim Ransom and his photographer partner Laura Benson. They set up an ACOUSTIC ONLY 4 track studio in one of the folkie haunts near downtown Denver and began to record local folk figures. So far they have put out several sampler type lps, with several artists on each and a few solo lps. They tell me their records get played on the remaining free form stations around the country, college and Pacifica type stations, and here in Colorado some tracks get played on formatted stations, both AM and FM. It's somewhat like the early Boston folk trip, or early Yakoma.

Denver-Boulder radio has been through some changes in recent times. KTLK has completely mastered the Ugly Radio syndrome and taken most of the teen audience. They speed up most records so much it's noticeable (would you like Paul Anka to sound like Donny Osmond at 137?), have the good old battle of the new sounds nightly, and give away records too! KIMN, the traditional Top 40 giant, bought the FM part of KFML (a free form hold with, predictably, serious financial problems) and automated soft rock on it. KOAQ is also automated, playing mainly stale Top 40 hits. KLZ fm, the nation's oldest fm rocker, is screaming one week and playing Michael Murphey lp cuts the next. KBPI the fm which cut deeply into the KIMN audience a couple of years ago, has taken a decided turn to the left in an effort to not sound so much like their imitators. And Boulder finally has its own pop station, an AM daytimer called KADE which plays both hits and lp stuff. The altruistic All Jazz experiment is going on again at KADX fm, and they seem to be doing ok so far. But you might know how those things tend to go. KFML am, which treks on daytimes, is still free form but they now leave out most of the really spacey music, which now ends up, along with some of everything else you could name, on KCFR the University of Denver's 30,000 watt fm.

The 3.2 rock clubs (referring to the serving of 3.2% alcohol beer to those 18 and over) continue on, as do the young singles places, altho most of the classifieds in the back of the Denver Singles Guide say "tired of the bar scene". Indeed, there's a Colorado music situation and as the public and record industry start to thoroughly investigate the wealth of talent hidden here, it will become more apparent to the patron as a whole.

—Randy Morrison

Randy Morrison is program director of KADE, a daytime AM radio station in Boulder, Colorado.



CHICAGO

There is an axiom that anybody with talent has to leave Chicago to make it. Chicago, the group that left town and kept the name, being the biggest example, along with people like Minnie Riperton, Rufus, and maybe one day Heartsfield. Still, there's so much music happening in Chicago that a person who resolved to spend every night following just local acts could never squeeze them all in, let alone national attractions, movies or theatre.

One local group who've made it without leaving Chicago is Styx, who after years of working the high school gym circuit miraculously found themselves with a hit single, "Lady," two and a half years after it was first released. Along with fellow Wooden Nickel recording artists Zazu, Styx seems to be creating a new South Side sound, which is a combination of punk rock and classical rock. A couple of other local favorites who hope to make it a second time around are the Flock (minus Jerry Goodman, but with a new violinist) and Lovcraft (minus the H.P., but with a new sound). Both will have new albums out on Mercury in May. Wilderness Road has also regrouped after a year-long lay off, with a new member, the old Wilderness Road humor, and a potent mixture of bluegrass and rock and roll.

The resurrection of the Road almost compensates for the demise of the Siegel-Schwall band, who had become a Chicago institution with their infectious blend of blues and rock. Corky Siegel, who, except for annual jaunts to Colorado and California, had vowed never to travel more than 200 miles from home for a gig, is much in demand as a solo act these days (though, ironically, he's currently stationed in San Francisco as "artist-in-residence" with the San Francisco Symphony while he collaborates with Bill Russo and Seiji Ozawa on another piece for blues band and orchestra). Rollow Radford, the very funky bass player with the old Siegel-Schwall band, is now playing with Bill Quateman, whose band also includes Caleb Quayle (of Elton John and Hookfoot fame), one amazing guitarist. Having parted ways with Columbia, Quateman is shopping for another record label. Other Chicago bands who may be on the threshold of recording contracts are the

Eddie Boy Band, who mix good hard rock with occasional forays into forties' camp, and Redwood Landing, who have grown from an acoustic trio to a six-piece full-tilt jazz-rock dynamo.

Speaking of jazz, although Chicago was once a hotbed for pre-bop talent, today the scene is pretty fragmented. The AACM, the organization which spawned the Art Ensemble of Chicago, and such avant-garde musicians as Anthony Braxton, is still around, as are a number of big bands who work off-nights in clubs. But among younger musicians there are a few standouts except maybe Judy Roberts (a very capable keyboardist who migrated back to Chicago after a frustrating stay in LA) and Streetdancer (who released an impressive debut album on Chicago's Future Records). And with the exception of Joe Segal's Jazz Showcase, which has a hard time finding a permanent home, there's no single club consistently booking jazz.

Chicago's reputation as a blues mecca, on the other hand, is still very much deserved. Most of the action is at those famous South and West side haunts, but even on the North side, you might hear Mighty Joe Young or Koko Taylor at the Wise Fools Pub, Junior Wells at Minstrels, or a legend like Muddy Waters or Willie Dixon at the Quiet Knight. Chicago also boasts a couple of the best blues labels in the world. Delmark Records, who just celebrated their 20th anniversary, and Alligator Records, the company who gave the world Hound Dog Taylor, have had history of consistently good releases. Add to them Flying Fish Records, with albums like Vasser Clements/David Bromberg set, *Hillbilly Jazz*, and you've got a nucleus of independent record strength in Chicago.

Another strong Chicago tradition is folk music. The older generation of folkies, like Hamid Hamilton Camp and Bob Gibson are still around—Camp as a member of a closely-knit, prodigiously-talented group, the True Brothers (formerly the Skymonters), and Bob Gibson as Director of Special Projects for the Old Town School of Folk Music, where he is turning on a whole new generation of hopefuls to the joys of folk music. Then there is the second-wave of folkies—Steve Goodman, John Prine, and Bonnie Koloc—all of whom burst on the national scene with albums around 1971. Steve, who wrote "City of New Orleans," is a consummate musician and showman. John, the author of "Sam Stone" and "Angel from Montgomery" is already recognized as one of the most original songwriters in America, and may soon become a bona fide star on the strength of his new album *Common Sense*. And Bonnie, who possesses one of the clearest voices in captivity, is a stunning interpreter of other people's material, as well as her own. Each has built up a modest national following while staying in Chicago. Why haven't they split in search of real stardom? "There just isn't as much backbiting in Chicago," says Steve Goodman, whose first album in several years will be coming out soon on Asylum. "Everybody in New York or L.A. or Nashville has two albums and is looking for work. Sometimes in the shuffle of all this, the music gets lost."

Elsewhere in the Lincoln Avenue area are clubs like Otto's and Ratso's, which book a combination of local and national acts. To some extent they are competing with Quiet Knight, the closest thing Chicago has to a showcase club. While coping with a slumping economy and the caprices of booking agents, owner Richard Harding has managed to present such standbys as Loudon Wainwright and Martin Mull while building up new audiences for fusion groups like Oregon and Michal Urbaniak. Harding also faces competition to the north in Evanston, where a group of former Northwestern students have developed Amazingrace into a first-rate coffeehouse offering the likes of Jerry Jeff Walker, Clements and Randy Newman. Whether the city can support three or four nationally-oriented clubs remains to be seen.

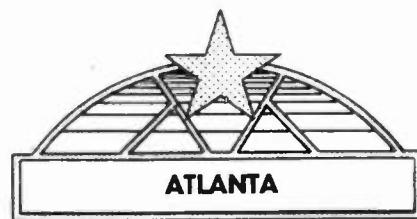
One factor that will affect the clubs is how many artists forsake the clubs for concert tours and how well concerts draw in hard times. When it comes to concert halls, Chicago has a couple of the best: the 3900-seat Auditorium Theatre, with its classic grandeur and magnificent acoustics, and the 4300-seat Arie Crown Theatre, which is newer and more sterile but more than adequate acoustically. Some of the raunchier boogie bands have been banished to the Aragon Ballroom, which is architecturally appealing, but acoustically

awful. Still, if you're 15 and there for the scene, it's not too bad. The big rock extravaganzas invariably wind up in either the 12,000-seat Amphitheatre (which has been known to smell suspiciously of the circus) or the 20,000-seat Stadium (home of the Bulls and the Blackhawks). Of these, the Stadium has proved the lesser of two evils, having done only moderate damage to the sound of Dylan, Harrison, Zeppelin *et al.* The one missing link in Chicago music halls—a medium-sized theatre suitable for rock—may have been found in the Riviera, which has been experimenting with upward mobile acts like Supertramp. And with another movie theatre, the Portage, now booking top country names like Conway Twitty, Chicago's sizable country audience will have a hall they can call their own.

To people on either coast Chicago may seem either provincial or unpredictable—perhaps because it's impossible to pigeon-hole with a single scene or sound—but to the people who live there, Chicago is a city alive with all kinds of music and with tradition, with possibilities—in short, a real orgy for music freaks.

—John Platt

John Platt is music director of WXR-7, Chicago's fine rock station.



ATLANTA

ATLANTA'S NIGHT CLUBS

The economic crunch of last fall greatly effected Atlanta's club scene. Without a word of warning, Richards—known nationally for its high quality talent lineups—closed at Christmastime, amidst a flurry of rumors. The owners' statement blamed simultaneous foreclosures by mortgage holders, Georgia Power, and skyrocketing overhead for the sudden shutdown. At press time, the building is set to reopen as a "cabaret/showbar."

This left Alex Cooley's 1,200-capacity Electric Ballroom with no serious competition and unquestionably on top as the city's superclub for medium-sized acts. Now, on weekends, long lines form quickly for even the most scantily-publicized shows; when a hotter band such as Kiss (a top draw in Atlanta) play Cooley's, the ambience is reminiscent of the Fillmore's finest hours.

Farther uptown at the Great Southeast Music Hall, things are popping, in sharp contrast to the gloomy sketch painted by its management at year's end. "Just as people were fooled into believing there was a depression last fall, now they've been fooled into thinking everything's all right," manager Robin Conant said. "The acts are back out on the road now and people are more willing to spend money." Lilly Tomlin, Doug Kershaw (whose new live LP was recorded live at G.S.M.H.), and Jerry Garcia's Legion of Mary made recent appearances there.

LOCAL TALENT

The locality is bristling with rarely-recognized musicianship. Beside the Birmingham, Ala. power-rock quartet Warm—who've been pushed to the eve of a recording contract by the Hughes-Gorman Management Co. (Hydra)—there are others equally deserving. Carrie Nation, a 6-member outfit which is an amalgam of California expatriates and local pickers, is a prime example. Specializing in a mellow, tasty, but yet force-filled mix of 'Frisco honk and Southern feel, Carrie Nation is the Dead (circa '66) of Atlanta.

On the acoustic end is an adopted Atlantan named Russ Holloway who's now wading in the same grief that faces John Hammond, John Prine, and Townes Van Zandt. Instead of "Rocky Mountain High", he chooses to knock out "Dyin' Crapshooter Blues" on a Dobro steelbody, with a style he learned from the legendary streetsinger Rev. Pearly Brown.

ATLANTA CONCERTS

There have been some changes over the last year in Atlanta's concert venues. Aside from the top echelon Led Zep/CSNY who would appear at the 55,000 seat Braves Stadium, many of the more standard fare acts are being promoted in Atlanta Auditorium (5,000 cap.) as opposed to the cavernous Omni, which seats 16,000. Only "sure-fire ten grand" draws like Alice, etc.

are booked there. The magnificent 5,000 seat Fox Theatre's fate is at best vague. Since it was purchased by Southern Bell and attempts to save the grand structure are on-again, off-again.

Some promoters and groups wishing an esoteric ambience choose Symphony Hall, acoustically perfect and with a seating arrangement of 18,000. Its an ideal location for blossoming acts such as LaBelle.

Although many people outside the South are under the misconception that Southern audiences can only handle "boogie," it's interesting to report that progressive rock and its stranger tangents draw at least as well here, if not better. Bowie, Kiss, Sensational Alex Harvey Band, Robin Trower, BOC, and Hawkwind are automatic sellouts in Atlanta.

Jazz is a different story. You could've shot deer in the Music Hall audience when Roland Kirk blew there last summer. "Fusion" outfits—Herbie Hancock, Tim Weisberg, etc., do much better here. Blues performers, especially those who have received some measure of press, are supported more actively. Muddy Waters, Lightnin' Hopkins, James Cotton, Howlin' Wolf, John Lee Hooker, and Sonny Terry & Brownie McGhee are all assured an enthusiastic gathering whenever they play Fulton County.

From a subdormant level five years ago, Atlanta's studio and record label scene is a hum of activity these days. The half-dozen major recording plants including Studio One, Web 1V, Sound Pit, and LeFevre are cranking out the likes of Atlanta Rhythm Section, Lynyrd Skynyrd, If, Ted Nugent, and many others, not necessarily Southern.

The two-year old GRC Records conglomerate (owned by controversial porno-king Michael Thevis) has finally scored after a long string of seemingly endless stiffs. Sammy Johns' single "Chevy Van" came out of literally nowhere earlier in the year and broke nationally—now charted at #5 on the

THE MACON MONOPOLY

By now, the Capricorn Records story in Macon is public knowledge. Phil Walden's label, which leapt to international fame in 1971 with ABB's *Live at Fillmore East*, went well, into the seven-figure business last year. For the current season, Capricorn has scheduled 35 releases including John Hammond, Allman Brothers Band, and Bobby Whitlock; their ultra-modern studios in the steamy middle Georgia city are running around the clock. For historical reference, it should be noted that Macon is the birthplace of both the late Otis Redding and Little Richard.

The Macon nightclub situation has degenerated somewhat from the notorious bad-jamming days a couple of years ago. Grant's Lounge, where on most any night in 1972 you could rub elbows with Gregg, Jaimoe, Betts, Hammond, Wet Willie, Cowboy, and numerous passers-through, still features occasional bedlamic sittings-in. The thrill, though, is definitely gone. Uncle Sam's, which last year at the annual Capricorn Records barbecue was the site of an ultimo-jam with nearly everyone on the label, is now a country music outlet. Le Carousel, legendary for its barbecued chicken (inspiration for Wet Willie's "Red Hot Chicken") and early morning gatherings after Grant's had closed, is now relocated in an extreme south Macon area.

There are over seventy record stores or outlets in the Atlanta Metro area. Out of the score of large ones, the hottest at present is Peaches, part of an LA-based chain. The downtown store's 16,000 square feet of floor space offers low prices and a mind-boggling stock of 250,000 albums, 35,000 singles, and 50,000 tapes. Understandably billed as a "one-stop record supermarket," their projected revenue for this season is six or seven million dollars.

The overall picture of Atlanta's music scene is a healthy one. There's an abundance of variety, dollars are flowing ever more freely as the economic nightmare seemingly fades, and the stream of talent—both in and passing through the city—has been if anything stepped up.

For what it's worth, Lloyd's of London has predicted that by or shortly after the year 2000, Atlanta will be the largest city in the world. Regardless, it is still laughable to call it a Liverpool of the 70s, but the importance of Atlanta's musical contribution is undeniable now.

—Jim Pettigrew

Jim Pettigrew is a contributing music journalist to Creative Loafing and other Atlanta area entertainment publications.



Chuck Berry's lyrical observation of the 50's that "They're really rockin' in...Pittsburgh, Pa." retains its validity in 1975.

But, if youth's early poet laureate were to pay a visit today to this city of steel and three rivers, he'd discern quickly that rockin' isn't all they're doing.

Only a few years ago, the collective Pittsburgh musical taste lay decidedly in rock's harder realm. Promoter Pat DiCesare, veteran of 18 years in music here, once operated on the theory that, "The harder it is the better your sales will be."

The past two years, however, have spawned a period of change to where today musical preference is becoming as eclectic as the community's ethnic melting pot.

Pop, soul, folk, jazz and various shades of rock peacefully co-exist. The oldies market here remains one of the strongest in the country.

Pittsburgh was the butt of old show business jokes for so long that some city residents were beginning to believe them. Now, though, the factory smoke of years ago is gone, replaced by gleaming skyscrapers and a renaissance spirit.

A vital aspect of this rebirth has been a new-found maturity in the area of entertainment, particularly music.

The appealing aroma of metropolitanism is in the air. The artistic community, especially, is beginning to assume an increased community awareness. One example of this is the recent formation of Pittsburgh Music Makers (PMM), which director Joe Kelly describes as, "A non-profit organization aimed at giving musicians, singers and songwriters a chance to grow in workshops, perform in a club, and shine in their own concerts."

Each Sunday night PMM showcases (a stage in the old Pittsburgh Playhouse has been used) two or three Pittsburgh bands, hoping to expose them to a wider audience and media and record company personnel. PMM provides the artistic freedom that too often can't be exercised in clubs because of economic considerations. The organization functions as a cooperative, with musicians from various acts often working together. Struggling in this spirit is the on again, off again, Pittsburgh Free Media.

"Our purpose," explains co-director Kelly Hall, "is to help people to understand good entertainment doesn't have to cost much." Free Media's aim is to provide musical entertainment at no cost or at least bargain rates.

Contributing immeasurably to the resurgence of metropolitanism is the emergence, in the past year, of a viable recording industry. An increasing number of bands are remaining in the city to cut demos and records, as a definite Pittsburgh studio consciousness becomes evident.

City facilities, such as Glenn Campbell studios and the especially popular 16-track Audio Innovators and 24-track Fox Studios, have been busy.

Fox, whose president is David Shaffer, is the recording arm of the newly formed River Records. Ton Cossie, River president, is a Pittsburgh native who, last year at the age of 27 became the youngest vice president by 10 years, in the history of RCA Records.

Last December, he left his position as RCA division vice president national promotion, to found, with Shaffer, River Records.

Cossie and Shaffer are hoping to provide that exposure and encourage other studios and the media, especially radio, to "Think Pittsburgh." To this end, the duo are providing counseling service for city artists.

Fox Studios already has recorded several Pittsburgh groups for national labels: Sweet Pete, for RCA; Diamond Reo for Big Tree (Cossie and Shaffer manage both acts); the Skyliners (of "Since I Don't Have You" and "This I Swear") for Capitol; and the Jaggerz ("The Rapper") for Wooden Nickel.

Another major catalyst responsible for the city's musical awakening has been a significant increase in the number of concerts staged in Pittsburgh. The summer of 1973 saw the abrupt transformation of the city from essentially a one-promoter (Pat DiCesare) to a three-promoter, market. Enter Pacific Presentations out of Los Angeles, and Electric Factory Concerts, from Philadelphia, and Pittsburgh music lovers--used to one or two, maybe three shows a month at best--began having a bumper crop

"Pittsburgh is going to be a monstrous music city"



•St. Thomas! Four new faces in Pittsburgh pop.

of concerts (as high as seven or eight per month) from which to choose.

This battle of the promoters was in part responsible for the decision of DiCesare, for many years the city's only major impresario, to take on a partner in Rich Engler, and form DiCesare-Engler Productions Inc.

Engler, 28, formerly president of Command Performance Agency, one of the more prominent, smaller promotional firms in Pittsburgh. The move was good strategy for DiCesare, 36. The team boasts an impressive background in the business (both are former musicians and have worked in various phases of the field) and knowledge of the market (both Pittsburgh natives.)

The most frequent site for a city show is the Syria Mosque, a 3,800 seat concert hall in Oakland, Pittsburgh's cultural district. Attendance generally is good to excellent there. Audiences, promoters and artists alike agree that the facility provides an intimacy that greatly enhances the enjoyment of a concert.

The major indoor shows are staged downtown in the Civic Arena, a 15,000-plus seat sports facility featuring the world's only retractable dome. As with any mammoth, non-concert hall, the acoustics leave very much to be desired. But acts who care enough to bring quality sound systems can make the Arena, which resembles a giant stainless steel space ship, an adequate auditorium for concerts.

At the confluence of a trio of rivers on the North Side, Three Rivers Stadium (home of the Pittsburgh Steelers and Pirates) is the location for outdoor superstar events. A bill headlining Eric Clapton and the Band last July drew 39,546 people and a gross of \$400,000--both all time city records for a musical event.

PITTSBURGH POP

The high energy Diamond Reo and pop-rock Sweet Pete are two of the city bands leading a charge aimed at giving Pittsburgh a name with which to be reckoned in the music world. For the moment, the money is on Diamond Reo to make it big.

The quintet (Norm Nardini, bass; Frank Zuri, keyboards and lead vocals; Bob "Bag" McKeag, lead vocals and rhythm guitar; Bob "Bead" Johns, drums, and Warren King, lead guitar) formed last fall, playing their first gig to 35,000 in an outdoor festival in the city.

Their first single, a rendition of the classic rhythm and blues tune, "Ain't That Peculiar," shot to the Top 40 on the nation's singles chart early this year. Predictions are that their new release, the McKeag-authored "Rock and Roll 'Till I Die," will go even higher. Their debut album, on Big Tree, distributed by Atlantic was scheduled for early May release.

Sweet Pete, recently signed to RCA's Wooden Nickel label, scored a regional hit last summer with an update on "Dancing in the Streets." A new single and debut album are due this month. The one-year old band is led by Pete Hewlett, lead singer, guitarist and co-writer.

Label hunting after a period with Columbia Records is country-rock Gravel, who, along with the Rhythm Kings, are two of the Pittsburgh area's most popular bands.

The six-year old Gravel recorded two singles for Columbia in 1972 and 1973. One, "Lonely Together," achieved local success. The group has opened shows for such diverse acts as Emerson, Lake and Palmer,

ZZ Top, Yes, Poco, and Blood, Sweat and Tears.

Certainly one of the most unique contingents in the vicinity are the Rhythm Kings, a four-year old, eight member, unit specializing in rhythm and blues and classic rock and roll. In addition to original material, the group's repertoire includes creative interpretations of the vintage R&B of Wynonie Harris, Cleanhead Vinson and Joe Turner; and the big band blues of B.B. King, Bobby "Blue" Bland, Guitar Slim and Junior Parker.

Also label shopping is the well-liked Dark Horse, a straight rocking quintet that has extended their popularity base to the Cleveland area.

At the softer end of the musical spectrum is much-praised Al Mossberg, singer-songwriter in the acoustic tradition of a James Taylor or Jim Croce; Christopher's Rye, once an acoustic front act for such bands as Pure Prairie League and Crazy Horse, is being managed and produced by Lou Futterman (manager-producer of If and Ted Nugent), and is trying to attract the interest of a record company.

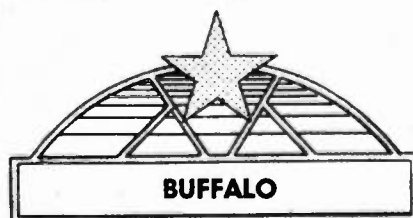
Record and tape sales in the city are dominated by the Pittsburgh-based National Record Marts, which has 40 stores in the tri-state area and is one of the largest facilities in the East. Rich Cline, singles buyer for the operation, says the city has a strong neighborhood identity as far as musical tastes are concerned. He believes the nation's music industry "should be a little more aware of the fact that Pittsburgh is a market where you can expose product."

In radio, WDVE-FM maintains the largest share of the FM audience with a format that is in the middle ground of Top 40 and free form. The album-oriented station aims for musical consistency with a mature approach by its disc jockies. Jim Roach, programming coordinator, and disc jockey in the 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. slot, last year was voted Pittsburgh's leading on the air personality by the readers of a newspaper in the city market.

The inclination of a lot of people in the know here is that it is going to produce more. Bryon Cleeland, of the city's Unity Plus advertising and production firm, is among those who are optimistic. Says Cleeland: "Though many people think we're behind the times, we're not. Pittsburgh is going to be a monstrous music city."

—Rex Rutkoski

Rex Rutkoski is a writer/reporter and music columnist for a daily newspaper in suburban Pittsburgh.



In the past two years, Buffalo has grown musically and socially to new heights. The entire social structure of the city revolves around the bars, of which there are over 600. There are all kinds of bars for all manner of people and they're open 7 days a week 'til 4:00 am.

Buffalo is a major industrial city where

blue-collar hell-raisers and beer drinkers have a good time. The white-collars do just as much hell-raising, but they're scotch-drinkers. Most Buffalonians are proud of their city and spend a good deal of time enjoying themselves. The hard-core live on the West Side. The leading West Side bar, without dispute, is Mr. Goodbar. Over four years ago it opened its doors and presented Buffalo with its first decent sound system. From time to time, the Health Department has warned Mr. Goodbar on the dangerous level of the sound system which exclusively plays funky and smooth R&B...and people still stand in line to get inside. The cross-section of people frequenting Goodbar is amazing. Slick, funky, stylish, singles, marrieds, gays and all of 'em...drinkers.

Mr. Goodbar established Elmwood Avenue as the place to be. At the present time there's Bullfeathers, Caseys, No-name, Jack Daniels and Coles all within walking distance, and during the summer, people float in and out all night long. Each bar has a sound system with R&B and soul the dominant sound.

The other major street with action and music is Hertel Avenue. The Bona Vista has established live music 7 nights a week with variety. Every night there's something different at the Bona Vista...blues, folk, soul and boogie-rock. When musicians arrive in town with time on their hands, undoubtedly they wind-up at the Bona Vista jamming. Joe Cocker, Bonnie Raitt, Jackson Browne and King Biscuit Boy have jammed with locals like Ash and Campagna, Paula Milligan, Phil Dillion, Spoon and Houserockers and the reputation of this dark, smoke-filled, barnwood bar has grown tremendously in the past year. Just up the street is Mulligans...a classy, singles bar with French cuisine. In the rear of Mulligans is a very posh, New Orleans night club complete with glass ceiling, a marble bar, hanging plants and occasionally national performers like Gino Vanelli, John Sebastian and Gabriel Kaplan. Mulligans is huge and packs in people especially on weekends. Other notable Hertel Avenue bars include Gabels and Caseys.

Most of the local groups have loyal followers that follow them everywhere. During the summer a good deal of action occurs 20 miles south of Buffalo in Angola on-the-lake. Groups like Talas, Posse and Barbara Sinclair's Houserockers play in the lake clubs and pack 'em in. Notable lake clubs include the Outside Inn, McNallys, The Mickey Rats Lounge and another Mickey Rats Club right on the beach where this summer local bands are going to play on the beach every Sunday to crowds of about 2,000.

Last summer, the major Western New York promoter, Jerry Nathan of Festival, put together Summerfest. It was the biggest outdoor musical extravaganza ever to hit Buffalo. Summerfest was held in the 80,000 seat Buffalo Bills football Stadium on four separate days. Eric Clapton, The Band, Lynyrd Skynyrd, Emerson, Lake & Palmer, Chicago, The Doobie Brothers, Crosby, Stills, Nash & Young, Santana and Jesse Colin Young all performed...and this summer it's going to happen all over again.

Another asset to music availability for Buffalonians has been two locals calling themselves Harvey & Corky. They recently bought a defunct movie theater in downtown Buffalo called the Century. Harvey & Corky are promoting film festivals, rock concerts, Broadway shows, and anything else they can get their hands on. At the time of this printing, the heaviest rumor is The Stones in June. Harvey & Corky deny it but they smile slyly while denying. Undoubtedly, that will be an Aud date.

Buffalo has one of the finest concert halls in the country called Kleinhans Music Hall. Architects from other cities and overseas have studied the Hall to imitate its acoustic qualities. It seats 2,900 and every seat is excellent. To top off everything else and keep Kleinhans in the Buffalo "tradition," there's a lounge in the lower level with the largest bar in the city. People love to go to Kleinhans for concerts and the performers love it even more.

Festival promotes most of the concerts in Kleinhans and does a great deal in presenting new, as well as established performers consistently. If you ever hit Buffalo, make sure to experience a concert at Kleinhans.

Buffalo does okay for itself and although we've got air pollution, unemployment at 14% and all kinds of economic problems...it's a good city and we have a good time.

—John McGahn

John McGahn is program director of WGRO, Buffalo's leading FM station.

PHONOGRAPH RECORD REVIEWS



IAN HUNTER
Ian Hunter
Columbia PC 33480

By GREG SHAW

When it comes to making solo albums, it seems that some folks have it and others don't know the difference. Even if he hadn't decided to make a permanent break from Mott the Hoople, this album would have been inevitable, considering how much Ian Hunter had come to dominate that group. And unlike his current mate Mick Ronson (whose two solo albums have been tedious exercises in pointless frippery), Hunter seems to be fully aware of what makes him special, and how to present it in a concentrated form that will serve to reinforce, rather than erode, the myth he is building.

Mott the Hoople's checkered career (five years of neglect, instant stardom with "All the Young Dudes," followed by two harrowing, disillusioning years at the top) has provided material for so many autobiographical songs by now that to continue writing them would probably be more than Hunter (and his audience) could take. Mott's last single, "Saturday Gig" was the best of these, and a conscious effort to close that particular book once and for all.

No less conscious is Hunter that this album opens a new volume for him. In the kind of touch only someone as obsessed with the history he's making would throw in, Hunter starts side one with a quick "hello"—in coy response to his own "goodbye" at the close of "Saturday Gig." This preoccupation with his own legend, combined with his acute powers of observation, ironic sense of humor and keen intelligence, have already given Ian Hunter the image as a sort of cockney philosopher of rock & roll. Though he's still a rock & roller, and a rather basic one at that, his fans have grown fond of looking for meaning in his songs, as a result of which Hunter has developed a tendency toward attempting to make statements in his music. Fortunately, he's among the very few who can do so successfully without breaking down the delicate balance of nature by which rock & roll defends itself from those who would take it too seriously.

Although in the past, Hunter has been guilty of his share of self-importance and over-theatricality, there is a welcome absence of excess in *Ian Hunter*. Disregarding portions of "Boy" and a rather self-conscious talking bit at the end of "Shades Off," this is an album of solid, rocking songs in which Hunter's personality is displayed in its most appealing aspects.

"Once Bitten Twice Shy" finds Hunter in a basic riff-rock format, tossing off quick put-down couplets like the punk Dylan he once modeled himself on. The song's only real substance lies in Hunter himself; he sings with a sneer, throwing in a cynical cackle every so often, keeping his distance, his superiority intact. "Who Do You Love" is more of the same, providing an interesting contrast with "I Get So Excited," the only other rocker, which closes the album.

This is as close to the old Hoople sound as Hunter allows himself to get, and significantly it's another song about being on stage, being a rock star. Even here, though, the differences are visible enough that no fan would confuse this with the Hoople of yore. In the studio, no less than



•Ian Hunter studies an old issue of *Phonograph* before recording.

on stage, they were in essence a live band; good as the band on this album is (and they are good, particularly Mick Ronson, whose destiny as a superlative sideman must be obvious to everyone but himself) they fail to generate the atmosphere of high drama that drew Hunter with such urgency into his singer's role. Here there's none of that, although his degree of involvement is perceptibly higher than it is throughout most of the album's remaining tracks.

Of that remainder, my favorite moments occur in "3,000 Miles from Here" a fragile ballad in which he shows off that marvelously cheeky British singing accent, the best since Peter & Gordon: some of the snotty lines in "Lounge Lizard" despite its generally noisy arrangement, and "Boy," a nine-minute opus that could have been a real bomb, but emerges as a lovely slow ballad in the Hollies style, building to a genuinely moving climax and aided all the way through by Ronson's fine supportive guitar and mellotron work.

Ian Hunter's voice, personality and image are distinctive enough that he seems a likely candidate for pop celebrity status in the years ahead. With this album, he's proven (to the world and to himself) that he can do it on his own. Mott the Hoople was a great band, but Hunter won't be the first great singer to successfully leave behind a great band. While none of these songs has the sheer, overwhelming power of "All the Young Dudes" or "Roll Away the Stone" or "Foxy Foxy" or whatever your favorite Hoople classic may be, they all provide solid vehicles for Ian Hunter to explore his potential as a pop phenomenon. The foundation has been laid; we can expect the monument to follow.

RUPERT HOLMES
Rupert Holmes
Epic KE-33443

By BOBBY ABRAMS

It is always impressive and a little bit scary to be in the presence of genius. That's the way I've felt from the first time I heard a test pressing of Rupert Holmes' first album, *Widescreen*. It's easy enough to dust off all that stale copy about the next Dylan or the new Beatles for such minor talents as John Prine, Albert Hammond, Bruce Springsteen or Elliott Murphey, but how do you write about an act that is a legitimate major talent? How do you come to grips with an artist who is so original that you know it's only a matter of time? What the next superstar tag implies is that the artist at hand reminds the listener of said superstar's style, but what these banal, cliché-ridden writers fail to understand is that the

comparison is not linear. Rupert Holmes does remind me of Dylan when I first saw the latter, but the manner of comparison is what is important. It is not that Holmes writes catchy, imaginative lyrics but rather it is about the fact that his style, his persona is so strikingly original that one can only look on open-mouthed and reminisce about hearing that nasally voice of Dylan's for the first time.

Enough then of these idle meanderings. Suffice it to say that this is the most important talent I've heard since Jackson Browne and before that, Dylan or Jagger. And more than these other masters, Rupert Holmes is totally self-contained. He not only writes and performs his material, he arranges, produces and conducts the 83-piece orchestra he employs on occasion.

By now it is trite for those writing about Holmes to talk about his technicolor sound, yet it is still the most apt metaphor. Indeed, Holmes forces us into such comparisons with the cinema via the title of his first album, *Widescreens*. Incidentally, if you are not conversant with this masterpiece (and I don't often use that word, since a masterpiece is something like *The Pieta*, not the latest Ingmar Bergmann film), you should be. Too, you ought to pick up the *Orchestra Luna* album which Rupert produced, because this man is totally incapable of making a wrong move.

Like a Nureyev, Holmes leaps about on a stage of his own construction. The autobiographical "Too Scared to Sing" defines the problem of stage fright in fresh and original perceptions. The sound is a full 360°, and it is unlike any other that the listener might be familiar with. Following this is one of the album's standouts, a tribute to Raymond Chandler, "Brass Knuckles." Only this is no lame parody of "Big Sleep" as is the Alex Harvey tune, "The Man with No Face" but rather a fully developed story, similar to *Chinatown* or the *Long Goodbye*, in terms of the scope of its theme.

"You Burned Yourself Out" is one of the most bizarre love songs I've ever heard. This is no mere "Tangled Up in Blue" or "Love Chronicles," and unlike the aforementioned songs, this one is *real* life, not some poetic metaphor. Closing side one is the ultimate nostalgia parody, "I Don't Want to Hold Your Hand." It opens with the catchy Beatles hook, which reappears in various configurations throughout the song.

Side two opens with a reggaeish "Rifles and when the last time you heard some pop singer croon about running guns in the Caribbean. "Studio Musician," another autobiographical number, bears no relation to the Kinks' classic, "Session Man." This is a biting, cynical commentary on the dues Holmes has had to pay in these many years.

"Everything Gets Better When You're Drunk" opens up with the classic Dylan line "...started out with Burgundy" and you swear a parody of "Just Like Tom Thumb's Blues" is coming, but no, this is the Nilssen song Harry's been looking to write and sing all these years. It's got that off-tempo reggae beat of Harry's and the song is just as funny as his best stuff. The album closes with "The Place Where Failure Goes" which starts off with the introduction to Cole Porter's "You're the Top" and proceeds to float in and out of that Kinks' song, "David Watts."

To conclude...need I say more. I haven't gone out on a limb like this for an artist since I wrote some pieces way back when about an English rock group called the Rolling Stones. Rupert Holmes is every bit as significant and I feel no qualms about the lavish praises I have heaped upon his work.

SPIRIT OF AMERICA
Beach Boys
Capitol

By GREG SHAW

Another summer, another Beach Boys anthology. It never ends, does it? All you kids who bought *Endless Summer* last year can now buy *Spirit of America*, thereby obtaining for your partyin', cruisin' and boogiein' pleasure no less than 23 new Beach Boys songs, each one a classic, as advertised on TV. And if you're like the average buyer who never heard most of the songs on *Endless Summer* before, you can be sure you've never heard any of these. You would think that after putting 20 hits on one album, they'd be a little short the



•Get out your hula hoops, skateboards and baggies: it's time for the Beach Boys annual summer reissue.

second time around, and they are. Most of these songs weren't hit singles, but most of them could have been if the Beach Boys hadn't recorded so many magnificent songs in such a relatively short time.

Even so, there are more "hits" here than I would have expected, and no repeats either. You get "409," "Barbara Ann," "When I Grow Up," "Do You Wanna Dance," "The Little Girl I Once Knew," "Break Away," "Please Let Me Wonder," and "Little Honda," all certified chart-busters, many Top Tens.

The less familiar tracks, originating from various early albums (including a couple from the great, overlooked *Beach Boys Party*) happen to include some of my all-time faves, particularly "Hawaii," "Tell Me Why," "Custom Machine" and "Salt Lake City."

It's a good album. Well planned, well sequenced, plays smoothly. Even though I have over 40 Beach Boys albums already, this one is likely to become one of my most-played.

REVIEWS

All the same, this album bothers me. On the positive side, it's important to have this music in circulation so today's generation can learn to love it. It's great to see the ads on TV, it's great to see beach consciousness coming back all over—even Pepsi commercials are starting to sound like Beach Boys records. And the people who put this album and *Endless Summer* together at least know what the Beach Boys are all about—the Statue of Liberty, Golden Gate Bridge, Mt. Rushmore, Superman, Al Capone, TV dinners, hot dogs and Mickey Mouse aren't on the cover by accident, and placing the Beach Boys' name above it all is not propaganda; it's education.

But it still bothers me. Mainly because



there's one question I can't ignore: where, in all this, are the Beach Boys themselves? Okay so they're out there touring, every night a revival meeting as the children of the seventies hear these songs and rush out the next day to buy these albums. But where are the new Beach Boys songs? I'm not blaming Capitol Records; since they left, over 5 years ago, they've at least treated the catalog with respect. But their last new album was something like three years ago, and with all this nostalgia lifting the Beach Boys into realms of Legend, one wonders why their current record company hasn't done more to exploit the mania, to urge them on to creative triumphs of which they're still capable, to make them more truly a part of today's happening scene. Why, for instance, did the great recent single "Child of Winter (Christmas Song)" get released in January and not promoted at all? Was Warner Bros. already more interested in the predictable sales of "Sail On Sailor," subsequently re-released for the third time? No wonder if Brian Wilson believes the people telling him no one cares about the stuff he's writing...I wouldn't be surprised if he gave up entirely one of these days.

There's a point beyond which even such fine reissues as these won't suffice to keep a group alive, and as far as recordings go, I fear the Beach Boys are coming perilously close to that very point. Buy this album, and love it, but try to remember: the Beach Boys aren't on Mt. Rushmore, they're still alive.

STARS
Cher
Warner Bros. BS 2850

By JOHN MENDELSON

Allow me to ventilate my prejudices up-front, just so you'll be hip as to where I'm coming from. I appreciate that being invited out for a movie and a pizza by the likes of my old buddy Dave Geffen might well set any young woman's ventricles a-flutter, but I can nevertheless picture myself forgiving Ms. Bono for dumping Sonny no more readily than I can envision ever fully recovering from the demise of that other gifted rockabilly duo, the Everly Bros.

Further, I find the manner in which she kicks off her popular CBS public-affairs series both patently and offensively false-seeming. "How you guys doin'?" indeed! If she's as Just Plain Folks as her opening monologues ask us to believe, I'm both Johnny and Edgar Winter! Moreover,

I've yet to so much as smirk at any of the jokes having to do with her costumes her writers apparently regard as so devastating a laugh-riot. If she and Bob Mackey want to give an entire national viewing audience a peek at her semi-private parts, they'll receive no outraged letters of protest from this viewer, but I still don't want to be asked to giggle at her audacity week after week after week after week after week after week. I get bored!

To quit digressing, my only quarrel with her new, long-awaited, and very wonderful *Stars* is the inclusion of Jimmy Cliff's reggae classic, "The Harder They Come," which someone has mischievously seen fit to re-title "The Bigger They Come The Harder They Fall" in spite of the fact that the word "bigger" appears nowhere in the lyrics. Somehow Cher just doesn't make me believe that "...the oppressors are trying to keep (her) down..." (I'll bet she spends more on intimate perfume in a month than I earn in a year.) You or I should be so kept down!

Aside from that, the album is unrelentingly stupendous. Her woeful, husky contralto and machine-gun vibrato betray never-before-dreamed-of nuances in such universally-adored folk-rock favorites as "These Days" and "Geronimo's Cadillac," as well as in a host of other unforgettable melodies commended to her attention by the deservedly-famous Jimmy Webb, who isn't Phil Spector. The marvelously sympathetic accompaniment is provided by all of your most in-demand Hollywood session stalwarts, with the positively stupefying exclusion of Bobby Keyes.

All in all, *Stars* is certain to enrapture and delight Cher's hundreds of thousands of avid fans. If Sonny's forthcoming solo double-album (which he's currently recording in Muscle Shoals with members of Amon Duul, Focus, the Grateful Dead, and the Heywoods) is anywhere near this hot, 1975 may yet emerge as something better than the Year Barry White Ran Amuck.



•Looking for a good time sailor?

THE MYTHS AND LEGENDS OF KING ARTHUR AND THE KNIGHTS OF THE ROUND TABLE
Rick Wakeman
A&M SP-4515

By TOM NOLAN

I once vaguely planned a toney essay, to be modeled on Susan Sontag's ground-breaker, on the grotesque changes rung on the concept of Camp once it became popularized. To be titled "Notes on the New Camp," my piece would have skewered (one hopes!) the illogic of movies, records, radio commercials and television series which so self-consciously tried to emulate the bad taste of that most unselfconscious brand of kitsch, which had come to be understood by de masses as "something so bad it's good" (Johnny Carson, *The Tonight Show*). The TV *Batman* was an obvious example of this new false Camp; as were spy spoofs, Blake Edwards comedies and Wayne Fontana Coke commercials.

But that idea's time has passed, and Rick Wakeman has now made the concept irretrievably antique by taking us one step further, into the palmy realm of the New



•Do you think they'll know we're not, er, exactly sober?

New Camp. And he's *not* fooling!

Nevertheless, the rest of us can glean our grim amusement at will. (And if that's your type of fun, you've probably already honed in on Rick, perhaps as early as a couple of platters ago). The exclusion of a laughtrack on this soundtrack simply makes it a perfect candidate for a new sort of Music Minus One series. The only thing gumming up the fun is the nearly-unrelieved ploddingness of Wakeman's Todd-AO tour through Arthurian times. These Extended Compositions mix and match all sorts of musical swatches—here a kind of lumbering jazz, there a sort of jungle chant, then a tacked-piano nickelodeon ragtime in a sea of ego. (And the Lady of the Lake is poor company!) The whole thing reminds me of the sequence in Billy Wilder's "1,2,3" in which a suspected spy is tortured by the KGB, who come up with the exquisite torment of subjecting him to repeated playings of a warped copy of Brian Hyland's "Itsy Bitsy Teeny Weeny Yellow Polka Dot Bikini." Do you take my meaning here?

I'm afraid we—you, I mean—should never have encouraged this fellow in the first place, who's now set for a cameo as the god Thor in Ken Russell's "Liszt." But *The Wives of Henry VIII* seemed so innocuous; who would have thought it could come to this? Rick does know one secret of carrying off such supreme presumption, which is to take it to the summit of pretension. At this Wakeman is a veritable mountaineer. The two very brief narrative passages in the ludicrous twelve-page Classics Illustrated program book are printed in English, French, German and Spanish; the effect is like seeing the liner notes for "Bozo at the Circus" hallucinated onto a Deutsche Grammophon sleeve.

At least one track is compressed enough so that the humor can be savored, nuggetlike. This is "Sir Lancelot and the Black Knight," with Rick shouting minimal lyrics over a cathedral full of upperclass-accented choristers and a synthesized orchestra playing jousting patterns. Armies in armour canter through dew-drenched forests, arrows glancing like matchsticks off their mailed limbs, while in a cozy castle nook before a roaring fire, Dimitri Tiomkin and Paul Francis Webster compose a requiem oratorio for Walt Disney...which...clocking in at a brisk 5:18...is an...obvious choice for the single!

SUICIDE SAL
Maggie Bell
Swan Song SS8412

By TOM NOLAN

While not a debut album, *Suicide Sal* is the LP that signals Maggie Bell's arrival as the fine, powerful singer we had been touted to expect. Last year's Atlantic disc, her introduction to American audiences, was a rather sedate, "tasteful" collection of tunes like "Photograph," which showed Bell as a fair interpreter of some of the better pop songs around that season; but few flashes were heard of the rough blues shouter said to have influenced bands from Liverpool to Kokomo. With her switch to Swan Song—that encouragingly consistent young label—Maggie has dispensed with the

respectable trappings in favor of an equally impeccable but far more vital "live" approach, and proves herself the most exciting vocalist in rock since...well, since Joplin.

Comparison with Janis is almost necessitated by the strength and emotional feel



shared by the two, but we need not extend the correlation any further than is demanded. They're two very different performers. Bell is the most ecstatic of singers, yet her ecstasy never runs wild; it's always channeled in service of the song. She's disciplined in her emotion, but flexible within her selfimposed rules. She's artful, and much more like Rod Stewart, actually, than Janis.

It is as hard to pick out the "best" tracks on this album as it is to find "weak" ones. The two Free songs, "Wishing Well" and "Hold On," are standouts, the first for its chorus hook and the gutso with which Maggie delivers it, the second for its sinewy delicacy, exemplified by Brian Breeze's guitar. Lennon-McCartney's uptempo "I Saw Him Standing There," with Peter Wingfield's brisk keyboard lacing in and out, is a valid rendering that avoids chic foolishness. Jimmy Page is present on two tracks and contributes a nice, restrained solo on pianist Wingfield's "If You Don't Know." The trace of Scots burr in Maggie's voice gives her the credibility to pull off "I was in Chains," a folkstyled lament that could as well have been sung without accompaniment.

The two last cuts on side one effect an emphatic catharsis, wherein the raunchy ebullience of "What You Got" is not dissipated but solidified, made to transcend itself in the moving "In My Life," a Sayer-Courtney reflection on change and loss which Maggie invests with more feeling than one would have thought would fit.

Mark London has produced this album to sound like the greatest concert you could wish for. Everything flows in the proper sequence and balance, the sound is crisp, up-front and full of presence, the music is spontaneous and involves you in it instantly. This is the most enjoyable album I've heard in a month, the perfect antidote to the plastic sentimentality incipiently blowing in the wind and most currently being purveyed by Manhattan Transfer. But it's more than that. It has the depth and resonance of work that warrants and rewards repeated listening. I have a feeling people will be playing this one for years.

REVIEWS



JOAN BAEZ
DIAMONDS & RUST

DIAMONDS & RUST

Joan Baez
A&M SP-4527

By BOBBY ABRAMS

There is no greater fan of Joan Baez in all the world than myself; I've been hooked from the first time I ever heard her sing "Banks of the Ohio." Objectively, however, I must state that while I repeatedly go back and listen to those classic Vanguard albums that she made in the sixties, I find her work on A&M to have been virtually unlistenable. So, for these last three or four years, while Joannie's been out on the hustings, speaking out against the war, or in support of the farm workers, or whatever project has her fancy at the moment, I play albums like *Joan Baez in Concert* or *David's Album* or whatever, so long as the album is mostly her singing in English, and not preaching the didactics of world-improvement.

So it is a welcome change to welcome Joan Baez back into the fold of those artists who decided it's time to stop futzing around and get down to being artists again. That seems to be a reflection of our current age; people today seem so much more serious than in years past. No longer do you hear talk of communes and wandering off to India to find the mystical magic guru. Instead, students are worrying about getting into law school or med school or business school, etc. For good reason: the current depression has sapped the affluent indulgences of previous years. Indeed, when I asked Joan what motivated this album, she bluntly replied, "Money! My manager told me I was broke and needed to put out an album that will sell." I truly hope it's not too late for Joan to recapture her career, since this is one gem of an album.

From the opening strains of the title cut, we know our girl has returned to us, with all her powers intact. A powerful slide guitar opens this most beautiful love song, an original composition. Hardly the tune one would predict Joan was capable of writing, and yet it probably is the most compelling song on an album containing material from the best of our contemporary songwriters. Gossip-mongers will have a field day with this paeon to Dylan, yet I prefer to look at it as a song of love past and the anguish that "...memories can bring/They bring diamonds and rust." It sets a tone for the album, as this track is followed by Jackson's "Fountain of Sorrow." Why this song? Joan claims it was the first Browne composition she ever heard. Next, is another song of empty arms and wistful regret, Stevie and Syreeta's "Never Dreamed You'd Leave in Summer." What a range! and yes, she puts Syreeta to shame. If anyone who has ever loved can hear these songs and keep a dry eye, I'd be surprised. Her distinctive style instantly puts her trademark on these numbers.

Side one ends with the nostalgic classic of the current season, "Simple Twist of Fate." Joan originally set out to do "Lily, Rosemary and the Jack of Hearts" (her favorite cut from *Blood on the Tracks*) but the track got out of hand. Unfortunately, as I listen to her sing, I long only to hear the original, which is often the case with Dylan's material—it is written so much for his own style. Side two opens with Dickie Betts' "Blue Sky." A rather indistinguished song, but her studio cats really cook on this one and why not, the lyric is rather insipid. Nor does she improve on the Divine Miss M's version of "Hello in

There," yet this John Prine tune lends itself well to her up tempo treatment and there are times when her particular vocal flourishes are quite effective and impressive. I'm mostly turned off by her unimaginative arrangement of the chorus. But if the purpose of "Hello in There" is to set up the old turkey tongue move (all interpreters of Dylan are masters of this form), then it succeeds admirably well as the preface to a soulful interpretation of Janis Ian's classic "Jesse." And yes, *this* does put Roberta Flack to shame, and I don't just mean vocally. Joan's work on guitar and synthesizer throughout the album is excellent and I especially call attention to the piano playing of David Paich. "Winds of the Old Days" is another song to Bobby, which seems to be a heavy pre-occupation of Ms. Baez's: how to come to grips meaningfully with a past and previous experience. If it results in an attempt to recapture the spirit of her music ten years ago and redefine it for the 70s; and if this album is the product of such self-searching, then the quest is more than valid, it is vital.



THERE'S ONE IN EVERY CROWD

Eric Clapton
RSO SO 4806

By KEN BARNES

It never ceases to amaze me—the sycophantic lengths so many "critics" go to in hyping the fashionable superstars' records. Dylan's a prime example (try and find a bad review of *Blood on the Tracks* or *Before the Flood*, and it wasn't till a year later that writers finally started hedging about *Planet Waves*). Bowie to an extent, and definitely right up there in the sacred cow category Eric Clapton. Reviewers fell all over themselves lauding Clapton's newfound "maturity" and "restraint" on his last album. And even as ordinarily-jaundiced and clear-sighted a publication as *New Musical Express* resorted to a lot of blather about "warmth and feel" in describing *There's One in Every Crowd*—sure signs that there isn't much of interest going on.

Nor is there, though there's certainly very little outright annoyance either. "We've Been Told," the opener, sets the pace—a pallid spiritual with Clapton's voice buried in the background vocals. Even disregarding well-founded distastes for the constant reappearances of Jesus, this is no great shakes (no intended allusion to the Yardbirds' killer "Great Shakes" commercial). Believe it or not, Clapton follows with *another* spiritual, one of the tritest, "Swing Low, Sweet Chariot." It does have a neat reggae beat, though, and would make a pleasant single for Yvonne Ellman, who mostly sings it.

What else? Another reggae outing, "Don't Blame Me," called by some "I Shot the Sheriff Pt. II." Well, they say all men have created sequels, and this one's really rather likable—the beat again is well-executed and Eric's certainly been practicing his Jamaican intonations. There's the obligatory slow blues, "The Sky is Crying," which like most of its ilk bores me stiff. "Better Make It Through Today" is a quiet, somewhat bluesy original that's even more paralytically boring. "High" is a perfectly bland original, again acoustic-dominated with absolutely no melodic spark.

Rockers, you ask? You bet, real ravers. "Little Rachel" chugs right along in a laid-back groove, with a buried lead, and is all in all about a tenth as interesting as "Long Cool Woman (in a Black Dress)" or any T-Rex single (which it superficially resembles). As an added delight, it remains on one chord throughout.

"Singing the Blues" is not the Guy Mitchell chestnut (rocked out by Billy Fury's brother Jason Eddie in '65 with deranged

guitar work that puts everything here to shame as far as intensity goes), but some Mary McCreary Shelter artifact. A lot of gospel back-up, a little OK guitar, but nothing exciting. Some suspense does arise as to whether it will join "Rachel" in the one-chord brigade, but it finally changes.

"Pretty Blue Eyes" is more acoustic blandness for starters, but shifts into a pleasantly-harmonic standard 50's chord progression which noted standard 50's chord progression connoisseur Gene Sculatti thinks is the album's high point. I'd vote for "Opposites," though—despite Clapton's utilization of the most rudimentary melody possible for the chord pattern he employs, the chords themselves sound quite affecting and the instrumental textures are a delicate delight.

Still, all told the album's about as exciting as cold waffles, and makes an appropriate companion to Clapton's stunningly stiff, glazed performance in *Tommy*. It's trite to say it, but just imagine the reviews if this weren't the legendary guitar hero himself. It's a legitimate impulse to escape that beartrap of a classification (which Clapton has certainly merited for past guitar wizardry), but it's necessary to have alternatives to offer—songwriting ability; good, compelling singing; rocking vitality—*something*. Nothing of the sort emerges on this perfectly innocuous album.

TELL HER NO

Del Shannon

Island 021

By KEN BARNES

I missed describing this one in last month's Del Shannon story for complicated reasons. It's out now, and its subtle, sophisticated production that breaks new ground for Del.

First of all, it's an inspired choice. A lot of people covered "She's Not There" but nobody's launched a serious assault on this Zombies companion piece. Del applies a smooth, slick treatment with a restrained vocal. But it's none of your MOR slush—the power's building up by the chorus and it shifts into overdrive by the bridge, rocking hard like "Keep Searchin'" or any of Del's early classics—it's the crucial section you wait for every time you hear the record.

"Tell Her No" sounds commercial as hell, strictly contemporary but with more than a touch of the class of '65. It's got everything it needs for an artist who don't look back, and—I hope—it'll be a big comeback hit.



I'M ON FIRE

Dwight Twilley Band

Shelter SR 40380

By MARTIN R. CERF

For the moment there are but two titles that have any meaning for me. One is "Tell Her No" by Del Shannon. The other is the first release by the Dwight Twilley Band. "I'm On Fire" is surely one of the most interesting pop releases I've come across since "September Girls" and "When My Baby's Beside Me" by Alex Chilton and Big Star.

There are more than mere textural resemblances to Big Star for the Dwight Twilley Band. Like Alex's group, DWB are from the Mid-South (Alex from Memphis, Tulsa for these guys). Like Alex the recording is the product of extended over-dubbing, one or two musicians doing the work of five. And too, it appears this act is starting with the immediate acceptance of both print and radio as did Big Star. Hopefully it will result in greater cashbox

acceptance than it did for the Memphis *mayvans*.

The Dwight Twilley Band consists of Dwight Twilley (composer and arranger for the group), Phil Seymour and Bill Peacock. Dwight and Phil have been together since high school. Obviously the years of work paid off for the act as in 1974 when they initially approached Shelter/Skyhill Publishing with a demo tape of twelve songs, they were picked up on the spot. Shortly afterward they were thrust into Shelter's Church Studio in Tulsa and their first recording sessions produced this release.

"I'm On Fire" was released promotionally as a 12-inch 33 1/3 RPM single at first. Shelter didn't want to turn off FMers to the act merely because their music was pressed at the wrong speed. Undoubtedly, consumers will be forced to purchase the 7-inch configuration. But it's worth the trouble and 10-cent investment in a red-plastic adaptor since this is indeed a single for people who don't buy singles. It heralds the birth of a 70's version of The Knickerbockers.

We thoroughly realize every possible gimmick occurs during the course of this track's all too short three-plus minutes; but those Kinks riffs and Rowan/Doobie/Everly Brothers high-harmony choruses are just too fine, and we are forced to rave. And how could anyone ignore the meaningless but important lyric ("You ain't you ain't got no lover; you ain't you ain't got no other...I'm on Fire.") It's what pop is all about, students.

Come fall, we'll be treated to the full album. Currently in the UK producing same with famed Glynn Johns, the Dwight boys managed quite well the production chores of this single...I hope the Tulsa-London transplant for the Twilleys doesn't include a stopover in Denmark for any musical neutering.

While awaiting the LP, why not schedule both a trip to your local retail pop outlet, and a change of RPMs on your turntable; accommodate that single. "I'm On Fire" is pure pop adrenalin and the Dwight Twilley Band a welcome booster shot-in-the-ass for 1975 record fans and pros alike.

JUDITH

Judy Collins

Elektra 7E-1032

By RONNI BALTER

Judy Collins used to be a folksinger who concentrated on the heart, the soul and the guitar. When she discovered that she liked sitting in front of a piano, and singing her own words better than strumming a guitar, crying someone else's plight, everything changed. She discovered this about 1967 and things haven't been the same for her since. From *Wildflowers* on, Judy has utilized a combination of cabaret-broadway singing styles. In point of fact, she has become the Liza Minelli of the sensitive set. All of the cuts on *Judith* are filled with full orchestration. "Houses," an original composition, is complete with violins every bit as sweet as the sweetness of her voice.

Through the metamorphosis from folksinger to supper club entertainer, her voice has remained as clear and bright as ever. "The Lovin' of the Game" is a fast-stepping melody that exhibits the distinct richness of her voice. There are several ballads spanning five decades represented here: "Salt of the Earth," "City of New Orleans," and the thirties' masterpieces, "Brother, Can You Spare a Dime" and "I'll Be Seeing You." *Judith* is a perfect potpourri of musical styles from depression classics to contemporary Broadway ("Send in the Clowns" by Stephen Sondheim).

Very interesting, this choice of songs, but does this make for an interesting album? Not really. Judy Collins has had trouble these last three or four times around producing albums that hold one's attention. No way any of these albums will be pulled from the stacks ten years from now, as one occasionally does with the brilliant *Golden Apples of the Sun* or *Judy Collins 3*.

The varied tempos and melodies of this latest album convey her complete comfort with this new musical mode. It's just me who can't settle into listening comfort. Will Judy start playing the supper-club circuit? Will she be the next Mel Torme? Does she know? It's the perfect album for family gatherings. Everyone, from grandma to little brother will find a tune on this album to like. And the 25-year olds? They'll want to know whatever happened to all those folksingers of the 60's.

REVIEWS

JOHN PRINE COMMON SENSE



COMMON SENSE
John Prine
Atlantic SD 18127

By TOM NOLAN

Fleshed out with such guest performers as Jackson Browne, J.D. Souther, Glenn Frey and Steve Goodman, *Common Sense* comes on like Prine's ultimate supersession production; yet his own participation as performer couldn't be more casual. He is much less somber, almost flippant—and perhaps more at ease?—than ever before on record. In the opener, "Middle Man," he achieves a mumbled throwaway delivery worthy of David Blue. The lyrics are wry, noting Jerry Mahoney and Johnny B. Goode in a wacky one-eye-closed seduction song. The title tune, another askew love, combines hard fact with fanciful paranoia. "Come Back to Us Barbara Lewis Hare Krishna Beauregard," with a harmony vocal by Bonnie Raitt, is a cinema picture of one forever-young denizen of the new-old South. ("She said, 'Carl, take all the money'/She called everybody Carl"). All of these tunes are loose and slippery, and come rushing out of Prine in one interconnected manifestation of his prolific, multifaceted talent. It's as if he were out to demonstrate his gifts can be just as effective for being easily handled.

On this record the delivery fits the message like a Sears-Roebuck raincoat on a Halloween skeleton. Songs of misery are framed in facetiousness. Sorrow is put in comic-opera terms to rob it of its lasting sting. Prine-created characters skim through life on busted water skis, waving to the postcard photographer an instant before taking their latest tumble...and coming up...grinning! Like Loudon Wainwright, Prine achieves his own wonderful synthesis of laughter and angst, heard most attractively here on side two, with such slick side-of-the-mouth gems as "My Own Best Friend"; the reggaeish "Forbidden Jimmy"; the driving *Ghost Riders*ish "Saddle in the Rain"; the rough but friendly "That Close to You":

"In the middle of the night
You'd ask me to make you smile
You'd come on like a one-armed child
With a hole in its shoe
Poor you
Everybody oughta know
It only hurts ya for a little while
So stop putting yourself on trial
For something you didn't do."

The side's *envoi* is Chuck Berry's "You Never Can Tell," that rockin' celebration of "c'est la vie" which pretty well sums up the record.

Prine, who arrived on the scene to be hailed as the New Dylan (remember when we needed one of those?) and worked through his initial angry "Sam Stone" phase to a more mellow and intermittently lovely place place of "Sweet Revenge," has now moved for a time to this crazy corner of consolation. He has survived a hype that could have overwhelmed him, and found a quirky, resourceful style with which he seems to grow more and more comfortable. This latest half-hour missive is a good brisk read, like a mosaic of postcards from a brilliant friend, swirled out in a rainbow scrawl with Bic Bananas. Aw shucks, John—write us more often, come back again soon, don't be such a stranger.

WINKIES
Winkies
Chrysalis CHR 1066 (Import)

By KEN BARNES

This month's import special features a group with a dumb name that sounds like a cross between a marine crustacean and a Hostess snack cake (ever stop to think how embarrassing it is to champion groups like the Raspberries, Ducks Deluxe, Winkies, etc., when there are so many respectably tagged aggregations like Emerson, Lake & Palmer, Genesis, and—what elegant, simple eloquence—Yes?). Not only that, they broke up just before their debut album's release, a strong motivating factor for the record company in launching an all-out promotion effort. Plus of course the record's not even coming out in the States.

So why even mention the Winkies? Because they really sound good—the four outstanding rockers alone would make them worth trumpeting in the Year of the Dime-a-Dozen MOR hacks, and that's not all. Facts first—they're produced by Guy Stevens, a notable British eccentric who happens to be at least partially responsible for the emergence of Mott the Hoople, Procul Harum, Free and Spooky Tooth. Lead singer Philip Rambow and guitarist Guy Humphrys (who split the original compositions) are the front men, and their future careers bear watching.

Rambow's singing has an awkward, hard-to-pin-down appeal—sometimes he phrases sideways like some of the Band's singing (not ordinarily a compliment, but it works here), with a semi-strangled tone that indefinably makes it. Humphrys has a knack for arrestingly simple riffs, rendering the hot rockers like "Trust in Dick" and "Out on the Run" dizzily infectious. He also sings on "Put Out the Light," another top-flight rock ditty which I didn't even notice ran 5 minutes (a very good sign). These aren't flashback 60's rockers either; they sound straight up-to-date and (despite superficial Stones suggestions) like nobody else.

There's another side to the Winkies, exhibited in Rambow's "Twilight Masquerade." Tackling the decadent rock scene head on, he names names and weaves a tortuous pattern of transsexual horror images. I'm not totally sold on the lyrics (what do you make of lines like "But sybaritic camping mincing wasters/Make the fragrance a fragrance so unreal"?), but the song is ambitious, musically well-realized and highly intriguing.

You wouldn't believe what they follow it with, though—"North to Alaska." That's right, Johnny Horton's Alaskan after-the-goldrush heartwinger. Great sense of pacing there, but I wish Rambow had more rockabilly grit in his voice and Humphrys had ditched the acoustic guitars and rocked awhile. It could have been a killer and it's merely good. The Winkies have a nice line in covers, though—they make the Dylan chestnut "It Takes a Lot to Laugh..." sound better than it ought to and power through with Bob Seger's "Long Song Comin'" (off *Seven*), an off-the-wall delight.

Anyway, enough is enough but you can't get enough of the Winkies, being split up and all. At least try to investigate their sole recorded artifact—someday it might become a one-shot classic.



RIGHT OR WRONG
Stealers Wheel
A&M SP 4517

By SAM SUTHERLAND

Two years ago, Stealers Wheel touched a public nerve largely numbed since the

mid-60s by rock's expanding sense of scale and corresponding self-importance. As a band, they offered simple but evocative songs that guilelessly recycled familiar '60s motifs, but when that band contracted to the current duo of Joe Egan and Gerry Rafferty, the subsequent album, *Ferguslie Park*, was anticlimatic, right down to an inferior reworking of the original band's last, great single, "Everything Will Turn Out Fine."

Ferguslie Park didn't work, largely because the Egan-Rafferty team chose to abandon their earlier modest scale and redeeming sense of economy in favor of the broader pop vistas explored on Rafferty's pre-Stealers solo album, *Can I Have My Money Back*. That album had balanced its pop splendor against more intimate prototypes of what would be Stealers Wheel's first records, but *Ferguslie Park* failed to strike such a balance. Now we have *Right or Wrong*, another duo effort, again presented in a lush, expansive pop style. If the new album doesn't reach that level of spare excellence maintained through the first album, it's still a qualified step forward.

Much of the credit rests with Mentor Williams' stylized production, which restores some of the first album's economy while achieving its sense of pop spectacle with broader strokes. One of Williams' crucial elements is the overall sound of the record, which achieves a lush and more diffused atmosphere appropriate to the album's moods of disillusioned romanticism. This soft-focus richness adds warmth to the simple yet vivid David Briggs string settings, themselves textbook efforts in the realm of Technicolor pop.

"Benediction" is the opening song and, disturbingly, the album's best. Egan and Rafferty seem more a single entity than ever: their singing, like their writing, is now totally collaborative, their voices fused by a complementary, reedy burr and a continual use of parallel harmonies. They open the song in a wordless modal progression that slips behind trebly guitar triplets before launching a full orchestral arrangement. The chorus is a soaring hymn to the folly of religion that's a cut above most of the duo's more recent slices of social consciousness.

Elsewhere, the shuffling, loping medium-tempo rhythms that made "Stuck in the Middle With You" and "Everything Will Turn Out Fine" so habit-forming are again used to good effect, notably in the title song. "Right or Wrong" also begins with floating vocal harmonies before bass and percussion enter to set up a rolling gait that later shifts to a raw, even meter for the build-up and fade. "Found My Way to You" rides a standard-issue descending piano riff, plumbs some stock romantic slogans, and manages to be charming despite those debts.

Singling out other highlights or missed shots becomes difficult, mostly because the duo has achieved a dubious consistency. The same harmonies, tempos and dynamics reappear throughout the album, and that limited range of elements emerges as one of *Right or Wrong*'s most serious flaws. I suspect the album's best songs will be ringing in my ears for a while, but a bit less firepower and more variety might have transformed this respectable, but too often a marginal collection of songs into a real sleeper.



CHICAGO VIII
Chicago
Columbia PC 33100

By JOHN MENDELSON

If you're a regular reader of the *Phonograph Record* review section (and

in this day and age who isn't?), you're probably beside yourself trying to determine what it is you're supposed to be getting heavily into. On the one hand, there's Greg Shaw and his shameless imitators making Neil Sedaka, the Carpenters, and like purveyors of catchy, mindless, formula pop rubbish sound like the greatest thing since individually-wrapped slices of pasteurized American cheese. On the other hand, there are the Rick Cromelins and Bobby Abramsons, forever chirping the praises of the intricate, cerebral progressive rubbish of your Gentle Giants, Genesises, Thin Lizzies and Wet Willies.

Until such time as you're able to get your preference act together, may I humbly propose that you pledge your undying devotion to one of my own personal favorites, Chicago, and particularly to the aptly-titled *Chicago VIII*, their latest, greatest and eightest album ever.

This *VIII* is an album for persons of even



•Chicago: The familiar strains of the big hit.

the most idiosyncratic tastes, an album with the proverbial something for the proverbial everyone. No sooner will you have slapped the sucker on your turntable than your ears will be regaled by the rhythmic "Any Way You Want," which will endlessly delight devotees such torrid boogiemongers as Foghat. Hardly before you've had the opportunity to towel down or ingest a few more barbiturates, you'll find yourself wafting on the euphonious strains of the slightly soppy and two-parted "Brand New Love Affair," which will induce aficionados of the Bee Gees and Neil Merryweather to blubber like actual babes. Scarcely will same have wrung themselves out before the Chi-guys'll be into their appalling tribute to semi-heavy metal, "Hideaway," for which the composers of "China Grove," "Fire and Water," and "Strangers in the Night" may or may not receive royalties.

And hardly will you have flipped this dynamic disc over than your ears will be tantalized by the familiar strains of the Big Hit "Harry Truman," which couldn't be more reminiscent of Ray Davies if Jimmy Guercio's hired goons had forced the gap-grinned maestro to sing at gunpoint!

That Robert Lamm! What a card he is: first he entitles his solo album *Skinny Boy* in spite of the fact that he hasn't weighed less than 423 pounds since early puberty. Then he writes a whole song bellyaching about critics (who make \$82.00 a month and are hated by everyone) not thinking the world of what he—who makes a few trillion a year and is universally adored—does on record. And then he, and not Ray Davies, gets the Kinks' first hit single in years. What a card!

Nearly as irrepressible a wit is lead guitarist Terry Kath, who's eloquent "Oh, Thank You Great Spirit," will put some in mind of Jimi Hendrix, others in mind of Charlie Parker, and yet others in mind of a panful of Polish sausages frying in margarine. This incandescence is followed by three probable Top 10 singles which'll doubtless find their ways into the repertoires of many of our more perverse marching bands by next college football season.

Surely this is what is meant by "a people's band." High in the mountains of that quarter of Colorado they own—where they're even as we speak preparing material for *Chicago IX: Their Greatest Hits*—they're looking forward to meeting and taking you horse-back riding. Don't disappoint them.

POP SINGLES FOR THE 70'S BY GREG SHAW

JUKEBOX JURY

Last month's ennui has thankfully lifted, and once again there's plenty of music worth hearing and writing about. The same old stuff still dominates the charts, but at least most of it's wearing well, especially Elton's "Philadelphia Freedom," Hot Chocolate's "Emma" (the follow-up to which, "Blue Night" should be out shortly) and even "Chevy Van" by Sammy Johns. Some good things moving up, too: "Long Tall Glasses" by Leo Sayer and "Jackie Blue" by the Ozark Mountain Daredevils seem Top Ten-bound, and both well-deserved. "How Long" by Ace (Anchor 21,000) a fine debut which should also be at the top by this time next month, and wonder of wonders, "Magic" by Pilot (EMI 3992) is starting to move, after all this time. I'm almost afraid to think about how much I dig this song, lest it somehow jinxed, but it really is tremendous.

We can look for quite a few other worthy entries to be nearing the Top 20 soon, too. Linda Ronstadt's "When Will I Be Loved" (Capitol 4050), probably the best cut on her album (though certainly no better than the Stray Cats' version on the Stardust soundtrack), is moving up dizzying speed. "Don't Tell Me Goodnight" (Big Tree 16033), Lobo's first single in quite awhile, should go far, and I'll even go out on a limb and predict that Sha Na Na's "Just Like Romeo & Juliet" (Kama Sutra 602), the second remake of this Reflections hit in the last few weeks, could be the smash they've been waiting for.



TROGGS—"Good Vibrations"—Pye 71015

TROGGS—"Good vibrations"—Pye 71015

To a real purist, this just might be the ultimate sacrilege, but I don't know anyone who's a bigger Beach Boys fan than myself, and I love it. But then, I'm a Troggs fan too, which you really have to be to appreciate what they've done to this song, and why. The thing I like about the Troggs is that they haven't tried to change their basic raunchy sound or their purposely crude approach to music in the nine years they've been around. And that takes guts, commitment, and the kind of self-righteous stupidity rock & roll could use a lot more of. They treat "Good Vibrations" with all the reverence they showed "Wild Thing"—in other words, none. After all, it's just a pop song like any other, a mere vehicle for Reg Presley's licentious growling, a good funky caveman beat, and yes, even an ocarina solo. What more could you ask from the Troggs? It's great to have them back...with any luck, they might even do a Joni Mitchell song next!

TOMMY ROE—"Glitter and Gleam"—Monument 8644

Tommy's one of those guys you don't miss until he's been away for awhile and something reminds you of how good he was. Like this record, which finds him in Nashville, on a new label, and working with Felton Jarvis of various country and rockabilly fame. It's a song of nostalgia for the good old days of rock & roll, but with a modern Archies/Lobo type arrangement and some beautiful echoed female chorus parts. In fact, it's the kind of record you could fall in love with beyond all logical justification, given half a chance.

PAUL REVERE & THE RAIDERS—"Your Love"—Columbia 3-10126

As long as we're saluting old heroes, how about the Raiders with their first release in almost two years. A catchy Lambert & Potter song produced by Michael Lloyd and Mike Curb (how's that for a winning combination...), this record holds only one surprise: it's a soul song that could have been (and probably was) written for the Four Tops. But behind the satin sound, that old Raiders beat is there, along with the excellence that one expects from this venerable group.

MARK LINDSAY—"Photograph"—Columbia 3-10114

Apparently Mark Lindsay's solo career has at last precluded his work with the Raiders—which might account for the fact that Paul Revere has added his name to the group for the first time since 1969. Anyway, Mark seems to have his best shot in some time with this song (written by Shelby Flint—remember "Angel On My Shoulder"?), a fully produced ballad with good commercial overtones. I'd still rather hear "Good Thing" or even "Arizona," but this will do.

SWEET—"Ballroom Blitz"—Capitol P-4055

Well, now that it's finally out (more than a year after its English release) the only response I can muster is a shrug of "too little, too late." I mean, now that Rodney's is gone, who in America is even going to play this? Certainly not FM radio, and I'd be surprised if AM could relate this to the kind of "disco music" they're pushing. The fact is, this kind of strident, blasting English pop went out of fashion in 1974, and the only shame of it is that records this fine (and it really is one of their best) never had a chance when the time was right.

There aren't too many English singles out this month, but those I've heard are all of interest in some way. Splinter's "China Light" (Dark Horse 10003) has been edited down from the album and should go even higher than "Costafine Town," with a melting melody and tasty acoustic guitar licks and that pseudo-Beatles aura we all love so much. Quite in the same vein, to my surprise (proving once again that, in this crazy world, even the worst can sometimes be the best) is America's latest, "Sister Golden Hair" (WB 8086). Built around a stock George Harrison lick, with a melody lifted from "If Not For You" by way of Nilsson's "Without You" (which can sometimes be the best) is You (which can be traced directly to Badfinger, conveniently enough) this one is so likable I don't even change the station when it comes on.

The new Kinks single is "Starmaker" (RCA JH-10251) and it's much like the last few in that it's full of lines like "everybody's in showbiz" but musically, it's the hottest in some time, like something from the *Face to Face* days. The best part is the opening few bars, a direct take-off from the Move's "Do Ya," and while the message is the same, as Mott the Hoople have proven there are endless possible variations on a theme, and always a couple of good new lines—such as, in this one, "I'm the starmaker, I'm the image maker...I'm the interior decorator!" Right on, Ray.

One of the names I least expected to see on record again turned up this month. Jimmy James & the Vagabonds were popular on the London club circuit throughout the mid-Sixties, and even scraped the American charts with "Come to Me Softly" (Atco 6551) in '68, but little's been heard from them since. Now they're back with "You Don't Stand a Chance (If You Can't Dance)" (Pye 71017), a solid soul sound in the AWB vein.

Now that "Spanish Moon" is a single (WB 8091) I suppose you could even include Little Feat among the newly-converted soul brothers. Trouble is, this cut sounds so much like the O'Jays' I wonder if it isn't a parody? It's so hard to tell satire from the real thing, especially with this kind of thing, or with country music, where I don't think anyone would think twice about a record that embodied all 800 of the genre's most overworked cliches. It'd probably go straight to No. 1.

But almost every area of music has left

itself wide-open for satire by taking itself so seriously—as Flo & Eddie have so hilariously demonstrated in recent concerts. As the Detergents of the '70s, they should really commit their "Kung Fu Fighting" routine to record before some Carl Douglas imitator unconsciously duplicates it and makes a billion dollars. A promising group from Japan

enough, and the song (by Tim Moore) is just interesting enough, that I think I'll keep this one.

Biggest disappointment of the month, to revive an award I once gave out with far greater regularity, is Reunion's "They Don't Make 'Em Like That Anymore" (RCA JH-10252). Although the same people are

PICK TO CLICK



HENRY GROSS—"One More Tomorrow"—A&M 1682

In any other month, this one might not stand out. But short of picking Elton John's "Pinball Wizard" or the new Bad Company single, this seems to me the most likely dark horse for May. Gross has been making increasingly interesting records for some time now, and "One More Tomorrow," with its Doobie Brothers overtones and high boogie quotient, could be just what the public's been waiting for. I especially like the double-tracked vocals that come in toward the end, though on the whole I would've expected even more such touches from the production team of Cashman & West. Parts of it still sound bare, where a tambourine, or some harmonies, or any kind of ambient noise for that matter, couldn't help but be an improvement.



•Captain Henry Gross: Burt Reynolds he ain't.

called the Sadistic Mika Band has issued their first U.S. single, "Suki Suki Suki" (Harvest P-4060) (not the Steppenwolf song), which could, for all I know, be that very thing. I mean, can there seriously be such a thing as Japanese soul music? If so, then fine, but I have a feeling that even the Nips are laughing at us. If this record makes the soul charts, I'll know for sure...

Just last month I was talking about how many oldies invariably come out, regardless of the rise and fall of other trends. Well, I guess it serves me right for making such a sweeping generalization (after only five years of observation) because this month, for the first time, there aren't any! Just for the sake of tradition, though, I'm gonna stretch a point and tell you about a record by Vince Taylor, Europe's legendary Gene Vincent understudy. "Do You Wanna Rock 'n Roll" (Rockhouse 7503) is a Dutch release which finds Vince backed by a studio band who don't really understand the effect he's after, but what the hell, it's his first record in years, and comes with a great picture sleeve (lotsa black leather and chains) for only \$3 from Bob Morris, Box 3285, Midland, TX 79701.

Quite a few examples of what I'd call straight-out pop this time around. Group called Shylo debuts with a country feel and a solid rhythm. "It Hurts a Little Even Now" by John Reid (Arista 0114) is equally appealing in a somewhat more bland fashion—as if some former Poco sideman decided to write a "Mandy" type ballad. Over-orchestrated, but good melody and vocals. "Love Enough" by Keller/Webb (Columbia 3-10117) is not the kind of record I usually like—some shrill chick who sounds like she's taken helium in an attempt to warble like Joni Mitchell—but something about her voice is just odd

behind this one as wrote and produced "Life is a Rock," this is a considerably less affecting tribute to the old matinee idols of the '30s and '40s. As if anyone cares. Back to the "yummy yummys," you guys, or you can forget about ever getting a good review from me again!

Just a few left to tell you about, and they're all hard rockers. Johnny Winter's "Golden Olden Days of Rock & Roll" (Blue Sky 2756), his follow-up to "Raised on Rock," is more of the same—heavy metal nostalgia for a simpler sound I somehow don't quite believe he was ever involved in. "You Need Love" by Styx (Wooden Nickel JH-10272) shows a touch of class by stealing its intro from "Let's Spend the Night Together," but there's so much guitar excess throughout the remaining 3 minutes that I'm gonna really hate this one if it becomes a hit. "Connection" by Montrose (WB 8080), another fine old Stones song, is slowed down past the threshold of slumber, and stretched out to almost 5 minutes. Ridiculous! The Dantes did a better version 10 years ago, and if you never heard of the Dantes, just wait and see how many people remember Montrose in 1985.

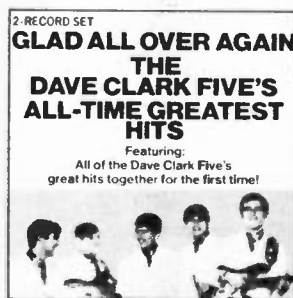
"Dr. Rock and Roll" by Blue Swede (EMI P-4065) is their best to date, a good solid stomper with no novelty value but plenty of hit potential. And if Kraftwerk can get a hit single (I still can't believe it...29 with a bullet this week... and they didn't even give Karlheinz Stockhausen the composer credit he deserves, having done this kind of thing better more than 15 years ago) there's no reason why Nektar shouldn't make it with "Astral Man" (Passport 7904), which is at least music. And how many hit records can make that claim these days?



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BLIND DATE

W I T H F L O & E D D I E

Edited by KEN BARNES

Excerpts from *Blow By Blow*—Jeff Beck (Epic)

Comeback act? Us. Del Shannon, Bobby Vee, Loggins & Messina. Buddy Miles, Billy Preston. Herbie Hancock, Miles Davis. Moms Mabley & Chick Corea. This is a comeback—of what? Not of anything I'd ever want to hear.

A monster at one time? Freddie Cannon. Freddie Hubbard. Vaughn Monroe. 8 years ago? Willie Mitchell. British? Edwin Starr. Grahame Bond. Baker—Gurvitz? Not quite a keyboard player...he held the stool. So far this could be the Emperor's New Clothes. Or a Peter Green solo album. Dog Soldier. All instrumental, huh? I've been waiting for a lick that would *open* a song. There's one. Should've closed it. It's not Clapton. Jeff Beck! Why isn't he soloing anymore? We should've guessed that earlier. Very jazz. Would you sit in a concert hall for an hour and listen to this? Can I hear "She's a Woman" by Lennon/McCartney?

It's still the same album! Music for Martha Reeves' elevator. That's Ramsey Lewis. Unless you're buying it because you buy every Jeff Beck album, save some money. Get America's *Tin Man* album instead—at least there's a hit on it. If you have to buy a George Martin thing.

Excerpts from *Solid*—Mandrill (UA)

Redbone. Navajo overtones. Willie Nelson. Kinky Friedman. New York disco action? Shirley & Co. Moogy Klingman. Bette Midler. Is this another instrumental album? Not my cup of tea, you know. TSOP. Four Tops. Round Robin. Barbara Mason. Someone's dying on that track.

Typesetter: It's an animal name. Skunk! What is this kind of music? Elephant's Memory. Nice guitar lick—give it a break. It's a simian name? Mandrill! I know you guys are sick now, trying to spring this junk on us. You have incredible nerve. What makes you think we'd sit through a Mandrill album? Save your money. If you're a Mandrill fan, though, this is the apex of their career.

"Hard Road," "Evie"—Stevie Wright (Atco)

His first solo album? Rab Noakes? Not English? Is he Dutch? Is he Spanish? The singer from Los Bravos. Grahame Bond.

Typesetter (PRM's unctuous typesetter had by now usurped most of the Blind Date



•Stevie Wright is the Grapefruit of the 70's.

functions, including playing the records and giving clues, much to Flo & Eddie's befuddlement): OK, you've heard the hard-rock cut. But he's a sensitive singer, too—listen! (Plays another hard-rock cut).

This is really sensitive, all right. He's a former lead singer from a famous band? Is this Mayall? Chris Farlowe. This sounds real good. Their hit had a day of the week in it... "Sunday Will Never Be the Same." "Friday on My Mind." The Easybeats. We're supposed to know the singer's name??

Typesetter (apparently quite dismayed that anyone could possibly disremember): It's Little Stevie!

It's Little Stevie! Stevie Wright? This was number one in Australia? Leave it on. Is

Phonograph read in Australia? Hi to all our friends in Australia where we'll be in July.

He sounds like British rock. You know, looking at that picture he looks not unlike Rab Noakes. What's a Rab Noakes? I don't know, but he looks like that. Maybe Little Stevie should get the center picture next issue.

Excerpts from *Cliff de Young* (MCA)

Typesetter: My clue was going to be that he was sensitive and not Jackson.

Then it's gotta be J.D. David Allan Coe. A former singer from a group? P.F. Sloan. From that era. Grass Roots' lead singer. Creed Breedlove. The Bee's lead singer. Bobby Arlin. Don Murray. Danny O'Keefe. Did we know them? They were after us. Not like the Michael Fennelly era. '67? Famous drummer came from the group. They were the Clear Light, right? Dallas Taylor was the drummer. And the singer? Now a TV star in his own right? *Sunshine*? The dying mother and the kid? Cliff de Young. This is gonna be a rough month to find something out of the cellar. Clear Light was a real freako group. Then why does he look like this? Did you ever have one of those days where you thought you had nothing to hope for? No new tomorrows would ever come? That Cliff de Young was around every corner? And that it just wouldn't ever get any better?

Excerpts from *Kokomo* (Columbia)

Typesetter: This group consists of people who've been in every British group except the Beatles.

Oh yeah. Who's been in every group except the Beatles? Derek & the Dominos?

Typesetter: I mean they've got about 50 people in the group and they all came from different groups.

Oh, this is the album that has everybody on it—members of the Who, Alice Cooper...it's not *Flash Fearless*? This is a real group. More members than Tower of Power? More members than the Shankar Family & Friends? Not as big as Centipede. But bigger than the Kiki Dee Band. A little Afro-oriented. Very Philly. It's a little mushy. A little more volume. Seems to me like the 5th Dimension. Seems like a waste to have everybody good in this group, because you

can't hear anything. It sounds like Thom Bell b-sides.

Nothing could help me get this one. I don't know...



•Das Dictators: Kohn' giv mir deine hand.

Typesetter: Their name is a city in Indiana, or Iowa.

Kokomo! Big push for Kokomo. What groups were they in?

Arrival? Grease Band? And you have the nerve to call this a supergroup? Great cover. I guess I'm too Anglo for this sort of stuff. White people sounding like black people are more offensive than black people sounding like white people. Or black people. I never want to hear it again. It's inoffensive—kind of like the stewardess music again—the Marina Hymn.

"California Sun," "Master Race Rock," "I Got You Babe"—Dictators (Epic)

Typesetter: This is an American group—AND THE TYPESETTER'S FAVORITE.

From New York? And the first cut's "California Sun"? UNK BAND. I'll say. Play some originals—please.

Typesetter: This is an ideology cut. Please don't use those college words on me. Pretty punky. Sounds like the Dolls.

FLO & EDDIE'S THOUGHTFUL THIRTEEN

Eddie: This is a rough month, boys! I might have Cliff de Young in the number one spot.

1. I give Bad Company the number one shot, not that they need it. We're at least dealing with some talent, Paul Rodgers has a great voice and it's one everyone will want to own. Safe enough.
2. Amon Duul—they sound great. I can't explain away "Archie the Robot." I won't try.
3. Hollies—Buy it for your mom, your sister. Good single, good luck, Bruce.
4. Leon Russell—His best recorded effort in recent memory is a safe assumption. That's about all I'll say—he used to really get to me and now—he gets to me.
5. Stevie Wright—The guy who looks exactly like Rab Noakes. I don't know how good it really is, but they're trying hard in Australia.
6. Lynyrd Skynyrd—You're gonna hear them anyway. This guy on the back is giving the finger. Mothers—alert your children! There should be a sticker.
7. Kokomo—You're going to hear them, whether you like it or not. The push is on. White people who sound black, which is in, but not as far as I'm concerned.
8. Brenda Lee—You've seen it, honey. Honestly.
9. Pasadena Roof Orchestra—They never said they were good, and they play stuff for your grandmother, or a strange date.
10. Mandrill is awful, but at least they make a commitment.
11. Jeff Beck—come on, Jeff, I don't like jazz stuff. I should give it a shot but I'm not a fan.
12. Dictators—If I ever see that guy he's in

big trouble. No, he's probably a wonderful guy, with hip weed and stuff, and I'd like him a lot if I got into it.

13. Cliff de Young—The expression on his face and his pula-bead necklace just about says it.

Flo: Oh man, when Leon looks like he's number one, I'm in trouble.

Eddie: I would like to say to you editorial staffers that in the future we would appreciate more hard- and pop-rock and less of this fag and Negro stuff. That's an off-the-record comment.

Typesetter: That's what you think!

1. Hollies—They're always worth it.
2. Amon Duul—I like the cover, I think it should be checked out.
3. Pasadena Roof Orchestra, because it's third most harmless on the list. And George Melly wrote the liner notes.
4. Leon Russell
5. Lynyrd Skynyrd, because I think the guy flipping the bird is cool.
6. Bad Company, because I don't want to look like a schlep, like I don't pick up on the new stuff.
7. Kokomo—for the same reason. I like them. It's soft-rock.
8. Jeff Beck—Jeff is always worth a few bucks. He's making a contribution even no knows what it is. It's exactly the same cover Marc Bolan used on *Electric Warrior*. I've never seen them together.
9. Stevie Wright, only because it's a great package. He'll probably be the next sex symbol.
10. Brenda Lee—I don't know why.
11. Dictators—because if I ever see that guy, watch out!
12. Mandrill never will make it.
13. Cliff de Young. I think the whole month sucked eggs.

Gotta be the Godz. Lothar & the Hand People's long-awaited return. The Dictators, right? You are sharp today! I just realized the reason you like it, typesetter. It's because

they're egomaniacs. No, it's because they're writers, and you'd like anyone like that, especially ones with no class. That's the big guy with the hair right, Handsome Dick what's-his-name? I think it's just too West Coast to be an East Coast record. I think the Seeds could get away with cutting this, but I don't think the Dictators have any right. Keep your opinions to yourself from now on.

Excerpts from *Hijack*—Amon Duul II (Atco)

Yeah—Eric Andersen's old days. Essex overtones. Not American, nor English. Amon Duul! Leave it on. If it's not English and not American, there's only one group it could be. Isn't there anything loud on their album? They never used to be that laid back, did they? I like this—this is their best record. I remember those guys, when we were in the Mothers over in Germany they'd shake our hands and speak to us in German. They were revolutionaries' then. Sophisticated time signatures and all that. I request "Archie the Robot." I passed up "Mirror Travelers," "I Can't Wait Pts. I & II," "Explode Like a Star," sounds like the single and "Da Guadaloop" in favor of "Archie the Robot." (listens fixedly). Turning all those down in favor of "Archie" was probably the worst move I've made all day. OK, next. Take it off quick, or I might not like them much longer.

Excerpts from *Sincerely*, Brenda Lee (MCA)

Brenda! Marty did the liner notes. I'll tell you, I wouldn't have put that back picture on there. She doesn't look that great. There's nothing really distinctive about it—nice voice, but if there's no hit no one's gonna buy it. Well, back to rockabilly, Brenda. That was her best era. A little "Sweet Nothings," a little "Is It True," less of this modern stuff. We want to hear those "I'm Sorry" strings. I'm sorry, Brenda.

"Another Night," "Sandy"—Hollies (Epic)

It's not *Bluejays*. Nightbirds. Tommy. Sure sounds familiar to me. Eric Andersen. Rick Wakeman. Hollies! As soon as the voices come in.

Typesetter: The single was written by America's most sensitive writer.

John Denver? Cliff de Young. He must be sensitive. Come on! Phil Spector. Another Bob Dylan? Bruce Springsteen. He's the only star that's going to emerge from the East this year, Except Bethlehem. Look at all the good it did when they cut an Albert Hammond song last year. See what a big star Albert's become. I think Springsteen could be as big as Hammond this year, thanks to the Hollies.

They've always got one killer song on the album that's unique and really different for them, and the rest is the Hollies! It could all be *Evolution*. It's always wonderful, but there are those voices and they don't really go for anything outside that formula. They're starting to sound like the Lettermen. No, the Lettermen are striving to sound like the Hollies. It's great. Everyone likes the Hollies.

come clean.

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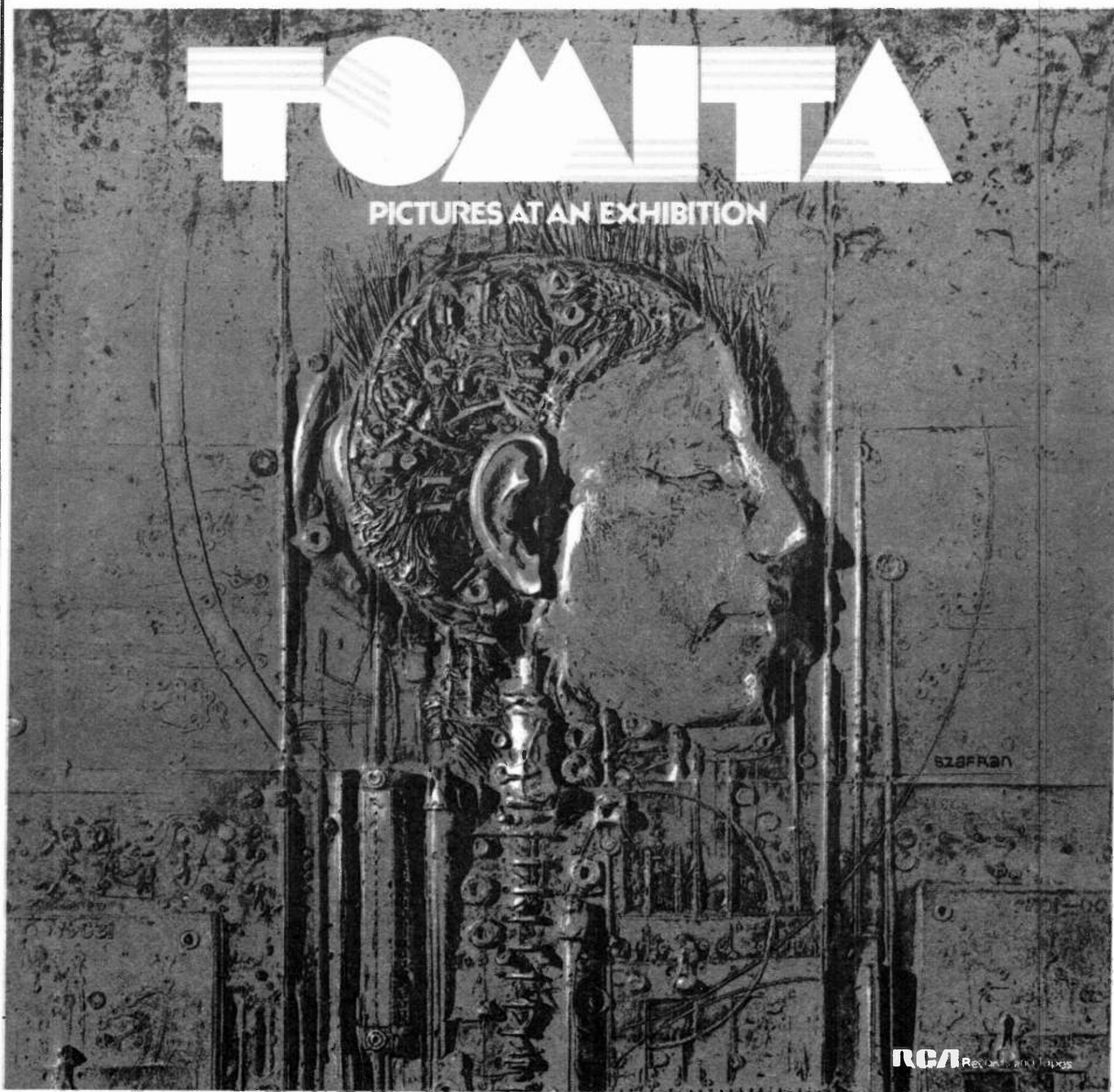
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SOUL & JAZZ



BEN E. KING: Supernatural Thing

RECORD MAGAZINE **2**
May 75 Vol. 2

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

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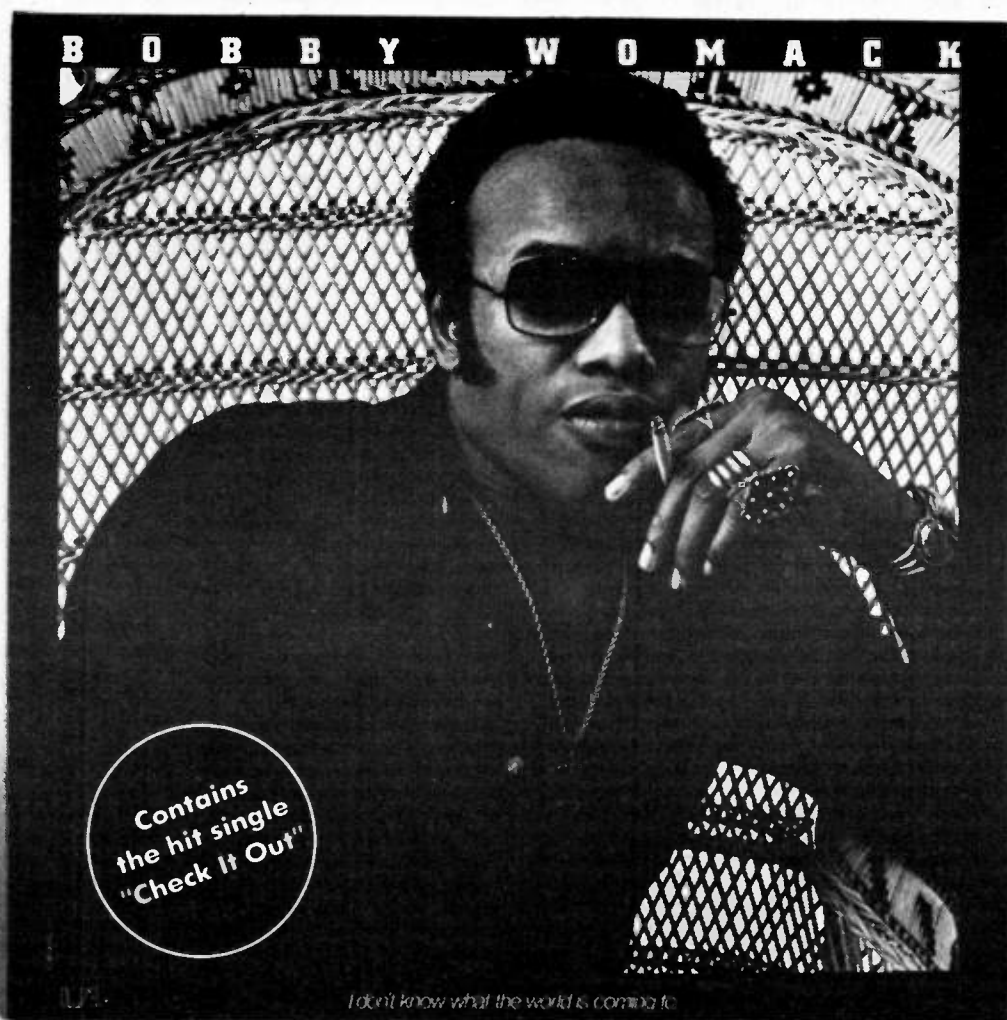
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PERFORMANCES

KEITH JARRETT
GARY BURTON
Royce Hall
Los Angeles, California

By COLMAN ANDREWS

One of a series of recent jazz concerts at UCLA was to have featured Keith Jarrett on solo piano followed by the Gato Barbieri group. When Barbieri became ill, Gary Burton was invited at the last minute to perform on solo vibes and Jarrett was elevated to headliner. Though the concert originally planned would of course have been very different indeed, the concert that was held was an unqualified success.

I continue to find it absolutely amazing that a vibraphonist can hold a large concert hall audience (the site was Royce Hall) rapt for nearly an hour, but Burton certainly can, and he has certainly done it before in other places.

His set used much of the same material he had used the last time I saw him play solo vibes, in fact, which was in Belgrade in 1971: he opened with a medley of "Moon Child" and "In Your Quiet Place," both by Keith Jarrett, and followed with a medley of "Green Mountains" and "Arise Your Eyes," both by bassist Steve Swallow, who was a part of his quartet for many years.

His third medley paired two Chick Corea songs, "Desert Air" and "Crystal Silence"—both of which appeared last year on the splendid Corea/Burton duo album *Crystal Silence* on ECM. Then came a Burton original, "The Sunset Bell," followed by an unnamed samba and, as an encore, "My Foulsh Heart."

Burton's delicacy as a player, his gentle transitions from line to line, help keep him interesting. He gets a sweet, almost shy sound from his vibes most of the time, but is also capable of invoking surprising dynamic variety: he probably affects more changes of timbre, in fact, than any vibist since Lem Winchester.

His harmonic sense is similar to Jarrett's and he uses a lot of the same gospel and blues chords, a lot of similarly inspired key changes. Best of all, he usually projects what can only be called a joyous sound; he's always leaping and loping, skipping back and forth. He sounds always as if he is having a good time.

Keith Jarrett is an even more impressive solo performer. He doesn't have the relentless technical energy of a McCoy Tyner or a Cecil Taylor, but he has created a style so unique, so intriguing, so intense, that he must surely rank with those two men and with a very few other living pianists (Oscar Peterson, Monk, maybe Tete Monolieu...) as a true solo piano master.

He is an exciting performer to watch. He sways, rolls, rises to his feet, practically dances, as he plays. His movements are frequently sexual in direction: he puts it to the piano.

Jarrett's solo work is like a history of contemporary piano, from gospel changes to Roosevelt Sykes or Otis Spann to Tatum to Bill Evans to Copland or Stravinsky to John Cage. But it is also like a fascinating novel, a novel you can't start stop reading.

His set consisted of what was, for all practical purposes, wide combinations of idioms; he was able, in the course of his work, to maintain dramatic tension almost completely. Listening to him, one got lost in his music—but kept following, fascinated, wherever he led. He set up problems for himself rhythmically or harmonically, and then, just as one listener started to ask himself "Now how will he get out of this one?", Jarrett would burst forth with some totally unexpected solution—a change from major to minor, a soft fade, a splendor of grace notes, a gradual speeding up of tempo, a bold and well-developed contrapuntal melody. He was almost literary in the way he threaded together plots and sub-plots, built climaxes, maintained the forward motion of story. And he was most gloriously musical.

Jarrett made an announcement from the UCLA stage after his performance, saying that he was giving up these solo concerts.

He apparently wants to devote himself more fully to composition and to his work with his fine quartet (which includes reedman Dewey Redman). If he means this, he will be depriving us of one of our most unusual and satisfying musical experiences we can hope to have.



BOBBY HUTCHERSON
EDDIE HARRIS
Lighthouse
Hermosa Beach, California

By BOBBY ABRAMS

We saw *Shampoo* the other night up in Westwood and liked it, but left with a feeling of unreality. Seeing the local streets on the screen is always a bit unearthly, but more difficult is the dilemma of seeing Nixon and Agnew giving speeches on television in a movie. It just brings to life all the rooted meaning of words like person and actor. Then again we'll see a movie like *Woman Under the Influence* and marvel at its reality knowing it was artifactual. Ceremonies of innocence if you will.

So how does jazz come into this, though we know it sometimes makes pretty good soundtracks for movies (or not so good viz. Herbie Hancock and *Death Wish*). For example, you sometimes go to hear jazz, and Eddie Harris is playing his synthesizers, and with him the band is playing the guitar, organ, electric bongos and six-string bass and you have to give up thoughts of "real music." All that's left are the sounds and intensities and patterns for you to get into in a rather removed way. It was no problem for Eddie Harris to play a full range of fantasy with the audience and his synthesizer—one minute he was playing in outer space on the arp, and the next minute he was playing Duke Ellington at the grand piano. Whatever Mr. Harris and his very skillful and coherent musicians attempted was carried out very competently yet the music remained only interesting or tantalizing but only rarely accomplished that real satisfaction that jazz is so capable of, that necessary blend of fantasy and evoked emotions.

"Painful, but powerful"

Bobby Hutcherson at the Lighthouse proved once again to be a masterful musician blending his theme and motif into warmly flavored feelings. This is the first time I've seen him without Harold Land, but his current band is no letdown. Mike Dickerson at the piano was pure happiness. Beaming away and pounding the keyboard with the certainty that he was playing what had to be. Mr. Hutcherson made it clear that he wanted to abandon the mood texture of

the vibraphone and played a particularly brilliant song almost entirely with crisp hard high notes. Painful, but creating powerful music. Mr. Hutcherson has continued to perfect his art with the right blend of fantasy and reality, and one is certain he will remain an important musician for years to come.

Cecil Taylor
Five Spot
New York City, New York

By LITA ELISCU

Quintessential jazz club, even has patina of history: the perfect place for Cecil Taylor to express his music after a long hiatus. The small stage was dominated by the huge piano, looking mostly like a racing schooner, sails full into the wind, sitting at anchor, waiting. Quietly, quickly, three men walked on stage and settled into their instruments. Maybe five notes apiece to make sure, and into seamless music, music which had no beginning and no end. Two hours of the most furious, impossible unimagined sounds; no valleys, and no recesses. The frenzy of the mad, or doomed. Thumping clusters of deepsea chromatic tonalities in the left hand while the right hand swooped among the piano's high notes, lost in some kind of ritual, secret dance of the spores. Counterpoint does not exactly describe the sensation. The sax player blew against this mighty ocean of sound, and he blew and he blew whole runs of intricate notes around the bricks issuing from the piano, running up and down and inside and out the scales of Western music. The drummer changed time, again and again, seeking to find yet another rhythm in between the ones already established.

It could have been chaos, and sometimes, it was. I fell asleep several times, trying to get away from these sounds, trying to rest a moment, re-establish contact with order as I understand it to be. Still, each time I woke up, I found the music so purely, sternly awesome, it seemed difficult to believe I had gotten lost. Chaos is what his music is about. Chaos is the incomprehensible, the not-known. Cecil Taylor's music has always been a boundary for my ears.

Afterwards, after the trip, there is a kind of wonder, as though being awakened from deep sleep, or sleep-walking trance. One can speak of mythologies never before known, of sinuous rhythms, the dark shadows woven into a tapestry of nighttime hollies and ghosts, golden sighs dying breathless but unlimited. The fragments of experience, the symbols presented in the musical conversation, are grown to express the whole thought...

Finally, after laughing, and ignoring whatever I could ignore, a better kind of truth emerged. Cecil Taylor has once again moved into new territory, on his own *Star Trek* circuit of the spheres.

BILLY COBHAM
Main Point
Bryn Mawr, Pennsylvania

By FRED TRIETSCH

The Billy Cobham Band doesn't so much play music as thunder; it stampedes like an elephant herd, but with Billy in full control; it rages like a tempest at sea, but with a gentle side, like the calm of a hurricane's eye. They play a fusion of styles, drawing from R&B, rock, jazz and pop, all combined masterfully into a solid musical entity. Billy sits behind a mountain of drums and bashes them all with abandon, ever insistent and urging the other band members along. Ferocious and driving one moment, and cool and breezy the next, the group functions much as a mini-big-band, soloists stepping out from the ensemble to concisely state a line before slipping back into the swing of things. John Aberchrombe's guitar work rounds out the backing nicely while most leads are handled by Randy and Mike Brecker, usually blowing straight out but at times bending notes with electronics. Cobham's is a thoroughly modern band, but hasn't forgotten the soulful roots of its musical heritage, with the bassist so lowdown he's just about standing in the basement.

The set mixed material from all three Cobham albums, though each piece was

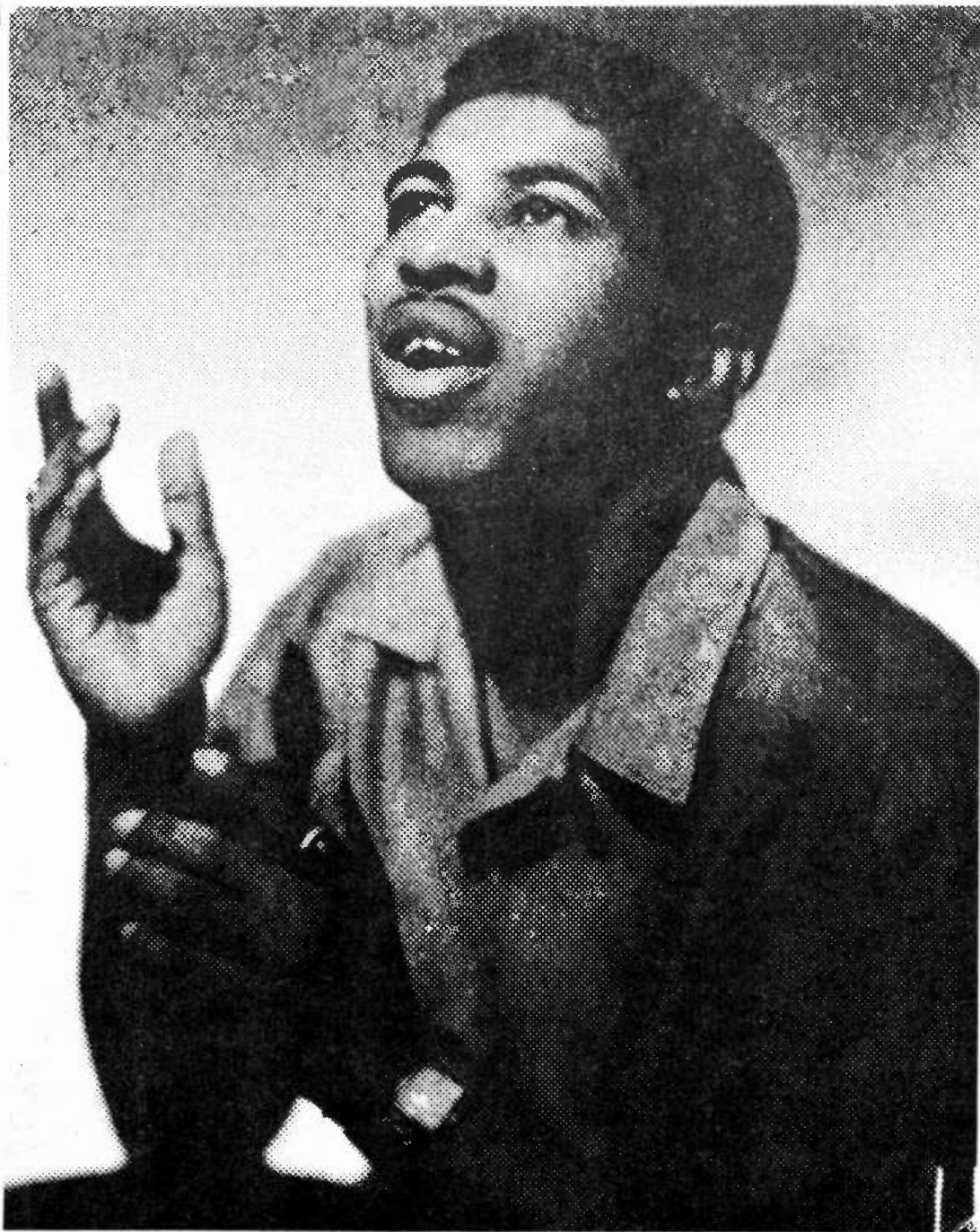


•Billy Cobham: Exciting and infectious.

considerably reworked to allow individual expression full rein. Most of the numbers were even more forceful than the studio renditions, extended into major works for the stage presentation. Naturally, Cobham's powerful drum volleys dominate, for this is truly his band and his physical presence in this club setting was awesome. The tunes were structured as jazz alone allows, with the basic theme stated and then abandoned for overall group jam, within a pre-set framework. Each soloist was so strong that the tunes built in effect as they expanded in setting.

But such exciting and infectious music can never stay confined to the club scene. Cobham knows the strength of his group and is determined to bring it to the people through concerts in larger halls in the future. After his years of restraint with The Mahavishnu Orchestra, Cobham is letting his musical concepts fully bloom in this setting, and the combination of forms can only lead to immense success.

SOUL & JAZZ RETROSPECTIVE

THAT VOICE**BEN E. KING**

by Gene Sculatti

Extraordinary or just plain down to earth great, there's something about the name Ben E. King and his powerful voice that conjures up one hell of a lot of images. Primarily it's *that voice*, erupting out of tinny transistors on the beach in the summer of '59 in "There Goes My Baby," arriving on time in the spring of '61 in "Stand By Me," that voice warming up dancing feet in the winter of '66 with "What Is Soul" and brushing aside all competition on the AM dial this very week in "Supernatural Thing." *That voice*.

If the notion persists that the 37-year old, Henderson, North Carolina-born/New York bred

**The Drifters, Bill Millar, Collier Books, 1971*

singer possesses some of the music world's most powerful vocal chops, let it be. Born Benjamin Earl Nelson, singing has been King's rightful avocation since he was six years old when he started singing in his local church choir. It's testimony to the strength and emotion of the King voice that it is one which has always been associated with records of great magnitude, from the sweeping vistas that lined out the Drifters' classics to the stark presence and movement of "Supernatural Thing."

"All I'd have to see was three or four guys in the neighborhood standing on the corner harmonizing and I'd join right in,"* King recalls, reminiscing about

his teenage years in New York City. While international stardom didn't arrive for King overnight, it snuck up quietly from behind.

He was eighteen when one of the neighborhood crooners, Lover Patterson, walked into his father's luncheonette and invited Ben to join the Five Crowns. Two years later the Crowns signed with Atlantic Records via legendary producers Leiber and Stoller and took up the since dis-banded Drifters name; "There Goes My Baby," with King wailing the anguished lead (he'd also co-authored the song), slid into *Billboard's* Top Five the first week in June of 1959.

This song, which revolutionized R&B recordings by its use of lush, elaborate string arrangements and the introduction of Baion, a Latin-American rhythm, has an interesting story. Until this session, Jerry Wexler and Ahmet Ertegun, owners of Atlantic Records, had personally supervised the production of all Drifters' product. Feeling stale, they turned to Leiber and Stoller, who had recently joined the company as staff producers. Wexler was appalled at the finished product, feeling everything was wrong on it, but Ahmet decided to go ahead and release the record anyway, just to try and salvage the session and the rest is history, as this record, with its soaring baritone lead, launched Ben E. King into the stratosphere.

In all fairness it must be admitted that the Drifters, in their twenty years as a recording group, went through several lead singers; Clyde McPhatter, Rudy Lewis and Johnny Moore all fronted the group, but it is King's distinctive style--heard on "There Goes My Baby," "Dance With Me," "This Magic Moment," "Save The Last Dance For Me" and "I Count The Tears"--which perhaps best defined the Drifters to most pop audiences.

King's tenure with the group lasted only two years, from the beginning of 1959 through the end of 1960. His last two performances with the group, "Save the Last Dance" and the immortal "I Count the Tears," were recorded before but released after he'd left the Drifters ("My voice was beginning to change," he jokingly told one interviewer). His solo career, aided and abetted by the then apprenticed Phil Spector, took off promptly with the brilliantly poetic "Spanish Harlem" which entered the Top Ten in January of 1961.

"I was afraid of "Spanish Harlem," King has said. "It was something I'd never done before. I was pleased with what we did, but I seriously wondered if I could top it."

Top it he did weeks later with an original composition, "Stand By Me," now a hit for John Lennon but to many the ultimate Ben E. King performance; hearing him sing the song fourteen years later, whether he's fronting a pick-up band on the road or sweating under the klieg lights on a *Midnight Special* set, remains a sublime musical experience.

Speaking of the Atco days and recording with Spector (who'd elected to work with King as a solo singer as opposed to continuing to produce the post-King Drifters), King explained "the thrill was attached to the work. I'd always sung in groups before--in church, with the Crowns. Alone it was weird. But I was surrounded by professionals. Everybody there had a dream to fulfill..."

"I personally wondered if I could ever top 'Spanish Harlem.'"

The hit streak that "Spanish Harlem" initiated quickly picked up steam. By mid-1963 King had toted up five Top 30 hits (the two aforementioned, "Amor," his wife's composition "Don't Play That Song" and "Who Have Nothing"). There is an interesting story to note about the latter song. It had been an Italian hit with different lyrics and King's manager, Al Wild, brought the record to Leiber and Stoller who wrote lyrics to fit the track--a most remarkable feat. Moving on from these recordings found King working in different idioms: percussive Latin sambas, dramatic ballads ("I"), country-western ("Seven Letters"), gritty blues ("The Record").

In 1966 the altogether unexpected "What Is Soul" (an original, co-written with producer Bob Gallo) proved an important innovation in King's career. He used a harsher, more bassy voice to accompany the



rambunctious instrumental track, thus establishing yet another identifiable aspect of his personal style and, in the process, scoring his last big hit. A smash in Europe, the record enabled him to tour the Continent extensively for the next several years.

Ben E. King has never ceased to sing. One of his last records for Atco before he left the Atlantic Records subsidiary in 1970 was "What 'Cha Gonna Do About It," an explosive duet with Dee Dee Sharp that was a remake of an earlier Doris Troy side. King continued touring (appearing on numerous Rock and Roll Revival bills) then resurfaced in 1970 on Bob Crewe and Larry Maxwell's *Maxwell* label ("Goodbye My Old Gal") and again in 1973 on Mandala Records.

Even though King continued recording (some of it exceptional material, like his versions of Elton John's "Take Me To The Pilot" and Van Morrison's "Into The Mystic" from the Mandala LP *The Beginning of It All*) the public by and large wasn't buying. Perhaps more crucial, radio programmers weren't playing, a situation now corrected by the overwhelming success of "Supernatural Thing".

The tragedy—the same one that affected Neil

Sedaka, Frankie Valli and countless others—is that it has taken this long for the general music audience to come around to the point of re-responding to artists they never should have closed their ears to. A versatile interpretive talent such as King should never be obliged to wait out the turns of musical fashion.

"In the old days I used to go into the Atlantic offices and look through the songs presented to me to record," King told one interviewer. "Back then you could *feel* when a record was going to be a hit. It's hard to get that feel now." Whether intuition preceded "Supernatural Thing," the combination of that voice with the Patrick Grant-Gwen Guthrie tunes, was a sure bet, for King and his new/old label Atlantic; Chairman of the Board Ahmet Ertegun himself caught King's act in a Miami Beach nightclub and re-signed the singer on the spot.

The amazing thing is that King's singing, now a few octaves above the resonant baritone of his earliest records, commands such physical presence. Where previously his vocals were amplified by the power and glory of 'big' pop arrangements, now the voice seems to carry the entire song performance,

riding the lean tautness of the single, riveting bass rift with confidence.

King's personal nuances—the drawn out pauses before "...supernatural" as the song nears the finish, the anticipatory "Oh..." appended to the front of the final "Extraordinary!"—make "Supernatural Thing" a prime example of the finest soul singing available.

Produced by Tony Silvester and Bert DeCoteaux, the *Supernatural* album presents the 'new' Ben E. King, sounding infinitely more relaxed than ever while retaining a firm grip on the nine tracks. His ballad voice rings out soulfully on Sam Dees' "Drop My Heart Off" and he flexes his newly acquired high tenor on the insistent "Happiness is Where You Find It."

No matter what direction the future holds, King's influence—as a continuing model of inspiration, as a contemporary music scene populated by newcomers several years his junior—is sure to be felt. As an interpreter, as a stylist capable of adapting comfortably to a wide range of sympathetic material, Ben E. King would seem to have few peers. It's almost—supernatural.



WEST



By COLMAN ANDREWS

The jazz vocalist's art is a highly specialized one. Since there has been comparatively little writing of jazz vocal music per se (the fine but relatively sparse efforts of Eddie Johnson, Dave Lambert, King Pleasure, Jon Hendricks, Oscar Brown Jr., Mose Allison *et al*, notwithstanding), the jazz singer must frequently deal with pop or standard material, but must do something special to it—must give it a new life, a new personality...must make it jazz.

Though calm reflection at less stirring times can make me question this opinion, I must say that whenever I'm in the presence of Sarah Vaughn, I am convinced that she is the single best female jazz vocalist alive today. As much as I love Ella and Carmen, as much as I can be torn up, stirred-up, and jazzed up by Blossom Dearie, Annie Ross, Mabel Mercer, *et al*, I find myself transported into pure jazz more fully with Sarah Vaughn than anyone else.

My latest transportation took place recently at that famous Los Angeles jazz dive, the Dorothy Chandler Pavilion. Sarah appeared with Michael Legrand conducting a combination jazz group and full orchestra (largely the LA Philharmonic).

Legrand opened the show, playing and/or conducting his original material in various contexts—excerpts from his score to *Wuthering Heights*, a Bach/jazz fusion; his song "Valse des Lilas" known in English as "Once Upon a Summertime"; etc. He is a good composer of delicate, melodically appealing popular music, and, as a pianist, is busy and energetic and full of sensible if not always original ideas.

When Sarah Vaughn was introduced, the concentrated energy on the stage became miraculous. She opened with "I've Got a Crush on You," which folded nicely into "A Foggy Day." Her authority, her majesty, was formidable. Her voice can be reedy and straightforward, then can become shy and teasing, then can become a quick musical athlete. She does more with songs than any other singer I can think of, makes them more her own—more even than Carmen McRae does.

Other songs included "I've Got It Bad," "I Remember You," and "There Will Never Be Another You" (another vocal *tour de force*, with her voice alternately gruff, crystal clear, sharp, and smoky).

She closed the first half of the concert with an uptempo version of "The Man I Love," redolent with her languid, solid scat singing.

The second half of the concert was less interesting, but more intriguing. After Legrand's competent reading of the Bach D-major harpsichord concerto, the show consisted of Sarah and Legrand doing Legrand material. As noted, his melodies are appealing; alas, most of the lyrics to his songs are written by Alan and Marilyn Bergman, the Harold Robbins and Jacqueline Susann of contemporary song-writing. I, for one, find it downright difficult to listen to most of their awkward, dull, clichéd lyrics without shuddering; that Sarah Vaughn can

take them and find within them a poetry never put there with a pen is doubly impressive. If she can make good jazz from them (which she indeed can), she can make good jazz from *anything*. Her duet with Legrand on "I Will Wait for You" was particularly effective, even chilling. I'd rather hear her sing Ellington, Gershwin, or Harry Warren, of course, but when it comes down to it, I'm just always glad to hear her sing.

Rod McKuen's Stanyan label has done a lot for jazz vocalists, mostly females, lately—both by recording new albums by nearly forgotten singers (like Chris Conner), and by re-releasing older, long-unavailable LPs. Unfortunately, the re-releases don't always include original release information—a lack for which McKuen and Company should be roundly chastised.

Three recent releases which do not include this information but which are nonetheless worthwhile owning, are: *For Always* by Mabel Mercer (Stanyan 10108), with arrangements by Ralph Burns and with some fantastic, little-known songs like Cy Coleman's "I've Got Your Number" and the Fran Landesman, Tommy Wolf heart-breaker "The Ballad of the Sad Young Men"; *You Better Go Now* by Jeri Southern (Stanyan

EAST



By LITA ELISCU

To be in New York and find oneself bone-tired awake, sweaty in the early morning, grey-curtained deadly light, which is not warm and realize that the not-nice lights are vortexed directly behind the eyelids anyway, and there is no reassuring milkman clopping his way up the street, followed by a friendly little dog, only maybe a siren for your company; or the laugh of some poor and crazy wino in the street below, sobbing over the last jagged, broken bottle of hooch in his hand...and then to hear the very beautiful and precise sounds

stylist, a voice silvered and poised between teardrop and coughdrop. She sang mainly chestnuts the time I heard her, but it almost didn't matter; if a queen wants to ride in a dog cart, she's still a queen. Heartbreak in her voice, and not the kind that comes from waiting all these years for someone whose roots reach back as far as Barney Josephson's to bring her out of maid service. Her kind of heartbreak is a special moaned frequency, the sound a horn makes when it is blowing tenderly, poignant and sharp, sometimes hesitant and sometimes arrogant, even raunchy, but always right. Frankly, her vocal range is limited—working as a maid has never been claimed as a way to keep the pipes in order—but her limits are a lot nicer to listen to than a lot of other ranges. Because she plays nice, neat tricks to keep one from noticing, and most of the time, it all works.

Mingus appeared at Lincoln Center, and there really should have been off-track betting allowed, because I would have taken long odds that the concert would be as uneven as it turned out to be and then some. What the performance consisted of was Mingus to one side, playing, floating, ethereal, exquisite bass as only the master can—and some other jive turkeys pretending



•Boring me softly with his song—Charlie Mingus.

they were Weather Report surrounding him. One piano player, who alternately laid out or attacked the keys, sounded better when he laid out. One sax player, who provided the couturier touch for the stage, as well as his sax, and his clothes, cut along hippy-pimpy lines, far outshone the runs he was not able to put together: talk about a living ad for the Cancer Association! This dude should have brought oxygen with him onstage instead of whatever he was using beforehand. And one horn player, who to give credit, tried. This, ah, quartet, played Mingus compositions and I cried, hearing the notes, imagining how the harmonies should have sounded, and only hearing that beautiful bass filling in for its part. Ah well: Mingus has always been self-destructive and this concert proved it. The latest album, on Atlantic Records, is a distinct improvement, not to say relief. All the notes fit and the power of Mingus' art shines on. Listening to greatness is always an experience; when it falls short of its own aim, it just causes

SR 10106), which is good evidence for the fact that Southern deserves serious consideration as a jazz stylist; and *Mad About the Boy* by Carmen McRae (Stanyan SR 10115), which is pure Noel Coward and sheer delight, which features jazzmen like Ray Bryant, Barry Galbraith, and Charlie Shavers, and which is yet another reminder of what a unique and personal talent McRae was and is.

Some other new jazz releases worthy of attention: *TiaJuana Moods* by Charlie Mingus (RCA APL1-0939), probably the third or fourth re-release of this classic album, and certainly one of the very best LPs Mingus has ever made—and he's made a lot of very good ones—full of brilliant solo work (Clarence Shaw's trumpet, especially) and ebullient ensemble writing; *Supersax Plays Bird with Strings* (Capitol ST 11371), further transcriptions of Charlie Parker's solos for five-piece saxophone section, this time featuring large orchestra settings for Parker improvisations on songs like "April in Paris," "Blue 'n' Boogie," and "I Didn't Know What Time It Was"; and *Jungleopolis* by Art Resnick (Symposium SYS 2005), some carefully constructed, tastefully played neo-60s jazz featuring Resnick on keyboards, a fluent reedman named Robert Rockwell III, and drummer Paul Lagos, who once appeared with John Mayall.

being blown through a saxophone by one Lester Young: why, it can make one comprehend the order in this universe, even if it is the order which leads to disorder. The city knows what it needs: that special kind of intelligent, hip pain born of natural rhythm out of the school of the street, and most of the time, it's called jazz. Whatever jazz is defined as these days, it is what it is, a healing force which sometimes cuts through pain like a scalpel, sometimes tries to blow it all away, and sometimes tries to woo the pain back into the basket it slept in before.

Anyway, the city is trying to heal itself, and jazz is busting out all over: small cafes, bars, fancy restaurants, vegetarian and health fare eateries, and anywhere else including some new clubs devoted strictly to sounds, and the return of some old and well-loved names. All kinds of names are listed in the listings. Chet Baker, Charlie Mingus, Basie's band, Billy Cobham, Helen Humes, Herbie Hancock, Miles Davis, Freddie Hubbard, Carla Bley, Marian McPartland, Cecil Taylor. Names well-known and some brushed off, brought out to play once more in the lights.

Helen Humes, who used to sing with Basie and indeed is on a number of collector's item sides featured with that band, has been performing at the Cookery, a restaurant near New York University, and now being run by Barney Josephson, who has owned clubs a long time. She is a great

hurt and bewilderment. Which is still better than the void left by so much music passing through the ears and out the other end without stopping off anywhere to register anything.

Bill Evans and Chuck Mangione played at the Bottom Line. Evans played Evans compositions with his bass and drummer, a trio which has been together for some time now, although I believe his drummer was new. Let's see: crystal waterfalls, prisms of snowflakes frozen forever inside an icicle carousel. Bill Evans music is 'cool' to say the least, cerebral and offside. It all started, they say, with Lennie Tristano's decisions at the piano, working his white brain to the outer limits on ways to achieve new sounds. Dissonances, polytonal rhythms, tempo against tempo. A 'white man's innovation of course, in the world of honey-hot freeform sound, but nevertheless, an important innovation which now attracts many instead of few. Anyway, Bill Evans on his piano, embodies the teachings. Well-travelled roads kept up by a master craftsman gardener who will never, never, allow one riotous wildflower to poke its head out of place. Too flowery? No primordial cauldrons here, no little girls' slips peeping out from underneath pleated skirts. Just beautifully measured chords rippling out, thoughtfully. Cerebrally. A perfect lake, only sometimes one wants the sea. Still, a perfect lake is lovely, and it is perfect.



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SOUL & JAZZ REVIEWS

SMOKEY ROBINSON
A QUIET STORM

QUIET STORM
Smokey Robinson
Tamla T6-337S1

By BOBBY ABRAMS

Bob Dylan once called Smokey Robinson the "greatest living poet" a fact now proclaimed loudly to the residents of Los Angeles via a sky-high billboard on the Sunset Strip (*de rigueur* for all important artists). Bob Dylan once called the guitarist for Brinsley Schwartz "one of the ten best guitarists I've ever heard." So much for the master's imprimatur. But he did make it into town from his Malibu Beach hideaway to catch the opening night of Smokey's first major performance in several years, along with such other celebs as Cher, Joni Mitchell, Carole King, Syreeta, Neil Diamond, Cheech and Chong, Jack Nicholson, Diana Ross, Billy Dee Williams, Billy Preston, Berry Gordy and the entire Motown family, and many others. Truly a night for star-watching, with the most impressive star on stage, cause this cat really gets down in performance. Fifteen years on the road with the Miracles does wonders for one's sense of timing, as well as the ability to handle and work an audience. And the crowd loved every minute of it.

Most impressive was the debuting of several tunes from *Quiet Storm*. Smokey calls this a concept album and it probably is, no matter how dated the term. It deals thematically with mature visions of love. Now Smokey has *always* been able to write love songs, ("My Guy," "Ooo Baby Baby," "Since I Lost My Baby," "My Girl" *et al*) and so it's not unusual that he has been able to expand his vision. This man does not make bad albums, and this one is no exception. As a staff producer for many of Motown's biggest acts, he invented and perfected many of their patented techniques, and the production on this album is just excellent.

His version of "Happy," which was the love theme from *Lady Sings the Blues*, done with Morgana King overtones, is incredible, especially if you liked the way Diana did it originally. "Love Letters" has the hard background that many of his best tunes have, and it's very contemporary, without the over-used wah-wah pedal and guitar riffs that seem to define soul music circa 1975. Smokey always could take obvious perceptions, trite observations about love and whip them into great, concise statements, with the requisite rimes. Everyone thinks about letters not sent, but how often does one come up with a great song on the subject, full of the ironies that mark his style? "Coincidentally" also is one of those type songs, complete with the best irony yet, a musical reference to that Donovan song which the Allman Brothers made a mint off of. It's nice to see "There is a Mountain" having soul relevance as well.

"Wedding Song" is kinda nothing (if you believe that Smokey, can, on occasion, write throwaway songs, then this must surely be one of them) but then it was written for Jarmaine's wedding and isn't it nice to note that Motown goes all out for one of its own. Can you imagine Irwin Steinberg, president of Mercury Records, writing a song for the next Clarence Satchell blessed event?

The big move, as could be expected from



•In truth, Bob Dylan is the greatest living poet.

a Motown album, is the title track, and it is a typical Smokey instant classic. It's awfully pop and MOR and should even get a lot of crossover play (soul to top 40, AM to FM). The song is filled with dynamic vocal pyrotechnic moves all over the place. The sweet, mellow falsetto; the sudden intense punctuation of a phrase, octave jumps, the whole bag of tricks. The lyrics are great and are a little bit of a departure for Smokey, in that they are more in line with traditional academic poetry, than the pop poetry he's noted for. A great album fully justifying the enormous promotional effort Motown is making to get Smokey back in the public's eye again. Fans of this genre will not be disappointed.

CARNEGIE HALL CONCERTS
Gerry Mulligan & Chet Baker
CTI 6054 S1, 6055 S1

By COLMAN ANDREWS

Everybody has roots, and Gerry Mulligan's extend roundly and securely into the feathery modal loam of early West Coast jazz, the soft-shoe quasi-bebop of the late '50's and early '60's in California. Mulligan's unmistakable baritone saxophone has certainly functioned notably in other contexts (most obviously in his fine big band recordings of the mid-'60s), and has essayed other styles (his recent LA-studio-rhythm-section recordings) perhaps less successfully, but it was inevitable that he would one day return at least partially to the period in which he first became known and in which he might be said to have worked most successfully. This he has been doing lately in concert, and the results of one such affair, held last November at Carnegie Hall, have now been issued by CTI.

Mulligan's old comrade, Chet Baker—who looks like a walking cadaver and plays like the breeze on a bright blue sea—is present on many of the tracks, sometimes without Mulligan and sometimes with. Personnel changes from cut to cut are not listed on the album notes, but other musicians involved include a rhythm section of Bob James on keyboards, Ron Carter on bass, and Harvey Mason on drums, and John Scofield on guitar, Dave Samuels on vibes and percussion, and on Volume Two, Ed Byrne on trombone. (Stan Getz was also involved

in the Carnegie Hall Concerts, and can in fact almost be seen on the cover photograph, but is not included on these albums, presumably for contractual reasons).

Mulligan plays at least two different ways hereon: for the Baker/Mulligan classics ("My Funny Valentine," "Line for Lyons," and "Bernie's Tune"), he is light and cool, constructing all the same old predictable puffy figures he's always used in this context. On some other tracks, though, he shows more fire, more grit. He lets the edges of his tone get rough and exciting. Baker's trumpet is lithe and reedy; he has certainly lost none of the fluency for which he was known. He sings on one track—"There Will Never Be Another You"—but his voice is regrettably lacklustre and dull; he sounded much better as a vocalist on his recent CTI studio LP, *She Was Too Good to Me*.

The rhythm section is tight in ensemble, but individually unimpressive. John Scofield sounds like Jim Hall after a long day; Bob James sounds like Bill Evans after a long night. Harvey Mason's drumming is too mechanical, too technically sharp but flavorless (though he does supply one particularly intelligent, brief solo on "It's Sandy at the Beach" on Volume Two). Ron Carter, who could play this stuff in his sleep, is flawless throughout; his brilliantly fluid solo on "It's Sandy" is especially impressive.

Other highlights include Baker's gleeful solo on "Bernie's Tune" (he sounds really glad to be playing it), James' swinging, octave-jumping solo on the same tune, and Mulligan's affectionately beautiful original theme, "Song for Strayhorn."

THE BRIDGE
Sonny Rollins

By MICHAEL LEHMEN

The legendary pose of Sonny Rollins has always endeared his work to me, evoking the truest sense of integrity that embodied the bulk of jazz when I first became cognizant of it a year or two before the jazz-rock phase. Jazz was mental interplay set to lifeblood rhythmic waves centered by a variety of melodic focal points. John Coltrane's rendering of "My Favorite Things" was the closest I had come to a

musical revelation since puberty. What impressed was the way a familiar workable melody line could be weaved in and out of seemingly uncharted areas; into so many forgotten regions this man blew. The jazz neophyte of the 60s was led into comprehension of the form by the melody, a fact which jazz-rock has greatly damaged. Along with Miles, Coltrane, Monk, Ellington, Sonny Rollins was one of the early giants whose mention seemed to evoke the endless stories which become attributed to a legendary figure. *The Bridge* is a product of perhaps the essence of all those tales, the epitome of Rollins as a magnificent blend of intelligence, earnestness and mystery.

The story is basically this. Renowned along with Trane (then a member of Miles' group) as the premier performers of the post-Bop sax players (Ornette Coleman was always revered as a thinker vs. a player, and Dolphy's notoriety was not yet firm), Sonny announced his retirement. This was 1959, he was at the peak of his career...creatively, technically, compositionally accepted as a master jazzman...and he quit to reassess. He retreated to the Williamsburg Bridge which spans NYC's East River at the foot of which he had an apartment. He would walk the bridge and blow, day and night. Ross Burton enhanced the legend with an article in *The Metronome* telling of the pedestrian who heard the strange squawking of a sax drifting in and out of the fog, playing with the intermittent tug boat calls. Sonny's triumphant return to the jazz scene in the fall of 1961 clarified that Burton had cited the wrong bridge (he had noted it as the adjacent Brooklyn Bridge), and that he (Sonny) had sought the refuge of that lonely walkway so as not to disturb people. His retirement was a venture into self-evaluation...personal, creative, technical. Away from both the grind of the club route and the overabundant (but deserved) praise of his following, a master was attempting to expand his sense of perfection.

This has always been the Rollins' calling card: perfection. He, to this day, will walk out on a solo that he feels is not developing. He will quit on sets and leave the bandstand to his peers with apologies, much like Mingus halting a misfire on one of his pieces and starting the band over again "from the top." This is what makes Rollins' contributions so crystal clear. And thus the re-issuing of *The Bridge* (it was cut-out in 1968) is both a crucial action in clarifying the legacy of a jazz giant; an historical necessity, as well as simply an offering to any listener (informed or not) of brilliant music.

The Bridge is just that...a link in Rollins' historical work of improvs with purpose. His bands have always rehearsed, a rarity in jazz. But this is his perfectionist's mind...co-ordinated spontaneity. A field in which to interact, rather than a straight line with breaks for pyrotechnical exposition. Rollins' had always been the master of the hard improv...his interplay with Coltrane on the classic 50's track "Tenor Madness" is perhaps the single greatest exhibition of lung power ever sampled. And here he is in top form. "John S." includes an awesome double chorus, 34 bars long. On that track and clearly in "Without a Song," the essence of his principles can be examined as the ensemble interaction enriches the horn solos continually. "The Bridge" is noteworthy on the compositional level particularly with its alternating choruses (shifting from a 6/8-4/4 to a straight 4/4). And how can one overlook the manner in which this 1962 rendition of Billie's "God Bless the Child" is so much a part of the Rollins' history, a history that has seen him re-record the tune on his 1974 *Horn Culture* with his present touring unit. In both cases Sonny demonstrates his concern for melody and sensitive, emotive playing...aspects of his work that are my favorites. As well he works in both cases with a guitarist as his alternate soloist (in '62 with Jim Hall, in '74 with the prodigy Matsui). And while the '62 date was his first with bassist Bob Crenshaw, it was an obviously prophetic union, as they are still together. *The Bridge* is an album with much to say...but mostly that we are lucky it is with us again.

SOUL & JAZZ REVIEW

MAY '75: SOUL AND JAZZ RECORD



CISSY STRUT
The Meters
Island ILPS 9250

By TOM NOLAN

The Meters, a New Orleans band that has achieved something of a cult following as well as some late-'sixties top 40 hits, has the highlights of its three albums for the Louisiana-oriented Josie label collected here for prominent national release via English-based Island Records. Much of the material on this 13-tuner (sublabeled "The Best of the Meters") is six years old, including the singles "Cissy Strut," "Sophisticated Cissy," "Look-ka Py Py" and "Ease Back," but the music—except for two period ringers, a Junior Walker-ish "Riding Your Pony" and a barnyard clinker, "Chicken Strut"—is as trendlessly immediate as Lee Dorsey's classics (which featured the playing of these same four men) or Dr. John's "Right Place, Wrong Time" (also with backing by the Meters). Comparison to Booker T. and the MGs is inevitable; the two groups' lineups are identical, and their musics superficially have much in common. But where the MGs wove definite if reductively spare melodies upon a tightly-pulled loom of rhythm, the Meters lay down a looser, even more percussive blend that is so functionally rhythmic it sometimes approaches abstraction. So we have here, basically, thirteen variations on the same tune, groove, or idea; but it's a nice groove, it's a lovely groove, and it's all right with me. My favorite is "Tippie Toes," an irresistible item bumped lightly along by the infectious figure played by guitarist Leo Nocentelli. Joseph "Zig" Modeliste is the drummer. His "partner-in-funk" is bassist George Porter. Art Neville plays the piano and organ. Produced by Allen Toussaint and Marshall Sehorn for Sansu Enterprises.



CAPTAIN MARVEL
Stan Getz
Columbia KC 32706

By MICHAEL C. FORD

When Stan Kenton introduced Brazilian guitarist Laurindo Almeida to American jazz audiences, during the 1940s, as part of the "innovations orchestra" presentations, certainly the Bossa-Nova rhythms existed. But, they were more or less classified as *samba* variations; or, as Ahmad Jamal's composi-

tion in 1960 stated: *New Rhumba*.

By the time Stan Getz brought Astrid Gilberto to America from Brazil, in the mid-60s, this country was into the full scene of Bossa-Nova influence; and it wasn't long before "The Girl from Ipanema" became clearly a rage. This, besides bringing Getz out of European semi-isolation, established an American jazz musician in the seldom hit record category.

His subsequent contributions have never needed the extra-added attraction of amplified instrumentation; and his widely divergent musical range is explored so admirably on this album. Despite the explicit Brazilian percussion in the rhythm section, (Airtio Morreira is such a prolific drummer) each composition takes on its own personality of tonal colors and individual presence.

Whether the chart demands the fluid improvisational changes like the title track "Captain Marvel," or the introspective patterns of the standard "Lush Life," the Stan Getz solo artistry flows and rushes like certain areas of the Salmon River.

The Scientology twins, Chick Corea and Stanley Clarke playing piano and bass respectively give more than consistent support to any unit in which they participate. And this new collection by Stan Getz is, again, additional evidence that, while there is too often a predominance of rooming in popular musical slums, sometimes four musicians like this get together and renovate like crazy.

FAST LAST!
Lester Bowie
Muse 5055

By MICHAEL DAVIS

The value of this record lies not only in its quality in and of itself but in the clear way it communicates the totality of contemporary Great Black Music. Innovation and a sense of humor are coupled with respect for tradition, giving the music a satisfying richness and diversity.

Like all albums stemming from the AACM nexus, *Fast Last!* has a communal quality to it; it's just a different group of people than the members of the Art Ensemble of Chicago Bowie usually records with. Everyone involved is important in group endeavors like this one but the contributions of alto player Julius Hemphill—two compositions and two arrangements—stand out somewhat from the rest.

Hemphill's octet arrangements for Ornette Coleman's "Lonely Woman" and his own "Banana Whistle" start off side one. The aching melody line of Coleman's classic is surrounded here by restrained, sympathetic mourners; a beautiful, touching piece of music. "Banana Whistle" is more upbeat and varied; my initial response to it was amazement that so many styles could be welded together so successfully. But that's missing the point; this is *one music* these men are playing and the various stylistic approaches are merely components of its vocabulary. In any even, these cuts prove that Hemphill has his chops together but good.

Side one's final track is "Hello Dolly." Surprised? Don't be. Remember 'Trane's "My Favorite Things"? This "Dolly" is more fun than any straight version you're likely to hear, what with its stretched out melody, Armstrong quotes, and all. Just Bowie's trumpet and John Hicks' piano but you won't miss the others. And I don't wanna hear any crap about destruction of the popular song; Lester is just playing with it a little.

The flip side stands up all right too. So much happens in "Fast Last/C," including one of the most unique bass solos I've ever heard, that any detailed description I could give would be hopelessly inadequate. "F Troop Rides Again" features three drummers; you can hear them march timing in formation, then ATTACK! Bowie's trumpet floats on top of the fray, taking pot shots where he can.

This is Lester Bowie's first album as a

leader since the formation of the Art Ensemble back in '69 and it is rewarding to hear him play outside that context once again. It doesn't look like the Ensemble are going to be releasing any records as a group until they get their own label together but *Fast Last!*, along with Roscoe Mitchell's upcoming set on Sackville, should bridge the gap nicely.

CHASE THE CLOUDS AWAY
Chuck Mangione
A&M SP-4518

By MITCHELL S. COHEN

Chuck Mangione really works within his own category: an amalgam of small combo jazz, orchestral pop and Latin-flavored big-band charts. This adventurous eclecticism makes him quite special, and often very exciting, but it can also be dangerous, having led in the past to such worthless addenda to his stage concerts as Bat McGrath and Don Potter, to inflated projects, and to disastrous attempts at lyric-writing. When he has a reign on his talents, he can be dynamic, lyrical and swinging. When he tries to accomplish too much, he can be sluggish and ponderous. On his first album for A&M (after a handful with Mercury) *Chase the Clouds Away*, the composer-arranger-conductor has, with a great deal of success, welded together his tight, responsive jazz unit and an orchestral concept, highlighting the best of each: the economy, verve and skillful improvisation of the group, the sweep, power and presence of the concert orchestra.

At the core of this album is The Chuck Mangione Quartet, and it is to the credit of their leader's arranging, and to a brilliantly engineered mix of this live-in-the-studio recording, that the four-man band never gets lost. The snapping propulsion of Joe LaBarbera's drumming drives the entire session, and new bassist Chip Jackson (replacing Al Johnson, now with Weather Report), like his partner in the rhythm section is a most valuable cornerstone. On soprano and tenor saxophones and flute, Gerry Niewood, a flexible and inventive soloist, is the lead instrumental voice of the group, along with Mangione's flugelhorn.

When the quartet is left to their own devices, they come up with the pearl of the album, "Can't We Do This All Night," just the four musicians loping through a simple, slow-funk blues structure with crisp bass-drums interaction, a catchy transitional line and lots of room for Niewood to stretch out on tenor, which he does with brisk, rippling phrases.

More often, however, the quartet is at the center of a larger group of musicians, as on "Echano," which contains everything Mangione does so well, in addition to many of his shortcomings. After a brief, delicate introduction, a statement by the strings and a reflective repetition on flute, there is a sudden switch into a Latin rhythm, over which Mangione plays a mariachi figure. The big band parrots the theme, and then Niewood is set free to fly with one of his eloquent solos, racing through cascades of notes up and down the scale on soprano while LaBarbera cooks like mad behind him. Following this virtuoso performance, Mangione takes over, and lowers the stakes. His solo has spunk, but he tends to flutter when he should soar. "Echano" doesn't recover, and ends poorly, as if the composition ran out of breath.

Other pieces on the album have a similar schizophrenic quality. "He was a Friend of Mine" displays Mangione's strong melodic sense, but also his tendency to get lush and hokey (it's a thrill to hear Niewood's flute pierce through the orchestral wall). "Soft" has a beautiful theme stated at the outset by Niewood, but instead of allowing him to expand on it, Mangione turns the song over to vocalist Esther Satterfield, who has a shimmering voice that doesn't help to distinguish Mangione's banal lyrics. Of the more ambitious compositions, only the opener, "Song of the New Moon," is an unqualified triumph: a number that manages to swirl, leap and move relentlessly forward all at the same time, as the orchestra weaves in and out of the quartet's thematic excursions. The achievement of this track, and of many moments on *Chase the Clouds Away*, is decisive evidence of Mangione's musical intelligence and energy, and with A&M solidly behind him, his considerable promise should not go unfulfilled.



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