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RECORD MAGAZINE

THE NITTY GRITTY DIRT BAND

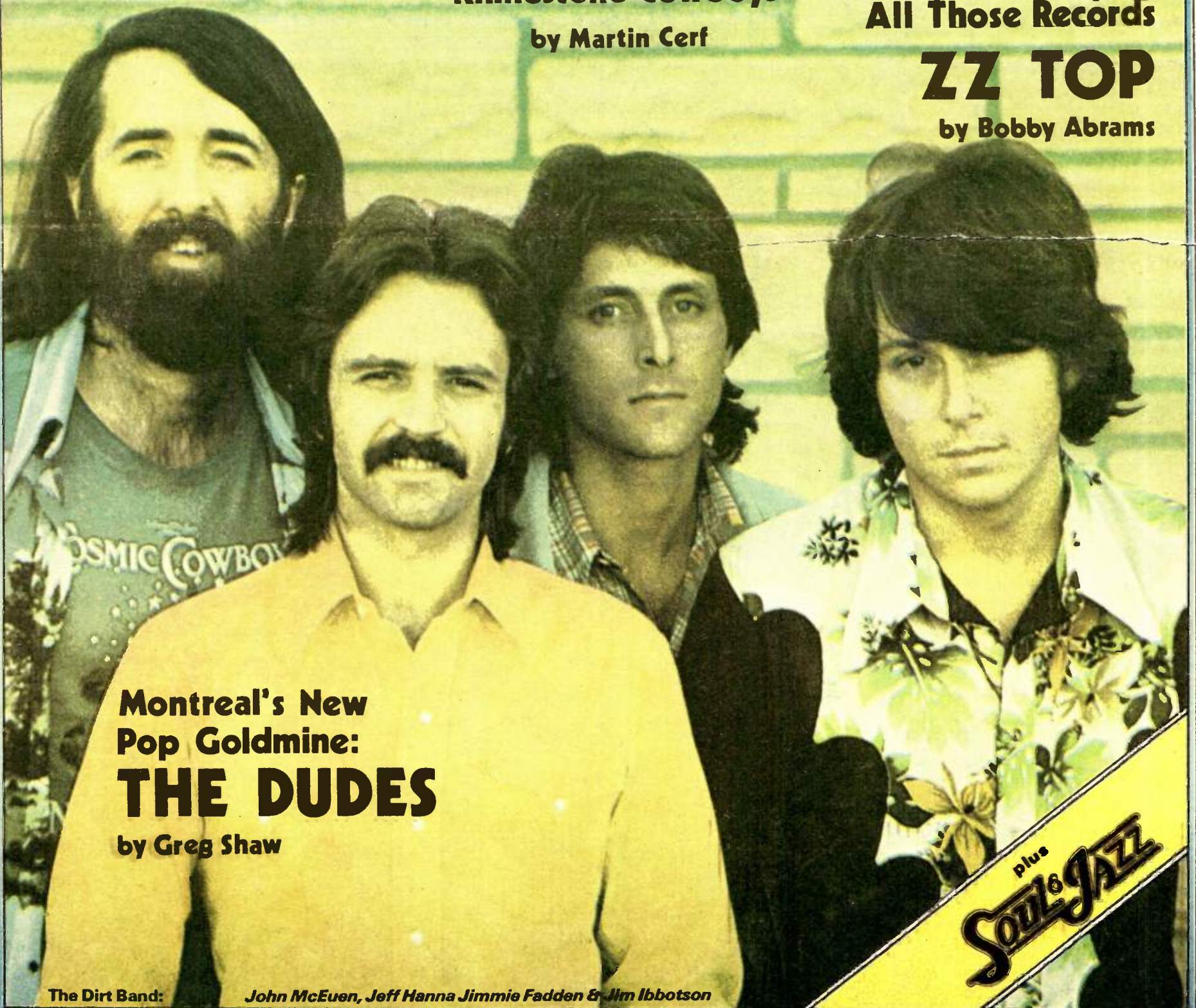
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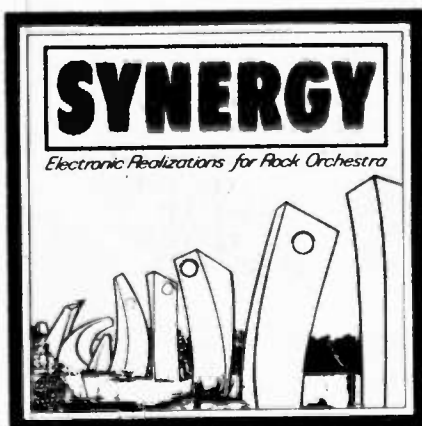
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THIS MONTH

NITTY GRITTY DIRT BAND: *Revolution In Aspen:*

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PERFORMANCES

Eric Clapton's Iron City Parade Rained On...



ERIC CLAPTON
SANTANA
Civic Arena
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

By STEVE HANSEN

Amidst a barrage of advertising for a series of three self-proclaimed "Events of the Summer" Eric Clapton and Santana (presumably the first of said three) slipped into Pittsburgh almost unannounced. Even still, the bill was able to lure 12,000 to the cavernous Civic Arena. Just one year ago Clapton headlined a show that drew 45,000 to Three Rivers Stadium, and now, in the wake of the nearly unanimously unacclaimed follow-up to *461 Ocean* he wisely chose not to press the issue, ignoring material from *There's One in Every Crowd* completely in favor of his safer stable of standards.

Similarly, Carlos Santana in recent years has produced little in the way of new memorable recordings, and like Clapton, he and his backing band also gave the crowd what they wanted, pulling fully 70% of the opening set from Santana's first two albums. While half-apologizing for the newer work performed (It's just good music, man) mercifully absent this tour was the gong prop, and the opening request for a few moments of meditative silence; sitting in for the gong, a portrait of Guru Sri Chinmoy nestled near Carlos' feet.

Carlos' familiar licks all fell conveniently in with the usual rapid-fire precision, careful never to overstep his self-imposed boundaries and leaving the extended solo excesses to the percussion section, who made a field day of the opportunity. After a boogie crazed standing ovation for "Jingo" amid frequent bursts of firecrackers, Carlos advised the people to be careful, and politely thanked them with a low bow. As Clapton arrives on stage at the Civic Arena's retractable dome—the Iron City's crowning tribute to the technology of steel—he's cheered on by fans who remember him as "Mr. Guitar." Hesitating for a moment for effect, Eric and the band brought the crowd to their feet with the opening licks of "Layla"

and goaded them back repeatedly throughout the show.

Clapton's guitar wailed and writhed in response to the fingers racing to and fro; holding in position their most familiar configurations a split-second extra in surly reply to last years critics who felt cheated by a tamed Clapton performance. About halfway through his 90 minute set the skies finally unloaded their burden and as the Civic Arena's roof ran its 2½ minute course, Clapton who is really pure show-biz at heart hastily whipped the band into an inspired version of "Let it Rain" with spirited assistance from the crowd.

During the set he attempted to sneak in an unfamiliar slow blues run, but the slight but firm reaction said this crowd wasn't buying even in small doses. He retreated back into accepted fare for the rest of the evening, pausing only long enough to allow a token solo shot to backup singers Yvonne Elliman and Marcy Levy. Yvonne did "Can't Find My Way Home"—with a prefacing tribute to Clapton's overlooked role as co-author—in a style reminiscent of Mama Lion. Marcy sang "Teach Me to be Your Woman," a pretty enough tune showcasing her multi-octaved voice, which she explored to its highest reaches until she at last wrangled a pained reaction from the crowd.

For the encore, Carlos Santana and conga player Armando Paraza rejoined the Clapton group for a rousing twenty minute jam spun off "Eyesight to the Blind." Here Santana finally opened up, and the sight of the great English and Latin legends, face to face, ricocheting licks back and forth produced a strange caldron of *deja vu* and history. Whatever else can be said about the recession, it sure has produced some dynamite bills.

Shortly thereafter he brought the show to an end, some four hours after the Santana band had opened it. Long after the recollection of song order and titles had faded, the image of a relentless Clapton in top form, his body wrapped around his guitar had not.

As the Arena unloaded that night, it was obvious to the Pittsburgh witnesses that the standard had just been set by which any future event of the summer would judge itself.

PINK FLOYD
STEVE MILLER
The Knebworth Festival
Knebworth, England

By GEOFF DEANE

Knebworth is a huge wooded and grass estate complete with 15th century mansion, 25 miles north of London. This festival was a special event in that it brought together again two near legendary, highly respected American rock bands, Captain Beefhart with his Magic Band and the Steve Miller Band. Sad to say though the expected excitement these two names generated was not entirely fulfilled by their respective performances.

First up was the inimitable and lovable Captain Beefhart and his Magic Band which featured Jimmy Carl Black (Indian Ink) and Greg Davidson (Ella Guru) plus multiple instrumentalist Drumbo. The set began shakily and uncertain. Except for a couple of numbers, the Magic Band never really gelled and hit full stride. This impotence due predominantly to Beefhart's material selection was obvious. At one point he stood up alone and recited some of his classically weird poetry attempting to sing in a very off-key, whisky strained voice. All very fine in a concert hall, but lost on most of the 40,000 assembled here.

And expectations again were great as the audience was anxious to hear Miller perform many of his famous, classic numbers. He and his makeshift band, Les Dudek on twin lead, long time friend Lonnie Turner on bass, and ex-Creedence drummer Doug Clifford, generally succeeded with an hour and

album. As a result, the entire outdoors was reduced down to resemble the more personal confines of four walls. The gathered worshippers sat awesomely, in captivated animation, soaking up the shifting echoes, acoustic mysteries, and the electronic aura which vibrates wondrously around them.

"Shine On You Crazy Diamond," a tribute to erstwhile Floyd Member, Syd Barrett, was the visual climax to the first half. It concludes with a huge chromium metal sun, erected behind the band, glowing in a turquoise hue which changed to a dazzling white and sparkled like a million diamonds. Metaphorically it reflected brilliantly the song's mood and theme. But, however imaginatively and dynamically Floyd coordinate and complement their music and visuals with one another, they do suffer from one unavoidable, appalling weakness; Roger Waters' vocals. He just can't reach higher notes and his off-key, strained attempts to do so damage Floyd songs.

After a lengthy interval they returned to perform "Dark Side of the Moon" in its entirety. Floyd rolled out the accompanying film plus for added effect arranged for a model jet plane to crash into the stage in a burst of golden, showering fireworks. A great festival stunt. Overall, though it was not the most inspired rendition of Floyd's most successful and commercial work. They have performed "Dark Side of the Moon" for more than two years, so it's no small wonder that Floyd may be growing weary of it. In a way I hope so, perhaps they'll be forced or inspired to write more new material.

Predictably, the crowd's demanding encore was answered by "Echoes," which is a masterpiece and illustrates the

PINK FLOYD & STEVE MILLER LIVE: Great expectations—unrealized

half of solid rock and boogie. So conspicuous though by their looming absence, were the old Miller greats. He did elect to play "Livin' In The U.S.A." An embarrassing lack of familiarity plus Miller's sustained lack of conviction, like his heart was not really into it put a damper on the audience's enthusiasm. That's not to say the band was not in good shape; the guitars played clear and clean, cutting and stabbing with alacrity. But still the set was void of any real drive and energy. Miller laid low on guitar allowing Dudek the lion's share of it, (including some very fine slide work). The crowd's eventual encore was more a matter of routine than an indication of the crowd's enthusiasm.

That left it up to Pink Floyd to pick up the pieces and rekindle some of the dissipated enthusiasm in the restive throng. Floyd delivered the goods, musically and visually. Their visual spectacular never fails, it seems, and Floyd at Knebworth unleashed their whole effects arsenal. The multi-media shebang opened with a startling fly by two roaring Spitfires which immediately like the flick of a switch set the crowd buzzing with delight and bewildered anticipation. In full surround-sound quadrophonic which pours the music down audience's ears like gigantic earphones, they launched into "Raving and Drooling" from a forthcoming



vast emotional and musical spectrum that Floyd convey. On this occasion they injected some sax breaks which worked musically, but not emotionally; too much jazz excess didn't blend well in to such an atmospherically undulating number as "Echoes."

"Echoes" lapsed and Knebworth drew to a close leaving the multitudes sufficiently entertained but now wholly fulfilled. A festival of great expectations—unrealized.

“...how The God of Hell Fire became

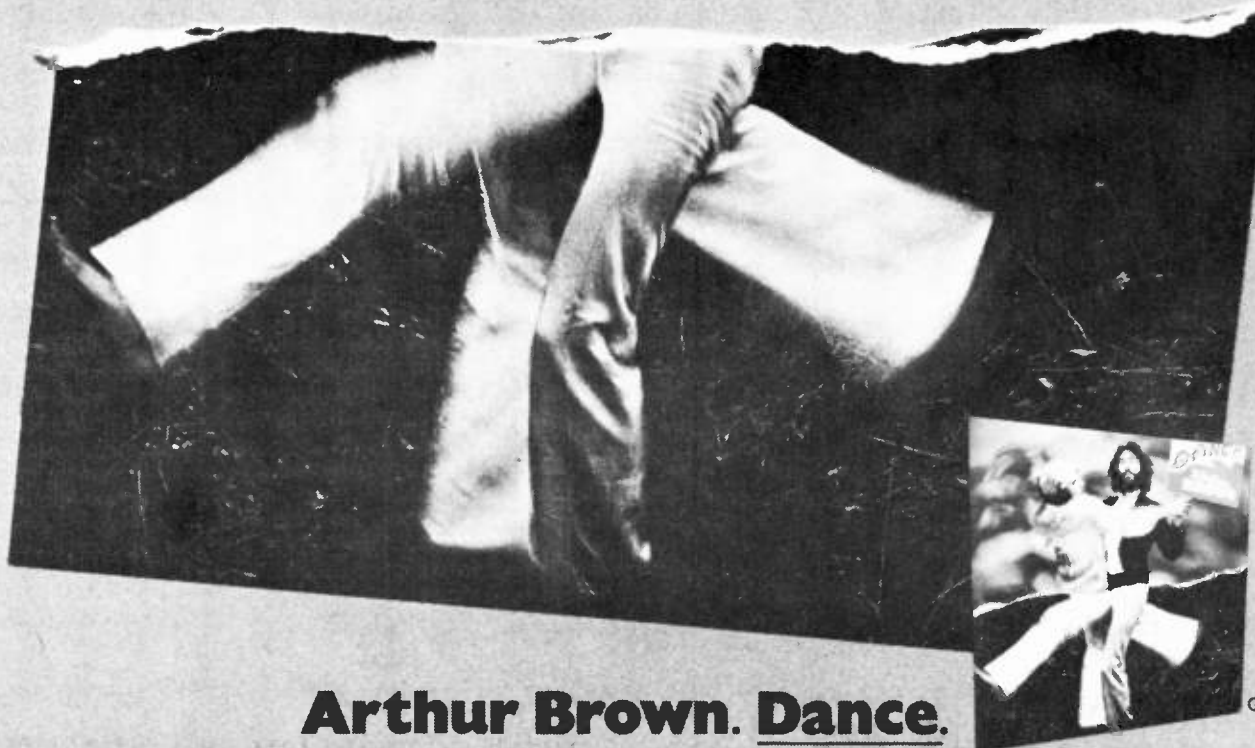


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PERFORMANCES

Toledo Stays Home For ELO, Cleveland Let Down By Walsh

ELECTRIC LIGHT ORCHESTRA
Toledo Sports Arena
Toledo, Ohio

By DAVID FANDRAY

Toledo is a rock and roll town. It likes its music loud, ragged and punk-brash. It is the sort of town where Aerosmith and Slade can sell out concerts, while acts like David Bowie and Bad Company draw surprisingly small crowds.

To throw a band with even a hint of sophistication here, into the boogie-heart of America, would seem to be an act of outright foolishness. And, sure, enough, this bill headlined with one of today's more intelligent rock and roll bands, drew what had to be one of the most dismal turnouts in Toledo rock and roll history.

With the crowd sufficiently warmed up by the two opening acts, the Electric Light Orchestra was able to come onstage without a worry about the light turnout. The audience was alive and friendly, and the band rewarded it with a show that could not have been better had it been an SRO performance.

The most impressive thing about ELO was its sheer musical power. With two electric cellos and an electric violin augmenting the standard guitar-bass-keyboards-drums line-up, the band was able to flex an astonishing amount of aural muscle. From the first song of the set to the inevitable "Roll Over Beethoven" encore, ELO produced a thick, rich sound. At times, it crested magnificently, seeming to physically roll off the stage into the first few rows of the audience.

In spite of the density of the sound, instruments and voices always remained distinct, and there was never a time when the basic rock and roll beat was lost. Held solidly in time by Bev Bevan's tasteful and precise drumming, the band never became one of those classical-rock outfits that sacrifices its identity as a rock band to artsy-craftsy affectation. Instead, ELO used its strings to complement and add depth to its basic rocking nature. The result was a "classy" sound that never became inaccessible.

The band's stage show was equally accessible. Group mastermind Jeff Lynne obviously knows that an audience wants a show as well as good rock music, and he provided for plenty of action to go along with the music.

Somewhat surprisingly, most of the show was provided by ELO's string section, rather than its rock and roll component. The cellists and violinist were in constant motion. They danced and pranced about the stage, frolicking with their instruments in a display distinctly contrary to one's usual notion about the behavior appropriate of the players of cellos and violins. They further enhanced the show by turning in several spectacular solo performances—the most notable of which was Hugh McDowell's crowd-pleasing romp on the cello.

The set was high-intensity from beginning to end. There were no real high points; no low points. The only time the warm audience response varied was when it enthusiastically greeted the several selections in the set that were drawn from the familiar *Eldorado* LP.

Those who did make it to the



Phil Ceccola

• Jeff Lynne and Michael invade Ohio

concert were treated to a show that easily equaled any put on in Toledo yet this year. ELO proved that strings can be mated to rock without compromising the quality of either. And, in the process, the band showed how much fun that mating can be.

THE MICHAEL STANLEY BAND
JOE WALSH
Cleveland Indians Stadium
Cleveland, Ohio

By ANASTASIA PANTSIOS

Cleveland's summer outdoor concert series, "The World Series of Rock," moved into its third game, featuring two acts whose roots are right in Cleveland, in addition to two English imports.

The Michael Stanley Band is the current great white hope of Cleveland. It is possibly the first band in years from the city to go national with a strong wave of

hometown support behind it. It was never quite respectable to like the Raspberries. The Michael Stanley Band features the faintest twinge of voguish Eagles sound laid over a pulsing rock'n'roll base, and some acoustic flavoring. This makes the band acceptable to a broad spectrum of tastes.

The band was welcomed with open arms in its first concert here since the release of its Epic album in June. The set included selections from that album and new songs which the band has prepared for its new album, to be recorded in August.

The Stadium sound was not kind to the band (nor to any of the others) but their performance was honest and energetic in an easy-going way. Of necessity, the group emphasized its harder material. Its acoustically based numbers, potent enough in a small hall, would've doubtless been lost in this cavernous stadium.

Though the Michael Stanley Band



• Michael Stanley Band.

was an outgrowth of singer-rhythm guitarist Stanley's career as a singer-songwriter, the group's strongest point is its rock'n'roll instrumentation. Drummer Tom Dobeck, bassist Dan Pecchio, lead guitarist Jonah Koslen and Stanley are a tight, throbbing unit that builds on its material through its playing. Vocals, while more than adequate, are not extraordinary. What is extraordinary is the way the patterns of the songs are sharpened through just the right instrumental touches.

The Stanley Band was playing local clubs and colleges only a few months ago, so their return did not have quite the same sense of homecoming that Walsh's did.

Since Walsh played to a sell-out crowd of 8000 at Kent State University the last time he was in town, and since Cleveland is not exactly the classical-cosmic rock capitol of the world, it's possible that as many as half of those in attendance came to hear Walsh rather than Yes. The response was bound to be, shall we say, hysterical. Walsh's performance however hardly merited hysteria.

Walsh was backed by the same band that he had on his last tour, including Ricky Fataar on drums, David Mason on keyboards and Bryan Gerafalo on drums. He was also joined for this performance by Joe Vitale of the Barnstorm band on keyboards. (Vitale's new band is currently recording an album in Cleveland.) Unfortunately, the band is not putting any more enthusiasm into its playing than it was last winter. Not only was it mechanical, it was inexcusably loose.

But it is unfair to blame the band. As sidemen, they can only follow Walsh's cues. And that is surely difficult. Walsh, who at one time was building himself a fine reputation as one of rock's championship guitarists, has become erratic and sloppy. Where he once seemed on the verge of developing a truly personal, idiosyncratic style, he now wades through muddled readymades of his old material.

Walsh's creative standstill is nearly absolute: his set at the Stadium was essentially the same as the one he played last winter. Not only is he not presenting new material, but he is digging back into the James Gang repertoire for things like "Funk #49" and the new versions don't measure up to the originals. Vitale's band does "Rocky Mountain Way" better. The most depressing thing is that the "recent" tunes from his *So What* album were mostly written and recorded over a year and a half ago.

Walsh has (or had?) a terrific knack for writing "pretty boogie"; songs like "Rocky Mountain Way," "Meadows" and "Welcome to the Club" that take a basic Deep Purple-style rock'n'roll riff and overlay it with a sound that is just a trifle offbeat, just enough to make the song really stick in one's head. Even if Walsh plans to shut the door on further creativity is it too much to ask for crisp performances of these "hits?"

Evidently, but the audience wasn't in the least disturbed, of course. It shouted and boogied and threw firecrackers. Such a reaction to sloppiness and lack of involvement won't be any encouragement for Walsh to do better, which is sad.

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Photo by Bill McEuen



Nitty Gritty Dirt Band Round-up America

**COMING TO GRIPS WITH THE KINGS
OF THE COSMIC COWBOYS**
by Martin Cerf

"Sometimes it was like a slow exotic torture enduring each other. There were moments when I thought if we stayed together another minute, someone was going to murder someone."

Jim Ibbotson, lead singer, writer and resident James Dean figure in The Nitty Gritty Dirt Band, can now look back on the past confidently, knowing the worst is far behind. Ten years together and The Dirt Band are a phenomenon if but for the years they've been together. In the days prior to the release of their new United Artists album *"Dream"*, The Dirt Band's first studio LP since 1972, yesterday's nightmare struggles seem almost of another era. "Always it was *'the band'*", Ibbotson rationalizes in retrospect. "We would tell ourselves it was *'the band'* that's important; then the problems wouldn't be unending. All the unspoken promises, near hits combined with a measurable improvement from one year to the next, I think that's the thread, the incentive that kept us together and made it work."

1975 is an important year for The Dirt Band. The chemistry is correct now, the group will fulfill their rightful position alongside friends and co-workers Linda Ronstadt, Jackson Browne, Michael Murphey and The Allman Bros. . It's a four piece act now (pruned down from six at the band's inception), they're writing and recording their own material, headlining major concerts and festivals throughout the nation this Summer and The Dirt Band ceased chasing all the past fragmented musical tangents which did little to define the group as anything other than interpreters. Regardless of the past, The Nitty Gritty Dirt Band in 1975 have grown into a self-sufficient, self-supporting unit whose rivals are scarce.

From the jug-band, leather-chapped drag of the early years to projects so conceptually conflicting in latter days, it seemed the only way this act could justify its existence was to hook up to a gimmick, or another personality--anything that meant they could put off being The Dirt Band for another year, another LP. Not the least of these past liabilities was a failure to generate original material. "I think that goes back to the days when Jackson (Browne) was in the band. When he left, we continued to record songs he'd written that we liked and tunes by other writers we admired," explains John

Photo by Bill McEuen



Jeff Hanna

"I grew up with the Dirt Band; they're fantastic." -- Linda Ronstadt

McEuen, The Dirt Band's tall bearded banjo, fiddle, accordion and mandolin master. John, more than anyone else is the internal magnet, he sees to all the needs of the band on the road and his outlook is realistic, sobering. Sometimes it's difficult to distinguish John from his brother Bill (William E.) McEuen who manages and produces the act (the fact that they resemble each other adds to the confusion). "You also have to remember in the sixties the record companies and publishers always had something to say about material," John continues. "Since we weren't exactly prolific in the first place, our producer at the time (Dallas Smith) and Liberty Records did all they could to discourage us from recording our own songs. Tunes were submitted that they'd suggest we record on our next album. The *or else* was understood."

Times have changed and "Dream," the Dirt Band's 9th album, thoroughly demonstrates just how far this act has evolved. Their self-confidence and casual Colorado lifestyle has allowed material to flow as if by osmosis. "We always were able to write original material," McEuen clarifies. "It's just that what we were writing at the time wasn't as good as what was available, we felt. It would have been easy to cut our own stuff, we would have made more money; but we were never a greedy band and always wanted to make the best possible record we could."

Ibbotson sees the band as more competent musically, both in the studio and out. "It used to be like a hot-rod competition. There was a time when recording became an ego trip to see who could add what solo. It was all so complicated. Over the years we've acquired a professional attitude, we've grown together and we know what works best in terms of our whole sound. Just because for example, Jimmie Fadden is one of the great harp players isn't reason enough to insert him whenever we can, but that's how we used to record."

Moving to Colorado from LA in 1971 was perhaps the singular most important element contributing to the Dirt Band's rise in status, commercially and creatively. The act's stock has been perpetually on the up-swing since release of their *Will the Circle Be Unbroken* American Music anthology in the fall of 1972. Before the move and release of *Circle*, the group had settled into a lethargic, patronizing attitude while living in Los Angeles. Centered in Southern California from 1965 until 1971, they were inevitably regarded as a local indulgence. Headlining the Troubadour was the greatest goal available, and after more than five years as a supporting act, Los Angeles was justifiably tired of the whole thing.

With their successful rendition of Jerry Jeff Walker's "Mr. Bojangles" in 1970 and the *Uncle Charley* LP, Bill McEuen was able to parlay the victory into several national tours. That's when the mid-west and college market started to open up. Kansas City instantly fell in love with The Dirt Band, and quickly adopted them as a local super-group (along with Brewer and Shipley who now live back in K.C., their home town, after a brief unhappy Southern California residence).

Subsequent to the success of the single, and exposure through concerts in cities outside the West Coast, the relative



"Linda is cool," says Janna who has worked of and on with Ronstadt for years; "She's a food junkie, like me."

boredom and isolation of LA was more than the group could stand. "We had to get out of LA," says Jeff Hanna, a founding member and lead singer, writer and guitarist for the group. "LA would have buried us had we stayed. Moving to Colorado in 1971 meant a chance to experiment, mature." The band had played to enthusiastic crowds in Denver and Boulder during those early tours and relocating in Colorado was an obvious answer to the most immediate problem, L.A.

"Even now we're pretty much taken for granted in Los Angeles," John relents bitterly. "Six months ago we played the Troubadour, our first time back in our home town in almost two years. And this review comes out that read in terms of 'Nothing's changed since you saw them here last week folks'."

Colorado challenged the act and seeded an entire new perspective. The geographical transition brought an immediate host of fresh, attentive new faces to the front of Dirt Band stages at a time when they needed encouragement. Full time exposure to the rural landscape and rustic lifestyle as is the way in the small towns throughout the Rocky Mountain state while off the road, was almost therapeutic. Life in the Rockies for the Dirt Band was the personification of all the things that the band stood for conceptually. In effect, they were walking it like they were talking it. Consequently the group started to become a reality for the first time.

When they settled into their respective wood-eared communities, Jim & Jeff in Evergreen, John in Golden, Jimmie Fadden and Bill McEuen in

Aspen, they promptly realized thousands of young people, artists, poets and just ordinary people had come to the state from places like New York, Chicago, San Francisco (particularly the Bay Area) and Boston for basically the same reason the Dirt Band left LA; they couldn't make it in the big city. The sixties didn't provide all the answers for the 'children of the Sunset Strip' and when the spirit of the 60's social movement died at the closing of the decade, large segments of the street population uprooted themselves like modern-day pilgrims. Without even a column inch of national media haza-gaza, suntanned, blue-jeaned land-poets instinctively gathered in communities like those in which the Dirt Band

reside. It wasn't long before the new citizens of the Idaho Springs and Castle Creek claimed the group for their own. The Dirt Band reflected the Colorado locals' consciousness and became somewhat of a natural resource in short order. "The people who came here didn't want to foster another Sunset Strip, Haight-Ashbury or East Village" John says protectively. "This is not a crashpad society, people work and are constructive here. We have fun and are forced to pay taxes like people everywhere. But we're living and raising our children in an atmosphere that best reflects the way we think and interact."

*I've got ripplin water to wake me
to the mornin' my woman in love/
and tall pine trees are pointin' us
easily to heaven above
Blue spruce flamin' on the grade
in the evening takes the chill away
fine/
Cut the telephone line and the
story's the same.
There's a worn red chair by the
window that we found at a sale
down the way/when some old
woman said they needed more
room for the winter/
The people like pullin out the
stuffin when they sit down, so
passes the time/
Cut the telephone line and the
story's the same.***

The lyrics from "Ripplin Waters," one of two Ibbotson titles on *Dream* go a long way to describe the effect country life with a new wife and child has had. Jim lives just up the hill from Jeff Hanna, off a one-lane road that provides the only access to the dozens of homes in the hills above Evergreen, a typical Colorado mountain community. Each dwelling is separated by pine trees and variable amounts of land. Evergreen is about thirty miles from the outskirts of Denver, a distance of little significance by LA standards, but a mile up on the Eastern slope of the Continental Divide, isolated by endless canyons and never-ending mountain ranges rippling across the state in every direction, thirty miles is more like a hundred. The topography rarely allows for the large valleys or plateaus a city like Denver needs to develop, and thus insures places like Evergreen a certain degree of freedom from rapid population growth and industrial development (although some remote areas have ben

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penetrated by mining and oil interests, severely in a few cases) "And most big city people can't take the winters here," McEuen smugly muses.

Except for Highway 74 which runs through "downtown" Evergreen, the bulk of the city's population lives in these mountains and foothills. Before winding your way into town, you'll pass Kerr Gulch, various signs signaling one *Historical Point of Interest* after another bikers, hikers, and at least two large dogs per human. Coasting into what little there is of a business district, everything starts to resemble sections of Southern California's Topanga Canyon, a 20 mile crevice that slices through the Santa Monica Mountains from the Pacific Ocean to the San Fernando Valley. Leather work and hand-crafts of all description are available from colorful wooden structures managed by persons or couples (usually the latter) who manufacture much of the goods traded. There's the town's record shop, Blue Spruce, which stocks your Nektars and ZZ Tops, but you'll also find them equally well-supplied with the Ferlin Husky catalog plus the latest Loretta Lynn and Mickey Gilley Product. The restaurants are warm with that "grandma's kitchen" motif, and flea markets outnumber gas stations. This time of year you'll find small signs tacked up all over town announcing the forthcoming rodeo, and somehow the people who live here really are different.

After admitting this to be the lifestyle it is, projecting the Nitty Gritty Dirt Band into a role similar to one the Beach Boys held with respect to Southern California's *gotta take that one last ride* 60's consciousness is not difficult. The Beach Boys spoke of endless permissive teenage girls, the beach and cars that did 300 miles an hour (not necessarily in that order). Similarly, the Dirt Band are reflecting the casual tide of the mid-seventies with dialogue addressing itself to subject matter like, "get out the fiddle, rosin up the bow, there's gonna be some music and I hope it ain't slow."

The words may be different, but the Dirt Band's message is the same as the Beach Boys: they want us to assume a more simplistic existence, begin to enjoy the basics that life in all its variations has to offer. They're promoting a good-time attitude through their songs and music as did the Beach Boys, and quite frankly, they're providing an escape for the snow-topped mountainless, pine treeless, ski resortless urban congestion the rest of this nation is all about. I for one, would rather not think of the whole world as my personal ghetto, and I'm buying the winter world of love distraction the Dirt Band is selling.

In many ways the Colorado scene as described by the Dirt Band is a more accessible one than the California surf-scene. The people really do look dramatically healthier here, even in Denver. They're easy-going and personable on first encounter. (Remember, not everyone in Burbank knew how to surf during that craze, but even Long Islanders have a clue as to what it's like to be healthy, honest and relate to friends and family intimately.) When the Dirt Band describe the mountains and forests of their Colorado Disneyland your imagination is provoked far beyond the random adventure sunveiled in "Surfin' Safari." Many elements have culminated over the years to define the Nitty Gritty Dirt Band as the distinctive, individual purposeful act they now are. *Dream* is the first of what will be a series of very big, very popular albums for a group that's been headed to the top since its inception back in 1965.

NGDB's 'Dream': complete, rewarding



DREAM
The Nitty Gritty Dirt Band
United Artists UA-LA 469 G

By MARTIN CERF

Dream is not a concept album in the traditional sense. There's no story-line here like in *Tommy* or *Godspell* or *Jesus Christ, Superstar*. There is, however, a subtle theme that intertwines throughout which, not unlike the Moody Blues' *Days of Future Past*, connects each track or segment by way of musical sugues, or sound effects. A case could be made for the lyrical relationships one song bears to another, but not a thoroughly convincing one.

Opening the first side is random chiming from old Big Ben. No sooner does the clock strike nine and the record succumbs to a taste of the ill-fated Wind Harp of New England. You recall perhaps, four sides of Wind Harp static United Artists released three years ago (The Wind Harp is a gigantic wooden structure positioned atop a remote mountain in Vermont in such a way as to create "cosmic sound" when wind rushes through its two-story high strings, which are more like Ma Bell's cable).

The Wind Harp buzz fades away into the never-never land it came from, and at last *Dream's* real introduction, an instrumental segment which showcases John McEuen's mandolin and banjo expertise. McEuen meshes well with Jeff Hanna and Jim Ibbotson's acoustic lead and rhythm phrasing while Jimmie Fadden cuts in and out with his trade-marked harp brilliance.

Threatening thunder-claps clash starkly with the light chirping of morning sparrows follow as we're led into the first vocal. Jimmy Driftwood's "Battle of New Orleans" has long been required material in performance for The Dirt Band, with a single version of the song pulled from *Star and Stripes Forever*, the group's live double album of last year. This time, they've rearranged Johnny Horton's 1959 hit in a way that establishes the song as the Dirt Band's own. Syncopated acoustic guitar riffs against a half-spoken, half-sung lead vocal by Jim and Jeff is surprisingly effective. Especially so as Ibbotson injects an extra heavy dose of his nasal "Kershaw-ish" tone for emphasis. There is fiddle, mandolin, and just enough electricity here to get off even the most skeptical.

Bagpipes(!) lead out of "New Orleans," although not without further input from Thunder City and a chirp or two from the Dirt Band aviary. "Bayou Jubilee" is next. Sadly, this is the only Jeff Hanna tune on *Dream*. Indeed it's one of the LP's highlights; a rockin' rave-up that weds a square dance with the surfer stomp ("Grandma's in the corner, checkin' it too, she's got her own version of the Cajun Boogaloo"). Hanna's lead guitar and vocal reveals

once and for all this man's commitment to old Bobby Fuller records.

There's no Audio Fidelity excerpts between "Jubilee" and "Hey Good Lookin'." Certainly a major contender for *Dream's* next 45 (in which case a little more AM bottom would be nice) this track will be the album's most-played tune if only for the Linda Ronstadt vocal. She sings two-part harmony with Jeff on this Hank Williams' standard. Jeff and Linda together do for the organic in-crowd what Mick & Carley did for the mondo-multitudes with "You're So Vain." Raw rockabilly; Charlie Feathers sides were consulted.

"Hey Good Lookin'" is much too brief for me. It's followed by a banjo solo interlude from John McEuen that begins as a seventeenth-century music-box exercise, progressing soon into a clever five string Koto imitation. The transition is more than John can handle and half-way through he stops to catch his breath and quickly blurt out a line in Japanese ("Omoshiroi Desune?", translated, "Isn't it fun?"), obviously for the benefit of the Dirt Band's thousands of fans in the East (Nagasaki, not New Haven).

flawless and very original, the lyrics naively honest and vividly symbolic. The words are personal and indulgent, but in a way that allows one to project into the scene ("The closest I've been to my family for days is my music"). Ibbotson's vocal prowess here is so fine, pretty, but not sweet.

Next is "(All I Have To Do Is) Dream," the current single. This Everly Bros. hit written by Bordieaux Bryant, was first a hit in 1958, but not since that time has the title received the face lift it's long needed to earn a Seventies audience. Like everything else The Dirt Band is doing these days, "Dream's" arrangement is flawless with Jim and Jeff's two-part harmony proving once more their's is a highly rare vocal marriage.

J.D. Souther's "Mother Of Love" was included on *Dream* by arrangement with Linda Ronstadt. Both the Dirt Band and Linda wanted to cut this Souther tune, and "When Will I Be Loved." So rather than compete with one another, they decided to each cut one of the titles. While "Mother Of Love" doesn't sit as well compositionally with *Dream's* other



• Jim Ibbotson, Jimmie Fadden, Jeff Hanna and John McEuen aren't the old men the derelicts pictured on their past album covers made them out to be. (Age range, 26-28).

A brief pause, then another ad lib line from John that brings us to Jimmie Fadden's only composition on *Dream*; "Daddy Was A Sailor." Like "The Fish Song" from *Uncle Charlie*, Fadden shows us how well he can weave a folksy-tale in song—this time he's singing the praises of a father's greatest gift to a son: "Something that he gave me, pleases all the little girls." A recorded version of those porno Popeye comic books found at the Midway in Long Beach, California or various parts of Jacksonville.

The last six or eight minutes of side one involves a series of musical and sound effects that work quite honestly within context. (Even so, some application of razor blade would have helped.)

The majority of sound effects are found on side one, although side two is not without its share. Leading into one of *Dream's* two Jim Ibbotson songs, is the sound of what was meant to be a "babbling brook." Unfortunately, compressed and pressed up on plastic as records are, rushing water sounds more like the trickling of department store urinals. Regardless, you get the point, the stage is set for another of *Dream's* big treats, "Ripplin' Waters."

Ibbotson has the potential to be a truly great song writer, his melodies are

titles, it does have its place on the record as the hard-rock number of the set.

There's a dialogue-to-banjo seque driving us to the final track, "Joshua, Come Home," a reggae song written by Ibbotson and the only track recorded outside Colorado (at Shelter's Tulsa studio). Leon Russell is featured on keyboards. There's an involved combined fiction/non-fiction story that accompanies the song, but it's a great sound anyway. "Joshua" is more evidence of the eclecticism the band is capable of handling.

Dream closes with more thunder which finally yields some heavy rain and the neglected Wind Harp manages one last pitiful plea for recognition. In all fairness, we must acknowledge these and all of *Dream's* sound effects, because they truly are pleasant in context, no matter how awful sounding when described.

In sum, *Dream* is an album that will make you happy and you'll want to play it over and over. (When's the last time you owned such a record?) The Nitty Gritty Dirt Band, are first class, and you could look all year and still fail to produce a more complete and rewarding album as *Dream*. Worth every dime it'll cost you, friends.

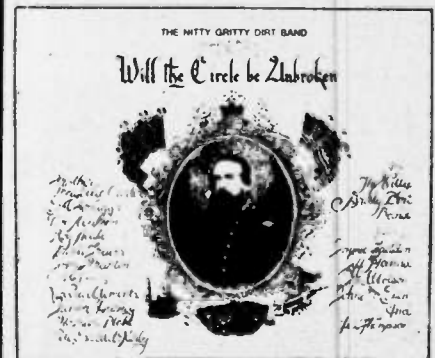
THE VISUAL GRAPH

COMPILED FOR OUR STORY BY L.A. WRITER JEFF WALKER, ATTEMPTS TO CONSOLIDATE MUCH OF THE DIRT BAND'S HISTORICAL DATA, WHICH DATES ALL THE WAY BACK TO 1964'S NEW COAST TWO THAT FEATURED JEFF HANNA AND BRUCE KUNKEL.

An exhausting procedure it would be listing in paragraph form the ten year history of The Nitty Gritty Dirt Band and various splinter groups and solo artists whose careers are directly related. Over the years they've been affiliated with and/or an important part of the careers of Jackson Browne (once a member of the group), Linda Ronstadt, Michael Nesmith, Poco, The Eagles, Kenny Loggins and many others.

Jeff Hanna, Jim Ibbotson, John McEuen and Jimmie Fadden as individual musicians are among the most accomplished in the nation. They're featured on countless recordings outside their own, recordings by John Denver, Greg Allman and Dickie Betts, as well as the recent hits "Wildfire" by Michael Murphey and Linda Ronstadt's "When Will I Be Loved."

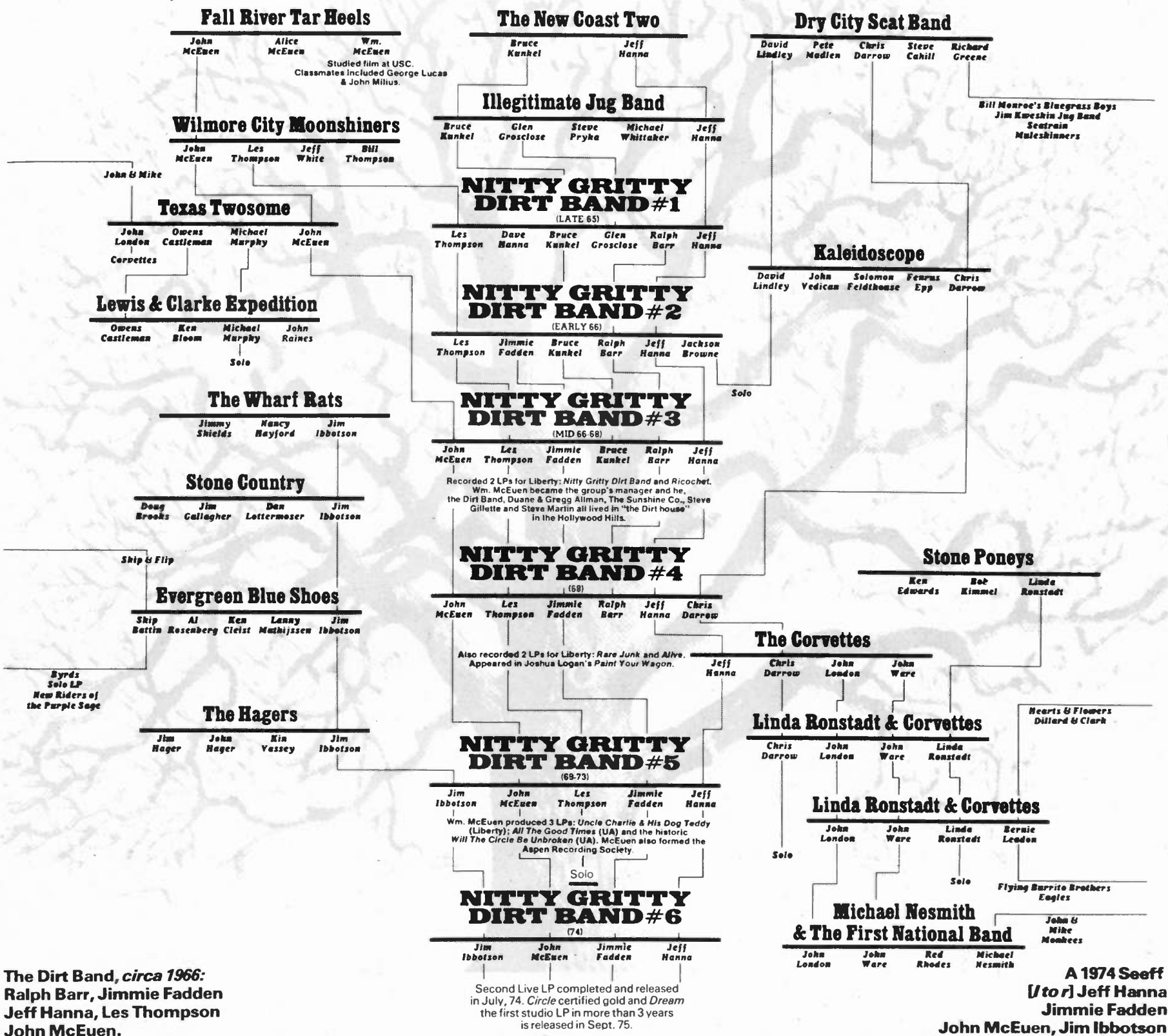
Their 1972 release of "Will The Circle Be Unbroken" sparked new mass interest in traditional American music forms and even produced the first gold album for Maybelle Carter, Earl Scruggs, Doc Watson, Roy Acuff and others. The Nashville Tennessean called it, "The most important event in the history of Nashville."



They've released nine LPs as the Dirt Band to date including their latest *Dream*. "Mr. Bojangles," "Some Of Shelly's Blues," "Buy For Me The Rain," "House At Pooh Corner" and now "(All I Have To Do Is) Dream" have all been big national or regional hit tunes by the group. It's an impressive list of credentials that we're finally catching up with.

AN ILLUSTRATED GUIDE TO DIRT BAND HISTORY

Photograph Record/Sept., 75/Page 13



Bill McEuen

Norman Seeff

The Dirt Band Sound: 10 Years in Rehearsal

Somehow, almost instinctively, The Nitty Gritty Dirt Band seem an act who's time has come around. Not just because *Dream*, their first studio album in more than three years, is such a great recording by everyone's definition. And not because their concerts have ripened, amassing a following that screams *demand*. It's not because the group members are in with the in-crowd, having played on the current hits by Linda Ronstadt, Michael Murphey and John Denver. And it isn't even because their latest single "(All I Have To Do Is) Dream" (already a breakout hit in many parts of the country, particularly the Mid-Atlantic region) that the Dirt Band are now headline news.

The Nitty Gritty Dirt Band have molded, shaped, perfected a style and format as identifiable and enthusiastic vocally as early Everly Bros. or Buffalo Springfield. They've sifted and refined their ranks to the point where The Dirt Band in 1975 are sterling tribute to the American group concept. The four individual members' respective musical skills are so keenly professional, each can work a solo comfortably. Command of a vast array of instruments has earned them well deserved respect within the industry as well. John McEuen for example, has almost single-handedly taken the banjo out of the 'Turkey In The Straw' vernacular adding it to the nation's pop air on a regular basis. "It will never mean cornflakes again," McEuen chuckles.

This act is rather like the Fantastic Four of Marvel Comics fame, each employs a very personal and unique magic at just the right time, one backing the up the other simultaneously.

This is not a sound or concept conjured up since the last record but more a technique arrived at after ten years weathering the kind of growing pains which usually split a group. All the ex-

perience and time together has had the opposite effect, as the Dirt Band are now literally dripping with class and taste that even they wouldn't dare suggest. And that takes them right out of the Mattel league a name like The Nitty Gritty Dirt Band might even still imply to the uneducated. "We thought of changing the name over the years," admits John McEuen. "We considered a contraction like 'Dirt Band' or 'N.G.D.B.', always we ended up sticking with the original complete, often embarrassing stumbly name. As we look back, we're not so sure we want to change it anymore. We were proud and always happy with what we were doing at the time we did it. Even in the Jug Band days, that's honestly where we wanted to be at that time. To change our name now would be almost like denying the past.

But compared to The Dirt Band of 1965, this group is as different as any, and for those who have put them off in the past, *Dream* is going to be an awfully great realization. 1975 is indeed The Nitty Gritty Dirt Band's year. In this time of uncontrolled Bicentennial Americana schmaltz that's sweeping the country, a group like the Dirt Band who thoroughly know and champion the musical heritage of the US (while injecting a little culture of their own) seem particularly well endowed. "We're thinking of cutting a Dirt Band interpretation of 'America The Beautiful'," says producer Bill McEuen. "It's really a great song musically you know, and I know we could go a long way to bring it to new ears with our arrangement capabilities...it should be the National Anthem, not the forgetably violent 'Star Spangled Banner'."

Something is going on here, and that something is tremendous music, classic playing. "Jeff Hanna, Jim Ibbotson, John McEuen and Jimmie Fadden will become familiar individual personalities to the public one day in the future," predicts United Artists Records president Mike Stewart, the man

McEuen says took a chance on The Dirt Band and their very expensive, esoteric, now gold 'Circle' project. "He may not have the hits Columbia does," says McEuen, "But he's

made a contribution to the business giving back some of what's taken out.

The individual Dirt Band members may never become the McCartneys or Lennons of tomorrow as Stewart suggests. But for now it's time to celebrate these guys by another name; The Nitty Gritty Dirt Band are a good time, and in times like these we're damn lucky to have 'em around folks.

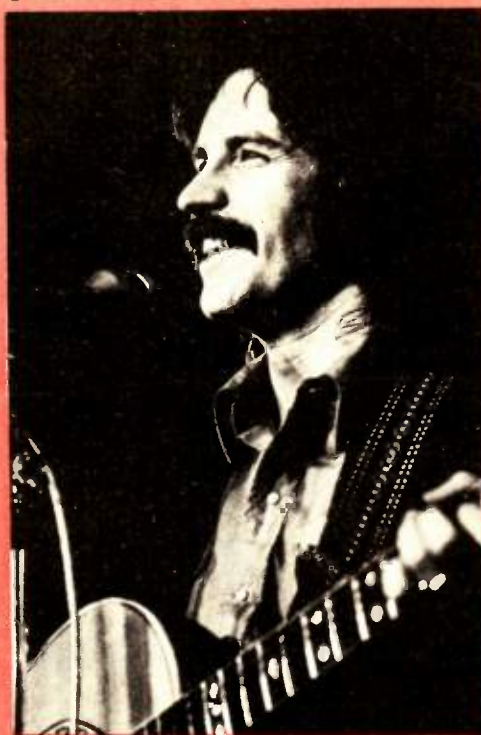
JOHN MCEUEN



JIMMIE FADDEN



JEFF HANNA



JIM IBBOTSON



DIRT BAND DISC DATA



SINGLES

- "Buy For Me The Rain" (Liberty 55948)/Feb., 1967
- "Truly Right" (Liberty)/June, 1967
- "Shadow Dream Song" (Liberty)/Sept. 1967
- "Some Of Shelly's Blues" (Liberty 56134)/June, 1969
- "Rave On" (Liberty)/May, 1970
- "Mr. Bojangles" (Liberty 56197)/Oct., 1970
- "House At Pooh Corner" (United Artists 50769)/June, 1971
- "Some Of Shelly's Blues" (United Artists 50817)/August, 1971
- "Jambalaya" (United Artists 50890)/Oct., 1971
- "Cosmic Cowboy" (United Artists 263)/April, 1973
- "Battle of New Orleans" (United Artists 544)/July 1974
- "(All I Have To Do Is) Dream" (United Artists 655)/July, 1975

ALBUMS

- The Nitty Gritty Dirt Band (Liberty 7501)/Feb., 1967
- Ricochet (Liberty 7516)/June, 1967
- Rare Junk (Liberty 7611)/June, 1968
- Alivel (Liberty 7511)/Jan., 1969
- Uncle Charlie & His Dog Teddy (Liberty 7642)/Oct., 1970
- All The Good Times (United Artists 5553)/Feb., 1972
- Will The Circle Be Unbroken (United Artists 184)/Oct. 1972
- Stars & Stripes Forever (United Artists 0998)/July, 1974
- Dream (United Artists 469)/Sept., 1970

Bill McEuen & the Aspen Recording Society

Cataloging what the Nitty Gritty Dirt Band are or what they are not would be an incomplete essay if we failed to direct our attention to Bill McEuen, known on record as William E. *Presents*. He's been a non-performing extension of the group since the start, initially serving as the band's manager, later assuming production responsibilities as well. Aside from the Dirt Band association in the early days, Bill also managed the Hour Glass (later to become the Allman Bros.) and the Sunshine Company (who are best remembered for their 1967 regional hits "Happy" and "Back On The Street Again"). It would be equally delinquent of us to ignore Alice McEuen, Bill's story-book wife and closest link with the day to day reality of administrating the Aspen Recording Society, Bill's management firm which has grown far beyond its original function as production company for Dirt Band recordings. Like the Wilson's of Beach Boy fame, the McEuens are all involved in the business of The Nitty Gritty Dirt Band (even Mother McEuen) and that 'Family' trademark is visible on everything the McEuens touch. From the films Bill recently completed at San Francisco's Boarding House to the meticulous construction of the Dirt Band album graphics which some record company executives term "excessive".

The first album McEuen produced for the Dirt Band was *Uncle Charlie and his Dog Teddy* in 1970 (the record is but a few thousand short of gold award honors presently). He was also involved in that album's design which earned a grammy nomination the year following its release. Dean Torrance and his *Kittyhawk* Graphics together with Bill actually construct the cover designs and concepts from start to finish. McEuen packages are always fine pieces of art in themselves but usually very complicated, meaning expensive.

"Gotta give 'em more than just a piece of plastic," McEuen instructs. "If we expect upwards of seven dollars from people then we must make an effort to give a total presentation and that includes class visuals."

"The record companies really don't understand people like Bill McEuen," says Dean Torrance who's known Bill since the days when both the Nitty Gritty Dirt Band and Jan & Dean recorded for Liberty Records. "He's an idealist, a perfectionist, and he'd rather the end result be correct than worry about petty things like overtime charges. For the bottom-line people, maybe that's just not a realistic attitude." Torrance of course is in the same boat, for all the years that Jan & Dean recorded for Liberty, Dean, an accredited arts major, was never allowed near the art department. "They used to tell us 'get out of here kid, you make the records, we'll make the covers'." Since Dean began his second career, his album visuals have been nominated for Grammy awards three times, and he walked away with the 1971 top graphics award for his *Pollution* cover.

As for McEuen, the truth is perhaps he does care a little *too* much. The battle for art goes on, one decade after another, one generation to another, still society never accepts these people totally. What's particularly curious about Bill is his dual producer-manager relationships. He lives the records he produces in the studio (which incidentally he devotes a great deal of time creating, rarely releasing more than one in any



•Vasser Clemmets, Bill McEuen.

given eighteen month period.) Then, the paradox occurs when he encounters the record company(s) peddling his wares. "Here's the secret," Bill candidly explains, "I've learned to be schizophrenic...I'm two people. When I'm in Colorado in the studio that's one reality, back in Los Angeles, shuffling in and out of sales and promotion departments, that's another." McEuen is the kind of personal manager known in the business as 'a pest' and if you're an artist with something important to say, a person like Bill McEuen on your side is mandatory.

Like all the industry's best artist-managers, Bill McEuen is a motivator. He presents his product to the individuals whose job it is to get records in the stores, on the air, the talent exploited to the masses, and hopefully, turn a profit in the process. McEuen feels corporate presentation of the music is a necessity although a painful repetition which McEuen says always requires that he define objectively, in terms basic enough for indifferent ears to comprehend, just exactly who's gonna buy this piece of product and why. Since he's involved with the creation of the record he's selling, a defensive air is occasionally unavoidable for McEuen when he's challenged to respond to comments like, "the track's too long" or "you can't have a four color inner sleeve Bill" or even worse "I don't like it." Bill is the first to admit he really doesn't enjoy his 'persuasion' or 'tricking' function, even in the slightest. "But someone must be involved in the creation of radio spots, in-store displays, and all the paraphernalia which shapes the way audiences perceive an act."

Bill McEuen is interested in investigating an alternative to the way the record business functions today. He'd like to be a part of an independent company administrated by people with a common sensitivity, who would control the sales and distribution of the music, and eventually film that he and his company create. On the surface, this may seem an altruistic goal, but erecting another MCA is not the intention. "I want to start out slow, and small and keep

it that way. I'd like to sell records the way Vanguard and Elektra did when they began. Admittedly theirs was a small share of the market at inception, but they were still able to reach those people who cared for the tradition these Family-owned manufacturers were recording. Those early sales kept the company in business and —eventually what they were saying caught the masses."

Aspen Recording Society, the working title of McEuen's purported record company, is closer to becoming a reality than even those close to Bill realize. "I've been working with a number of artists many of whom live in and around the Aspen area; people like Buck Dean & the Buckin' Strings and Brian Bowers. These acts possess a tremendous amount of talent and originality, and I think they're ready to entertain thousands." Buck Dean and the Buckin' Strings has been described as an Allman Bros. who sings country ballads. Lead guitarist in the act is a one-time member of the loud, metallic Black Pearl from LA while the bass player once worked with George Shearing. Buck Deane, be warned, is a yodeler.

Brian Bowers commands an autoharp, which Bill is trying to capture on tape. Autoharp is nearly an impossible instrument to record correctly because of the unit's construction and variable playing technique. You can see where presentation of such slightly ephemeral product might fail to spur support from your Bob Crewe types. An alternative label with an alternative sales and distribution process theoretically would serve as means of an introduction to the public, and if the sales were as tangible as Bill says they will be, corporate objection to wholesale allocation of investment capital would be kept to a minimum by definition. "I don't expect the business to understand what we're doing in Colorado now, they don't need to. When it starts to sell, or we establish the demand, it'll be so logical they'll gladly pay us twice what we might have asked in the first place." Deane and Bowers are projects which Bill will pursue more intently later this year or early 1976. Meanwhile, three other acts have his immediate attention. Together, with the Dirt Band, Steve Martin, John Hartford and Morry Manseau are the Aspen Recording Society.

The Aspen Recording Society will be in a position to pursue the ideals to which it aspires more actively upon the completion of their recording facility which already serves as a complete mix-down and post production operation for the recording. McEuen and the Dirt Band have up till now done at the nearby Caribou and Applewood Sound studios.

Presently housed in a converted two bedroom \$100,000 family residence off Aspen's one and only golf course, the temporary home of "The Society" is already shaping up to be twice the service most studios provide. When completed next July at a location ten minutes outside Aspen, McEuen has visions of an audio showplace that he says will at least "break down the tradition that requires artists to cut in a back hole." In its final configuration, the Aspen studio is intended to be ideally suited for the recording of acoustic and classical music. There will be double glass windows that display views of the tree-lined, snow-capped environment that surrounds Aspen.

Steve Martin



Steve Martin is undoubtedly the best known, unknown comedian today. He's logged more than two-dozen Tonight Show appearances, spots on various network specials such as Lily Tomlin and Smothers Bros., national tours with John Denver, the Dirt Band and even Vegas with Roger Miller. McEuen describes Martin as a "TV Animal", who doesn't tell "jokes" as such; there aren't always *straight* and *punch* lines delivered in his dialog. Rather, Steve Martin is the "court jester", a clown, not always saying funny things as much as *doing* them.

On stage, he occasionally adopts *Groucho* nose and glasses while encircling his head with inflated balloons, as he slips into a pair of gigantic webbed

rubber feet, he explains to the audience in a serious tone that Steve Martin humor is not cheap or gimmicky. "I don't need to resort to the props and crutches other comics use to get a laugh." He's silly, but very accessible.

Martin's comedy is not to be pigeon-holed. His goofy antics are derivative of Jerry Lewis perhaps but served up in a 70s context, the parallel doesn't sustain itself. "The definition of my comedy is my act" says Martin, who will be a featured guest on an upcoming NBC John Denver Christmas Special. "Everything all put together is me. When it succeeds, it succeeds because I'm with it-with what I'm saying."

Bill McEuen is now completing Steve Martin's first LP, which as yet he's not placed with a major distributor. "We had a great deal with Geffen (Asylum), I thought," says McEuen, "But after we finalized our agreement, he (Geffin) somehow interpreted the Nitty Gritty Dirt Band and John Hartford to be part of Steve's deal. We gave him back his advance."

Whatever label the first Steve Martin LP (titled *I've Done Terrible Things To My Dog With A Fork*) ends up on, it will prove a long overdue property that the television masses will respond to in numbers only the tube generates [i.e. *Endless Summer*, *All In The Family*].

John Hartford

Hartford is another TV folkie, who like Steve Martin was a large part of the original *Smothers Brother's Show* and is best remembered for his composition "Gentle On My Mind", Glen Campbell's first hit outside the country market. Over the past six years he's recorded half-a-dozen LPs for RCA and Warner Bros., none of which sold well or even garnered much press coverage or radio play.

"Those LPs weren't really recorded or produced right," McEuen says of Hartford's previous releases. "We've just finished mastering a double LP that was recorded live at Kansas State. It's the culmination of John's last three years experience on the road and captures the integrity and scope of this artist whose contribution to acoustic music is vast. It could only have worked in the live setting we cut it in."

Morry Manseau

Like all the artists and musicians Bill McEuens is involved with, Morry has been a member of the family for many years now. Originally the leader of LA's Sunshine Company, Morry has withdrawn from the business at large since the band split in 1968. Aside from infrequent session dates and sporadic appearances with The Dirt Band, Morry elected to retain this low profile so that he might develop his writing and playing techniques on a full time basis these past seven years. (Not unlike

the self-induced exile Jackson Browne one committed himself to). "We've got 3/4's of an LP finished on Morry," McEuen reports. "Without this sounding pompous or pretentious, I know what we've captured on tape with Morry is truly dynamic. His sensitive acoustic guitar work combines with the deepest, richest, symbolic poetry ever recorded. Morry is a musical point of view projecting cinematic images with a guitar as a second voice."

Bobby Abrams gets all the way down to Memphis with ZZ Top WHO'S BUYING ALL THE ZZ TOP RECORDS?

They're grating, repetitious, hackneyed, and boring. They play material that's been done to death a thousand times. I certainly don't listen to them — does anybody?

— A leading rock critic

It's obvious that the above is representative of most of the media feelings about what is fast becoming the hottest concert act in America. Most critics, by now several years out of their rock and roll youth, are armchair experts on music. Few attend concerts, and most like their music to be mellow, soft, even insipid. I often wonder if a group like the Rolling Stones or the Doors, when starting out, would have been able to pierce this soporific stupor, or would they too be considered just another boogie band.

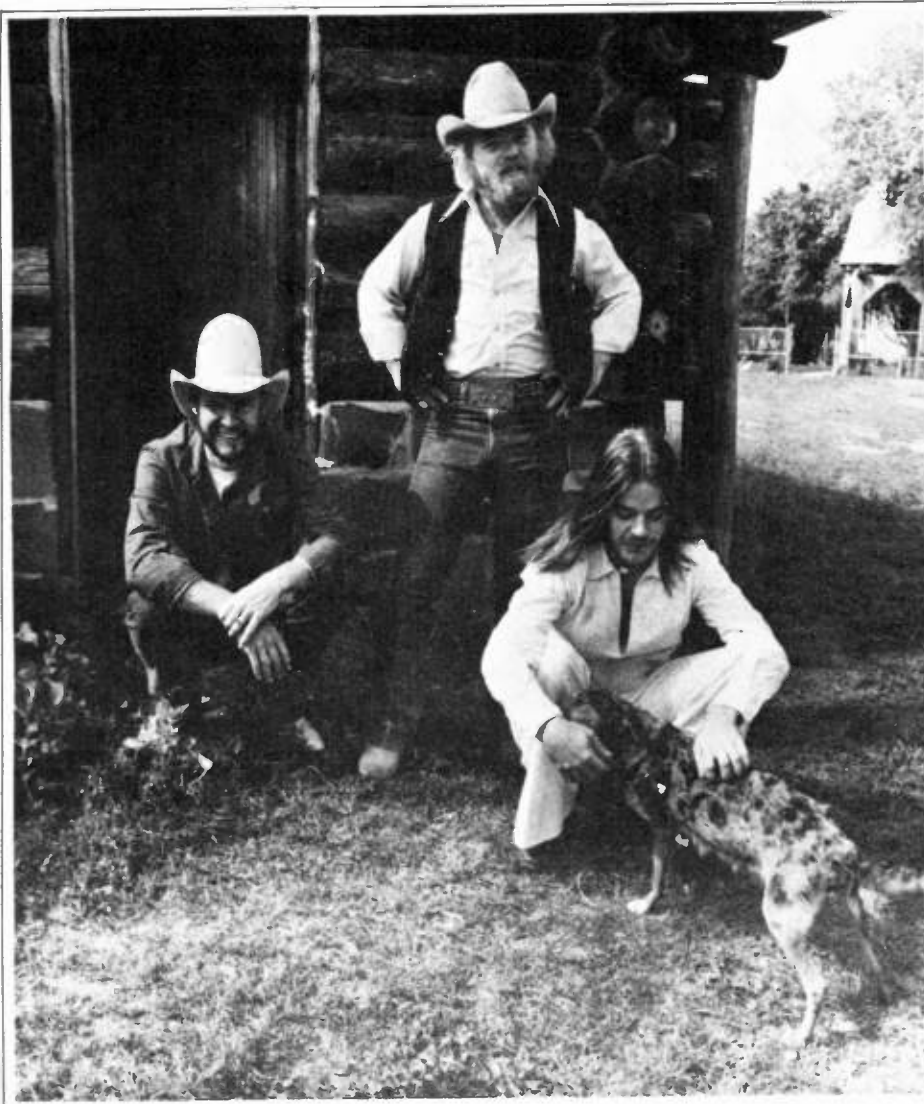
It's equally obvious that there is an audience in America that likes their music hot and heavy, loud and raucous. They are the offspring of what Nixon used to call "Middle America." Geographically, it excludes the northeast and the California media centers, although, I've been going to concerts here in Los Angeles lately where the cry to "boogie" has arisen. I travelled to Memphis to observe first hand what went on at a Z.Z. Top concert in one of their strongholds, for if nothing else, the Mid-South Coliseum in Memphis is the perfect place to observe this rampaging phenomenon.

The audience showed restrained enthusiasm as they sat through the opening act, Trooper, the latest discovery of Randy Bachman. But as the intermission lights were once again

dimmed, all sorts of cheering and stomping began, accompanied by the lighting of matches from all corners of the concert hall. From the opening strains of "Thunderbird," people were up on their chairs, hooting and shouting, dancing and swaying to the beat of these three pied pipers from Texas. Publicist Bob Small added, "Check the room out. There's never a dry pair of panties after they've finished their set." From the excitement levels of the crowd, I was forced to concur completely with his analysis.

They played a two-hour set, complete with two encores, and if it weren't for some local ordinance, they would've played longer. Material came from all four albums, and was often shaped into extended jams that never lost the interest of the dancing hordes. Bill Graham, who has promoted many Z.Z. dates, considers the Top one of the premier draws of all-time, as much for their professionalism, as for their talent. It was easy to see why. Though they brought the crowd to the rioting point often, they managed to maintain firm control, never allowing things to get out of hand. By cordially answering the crowd's demands for more, and then relating the reason why they couldn't just play on, they kept everyone satisfied. They are complete showmen, and I can see now why promoters like Graham are enamored of the group.

A group like Z.Z. Top will normally sell records to its concert audience, who are then able to relive the experience in the comfort of their homes, by listening to the record. However, with their latest album, *Fandango*, a subtle shift in marketing patterns has occurred. The rate of sales on this album makes it obvious that others are buying the Top; for the most part, consumers who probably have never bought this group before. Terry Manning, their engineer, feels that "they are being discovered, after five years, by the serious music fans, the ones whose collections encompass more than mere boogie. These albums are cut well, and more than noise is reproduced," taking a subtle swipe at some of the other groups who are often mentioned in the same breath as Z.Z. Top.



Total professionals, they have been in the business now for almost ten years, and in their own words, they play "music of all types that entertains. People spend a lot of money to go to a concert and we want them to have a good time. We'll do just about anything to get them off."

Lead guitarist and vocalist Billy ("Boogie, Billy" is the normal cry from their half-crazed fans) Gibbons has played for several years. His first real professional band was the moving Sidewalk, which he put together in 1965. They had two regional hits, "99th Floor" which was a breakout record in the South and "Need Me," a minor hit throughout Texas. During this period the group toured with Hendrix and once on the *Tonight Show* the master of electric guitar acknowledged freely that Billy was one of the best. It's important to remember this when you talk to people who are convinced that anyone could play Z.Z.'s material.

While the Moving Sidewalks were tearing up Houston, over in Dallas there was another group tearing up the crowds—the American Blues. The one and only album they did for Karma Records would be enough to give you a good reading on this band, but if you've never had the opportunity to listen to this outburst of overt psychedelia, I should add that the group name referred to the fact that the band members had dyed their hair blue! Although never more commercial success than a solid bar band, they did release a follow-up album on Uni and a single, "Melted Like Snow" on MGM.

Around 1969 both groups were going through some changes. Gibbons had already gotten with manager/producer Bill Ham and formed a group called Z.Z. Top, which released a single, "Miller's Farm" b/w "Salt Lick." The rudiments of the sound were there, but it wasn't until Frank Beard joined them on drums and later brought in his old bassist from the American Blues, Dusty Hill, that things started cooking.

Like most of the Texas bands that they grew up with, Z.Z. were raised on the blues and taught to get an audience off. And it's rough getting your chops together in some of those beer halls, where the patrons would just as soon shoot you, as listen to your music. This is an area of rough trade and a raw, searing sound has been a part of the music of several other musicians who've come out of that scene, like the Winter Bros., Janis and Doug Sahm. So instead of going into a studio with a six-figure contract, they went on the road, playing every one-stop town in southeast Texas. They particularly remember with fondness the town of Nacogdoches, Texas where they were really loved and go to the head of the class if you can even pronounce the name of that town, let alone place it geographically.

After a year of this, having won the "Entertainers of the Year Award" given by the southeast Texas Chamber of Commerce, they went into the studio and produced their first album. *First Album* is fairly typical guitar stuff, and on the basis of this album, you'd be forced to conclude they were just another run-of-the-mill blues band. Which is what most critics concluded, forever consigning Z.Z. Top to the throwaway pile. From this album emerged two numbers, "Somebody Else Been" Shaking Your Tree" and "Brown Sugar." The former, which was a minor hit, could have been an outtake of Creedence's, for it had all of Fogerty's patented moves, except for an overwhelming commercial feel. The latter is a real blues number, including a run of notes that would make Eric Clapton proud, moving right into a total cop of Hendrix's "Purple Haze."

But that was not unusual, for they were still a new band, and Hendrix had probably been the most accessible source for Gibbons.

Slow album sales did not faze the group in the least, because they had oriented themselves around a different objective. Some groups make albums to support tours, to even enable them to tour, or just because they like the feel of a studio. This was a group distinctly uncomfortable in that situation. They just kept right on doing it, playing every mud-filled festival in an ever-increasing radius from Houston.

The second album, *Rio Grande Mud*, could be described as more of the same, yet they were going about building a group identity. They started to emerge as one of those Southern boogie bands that were totally mystifying the intellectuals in the record business. Wasn't it bad enough that Grand Funk was a monster act, derived as much from the showmanship of manager Terry Knight as from the ripple-and-reds music that group played? Moreover, this was a music that critics traditionally have been unable to relate to—it asked for participation from the audience, to move, to groove, to get high and boogie. As long as they were merely a Southern concert act, it was easy to categorize them and ignore them. Superior Easterners were confident in thinking of Z.Z. as a bunch of Texas hicks. However, a funny thing happened on the way to the third album.

They had played as an opening act to the Rolling Stones in several parts of the country during the 1972 tour. This gave them the added exposure they needed and the Stones audience was ripe pickings for them, as in some respects, they played a similar style of music. They got rave reactions from the crowd, if not the critics, creating a demand for their product, so it was not unusual that there was a hit single on *Tres Hombres*, a year after its initial release.

They were a group that by now warranted radio attention and "La Grange" was just the right tune, a mere re-working of the Slim Harpo ditty, done also by



•BILLY GIBBONS



•DUSTY HILL



•FRANK BEARD

Neal Preston

"We'll do anything to get the audience off"

the Stones, "Hip Shake." It was the impetus to give them their first gold record, and further, to enable them to start selling albums. After all, despite the lack of media coverage, someone must be buying those records. The trio is cognizant of the problem. In order to survive, they needed to be playing a lot of live dates, and that's the bedrock of their success. "We're still learning about a studio, and we're anxious to learn. But it's a time-consuming process, so we're still concentrating on what we know best," is the way Gibbons put it, when questioned about the group's recording techniques. He added that he was very heartened by the fact that their fans were very patient, as it has been two years between the release of *Tres Hombres* and the current *Fandango*, which is basically a live album.

I spoke to manager Bill Ham about the trials and tribulations of this group. "It's been frustrating, because, you know, I've worked with them and believed in them for so long. I always knew it was just a question of time. I'd watch as Bill and Dusty would whip up an audience with their banter back and forth, as Frank kept the beat going. I've watched them blow much bigger groups off a stage, and yet, the critics



"If all major rock artists and their respective management were as cooperative and pleasant to deal with as ZZ Top, I'd put up with all this madness forever."

-Bill Graham

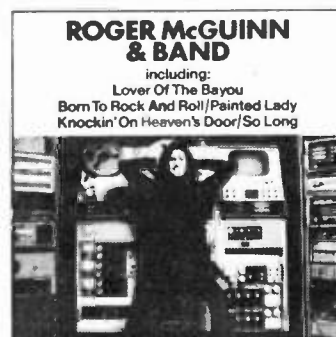
would always be putting us down. So we stopped playing to the critics. Every time we would get discouraged, we'd go to another gig and the crowd's reaction would renew our faith. I think *Fandango* is

finally the album to do it, to tie it all together, to enable the group to garner all the success they so richly deserve."

Off the *Fandango* album is what appears to be another monster single, "Tush," which is a classic in this or any other genre. It's got catchy, tight accessible lyrics ("I'm going downtown, looking for some tuch...") plus the rave-up killer guitar work that is this group's trademark. It has forced many people to take another look at this group, which is now sneaking up on huge success (my prediction is that by the release of the next album, they will be one of the superstar groups) yet no national publication has reviewed the album. Not only that, but it's a fairly solid album, one that cannot be easily dismissed by the snobbery that opened this article. Besides "Tush" there is a very credible and enjoyable version of "Jailhouse Rock" done in the Jeff Beck vein, the live "Backdoor Medley" that shows the excitement the group generates live, the funny and very bluesy "Blue Jean Blues" and their concert opener, "Thunderbird." Dusty talks about their growing popularity in these terms: They know we're not bullshit. It takes a long time for the technique to show through." It has taken a long time, but I think their technique is showing through, and 1975 will be their year.



Roger McGuinn Has Painted His Masterpiece.



"Roger McGuinn and Band"
On Columbia Records and Tapes.

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When was the last time you heard a rock musician admit to Lou Christie as a personal fave - rave ...?

THE DWIGHT TWILLEY BAND

By KEN BARNES

Once in a while a single hits the radio and hooks you immediately. They come out of nowhere, seemingly—happens to me every so often. Sometimes they're smash hits ("Mr. Tambourine Man," "You Really Got Me"), sometimes they don't quite make it but manifest themselves on the radio just often enough to enthrall ("I Can't Explain," "Eighteen"). "I'm on Fire" is an almost-smash (#16 for two weeks in a row at press time), with all the attributes of an out-of-the-blue classic, being the debut disk for the Dwight Twilley Band.

As for the Dwight Twilley Band itself, I had no idea at all. Others were piqued by the mystery of their arrival as well. They'd tell me, "I hear there's four guys in the group all named Dwight Twilley," or alternatively "Nobody in the band is named Dwight Twilley—it's a pseudonym, like Jethro Tull." At least, with "I'm on Fire" appearing on Shelter Records, no one tried to tell me it was Leon Russell's latest disguise.

Well, the actual roster of the Dwight Twilley Band is Dwight Twilley (keyboards/vocals) and Phil Seymour (drums/vocals, though both play other instruments). They use a pickup bass player for TV and live spots, and a longtime friend, Bill Pitcock, handles the guitars and is an integral part of the band, but the nucleus is Dwight & Phil.

"Most bands go through a cycle of trying to do their thing live and play other people's music, and then throw in a few songs of their own," says Phil. "But we've always been different—it's kind of intangible. Two people working for seven years—we couldn't go out and play that music live and we didn't particularly care to. We just wanted to record it."

Dwight: "We've always been doing it, not necessarily in official studios, but trying to make pop records. We'd get any studio time we could, we even built our own little demostudio in Tulsa. When we first started we used cassettes, a little mono, and jump back and forth, ping-pong 'em together, and do these little concept albums when we were 16. Then we went out to Nashville (in 1969), got a producer (Ray Harris by name) interested in us. But we never had a record deal."

"He really influenced us a lot. He was an old downhome funky rock & roll producer, which was nothing you could come into contact with in Tulsa," Dwight adds.

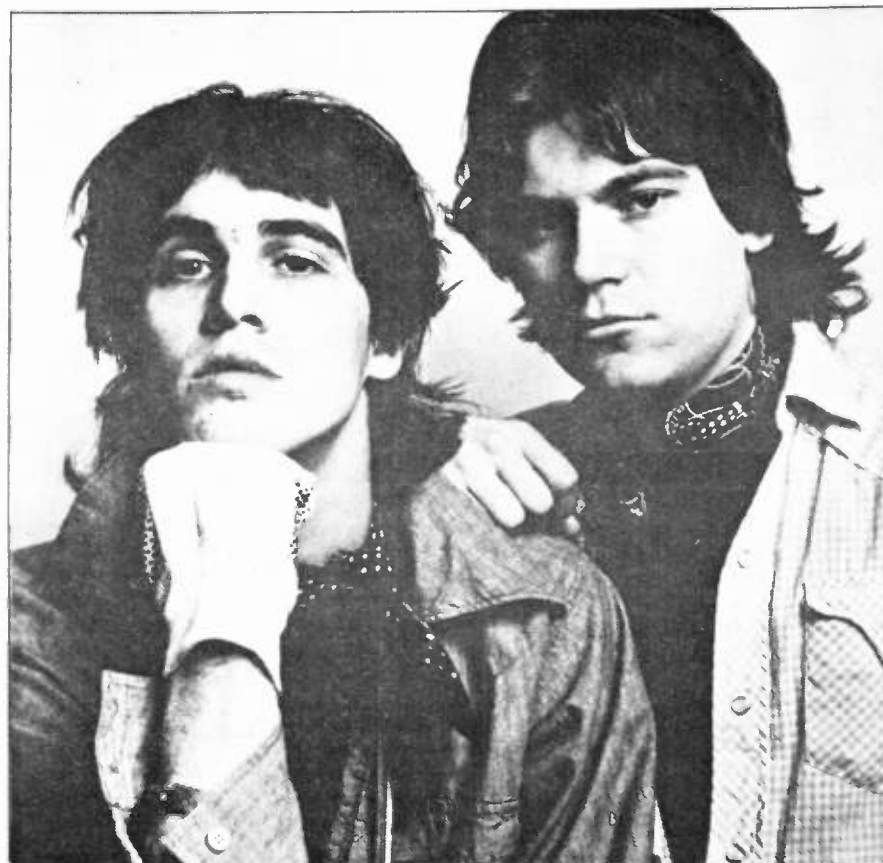
"Originally we started with acoustic guitars," Phil relates, "kind of folksy, and he'd say, 'Y'all sing like pussies!'"

"So we ended up going back into rock & roll," finishes Dwight.

Their pile of studio demos and homemade tapes mounted, but nothing transpired. Phil then joined a band called El Rocho, who cut an album for Columbia around 1972.

"I just joined a band for something to do. But all this time Dwight and I were still together—he went off to college..."

"I started a band with Bill Pitcock," says Dwight. It was called 1950. Phil then left El Rocho just before they went into the studios. "Which caused quite a



"We just like those pop-sounding records"

problem, explaining to them after they'd got a record deal about this thing with Dwight...I tried to explain it to them, but I couldn't flat-out tell them he wrote ten times better than any of them. They see now. They broke up. They were an excellent rock & roll band, the best bar band you could imagine, but on record...enough about El Rocho."

Phil joined up with Dwight again. They continued working with Harris, but he became involved in a tangled lawsuit with Playboy Records. So they split, eventually landing in L.A. where through tortuous machinations one of their demo tapes reached Shelter, immediately impressing Denny Cordell and publishing chief Don Williams. Ironically, though Dwight, Phil and Shelter all hail from Tulsa, the label was originally one of their last choices.

"Yeah, well, they were in Tulsa," Dwight begins. "We knew some of the people, we'd been in their studios there," Phil picks it up. "But it was just the 'groovy' thing that everyone did there, and we just didn't want to be a part of that." Certainly the Dwight Twilley Band's pop-rock approach is far removed from the Leon Russell/Mary McCreary Shelter axis, but the company's commitment seems all-out, especially with a hit under their belts. Don Williams in particular raves about Dwight's writing ("He's got everything taped for the last seven years, hundreds of songs, some great stuff, all organized in his head. He'll sit down at the piano, play bits and pieces of a four-year-old song, then a tune he just wrote yesterday, until something clicks") and Dwight and Phil's near-telepathic studio rapport ("When they do their vocal overdubs, they don't even listen to the original vocal track—they just add it on to the instrumental and it all fits.

The Beatles and Elvis overshadow other influences, but more detailed questioning into Dwight and Phil's listening preferences proved illuminating. "We just like those real pop-sounding records," says Dwight. "We play singles at home as a hobby. We're not really collectors, but we have piles of 'em at home." At times, we get these play orders—people come over and we've just gotta play them these five singles..."

"Currently our favorite thing is no one," says Phil proudly. "The farther you get into your own individual music the more disoriented you get towards other music, and especially current things," Dwight comments. "The only thing you get into is your roots."

Like what, I ask, already immoderately cheered at finding musicians who don't swear by John McLaughlin or Albert King. A chorus of titles and artists followed— "He's So Fine," "Oh Pretty Woman," "You've Lost that Lovin' Feelin'," Bee Gees, Beach Boys— "Surfin' USA," we're into that right now—Gene Pitney, "It's Not Unusual"—and most sublime of all, "Lightning Strikes!"

It was no accident, then, that the "I'm on Fire" single came out well in advance of an album (now scheduled for mid/late August). "What we're really into is singles," says Phil. "Hopefully that's our strong point. Since we've been together we've had an interest in Top 40 AM singles. We'll have another single out before the album."

That record (its release delayed owing to "Fire's" persistent upward motion) is called "Shark." You could call that timely. You could also call it opportunistic, exploitative, or worse, though Dwight wrote it before even

hearing of *Jaws*. It's a concupiscent teenage romance number with a catchy "shark in the dark" refrain. Again it's got that hard-rock crypto-boogie sound dominant, with a blithe mid-60's-style bridge to balance matters, and some vicious guitar at song's end.

A venture to Shelter's Hollywood headquarters to hear "Shark" quickly turned into an hourlong sampling of album tracks and even rough demos. Frankly, I was bowled over. I liked the single, of course, but had no real idea of the band's versatility, how they'd handle a slow melodic number for instance, whether there was any enduring substance there at all. But the tracks I heard were magnificently varied, more pounding rockers, some lovely tunes, echoes of folk-rock and the Beatles and a dozen other fleeting similarities, adding up to the most impressive array of originality I've heard in quite a while. Although the songs were different, they shared a certain quality of complexity without complication—the music stayed simple and to the point but each tune would seem to go through any number of distinct phases, sounding like four songs spliced together yet thoroughly unified at the same time. It was fascinating, something like the Raspberries but without that constant self-consciousness and homage to roots, an innocent sophistication of sorts—look out especially for "You Were So Warm," "England," and "Just Like the Sun."

"We believe in a theory of the big thing happening every decade," says Phil, joining the ranks of pop pundit prophets. Obviously he and Dwight have devoted hours of daydreaming and discussion to the topic. "Before it happens things get really stale. You start hearing all the old records being redone and people start getting off into their other groovy things—'jazz, man'—and act like it's going to be a big thing—or reggae or whatever it is—and it just fades out. The real meat is just rock & roll hits, songs."

"The great thing is to be Top 40 and have the young kids, and yet have other people into it too. Which is what's happening apparently with our single."

And is the time right for the Dwight Twilley Band to become that new super-pop phenomenon?

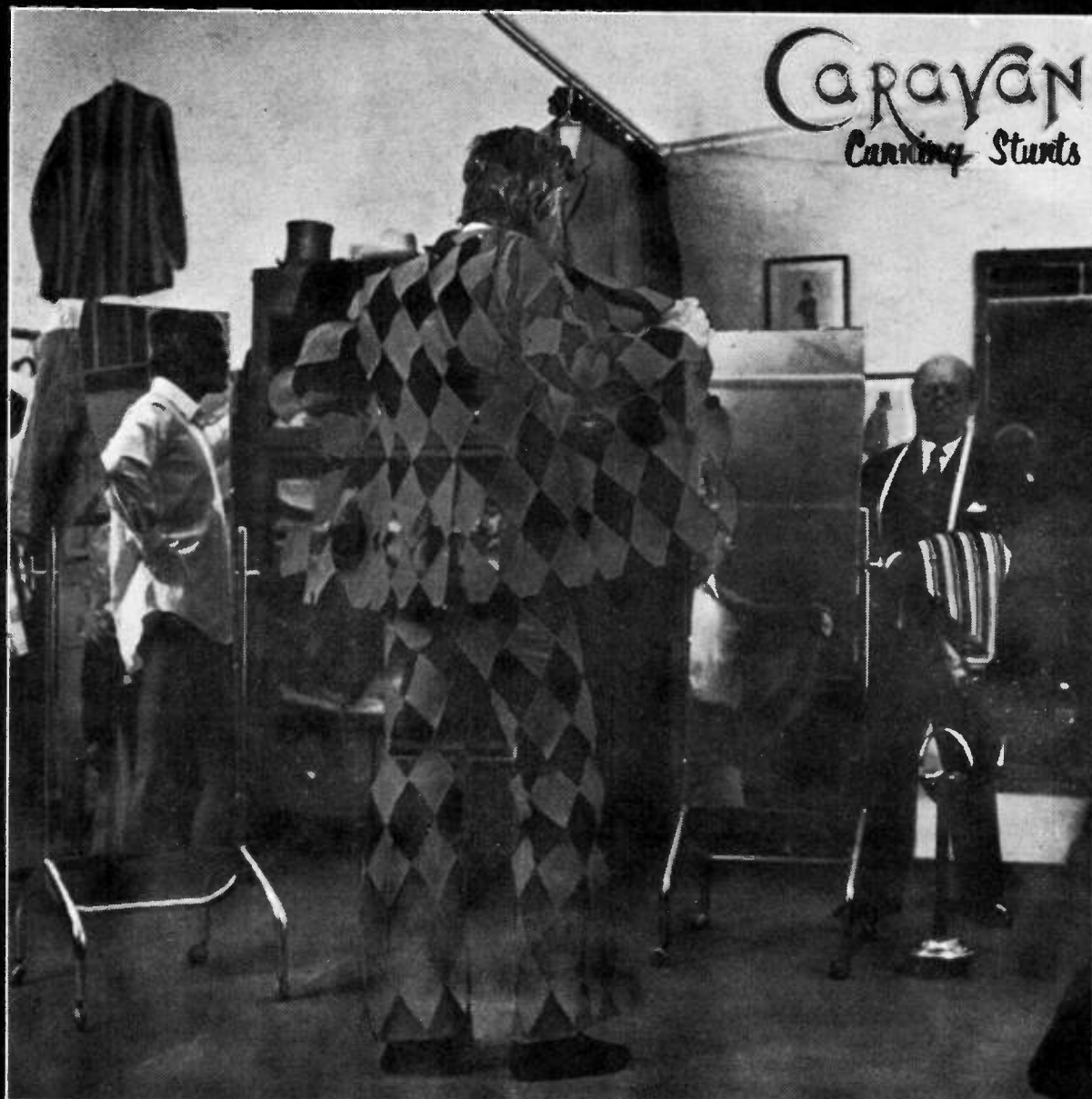
Dwight: "We've got nothing better to do than to make the effort. To be blunt, that's what we're trying to do, what we've always been trying to do. It's taken seven years to get to the point of trying this thing—not that we couldn't have made money before, not that I couldn't have sold my music or Phil couldn't have gone out with El Rocho or been a professional drummer. But we wanted to do this. It's just a romantic thing and we're romantics. We'd like to turn everyone on if we can."

Well, like many of my literary colleagues, I've been going out on limbs predicting such and such a group will be the next big thing so often that most of the remaining readership must be sick to death of it by now. But I can't resist planting the idea that the Dwight Twilley Band might make a go of it—their music has the requisite widespread appeal, and they've certainly got the premeditated angles down pat.

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A Glimpse Inside the Inner Circle of Montreal's Pop Society

THE DUDES: NEW HOPE FOR THE POP-STARVED MASSES

By GREG SHAW

It was a muggy summer night in downtown Montreal. The Forum was about two-thirds full for a show featuring Johnny Winter, along with the city's most popular local band, The Dudes. This was the group's first appearance at Montreal's largest auditorium, but the crowd knew them well and greeted each song's opening bars with cheers. After a year of playing the nearby clubs, the Dudes had carved out an intensely loyal following and won a place in the forefront of Montreal's rapidly burgeoning music scene.

This local fervor was reported in a *Phonograph Record* performance review (Dec. '74) which was seen by Nat Weiss (Brian Epstein's former partner) who, in a classic showbiz story, flew immediately to Montreal, saw the band in their element, and signed on as their lawyer. In short order they had also gained a high-powered manager, 24-year-old whiz kid Fred Heller (Mott the Hoople, Ian Hunter, Blood Sweat & Tears). Within weeks, the Dudes had signed one of the largest and most favorable contracts ever offered a new group by Columbia Records.

Tonight was their first major gig since finishing eight weeks of recording, and to help celebrate, the group had brought in a small number of writers and friends from California and New York, among them the six-foot-four master of pop outrage Kim Fowley, whose constant search for the "next Beatles" had, over the years, involved him with dozens of artists who recorded his songs before (and sometimes even after) becoming famous. These ranged from the Hollywood Argyles to the Soft Machine, including every conceivable type of artist within that spectrum, among them the Dudes, who chose Fowley's "We're No Angels" as the title song of their album.

Despite some trouble with the sound, and an unduly short set (whose encore was precluded by the raising of the house lights on the arrival backstage of Winter), it had been a good show. The six-man group, with three guitarists in white suits up front and two drummers behind, made a powerful visual and sonic impression. Yet far from the high-energy overkill one might expect from such a lineup, their songs were intricately harmonic, stressing melody as much as beat while remaining unmistakably hard rock; a hard to explain and even harder to forget sound that defined the Dudes as something clearly out of the ordinary.

Later, at a party in the elegant Ritz-Carlton Hotel, we had our first glimpse of the inner circle of Montreal's pop society. It was quite a departure from Hollywood. Everyone I spoke to seemed outgoing, unaffected, and equally concerned with the success of others in the city as with their own. There were no parasites or groupies to be seen; most of the women present were wives of band members or local personages in their own right. My initial, and continuing impression was of a large family, which in the case of the Montreal music scene turned out to be not far from the truth.

The people of Montreal, along with the rest of the bilingual French-Canadian *Quebecois*, have a universal pride in their culture that transcends mere boosterism;



"The Dudes have a sound that's hard to explain, even harder to forget!"

these are people who would, if they could, secede from the rest of Canada, so deep is their disdain for the boorish mentality typified for them by Toronto, whose dominance of the Canadian music scene (and the rest of the nation's cultural and economic life, for that matter) is a source of no little rancor to those in the larger and vastly more cosmopolitan city of Montreal.

Although the rock audience is best known for its eccentricities (Shawn Phillips is as popular there as David Bowie in Hollywood), the people of Montreal in general consider themselves supremely hip. Reinforcing the old cliché of Montreal being "the Paris of America," a distinctly Continental flavor pervades the city. The downtown area is packed with boutiques, tobacco stores, smart shops of all kinds, and in particular, discotheques.

There are, in fact, over 200 discos in Montreal. The first discotheque in the world opened here, some 15 years ago. In addition to the American disco hits, they play a high proportion of local records, from French cover versions to French or English originals by Quebec's small but intensely loved local stars or *vedettes*.

Most of these can be found, on a given night, at small, cramped clubs such as Thursday's or the Wrong Number, clustered around Crescent Street. You can't get into these clubs without dropping the proper names, and once inside you're surrounded by tightly-packed local stars, dressed to score, talking idly as their own records play on the jukebox. Occasionally, when one's status drops, his discs vanish from the box. But in general, they are quick to laud one another, and to talk up the enormous potential of Montreal as a pop capitol. At least they were that night, in the presence of Dudes publicist Gary Sperrazza, Kim Fowley, various group members, and myself.

If he knows how much hype to discard and how to interpret what's left, a reporter's job can be immensely simplified in the presence of Kim Fowley. In his insatiable drive to penetrate the very marrow of "what's happening" in order to peddle his songs to any and everybody who might someday generate some royalties, he wastes no time probing the brain of each

person he meets, searching for any possible angle, opening, or lead; demanding each one's analysis of the prospects, and on the slightest provocation launching into a rapid-fire catalogue of his own manifold accomplishments—which can be quite overwhelming in condensed form. Within an hour after the concert, he had persuaded a beaming, expansive Fred Heller (the Dudes being the first act he had worked with *before* they made it, he seemed to be relishing the whole experience as much as they were) to let him write lyrics for the upcoming Blood Sweat & Tears album. In another two hours, he had found his way to Thursday's and interrogated everyone there. His immediate conclusions: without speaking French, it would be hard to get laid by most of the better-looking Montreal girls; and without a powerful catalyst of some sort, the Montreal sound would never heard outside the borders of Quebec.

Such a catalyst could take the form of a band (like the Allman Bros. in Georgia) or a venue (like the Fillmore in San Francisco) or a studio (like Cosimo's in New Orleans) or a far-sighted manager (like Brian Epstein in Liverpool) or even an enterprising publicist on the order of Andrew Loog Oldham. All the other elements appeared to be present: a pop-oriented, loyal youth population, a strong regional culture effectively represented in the music, no shortage of good, young musicians, and most important, assured exposure through local discotheques as well as a healthy radio scene (two good AM's, CKGM and CFOX, and two fine FM's, CJFM and CHOM; the latter Canada's first progressive station). Although there is no local music magazine, the two daily papers provide consistent coverage of local talent; Juan Rodriguez at the *Star* is one of the country's most respected music critics.

Most of the people I spoke to are hoping the Dudes will be the force that brings it all together. They won't be the first to attempt an invasion of the United States (Mahogany Rush, April Wine and Moonquake have all made stabs at it), but they are the first to do so with any of the style and sophistication that Montreal represents, and the first to try it with the support of a major record company.



SMOKEY

featuring
If You Think You Know How To Love Me
Pass It Around
Don't Play Your Rock N' Roll To Me

MCA-2152
Produced by Mike Chapman
in association with Nicky Chinn for Chinnichap

MCA RECORDS



"The Dudes create white disco music, not AWB, but real teenage music grounded in the Elvis-Beatles tradition."

The irony of this is that the Dudes are not, strictly speaking, a Canadian band. They are in fact the latest manifestation of a group whose roots run deep through ten years of California rock. The two founders of the Dudes, Bob Segarini and Bill "Kootch" Trochim, had been together since 1966, when Kootch joined Segarini's band the Family Tree. This band was the pride of Stockton, California, and as the eastern Bay Area's own long-haired, Beatle-crazed, turned-on Mods, the Family Tree were among the first generation of American rock trendsetters. They played regularly at the Fillmore Auditorium in the earliest days of the San Francisco scene, where their repertoire of Beatles and Stones material made them perennial favorites.

The Family Tree was also among the first San Francisco groups to record, and their album (*Miss Butters*, RCA) was possibly the first 'concept' record. Personnel problems broke the group up in early 1968, following which Segarini drifted to Los Angeles where he started a group called Roxy with guitarist Randy Bishop. Heavily influenced by Love, the Byrds, and as always the Beatles, Roxy also had a healthy dose of flash and a dedication to rock & roll fundamentals. An album on Elektra and a popular single ("Rock and Roll Circus") established the group and they went on tour, only to run out of money, have all their equipment stolen, and decide it was time to think about starting a new group, going back to the basics and having some fun for a change.

So Segarini and Bishop returned to California, rounded up some musicians, and retired to Eureka (a remote Northern California outpost) as the Wackers—the most ridiculous name they could think of. Playing bars for little more than the cost of their drinks, doing all the Stones and Beatles and Little Richard tunes they could find, gave the Wackers a solid foundation on which to build a new career. Eventually Elektra signed them, with Kootch rejoining and Gary Usher as producer. At first they were impressed by Usher's credentials (Beach Boys, Raiders, etc.) but as time went by Usher's determination to make the Wackers into an ultra-lush harmony group on the order of CSN&Y led to serious conflicts. They had a smooth, melodic side to be sure, but beyond this the Wackers were a tremendous rock & roll band in the finest tradition; as somebody once said, they were the ultimate bar band.

In any case, the Wackers released a promising first album (*Wackering Heights*), an excellent (given Usher's objectives) second album (*Hot Wacks*) and a single ("Oh My Love") which got some play. They were touring, and starting to amass a following. Segarini & Bishop as a songwriting team were beginning to turn out some remarkable things, and Usher had finally been ousted.



•Pictured clockwise: The Wackers, Roxy & April Wine. The Dudes are an extrapolation of these Canadian pop heroes.

Elektra, never what you'd call a rock & roll company, wanted Segarini and Bishop to cut an album as an acoustic duo. With producer Mark Abramson, they went up to Montreal, where parts of the second album had been recorded. Before long, the rest of the group showed up and *Shredder* became another Wackers album. Polished and commercial, yet more grounded in rock than the previous two, *Shredder* drew strong reviews and a single, "Day and Night" actually made the chart, going Top 20 in Detroit and topping the surveys in Montreal, where the Wackers were treated like superstars by the local populace.

On the strength of that and the next single, "Hey Lawdy Lawdy," the Wackers set off on a tour of the Northwest, with the intent of raising money to move to Montreal for good. They made the move in early 1973, and as a "big time American group" they were able to draw crowds at every high school and club they played. They also loved the city, and raved to friends back in California about the pop awareness, the great audiences, the musicians, the radio...they were so inspired, in fact, that they immediately began recording a fourth album, to be called *Wack & Roll*, consisting of all the lusty rockers they'd been playing live for years but never had a chance to put on tape—titles like "I Started to Rock," "Juvenile Delinquent," "Teenage Love," "She Loves You," and "Tonight" will give some indication of the direction they were taking.

It was tremendous stuff, but even before the sessions ended there were intimations that Elektra was displeased, and when they refused to release the

finished product, the Wackers were about ready to throw in the towel. Randy Bishop left to become a solo singer (later scoring one of the biggest local hits of 1974 with "Don't You Worry"), while drummer Ernie Earnshaw returned to California. He was replaced by Wayne Cullen, and the Wackers struggled on for awhile, cutting a final single for Canadian Polydor. Then, one day in early 1974, they finally called it quits.

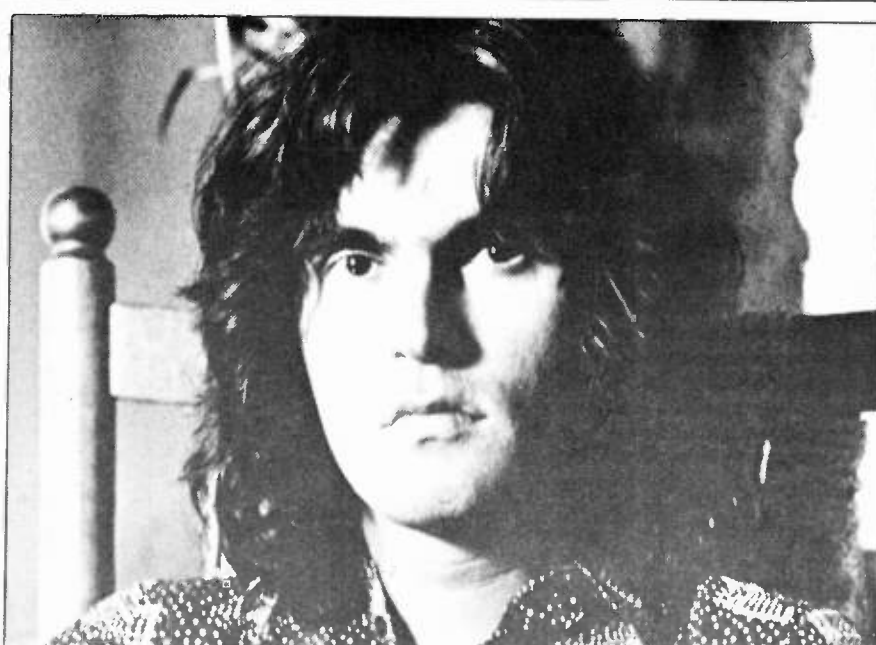
To Segarini, the death of the Wackers was but another step in his search for the perfect band. This time it was All the Young Dudes, and within weeks they had conquered the local high school circuit and were holding down a residency at the Moustache, the most prestigious club in Montreal. In forming the Dudes, Segarini had created overnight the best band in Montreal, and he had to break up three other groups to do it. From the Wackers, he kept Kootch and Cullen, adding David and Richie Henman, who had left April Wine to form a trio called Silver shortly before, and Brian Greenway from Mashmakhan.

Having seen most of Segarini's bands over the years, I'd have to agree that this one is his strongest. Their songs are the best he's written, full of Beatle influences and harmonic subtleties, built on solid rock and as commercial as anything I've heard this year. His voice, always enjoyable and characteristically his own, has matured; he can use it like Bowie or Ian Hunter, or weave it into Graham Gouldman harmonies, or drop into the rawest Larry Williams raunch. And with three guitars and two drums behind him, there's no chance of his point being missed. If nothing else, Segarini has learned from his mistakes.

"Without a powerful catalyst of some sort, the Montreal sound will never be heard outside Quebec"... Kim Fowley, July, 1975



•Mahogany Rush



•Pagliaro

To get to Andre Perry's studio, you head north from Montreal toward the Laurentian Mountains, said to be the world's oldest. As you get closer, you enter a stunning landscape, mountains and valleys carpeted with incredibly green virgin timber. The sky is immense and the air is pristine. In a few hours you could be driving on arctic tundra, but after about forty miles you turn onto a road that leads to Morin Heights. The town itself consists of a few houses and a general store. A few miles further into the naked wilderness you come upon a breathtaking sight. Rising from the side of a hill, overlooking a forested valley and flanked by a still, fairytale lake, is a glass-walled cabin, alone in the middle of nowhere. This is Andre Perry's studio.

For years before, Perry had operated his studio in the city. This dream studio had been created from scratch, and completed only months before. Already Cat Stevens and Billy Preston had recorded there, and other big names from the Stones to Elton John had shown interest. Perry's is by far the most modern studio in Canada, and comparable to any in the States. The Dudes had just wrapped up eight weeks of recording here, and producer Mark Spector was deeply immersed in mixing.

A major problem with the Dudes album was the choice of material. Segarini was in the midst of a writing streak that just wouldn't stop; there were enough out-takes from *We're No Angels* to fill two albums. The final selection came down to a choice between an album of Segarini's funky delicacies or an assortment of tunes representing the band's total repertoire, particularly David Henman's more direct hard rockers.

They chose the latter approach, though anticipating possible charges of "lack of direction." But hearing the final product, it's evident that this is a band with a distinct and fully developed character that emerges in everything they do. There's also a definite Dudes sound, not quite like anything that's been heard before, and possibly heralding the new direction many have been predicting for rock.

The music is strongly rhythmic, polyrhythmic even, with a dance beat right out of the discos—but it's white disco music, not AWB but real teenage music grounded in the Elvis-Beatles tradition, applied to the new universal beat of the Seventies. Segarini's fey vocals and clean, polished harmonies set the Dudes still further apart from the bandwagon corps of white R&B copyists, as do his classic pop-rock themes and lyrics. And there are no Gene Page orchestral arrangements. It's what I've always felt was bound to be the very next phase, the uniting of disco mania with rock & roll, a form that has been desperately in search of any kind of mania for all too many years now. And the Dudes could well be the group to pull it off.

Despite their surfeit of material, the Dudes are still working on new tracks. Their pet project is a thing called "1962," which attempts to evoke the feeling of that era in 8 minutes of interlacing melodies and floating harmonies that would turn 10cc green with envy. In an odd reversal of studio procedure, the vocal tracks have been finished before the instrumentals, and the effect is strikingly haunting.

Behind the studio, beyond a small knoll, sits Perry's house, a storybook cottage with hand-tooled woodwork that could only have been done by Black

Forest elves, fruity vines climbing the wallpaper, a legendary wine cellar, and Perry himself, the most gracious of hosts. A large, bearded man with twinkling eyes, he is the contented master of a world he created out of a personal vision, this rock & roll hobbit hole in the midst of an unlikely mountain retreat.

In Andre Perry's living room, having heard the tapes and thoroughly investigated the entire facility, Kim Fowley was now holding forth. "You sir," he stated firmly, extending his finger toward Perry, "are in a position to become the Sam Philips of Montreal! Someone like you could ignite this whole scene. All these potential rock & roll stars crawling through the streets should be brought up here and turned loose in the studio!" Fowley went on, elaborating his theory of Perry's studio as the missing focal point of this would-be Liverpool, as Perry sat back, taking it all in with a sly smile.

After being introduced as "the H.G. Wells of rock & roll," I was asked to throw my weight behind this analysis. I allowed as how it couldn't do any harm to start churning out Montreal masters that could be placed with the various labels of the world, drawing attention to the "Montreal sound," if indeed there were such a thing.

Perry, of course, is not unaware of his position. He has in fact made his studio available to the Dudes, and Randy Bishop, and some of the more talented local musicians. He even has his own label, Good Noise Records, with 8 singles out including one by Alan Gerber, formerly of Rhinoceros (another Elektra group that never saw the success they deserved). But with important out-of-town sessions filling the studio, and top local attractions such as Nanette Workman and Lewis Furey making increased use of the facilities, Perry isn't really in a position to open his doors to all the raw talent in Quebec.

Back in Montreal, there are other studios where a band can record, some of them excellent. Tempo, where the Dudes demos were cut, also serves April Wine, Beau Dommage and many others. RCA has a good studio, and many groups use Studio Six or Lissen Audio. Yet clearly, Andre Perry is king of the Montreal studio scene, and as his reputation spreads he can't fail to bring overdue attention to the local talent.

And what about the local talent? Fowley's most-asked question (when he wasn't scribbling down lyrics; he wrote 10 songs in the day-and-a-half we were there, with titles like "Hanging Out," "Crescent Street" and, at Perry's, "In the Studio") was, "Where are the Sweet of Montreal?" By which he meant, a group whipping up teenage excitement with power chords and glitter. Montreal is not a teenage audience, however; its mentality is more mid-20's, rock-based but too cool, too reserved to fall for blasted anthems of anarchy in the streets.

There are, simply, a lot of good musicians in Montreal. Some record almost exclusively for the French market, the biggest of these being Charlebois, who for years has been regarded as a sort of Beatles/Dylan figure in Quebec, though he's basically just a good rock singer. There are many fine soft-rock acts who sing in French, like Beau Dommage or Gilles Valiquette. And then there's Michel Pagliaro, who's been around forever, released close to 30 albums, and is worshipped in Quebec.

Almost all of Pagliaro's records have been in French, but as perhaps the only person to successfully sing rock & roll in the French language, he has amassed a cult following throughout the world. A brief stab at recording in English, back in 1972, produced two enormously big hit singles in Europe and a round of critical raves in America, so now there's talk of packaging Pagliaro for American consumption in the near future.

Pag's former backing band, led by Jack August and Hovaness Hagopian, now record as Moonquake. They had a great single called "Remember" about two years ago and their first album came out here on Fantasy. A second LP is now out in Canada, and next to the Dudes and Mahogany Rush they're probably the band in Montreal.

Next on the ladder is April Wine, who had a 1972 hit with Hot Chocolate's "You Could Have Been a Lady." Their first three albums were superior rock & roll, particularly *Electric Jewels*, but none except the first came out here. A fourth album has just been issued on Big Tree, and it's excellent, but since the departure of the Henmans, April Wine has lost a lot of their original spark.

Beyond these, there are local groups like Harmonium (Yes imitators), Aeon (formerly the Rabble), Les Sinners, the Sand Band, Ville Emard Blues Band, Billy Workman (previously with Pagliaro, and expected to do great things someday), Patsy Gallant, and American immigrants like Jesse Winchester and Ellen McIlwaine, who moved there recently, fell in love with the city just as the Wackers had, and now records for the local Kot'ai label.

In short, Montreal has plenty of talented, competent musicians who can make records as good as any heard on the radio today. But it's still lacking the catalyst that could turn it into the hot, productive rock & roll center it longs to be. And in the absence of a Brian Epstein, or a Fillmore, or a Sam Philips or an Andrew Loog Oldham, nearly everyone seems to be expecting the Dudes to pull it off.

Once away from Montreal, however, the spell fades and it all begins to seem not quite so inevitable. Cleveland, Austin and New York, with as much going for them, have failed to erupt as regional trendsetters, and clearly at this stage of the industry it's very rough indeed to convince anyone of the value of a music, a sound, a style that arises from the people, from the kids, rather than being handed down from the small, exclusive coterie of established superstars. The odds are against it, but then the strenghts of Montreal music are hard to deny. At this point, it's still a matter of opinion and conjecture.

Bob Ezrin (producer of Alice Cooper and other heavy metal groups), who works out of Toronto, has said that there's no rock & roll climate north of the border, none of the 'inner city' experience that spawns radical new musical developments. Kim Fowley, on reflection, diagnosed the Montreal scene as "a bunch of untogether Canadians." And Bob Segarini, who certainly deserves the last word, says simply, "The Canadian music scene is the most underrated, under-hyped, and under-exploited music scene I've ever been a part of. Montreal feels to me the way San Francisco did in 1967. Something's going to happen."

PHONOGRAPH RECORD REVIEWS

FLO & EDDIE: WHITE PUNKS ON DOPE The Hope And Crosby Of Rock Have Something You Need

ILLEGAL, IMMORAL & FATTENING
Flo & Eddie
Columbia PC 33554

By Richard Cromelin

In the spirit of fair play which should be utmost in our minds this Bicentennial year, PRM sent invitations to a wide spectrum of rock and pop artistes, asking them to participate in a Blind Date-style discussion of Flo & Eddie's new Columbia album. Response was overwhelming, and on the appointed day our sophisticated listening room saw a dazzling parade of musical luminaries. Some brought weapons with them and were disappointed at finding no Flo & Eddie in attendance.

Making this special Blind Date [which has been severely edited down to the true highlights] even more confusing than Flo & Eddie's usual monthly blitz was the fact that the participants arrived and departed in various combinations, creating overlaps, misunderstandings, redundancy and fist-fights. Three babies were born in the medical tent and there was plenty of water.

ALICE COOPER (putting golf balls into the Typesetter's mouth as he listens): Circus music! Is it Leo Sayer? Christopher Milk. Ah, the Tibetan Memory Trick. Jerry Lucas? Uri Geller. Bronstein — the guy that used to be on Art Linkletter's House Party. Art Linkletter's a good friend of mine, you know. These guys are really high school. I like that. Spit a few of those balls back, would'ya? This group toured with me? It's not Suzi Quatro.

Wait a minute, that's Elton! A live festival album. Was this recorded in a crater in Hawaii? No, it's not Elton. Joni?! Joni Mitchell doing an EJ impression. A Yoko impression — see, the announcer said so right there. Is this one of her new songs. Piles of Vials? God, a litany of all her lovers. That's great. True confessions. Her voice sounds better than ever. She never toured with me though. Too bad — I might have been in the song (just kidding, Cindy).

No, the thing about this record is, I mean, it's just entertainment, and that's great. I mean this could be a George Burns record. A George Raft record. A life raft record. No, really, rock'n'roll is just entertainment. It's the same thing as *December Bride* and *War and Peace* and Lillian Gish and Buckminster Fuller. It's escape (that's the name of a song on my latest record, you know).

The sooner we recognize that, the sooner our political and social structures will align themselves into a viable system. Not forgetting aesthetics, which — did he just say "Jackoff"? I was going to say that your grandmother could listen to this record, so could your teenage daughter, your five-year-old autistic son, your dog (Typesetter: *Mm. Mph. Gllwb.* (He ejects four golf balls from his mouth) *My grandmother can't listen to anything. She's dead, and before that she was deaf!*)

I've played baseball with these guys? And toured with them. And stolen their line about rock being just entertainment?

NICO (who has been snoring softly in the corner since her arrival. Suddenly her eyelids rise like velvet curtains, revealing eyes haunted, yet innocent. She drones a second voice to the selection being played):

The killer awoke before dawn...He put his — No, I did not sing "He put his earth shoes on." This is not my record. My voice is deeper than this. The accent is all wrong. *Vas ist los* earth shoes? What record is this? (Typesetter: *That's for us to know and for you to find out, you dizzy blonde!*) *Ist das nicht ein Patti Schmidt?* Oh, Jim, the king of der lizards.



Brad Elterman

BJORN & BENNY (tearing up the carpet as they execute intricate maneuvers on ice-skates): Gut ice-skating musick. This is what you call disco musick, no? What is this sudden silence? (Typesetter informs them that during this portion of the show the band in question shakes a variety of percussion instruments that emit no sound). Is avante-garde then. Jjohn Cjage. Jjohn Cjale. Ajndy Bjown. Ejno. Ljou Rjeed.

LOU REED (entering): Mmpphrrhm (ejects twelve transistors from his mouth).

B&B (straight up): Ljou Rjeed here in the room! Then the record is not his. Careful, Bjorn! (Bjorn, under too much momentum, careens past the turntable and crashes through the 10th floor window). (Typesetter, calling after: *That's what you get for trying to read the label.*)

LOU: What is this garbage? Who was that? Hey, that's good — "Death to whitey, right on." The Last Poets? The Penultimate Poets? Yeah, this is true. I'm OK. I'm either blue or yellow, but never white. Haay! Nico!

GEORGE HARRISON: That sounds like a Who riff. "Happy Jack." Is it Wishbone Ash? Did he say, "Sorta like Mott the Hoople"? Yes, it is, isn't it. But then in a way so is everything. (Typesetter: *Hey, you're spilling brown rice all over the carpet!*) Yeah, it keeps falling out of my beard. Perhaps it will grow — that looks like a fertile shag. But why is it so torn up?

LOU: Mmm, I think I'll throw up. Maybe this record

will sound better if I puke on it (Lou throws up). Doesn't help, does it? I've got a strap on my shades, you know, so they don't fall into the toilet when I puke.

GEORGE: Is that Billy Preston sitting in? Hare Krishna, guys, could I use him now! This is a live record, yes? But the song before was studio. A nice song. Now wait, what's this? A George Harrison dild? Is that like a mantra? "My Sweet Lord?" This must be a bootleg of my tour. Oh, that intro is so pure! Here I come now, oh goody! Mmm. Must have been one of the good nights. No, wait! No one ever came on and told me to stop because my voice was going! Krishna doesn't like slander. If I find out whose record this is it's back to the lawyers. Billy!!!

TODD RUNDGREN: Say, George, how are you?
GEORGE (Sobbing): You're not Billy! You can't help me!

TODD: Sure I can (Wheels in a computer-synthesizer console, draws a picture of Billy Preston on the screen, flicks a switch and an almost-perfect replica "Nothin' from Nothin'" fills the room).

GEORGE: Not bad, Todd, but it's out of tune.

TODD: Yeah, that's because this guy here drew glasses and horns on the picture. (Typesetter whistles innocently).

GEORGE: Wanna buy some incense?

TODD: No, I'm broke. Wanna buy a long record?

(Typesetter: *Would you guys get to business and listen to this mystery album?*)

GEORGE AND TODD (chanting in unison): The mystery is profound, the mystery of the sound, the mystery is so plain, and now if you'll excuse us we'll go catch an astral plane. (They soft-shoe arm-in-arm out of the room).

LOU: Larry Coryell. Booker T. The Comfortable Chair. Unit 4 Plus 2. Nico, get away from that window! "Eddie are you kidding?" — double knits. I've seen that guy's commercials. I love to watch things on TV. There's more truth in the LA clothing store culture than there is in your magazine and the Troubadour bar put together. Did Todd take that medicine with him when he left? I wanna bang it.

ALICE: Hey, be quiet I'm driving (tees off and drives the ball past Nico's head, through the window and into the forecourt of Mann's Chinese Theatre)...Now it sounds like the Beach Boys, so it must be David Cassidy. Shawn Cassidy? Hopalong Cassidy? He's a good friend of mine you know. Neal Cassidy.

BJORN, wrapped in a Hamburger Hamlet awning, re-enters on crutches. He hobbles over to Alice, stares into his face and spits a golf ball at his nose. Alice begins bleeding. (Typesetter: *I thought only women bleed*). Alice buries his iron in Typesetter's head, grabs a crutch from Bjorn and kicks him back through the window. He reaches down the front of Nico's dress and pulls out a mascara kit, blackens his eyes, leaps up on a couch and begins dancing and stabbing the air with the crutch as the record reaches "There's No Business Like Show Business."

While Alice's look becomes progressively more glazed, Typesetter, unnoticed, crawls painfully to Todd's synthesizer and sketches a nuclear mushroom cloud. One of the Eagles enters, sizes up the situation, rushes to the machine and draws a bottle of tequila. The song reaches its crescendo, Nico jumps out the window, Lou has joined Alice's dance. Typesetter dies, and as he falls he trips the switch. As the room begins to heat and rumble, someone else from the Eagles takes a swig of tequila and says, "Hey, this is the new album by —"

(Applications are now being accepted for the position of typesetter at PRM. Duties and insurance programs will be discussed at the job interview).

ONCE UPON A STAR
Bay City Rollers
Arista

By MITCHELL S. COHEN

The Bay City Rollers campaign is underway, and its components are familiar: screaming female fans in Great Britain, Sid Bernstein masterminding tour plans, back-to-back appearances on network TV (broadcast from the Ed Sullivan Theatre, no less), and a well organized press blitz. Well, you and I, we've been through that, and the cold calculation of the whole thing is enough to make the objective observer cynical. After all, T. Rex, Slade and Gary Glitter hardly caused a stir over here. But the Rollers may just happen. As Paul MC might put it, they're very clean, and the pre-pubescent being exposed to them on kiddie shows like Wonderama are susceptible to the hard sell. The concept of the Bay City Rollers is a deliberate attempt to fill a gap for the pre-high school audience which has been without a rallying point for a number of years. What is required for this demographic bunch is simple, romantic (but sexless) and catchy pop music attached to cute, clean-shaven boys with white teeth and, in this case, distinctive costumes. The Rollers were created to fill the bill, and they do it with style, if not (at least on disc) excitement.

At this date there is no U.S. album release—Arista promises one to coincide with the fall goings-on—but the Rollers two LPs are nuzzling in the U.K.'s top ten, and some copies have made their way across the Atlantic. The recorded evidence of the Rollers' talent is by no means definitive, and possibly has little to do with the phenomenon, which by definition is communal and, more important, visual, but it's all we have to go by right now, and it's worth listening to. *Once Upon a Star*, the latest effort (*Rollin'* preceded it), is a recent and representative collection that gives us an idea of the range, context and abilities of the Rollers, and it's pretty fair.

To get some sense of what a group is about in the early stages of development, their treatment of oldies is usually helpful. It provides an indication of roots, musical approach and a chance to judge talent on known territory. The Rollers obligingly place such touchstones at the beginning and end of side one, by a large margin the weaker side of the album. The 4 Seasons' "Bye Bye Baby" (a Stateside single) opens the set, and it's trimmed to its basic components to become elementary pre-teen pop with pleasant harmonies. Gaudio and Crewe have the knack that the Rollers are after, and the group takes advantage of the song's melodic potential. "Keep on

Mine" is a blatant steal from the Phil Everly song that Linda Ronstadt recently scored with, "La Belle Jeane" is a dull ballad, and "The Disco Kid" is plodding even for a record of that genre. If they can't maneuver these basic styles, what hope is there for them? Only "Angel Baby" (not, unfortunately, the Rosie & Originals song) is handled adequately, but the Rollers go nowhere with the characteristic thumps and castanets that have marked "They try to say it's just a teenage love affair" songs for the past two decades.

It's not until you flip the record over that you begin to realize that the Rollers can do some things quite well. Eric



•The Bay City Rollers are looking for a hit—any suggestions?

Dancin'," on the other hand, is atrocious: thin and wearying with fake crowd noises. It simply doesn't rock, and that suggests trouble.

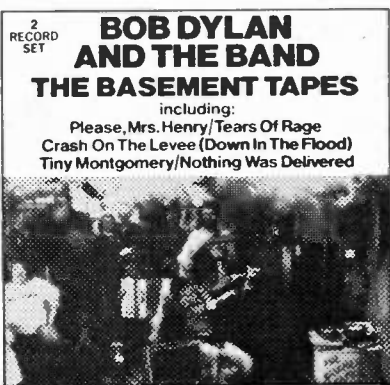
The side one originals aren't much of an improvement. "When Will You Be

Faulkner and Stuart Wood are not yet high calibre composers, and Leslie R. McKeown (these are the names that'll be pounded into our heads these next few months) is a limited lead singer, but there's a bright, cheery sound being

made. The title track is the best F&W song to date. It may be a flash-forward commentary on their own success, or perhaps a tribute to the Beatles, but whatever the subject, it's a winner. Following "Once Upon a Star" is "Let's Go (Huggin' and Kissin' in the Moonlight)" a brisk, anthem-like composition that is, along with the Eddie Cochran-derived "Rock and Roll Honeymoon" (complete with "bop shoo waddy waddy" background and "here comes the bride" quote), as close as the Rollers get to hard rock. As might be expected, they never really let loose—everything is always under control—but these songs are at least energetic. "My Teenage Heart," which sounds like a Gary Lewis outtake, is delightful, with hooks all over the place. Once again, there's not enough depth for my taste, but it's a perfect, succinct specimen. The remaining two songs on the album, "Marlina" and "Hey! Beautiful Dreamer," are somewhat less successful. They have a common theme, and are competently performed, but "Dreamer" is too obviously an attempt at seriousness and is drawn out beyond its small scale, and "Marlina" is merely ordinary.

Assuming that the Bay City Rollers are a capable live act, and that they get TV exposure, and *16 Magazine* behind them, they could go over on a Monkee-Partridge level. It's hard to foresee them going above that point, although it's certainly possible. And if, as promised, their American LP is a combination of the best of *Rollin'* and *Once Upon a Star*, it could be a fine album indeed, and Arista will have a hot property on its hands. We don't really need the Bay City Rollers, and there's far too much gimmickry and promotion and not enough sex, humor and real substance coming from the group (in other words, I can't see them stirring up much passion or fervor for or against), but they could add a bit of interest to what otherwise might have been an uneventful musical season.

IN DYLAN'S BASEMENT



THE BASEMENT TAPES
Bob Dylan & The Band
Columbia C2 33682

By KEN BARNES

What we have here is the most enjoyable Dylan album yet released. Not the most profound—you can pick your own candidate there while I withdraw to the sidelines (depth and significance being qualities I can seek more readily in forms other than pop records). Not the most rocking, either—that award probably goes to *Highway 61*, but it's a quality vastly overrated in Dylan, as evidenced by the critical legions who celebrated his abysmal steamroller bellowing on *Before the Flood* and consider "Like a Rolling Stone" the greatest rock & roll record of

all time. In "Open the Door Homer" here, Dylan claims, "There's a certain thing I learned from my friend Mouse," but it certainly wasn't how to rock out. Mouse (Ronnie Weiss) is a semi-legendary Texas performer whose "Public Execution," composed and played as a shameless '65 Dylan imitation, manages to cut the original models to shreds for rock & roll impact. I could reel off half a dozen 45 contemporaries which are better rock & roll records than "Like a Rolling Stone," and that's being kind and leaving out the Castaways and the Barbarians (list on request).

But I wax splenetic. *The Basement Tapes* is by no means the frothiest Dylan album either—that dark undercurrent isolated in the liner notes places the LP parsecs away from the *Nashville Portrait* constellation. "Tears of Rage" is agonizing and the desiccated manner in which Dylan and the Band sing "Going to have some fun" in "Goin' to Acapulco" positively scarifies.

But essentially the *Basement Tapes* communicate a blithe, insouciant spirit. Half the lyrics sound like idle rhyming exercises (the winning quatrain: "Say hello to Valerie/Say hello to Vivian/Send them all my salary/On the waters of oblivion" from "Too Much of Nothing," a vastly changed—and better version than Peter Paul & Mary's). Personally I enjoy the gloriously meaningless image sequences in "Tiny Montgomery," "Lo

& Behold," and "Yea Heavy & a Bottle of Bread" (which I persisted for years in conceiving as "Bottle of Reds," which seemed more apropos) as much of Dylan lyrics—in fact they're probably even more fascinating. I've always suspected that if I could untangle the entire lyric litany of mysterious powers down in old Frisco to whom the mythic Montgomery wished to have his regards communicated, I'd be afforded the ultimate Dylan insight. It's still a pleasing conceit, though not quite as pleasing as learning of Dylan's boasted ability to bite like a turkey and slam like a drake (useful attributes both).

In other words, this stuff is funny (add "Million Dollar Bash" and the deadpan shaggy duds story "Clothes Line Saga" to the list). Many of the tunes are great, too, some of Dylan's catchiest. Some good playing from the Band, too, organ and guitar in particular ("Odds and Ends" is a fine rocker, believe it or not). Most of the really hot guitar playing is saved for the Band's eight tracks, which sound to me as a whole far more vibrant than the *Big Pink* album ("Chest Fever" excluded)—glad they were released, too.

So if you want a Dylan album you can actually play casually, without actively pondering the mystic significances of it all, this 1967 collection is it. The insights you derive, if that's what you're looking for, are likely to prove just as rewarding, but getting there is much more fun.

BLUES FOR ALLAH
Grateful Dead
United Artists/Grateful Dead Records GD-LA494-G

By BUD SCOPPA

The first Dead album to be distributed by United Artists contains everything we've come to expect from the latter-day group and its offshoots: tuneless songs, flat and dry performances (especially vocally), and a general air closer akin to inertia than mellowness. *Blues for Allah* even (trendily) contains touches of quasi-soul and quasi-reggae, plus some quasi-jazz meanderings (complete with cricket chirps) to further flatten the album's effect; these elements all contribute to the sensation that there's not much going on here.

The only hint of fire comes on "Slipknot!" an instrumental that rides out from the closing of "Help on the Way," a typically unfaceted Hunter-Garcia song. On "Slipknot!" the guitar playing displays the cutting edge (and an accompanying sense of possibility) that distinguished the music of this band in the Sixties. This album is a particularly odd place to find a passage with bite, since *this* Grateful Dead (as distinguished, in personnel and inclination, from earlier models) seems to so love aimless wandering: the current Dead can make a four-minute track seem four or five times that length.

Aside from "Slipknot!" Weir's pastoral instrumental, "Sage and Spirit," and the ghostly title song, I can't find much of either form or feeling on *Blues for Allah*. If the Dead get any limper, the grooves are liable to droop.

REVIEWS

BESERKLEY CHARTBUSTERS, VOL. 1

Various Artists
Beserkeley B-0044

ROCKING THE WORLD
Earth Quake
Bezerk

By GREG SHAW

The record business these days is a very inhospitable place for a simple rock & roll band, no matter how flashy or pop-conscious they may be, without the benefit of some trendy new gimmick. The few who do manage to get records out (Dolls, Stooges, Raspberries, Blue Ash, Dictators, Duck Deluxe, etc.) ultimately encounter such apathy or outright prejudice from people in radio, distribution, and often their own record company, that all their efforts seem in vain.

Many groups of this type have realized that it's better in some cases to put out and distribute one's own recordings than to be at the mercy of an indifferent industry. Earth Quake, with two albums on A&M and ten years of local popularity in Berkeley behind them, were among the first and most successful to try this approach.

Beserkeley Chartbusters is the label's first LP release, showcasing their four hottest hitmakers. Greg Kihn, a young hunk of teenage idol material, is represented by "All the Right Reasons" and "Mood Mood Number," both catchy, light pop tunes backed by members of Earth Quake and thoroughly appealing, especially the former. Kihn's voice reminds me a bit of Elliot Lurie, and various others I can't quite place; it's one I'm anxious to hear more of. The Rubinoos, supposedly a young, bubble-gum influenced rock band, contribute "Gorilla," a tasty but relatively unimpressive song that might have fared better with fuller production.

Earth Quake themselves offer both sides of their two Beserkeley singles, the standouts being "Friday On My Mind" and a powerful, kinetic arrangement of Jonathan King's "Tall Order for a Short Guy." For my money, Earth Quake are one of the most dynamic pop bands extant today.

The undisputed star of this album is Jonathan Richman, the intense, moody romantic who shocked hippie audiences with songs like "I'm Straight" and won a cult following with his songs of youth and innocence, many of them tributes to the teen culture of Massachusetts, which holds the same mystique for him as Brian Wilson's California. After the Modern Lovers' abortive attempt to cut an album for Warner Bros., Richman cut these four songs for Beserkeley, and while they don't quite convey the weird charisma of his live performances, they clearly mark him as a unique and volatile talent.

His images are always carved in detail, often embarrassingly true-to-life. Who else would write a song about falling in love with the new bank teller? About going to rock at the "Government Center" to make the secretaries feel better when they put the stamp on the letter? These songs have a special quality, yet they are completely overshadowed by "Roadrunner," which to me is a classic in a league with the Beach Boys' "I Get Around" or the Velvet Underground's "Rock and Roll." Thematically it lies somewhere between the two, glorifying the pure experience of driving around the suburbs of Boston with the AM radio on. "I'm in love with the modern world!" gushes Richman, and he means it; he's a true poet of our times.

Back to Earth Quake, Beserkeley also offers a live album which includes their

versions of "Route 66," "Friday On My Mind," ELO's "Ma Ma Belle," "The Velvets' "Head Held High" and the Small Faces' "Tin Soldier" along with three originals. Personally, I would buy any album by a group with the taste to perform those songs, but in this case they more than do justice to the originals; it's a power-packed, good-time rave-up of the highest order. You probably won't find them in stores, but these albums can be ordered for \$4 each (plus 50 cents postage) from Beserkeley, 1199 Spruce, Berkeley, CA 94707.



SONS OF THE BEACHES
Flash Cadillac & Continental Kids
Private Stock PS 2003

By KEN BARNES

They've done it again, and it's starting to get annoying. OK, Flash Cadillac & the Continental Kids are great—leagues ahead of any other rock revival act and capable of much more. Anyone who's seen them live knows they can play anything they want, brilliantly. They've also got this keyboard player, Kris "Angelo" Moe, who writes some of the best songs around—instant pop classics with a million hooks, just catchy as hell.

There's some great examples on their last album (*No Face Like Chrome* on Epic) and even more on *Sons of the Beaches* (four, to be exact). Like "Time Will Tell," which reminds you of "Please Let Me Wonder" or one of those sublime Beach Boys ballads without a shred of actual plagiarism. Or "Rock & Roll Menace," sort of an Alice Cooper/Stones/Beach Boys cross and a first-class rock anthem too.

But Flash Cadillac always clutter up their albums with material in the strictly average class. At least this time they've dispensed with 50's revamps, moving out of the Sha Na Na country at last (though Sha Na Na covers a Raspberries song on *their* new album)—the only cover is Bruce & Terry's "Summer Means Fun," lightweight, quite short and a letter-perfect copy, thus good fun. But rock revival trappings linger—last album you got "Rock & Roll Heaven," this time it's "Good Times Rock & Roll," archetypical revival pastiche swill originally cut by Arkansas Riverbottom and a minor hit single for Flash. This dispensable ditty was written by Richard Burns, who once helmed the Hondells, and admittedly his other contribution, "Come on Let's Go," is pretty good and reminds me of those original cycle-dramatists.

Not so good is the new single, "Hot Summer Girls," a Peter Shelley creation (he masterminds Alvin Stardust) first released by a British studio group called Barracuda. It's an uneasy mix of synthetic surf and British glam-pop, pleasant but in no way outstanding. There's a couple of other outside compositions, too, all of which pale before Kris Moe's originals.

Overall this is probably Flash Cadillac's most consistent album, and it's a real fun-packed disk all right, topnotch singing and playing, etc. But somebody ought to get Moe into gear and make him write the whole album next year. Odds on it'd be a classic.

SUPERTRAMP PERFORM "CRIME OF THE CENTURY"

"...something new is in the air...the sort of thing that would renew anyone's sagging faith in the unpredictability of rock and roll."

—Richard Cromelin
L.A. Times



SUPERTRAMP DATES

JULY 31

Queen Elizabeth Theater, Vancouver, Canada

AUGUST 1

Paramount Theater, Seattle, Washington

AUGUST 2

Paramount Theater, Portland, Oregon

AUGUST 3

Convention Center, Spokane, Washington

AUGUST 4

Sports Plex, Lethbridge, Alberta, Canada

AUGUST 5

Southern Alberta Jubilee Aud., Calgary, Alberta, Canada

AUGUST 8

Civic Auditorium, San Jose, California

AUGUST 9

Warner Theater, Fresno, California

AUGUST 11

Texas Hall, Dallas, Texas

AUGUST 12

Houston, Texas (To be announced)

AUGUST 13

New Orleans, Louisiana (Tentative)

AUGUST 16

Civic Center, Ottawa, Canada

AUGUST 17

Palais des Nations, Montreal, Canada



FLEETWOOD MAC

Includes
Monday
Morning
Crystal
Say You
Love Me
Landslide



FLEETWOOD MAC
Fleetwood Mac
Reprise MS 2225

By BEN EDMONDS

If you're one of those people like me who lost track of Fleetwood Mac in the post-Peter Green haze of erratic albums and perpetual personnel changes brace yourself for the nicest musical surprise 1975 has sprung on us: Fleetwood Mac (the band) has produced *Fleetwood Mac* (the album), a record strong enough to demand immediate inclusion in any consideration of the year's best.

Just prior to the recording of this new album, the band replaced the departing Bob Welch with two new members, vocalist Stephanie Nicks and guitarist/vocalist Lindsey Buckingham. As Buckingham Nicks they released one mildly promising album on a Polydor subsidiary in 1973, which sounds absolutely premature by comparison with their initial accomplishments as a part of Fleetwood Mac. They're both talented writers and singers, but their decisive contribution to the band is more in the realm of attitude; there's an aggressive energy at work here that even the original Fleetwood Mac might not've been able to match.

Stephanie's songs are indicative of the diversity this new band is capable of. She can go soft and acoustic on "Landslide" and be equally effective at handling the electricity of "Rhiannon" (possibly the most powerful song in their live set). And have them both rank among the album's highlights. Lindsey Buckingham is a solid guitarist, and his intelligent ideas about guitar tracking play a substantial part in the success of this album. It's not the blinding guitar virtuosity of previous Macs, but playing with taste and an almost impeccable sense of what each song requires of his instrument. "Monday Morning" (featuring great Buddy Holly drumming from Mick Fleetwood) and "Blue Letter" are performances Nils Lofgren and the Eagles (respectively) would be proud to claim as their own, and Buckingham's musical personality would seem to be emerging in an attractive niche somewhere between the two. But where taste and restraint can occasionally border on strangulation, his big and brutal playing on "I'm So Afraid" suggests an explosive quality that this band has only begun to explore.

A lot of the old Fleetwood Mac was merely convenient conventional frames on which great and near-great guitarists could hang their most impressive licks. This album, however, crystallizes Fleetwood Mac as a *song* band, something they've been threatening for the last four years. The crucial element in the taking of this direction has been Christine McVie, who had the same blues roots everybody else did but countered with a pop sensibility that, until now, none of the band's guitarists truly shared. Her pop inclinations blossomed with the last album's "Come A Little Bit Closer,"

which may've been *the* undiscovered pop gem of 1974 and remains eminently ripe for a smash coverjob.

Her songs on this album, most notably "Forever" and "Say You Love Me," strike the most operative balance of her influences yet. The former is a smooth love ballad that Dennis Wilson could almost've written, while the latter shows off her developing mastery of a distinctively bouncy strain of good-time rock. And her keyboards mesh with Buckingham's guitar to give the overall sound more punch, bringing a band that has always been the sum of readily identifiable parts into a more unified perspective. The one song co-authored by McVie and Buckingham, a rave-up called "World Turning," is not among the better tracks (being to my taste one of those live killers that never really translates to record), but the amount of radio exposure it's already gotten reflects an effectiveness at providing their audience with a relatable point of transition between old and new Fleetwood Macs.

Keith Olsen's main contribution as engineer and co-producer is that you can finally begin to get on record a consistent picture of how good a drummer Mick Fleetwood is, something you've always had to see the band live to fully appreciate. On the band's past studio efforts, it didn't necessarily matter *what* he was playing because too often it sounded like he was beating on a piece of fruit with a mallet. This time around you really begin to feel the presence of his drums and, more importantly, what they mean to the construction of Fleetwood Mac's music. Though I feel a bit foolish waking up to the fact seven years on, the partnership of bassist John McVie and Mick Fleetwood is the best rhythm section in rock & roll.

While this is one of the album's greatest assets, it simultaneously creates the album's only real problem. It almost seems as if Olsen achieved his drum presence not by making them bigger, but by making everything surrounding the drums smaller. What this album lacks, which you notice when you see the group live, is power, and it's down to the way the band was recorded. You're always aware that they're making the right instrumental moves, but the point is never driven home with the authority it should be. The greatness of the music is all here, but its real muscle is not always represented.

Such ultimately petty gripes aside, this album scores heavily for what it delivers but also for what it promises. Its three hit single possibilities ("Blue Letter," "Monday Morning" and "Say You Love Me") could very easily explode the dimensions of an already-substantial following, yet it's still just a beginning. The album was recorded before the band had ever played together live, which makes for a potential here that's nothing short of frightening. Far from being merely a good band with a distinguished past, Fleetwood Mac is a band with a future.

STREETS
Ralph McTell
20th Century

By LOIS MARINO

Melody Maker once wrote: "McTell and 'Streets of London' are synonymous. It must have been sung in every folk club in the country. It's earned him the respect of musicians in all fields. It's acknowledged as one of the greatest social commentaries of the day. Damn it, it's the song that made him." It's also a song that's been recorded on several McTell albums previously. In accordance with McTell's feelings about this number (he's sick of it), I'm gonna COMPLETELY IGNORE that opening hit cut in this review and move right onto the good

stuff. Which is the remaining 10 tunes.

Starting with "You Make Me Feel Good"—he really does. No matter how many times I hear his voice, it always hits me like slipping my bare arm into a tweed jacket and finding a silk lining. What a great song—it's a rusty railroad ride, all soft comfortable and chugging with a beautiful autumn view. Ralph extols the natural life. A dandelion, some scruffy jeans, and you, you with your tangly hair. Hey, but don't start thinkin' the kid ain't got no class—let him lift you in his arms and float you across the floor, a sleepy waltz, the start of a "Grande Affaire." Ah, remember how it was—always the best hotels, the white coated waiters, the moon over Amsterdam, the taste of sheets and wine...

"...Come on down like an angel, come on down like a woman," begs the penitent beneath your sill, "...give me your sweet forgiveness...ah, it must be, MUST BE, the 'Seeds of Heaven.'" Could any woman refuse those dulcet tones, that hired heavenly choir??? Come then, let's rumba and make up. The band's playing "El Progreso" and the cigarette girl, she got more than a rose between her teeth. One drag signor, and you hit de roof...AAEEIII! The music was so hot and her eyes were so dark...and I'm an English boy I won a holiday in Mexico.

"Heron Song" is personal, a song of freedom and not freedom, sleeping and weeping by the side of a road and wishing for wings in order to know which way to go. "Pity The Boy" is something your grandmother would have recited to you, wise wag of finger. My child, never marry for money, or position, or beauty, for all will fade. "...Better by far, to marry for love, stay broke for the rest of your days..." It's got an almost western sludge-motion feel to it—waltzing in quicksand. A Shaker psalm.

Here's Arizona Ralph McTell, sittin' and pickin' and wantin' "Interest On The Loan" cause he needs a coupla drinks...promising to write or maybe phone, promising to pay it all back—the money, that is. And he balances his guitar on his knee that's balanced on the split rail fence and when he smiles to explain he blends into the sunset and you know there are some things you can never get back, and never repay.

"Lunar Lullaby" leaves a liquid languor. All the burning metaphysical questions wrestling with a young man's mind as he lies on his back under a field of stars. I know you don't have the answers either but please my friend, tell me it's all right. Reason me to sleep tonight...promise me that it won't all collide.

What makes this McTell's most outstanding album to date is the wide variety of musical styles he's managed to mix and make work. You never forget he's a folk singer, but it's terrific to hear him whoop and shout in a Reggae way, or somberly intone a stately dance melody, or go C&W, or play with the French language to produce a jaunty freer and easier feel than one usually associates with his music, and still be able to get way down and moan the bad blues. And speaking of produce, he did it, the entire LP, and wrote everything with the exception of "Red Apple Juice," which is traditional.

The end result is a really fine album that you can play to match any mood you happen to find yourself in, and if you're moodless, it gives you eleven different choices. Why not be all eleven, one right after another, over and over again?

DESTINY
Felix Cavaliere
Bearsville 6958

By LITA ELISCU

This is a dance album, a disco album. Happily, and much more importantly, it is a successful one: it goes

chooga-chooga in all the right places, the rhythm section functioning like an omnipresent undertow always ready to drag one's feet into action, making it impossible to stay still. The production is clean, strong and sparse, letting solos weave in and over the beat, winding around the vocals.

The vocals, as well as the production and most of the songs, are all courtesy of Felix Cavaliere who just happens to have one of the finest pop voices around—and though it has been around for a while, only improving instead of giving out. It is the vocals, as well as the high level of musicianship, which makes this album so listenable, so danceable. After putting it on one or two times, the easy hummability and infectious beat mark its immediate success. Further listening reveals the almost textbook clarity of the production, making it an even greater joy: a classy disco record, in which the sense of care keeps anyone from condescending to the basically lightweight material. I use that word, "lightweight" only because current values assign it to dance music as opposed to the 'heavier' varieties where the lyrics are all-important or electronic technology is used so abundantly that effects require several hearings to be sorted out. Only a few pop masterpieces manage to blend the light and lasting to reach new levels, and this is not such a one. It is merely a fine record, worth listening to and then listening again... Come to think of it, that's not so bad...

FELIX CAVALIERE DESTINY

Includes FlipFlop Light of My Life
Try to Believe Hit and Run



My favorite cuts include "You Came And Set Me Free," with its infectious chorus, featuring Elliot Randall on lead guitar, and congas augmenting the drums. It has everything wonder about New York street music: breeziness, earthiness, a certain roughness that sits salty on the ears, and the powerful, searing vocal of Felix, cutting above and through everything else. The back-up vocalists manage to sound like Laura Nyro, no mean feat, and give the song yet another pleasant face. Miss Nyro herself sings backup on the following cut, "Love Came," and her voice is again magnificent, even in back-up capacity, but the cut itself does not work quite so well. "Flip Flop" is one other favorite, and I have been told the plan is to take off the vocal track and leave the instrumentals—a sound plan indeed. The interplay is nearly perfect, Sanborn and Brecker trading off saxophone solos, Buzzy playing fuzztone guitar, making staccato runs stopping short of climax. Just lovely. Dino Danelli, one of the original Rascals, plays drums on this cut, and it would have been interesting to hear him on more, for his drumming sounds good here.

If the album has a major flaw, it comes from Felix trying to provide everyone with a showcase for their talents; sometimes, it seems as though songs exist only for the solos contained therein rather than the overall effect. In this time of disco madness, it's good to see one of the originals back on the scene, providing good music for dancing the night away.

REVIEWS

RUN TELL THE PEOPLE Daniel Boone Pye 12105

By GREG SHAW

Anyone who thinks of Daniel Boone as a one-shot British bubblegum hack is making a serious mistake. True, "Beautiful Sunday" was played so incessantly in the summer of 1972 that it eventually became an annoyance, but the same could be said of the Sweet's "Little Willy" and nobody seems to have held it against them. In the final analysis, both must be acknowledged as perfect pop records, as only the British know how to make.

Boone's subsequent releases, with the exception of the marvelous "Annabelle," were admittedly not up to this standard, but with "Run Tell the People" he has again hit the mark, prompting the release of this, his second American album. Half of the songs were previously issued on *Export Only*, a 1973 British release that never came out here. The rest are originals, including "Run Tell the People," a great watered-down Phil Spector sound that should, by rights, have been a hit single. The newer songs show a development in the style of producer Larry Page, who has helped bring out the more commercial elements of Boone's modern pop sound.



Compared with such 1972/73 cuts as "Carrie Lee" and "Who Turned the Light Out On My Life" (on which Boone might almost be mistaken for David Cassidy), the new tracks stand out as sparkling gems of 1975 bubblepop. "Running Around With the Boys Again" has more of that Spector piano, a couple of Roy Wood riffs, and First Class harmonies. It's a simple melody and on the whole the songs lack substance, but the sound is nice and endlessly tolerable. My favorite of the lot is "Singing Backing Vocal With a Rock n' Roll Band," a subject Boone doubtless knows plenty about, having done some ten years of it in various forms. It's the fullest production on the album, every "shang-a-lang" and "shooby-do-wop" backed up by a woman chorus and the whole thing rocked along by strong Hollies-like guitars. Lyrically, the song appears to be the story of Boone's life. Though his history is not generally known, few British musicians can match his experience. Starting out in Birmingham (the home of Roy Wood, Jeff Lynne and Denny Laine) his group the Bruisers backed singer Tommy Bruce on a couple of hits and then scored a hit of their own with "Blue Girl" in 1963. As Peter Lee Stirling (Boone's real name) & the Bruisers, they toured and recorded for several years, during which Stirling wrote prolifically for other groups, including the Merseybeats. With this background, Daniel Boone can be seen as more than just another British pop singer. He's at the peak of a long, productive career, and if we're lucky he'll keep making records like these for many years to come. He's no Paul McCartney, but for what he is, he's one of the best.

SLAKEHIPS ETCETERA Nucleus Sire SASD-7508

By MICHAEL POINT

Nucleus has now recorded a good half-dozen albums and stands as one of England's longest running jazz groups. Trumpet man Ian Carr, who has several solo albums out himself, has been the dominant figure in the band from the beginning as his smooth trumpet work and consistently classy compositions have served as the group's audio trademark. *Snakehips Etcetera* evenly divides the composition credits between Carr and the group as his three tracks take up the album's second side while the first is devoted to tunes by saxist Bob Bertles, keyboard man Geoff Castle, and bassist Roger Sutton. Despite the melodic diversity of the tunes there is really not too much difference in the overall approach and what emerges is yet another tightly-knit Nucleus album with a plenitude of pleasing sounds.

Nucleus is relatively restrained and resists classification as either a jazz/rock unit or a free-form exploratory band. Their sound is based in a more traditional jazz mode and if you simply must have fiery hit-or-miss explorations you may not like all of the album, although there are definitely parts which fall into that category. The ten minute plus title track slithers along with a variety of interesting solo spots, including some of Carr's best work on the album, but the two tracks that follow it, both by Carr, are the high



points of the album. Guitarist Ken Shaw is featured front and center on "Heyday" and presents impeccably clean guitar lines that are dominated by inventiveness and not volume. Bob Bertles also gets some of his best licks in on "Heyday" with the hardest blowing sax work on the album tucked neatly into a solo break on the song. Bassist Roger Sutton, too, gets his featured role in "Heyday" and it seems obvious that Carr's compositions are excellent vehicles for the entire band, both individually and as a unit.

Ian Carr's trumpet style is marked by a melodic fluidity with a few traces of Miles Davis evident which is no sin since any trumpet player uninfluenced by Miles has either just picked up the instrument or simply hasn't been paying attention. Nucleus is a band to watch and *Snakehips Etcetera* is an album to buy. There really isn't much else that needs to be said.

THE STAMP ALBUM Climax Blues Band Sire SAS 7507

By PETER CRESCENTI

I was surprised, not long ago, while skimming through a British rock weekly, to see the Climax Blues Band listed, in magnifying glass-sized print, as a support band for heavy metalers Thin Lizzy, a group barely known here, and hardly a major act even in England. After a brief investigation, I realized that Climax is among a small group of British bands, like Foghat, Peter Frampton, and Renaissance, who through constant gigging and a series of respectable chart successes here, are now only one or two albums away from becoming established Top Twenty hit makers in the States, while at the same time being mysteriously ignored in their own country.

It's not unusual though for the British audience and the national rock press, who practically control that audience in the absence of free radio in England, to disregard many good English bands, until they've achieved spectacular critical and popular acceptance in America. Robin Trower and Average White Band were both slighted in England before each scored monstrous hits here, so it's not strange that bands like the Climax Blues Band have chosen to campaign in America almost exclusively, because the pattern that has emerged dictates that you can go home and be recognized, but not until you can flash that gold album.

If they still want it, Climax may have their passport to stardom in England, via America, with *The Stamp Album*, a superior follow-up to the disappointing *Sense Of Direction*, which lingered in the charts for six months, buoyed by the unexpected success of their rousing double album, *FM Live*, which in turn, had solidified and expanded the cult following that rallied around Climax's first five records.

The Stamp Album kicks alive with the usual Climax zest, as Derek Holt's bass bulldozes into "The Power," an idealistic rocker about the good

vibrations in all of us that could bring us "a new tomorrow." Holt and drummer John Cuffley are a propelling rhythm duo that rudely boot the song in the ass, while saxist Colin Cooper's fat horns cushion guitarist Pete Haycock's crisp picking. "Mr. Good Time" uncovers the rock'n'roll leeches that suck money and spirit from unsuspecting bands, and musically, reveals the maturity and self-control the band has developed, as they chose to tastefully understate rather than constantly assault the senses with virtuosity, an option too many bands refuse to recognize.

The flip side opens with the band easing in over flight announcements at an airport, giving the possibility intended effect of sighting a jet in the distance and watching it until it flies overhead. "Sky High" explains the frustration of waiting in airports, and then the exhilaration of finally taking off to yet undiscovered places and relationships. Haycock, probably the most underrated axist around, tears off a succinct, melancholy solo in mid-tune, trailed by Cooper's haunting sax comments as the song slides back into the verses.

Whether by accident or design, Climax pays tribute to Little Feat in "The Devil Knows," a swirling orgy of stinging drumming, scintillating slide guitar, and tasty piano plunking by returning original keyboardist Richard Jones. Jones' return to Climax is not an overly dramatic one, as he is being assimilated back into the band slowly, using the piano and organ mostly as an accenting underlayer for the guitar and horns to work over. The keyboardist, who also plays guitar, sings, and writes, understands the fairly limited role he must play for now, and wisely and efficiently uses open space as well as he actually plays, something Little Feat's Bill Payne is a master at, though his role in Feat is a more prominent one.

"Loosen Up" is funky, drunken, gutter rock, smeared with an aura of inebriated, sloppy, wet sex in the back room, and comically punctuated by a clarinet and "do do do" vocal chorus. And a line from the song is actually an accurate suggestion of what this album is all about. "If you need a little lubrication in your locomotion, gotta loosen up," sing the boys, and it's not a bad idea to get up and do it with them.

SLOW DAZZLE John Cale Island ILPS 9317

By SAM SUTHERLAND

Each new installment in John Cale's quixotic solo career has invited the sort of critical involvement and public indifference that have earmarked him as a classic cult figure. His anomalous credentials as musician and composer, and prevailing appetite for a taut and impressionistic vein of surrealism—both indications that Cale's inheritance is European and academic, rather than American and vernacular—have proved irresistible to the absorbed listener. His thorough eclecticism, frail voice and droll, cryptic persona have been equally forbidding to a broader audience.

What seems conventional in the context of an iconoclast's past output is by no means an assembly-line exercise in stock pop ideas, though, and *Slow Dazzle* shows its links to Cale's last album, *Fear*, in its choice of classic rock songs as structural motifs. *Fear* was a stark contrast to its predecessor, *Paris 1919*, abandoning an expansive gothic scale for comparatively sparse, sinewy songs. The new album refines the approach, its songs built on strong and simple frames braced by lean but powerful drumming (from Timi Donald and Gerry Conway, both incisive rhythm masters) and simple, syncopated bass lines that seem conjured from the '50's by Pat Donaldson.

The songs themselves are likewise rooted in straightforward song structure, with well-timed bridges and effective choruses only fractionally removed from pure pop by Cale's melodic subtlety. At the same time, Cale the arranger has introduced massed ensemble support in the form of multiple keyboards and simple but supportive orchestral lines to give these new songs a depth and richness pointing back to *Paris 1919*'s symphonic mein.

"Mr. Wilson," the first song, displays this balance of stout rhythmic structure and widescreen harmonic depth to pay tribute to Brian Wilson and the mythic, post-psychedelic Beach Boys. Cale's tribute is laced with dark menace, alluding to paranoia and drugged excess as Wilson's demon before breaking through its shadowy verse to build a paean to the California dream. The song ends with a vocal montage that perfectly captures the soft, airy vocal embroidery of Wilson's most lionized late-'60's songs, with "California wine tastes fine" an ironic contrast to the Beach Boys' more explicitly cosmic choral rounds. Throughout, string arrangements and celeste sustain this panoramic atmosphere beautifully.

While "Mr. Wilson" invokes a symphonic character to achieve its effect, most of the album's other songs rely more on the tested ensemble interplay of rhythm section, keyboards and guitars. Here Cale's choice of players proves striking, for he has chosen a rhythm section best-known for English folk-based rock, two guitarists (Chris Spedding and Phil Manzanera) with both blues and experimental rock elements, and a handful of additional players (Eno, on synthesizer, and Geoff Muldaur, to sing harmony on two songs) with decidedly esoteric leanings. The resulting band is much too flexible, yet consistently restrained, to inhabit any single, familiar genre.

That Cale's earlier penchant for compositional experimentation has been tempered to a minor role, that his dry and rather chilly voice has been pushed toward more extroverted but still imprecise rock style, seems to me fairly unimportant. *Slow Dazzle* lives up to its title, proving hypnotic in the long run.

JUKEBOXJURY



THE TROGGS—"Summertime"—Pye 71035

Their follow-up to "Good Vibrations" is, in my humble opinion, the nearest thing to a masterpiece the Troggs have done since "Wild Thing." At first it sounds underproduced, until you realize it's merely raw; the only way for a song like this to sound. A beat that pounds with menacing restraint, pushes Reg along as he breathes the glory of sun-tanned girls who wear their dresses so high you can see the sunshine on their fa...fa...fa...faces. As the end of each verse approaches, you're sure he's gonna lose all control and start slobbering obscenities, but he always pulls out just in time. A classic.

SVEN & CHARLOTTE—"Dance"—MGM 14779

Here's a curious item that brings up all sorts of mind-bending trivia. We all know by now that Abba was formed when two veterans of Sweden's pop idols the Hep Stars decided to form a group with their wives. Now, believe it or not, the leader of Sweden's other '60s supergroup, Ola & the Janglers (whose name for some reason is not Ola, but Claes of Geijerstam) has put two of his lady friends in the studio to cut this lovely song which you may recall from Abba's first album. It's got that same arctic purity of sound, and though it lacks the benefit of Bjorn & Benny's production (for my money, they've got the most dynamic sound going) it benefits from the voices of Sven & Charlotte, with a piercing quality reminiscent of Carol Douglas (or better, Peanut—as long as we're wallowing in trivia, might as well go all the way...) that Ann & Frieda can't quite match. Anyway, it's a good song and a powerful pop recording that you shouldn't miss.

COTTON, LLOYD & CHRISTIAN—"I Go to Pieces"—20th Century 2217

The Del Shannon-composed Peter & Gordon hit is revived in this fine Michael Lloyd/Mike Curb production that does nothing to hide the intrinsic beauty of the melody. Mersey guitars are replaced by disco orchestration, which will probably ensure a certain amount of exposure. The more the better...

THE MICHAEL STANLEY BAND—"I'm Gonna Love You"—Epic 8-50116

Stanley has never been especially high on my star-studded list of Cleveland fave-raves, but there's no denying the

strength of this cut. A sort of heavy metal ballad, produced by the guy with all the "x"s and "z"s in his name (whose records are usually about as listenable as his name is pronounceable), it hits a rare middle ground between raw power and melodic (almost bubble-gummy) vocals. I like it.

RON DANTE—"Sugar Sugar"—RCA PH 10340

And speaking of bubblegum, this disc reunites my long-time hero Ron Dante (just dropped from Arista) with the song that introduced his voice to billions back in 1969. It's been long enough that a new generation may just decide to chew on it awhile, especially since it's been up-dated and shot full of disco potential.

ALICE COOPER—"Department of Youth"—Atlantic 3280

This is actually my favorite record of the month, but of course by the time you read this it should already be in the Top Ten so there's hardly any point in telling you about it. I can't just let it pass, though; it's too good. Probably his best since "Eighteen," and a strong contender for best teen anthem of all time. If there were but a fraction of the teenage rebellion afoot in the land almost any year in the '60s had, this would be a controversial and possibly dangerous record. In 1975, it's merely great.

LOU CHRISTIE—"Summer Days"—Slipped Disc 45270

Lou's latest, on a new label (part of the Elektra-Asylum complex) is a slightly rocked-up ballad that should get plenty of MOR play and could become as big a pop hit as anything Frankie Valli's done lately. No trace of the old falsetto, but I doubt if many will miss it, and without it Christie's still a fine singer, as we've noted on his last few releases. This ought to be the one to do it for him.

As for Valli, his new stuff sucks, but we should remember how good he once was. The Osmonds, who are doing so well with "The Proud One" (MGM 14791) could learn a lot from him; Valli's original version (Phillips 40407, 1966) is vastly superior, though this is still the best Osmond outing in some time. The Four Seasons, meanwhile, have bounced back on Warner Bros. with "Who Loves You" (8122), a bouncy Bob Gaudio tune produced by Mike Curb.

You know what my favorite song on the air is right now? "Black Superman-Muhammad Ali" by Johnny Wakelin &

the Kinshasa Band (Pye 71012). I don't know why, but it's just a great record. Reminds me a bit of "The Ballad of Davy Crockett" for some odd reason....

The first new Beau Brummels single in six years is "You Tell Me Why" (Warner Bros. 8119), a remake of their 1965 hit from their superlative comeback album. This song, like the album itself, shows that the Brummels weren't merely ahead of their time; they were making music of timeless class and beauty—and still are.

Quite a few good pop records out this month. Tommy Roe's follow-up to the brilliant "Glitter and Gleam" is a thing called "Rita and Her Band" (Monument 8662), not in the same class but not bad. Tinker's Moon, who last appeared with a cover of the Bay City Rollers' "Shang-a-Lang," are back with "Ooh Baby, Baby" (Polydor 15107), a rather low-key, almost laid-back tune that sounds okay but leaves me thirsting for some real bubblegum. Brian Cadd brings back Crazy Elephant's "Gimme Gimme Good Lovin'" (Chelsea 3016) and while nothing could touch the frenzy of the original, this is a good try.

Andy and David Williams take on Gary Lewis' "This Diamond Ring" (Barnaby) in an arrangement little changed from the original and rather nice to hear. Bobby Sherman, meanwhile, joins the growing ranks of those who've recorded Neil Sedaka's "Our Last Song Together" (Janus 254), despite the song's personal references to stairways to heaven and other bits of nostalgia that few other artists besides Sedaka can really lay claim to.

My big discovery of this paragraph is Patricia Dahlquist. Though not her first record, "Keep Our Love Alive" (Epic 8-50125) is the first to strike me as something special. She's got a sweet girlish voice, almost like Lesley Gore's at times, and this song brings it out to the fullest. I also like it because of the production, which takes the disco beat out of the discos and puts it in a teenage context. More of this, please!

One other girl singer I've been listening to is Reparata, of Delrons fame. I reviewed this record when it came out some months ago, but "Shoes" (Polydor 14271) is again for some odd reason starting to move up the charts, and I've even heard it on the air a few times. It's got that Abba sound and is just different enough to be a freak hit, so call your local stations today. And while you're at it,

BILLY SWAN—"Everything's the Same (Ain't Nothing Changed)"—Monument 8661

Here I had Billy Swan pegged as a one-hit-per-decade wonder, and he comes up with this magnificent waxing, easily outclassing "I Can Help," which I always considered a bit too one-dimensional to merit any lasting excitement. This one, though, is infinitely hotter, with guitar and organ combining more smoothly into the mix, bolstered with touches of piano and the same female chorus that added so much to Tommy Roe's "Glitter and Gleam" on the same label recently. He still knows only one guitar run, but it's used more effectively here, and the lyrics, while still repetitive, aren't quite so vapid. The end result, however, defies analysis; it's just a stone groove record that I'm hoping will go all the way.

PICK-TO-CLICK



demand to know why they're not playing "S.O.S." which is moving up at a tragically slow pace.

Are you ready for the return of the George Baker Selection? Part of the big Dutch non-invasion of 1970, they're back now with "Paloma Blanca" (Warner Bros. 8115), a decent if unremarkable pop tune. Also from Europe is "Ding-a Dong" by Teach-In (Philips 40800), a brisk ditty with female vocals and that Eurovision sound we all adore so much. From England, we have Rogue with "Cool Clear Air" (Epic 8-50126), a familiar-sounding song with nice harmonies and sparkling production. From Montreal comes "Judy Played the Juke Box" by the Crescent Street Stompers (20th Century 2176), a group of local studio musicians with a strongly commercial pop/disco sound based around a recent British pop hit that's pretty much unfamiliar here. And finally, to complete our world tour, from Florida we have Phil Gernhard producing (together with Tony Scotti) David Bellamy on a tune called "Nothin' Heavy" (Warner Bros. 8123), a typically gentle, affecting soft-rock ballad in the Lobo vein, with lyrics that are hard to argue with ("I don't want nothin' heavy, just my baby in the back of my Chevy....").

It's well known by now that George Harrison's "My Sweet Lord" was copped from the Chiffons' "He's So Fine." Unfortunately some idiot had the bright idea to have the Chiffons get back together and cut the Harrison version (giving him full credit, no less) and naturally it's awful, not to mention blatantly obvious. Chiffons fans steer clear (Laurie 3630).

I mentioned a couple months back that no one had written a novelty song about Elton John. Now there's Clive Baldwin, taking the role of an Al Jolson fan who's been in a coma for 30 years, awakening to find a music scene he can't comprehend. "Who the hell is Elton John?!" he demands to know in "Now It's Paul McCartney Stevie Wonder Alice Cooper Elton John" (Mercury 73680). A pretty weird record.

This seems to be the month for 'em. Check out the Creepies with "Teach Me How to Rock 'N Roll" (Pye 71021), which combines Bobby "Monster Mash" Pickett with David "Chipmunks" Seville and a bit of "Flying Saucers Rock & Roll" for one of the strangest novelty discs of recent vintage. If you like the Rocky Horror Show, you'll love it.

The Winos, having dumped Mogan David, are on the new Rhino Records label with "All the Wrong Girls Like Me," a well-conceived though weakly produced teen rocker backed by "Savage Surf," a fine surf instrumental. Send \$1.25 to Rhino, 1716 Westwood Blvd., L.A. 90024.

Oldies fans, take note: The Pentagons (remember "To Be Loved"?), are back, recording as the Jones Bros. with a fine soul ballad, "Lucky Lady" (Avis 102). The Belmonts are back too, with "A Brand New Song" (Laurie 3631). Carmol Taylor has a nice version of Chuck Berry's "Back in the U.S.A." on Elektra 45255, one of the rare country releases on that canyon-oriented label. Buddy Holly's "That'll Be the Day" is revived by Jym Diamond (Luciver 202), and did you know incidentally that Paul McCartney owns the publishing rights to all Buddy Holly's songs? That crafty little guy is full of surprises....

BLIND DATE

A monthly Blindfold Test by those masters of slander-rock, Mark Volman & Howard Kaylan

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

A FLO & EDDIE PROPOSITION:

Hey, if you guys have any influence with the people we've been reviewing, now would be a good time to give them *our album*, and let them review it for the October Blind Date.

Excerpts from *Ride a Rock Horse*—Roger Daltrey (MCA)

Mitch Ryder! Is this Bonaroo? Famous singer? How famous? Mark

ROGER DALTREY Ride A Rock Horse



Lindsay famous? Harry Nilsson. Eric Burdon. Memories of Maria. Los Indios Tabajaras. A little Daltrey in there. A lot of Daltrey! That might be the problem—THERE'S ONLY A LITTLE Daltrey in there. Trouble with the last album too... Russ Ballard produced—he certainly has keyed down. Phillip Goodhand-Tait wrote this! I *knew* he'd come back. I think Russ Ballard's going through a bit of a slump, and it couldn't affect Daltrey positively. He screams wonderful! It sounds like "Step right up folks, the guy who was in *Tommy* will do his Vegas act for you!" I wouldn't recommend this.

Excerpts from *Destiny*—Felix Cavaliere (Bearsville)

Kraftwerk at 45! This isn't the band with Chaka Khan's husband, is it? Kokomo. I know this guy? Intimately? Geographical sound? Allentown, PA rock! You gotta remember the stereo we're listening on—the Typesetter's low fi. Three Dog Night. Best white R&B group of its time? The original AWB. Rascals. This is Felix? All right! This sounds good. He's added the synthesizer. I want to hear him sing! Wonderful voice. I'm glad he got out of that cosmic thing—even if he got back to a ghetto, at least he's back out of the ghetto of his *own mind*. Profound, what? Is he wearing a hat? Steve Khan plays guitar—this *could* be the album with Chaka Khan's husband.

Excerpts from *The Rowans* (Asylum)

One of Clive Davis's losers? Brewer & Shipley. Related act? Batdorf & Rodney. Tavares. The Taniguchi Brothers. It's a duo? Trio—they added another brother. The Isley Brothers. Let me guess without having to hear any more. I don't have any idea and I don't like it. Jerry Garcia said they were as good as the Beatles? You can get Garcia to say anything! I want to hear another cut now. The name has to do with racing boats... Regatta. Dynpflex. Porthole. Junk. The locomotive power that moves racing boats? What is this, 20 Questions? Spark plug. Oar. I don't care. The Rowan



Everybody's Somebody's Girlfriend

Brothers? Who? I didn't hear anything that made me flash on the Beatles. In fact I didn't hear anything that reminded me of the Searchers. That's the pits. Is Phoebe on it?



Excerpts from *Dance with Arthur Brown* (Gull)

Leave it on! Arthur Brown! I've waited for a new Arthur Brown album for years. Yeah! Dance with Arthur Brown. Wonderful! I love him! He's got a lot of originals here, though... Saxen—George Kahn. Chaka's husband! Very tame. I never heard Kingdom Come so I don't know what he's coming out of, but from the last Arthur Brown album—I don't want to review this album any more. I want him to be more hellfire. Yeah, *burn*, you son-of-a-bitch! I'm afraid this album will. It's not the same. Now this I like (the Typesetter having cleverly skipped "Fire" on the turntable). I think if they re-released this album one more time—they've got enough copies of it lying around. He was the best stage act going.

Excerpts from *Ruby Starr & Grey Ghost* (Capitol)

Girlfriend of a famous singer? Marianne Faithful. Jessi Colter. Linda



McCartney. Nancy Nevins. Veronique Sanson. Rita Coolidge. Bonnie Raitt. Everybody's somebody's girlfriend (good song title). This could go on forever (likewise). Warren Beatty's girlfriend. Who's the boyfriend? Sheeky Greene. Not Cher's farewell album, is it? Why not? She doesn't sing all that bad. But that's not important. I just want to know who she is. This could be Reverend Ike's wife. A name group—geographical? Black Oak Arkansas. That's the girl who sings "Oh Jim Dandy"—Cherry Red! Ruby Starr, right? Now it's all in perspective. What's making that funny noise in the turntable? Grey Ghost. I don't like it.

"Don't Want to Say Goodbye," others, from *Sha Na Now* (Kama Sutra)

Abba. O'Jays. Little Milton. Little

Milton? Mostly white? I like this one. Just a minute. Grey Ghost. This is throwing me. Sha Na Na! Yeah! They ought to change their name. This is a good pop record. Why *not* do a Raspberries track? Sha Na Now. Looks like Sha Na Then. Who is Tony Camillo? "Bazuka?" Oh no.

Excerpts from *Power in the Music*—Guess Who (RCA)

Enduring group? Poco? Guess Who. Jim Stafford. Do I like these guys? They're great. I can't imagine liking anybody so much and not having heard them in the past. They must've boogied an awful lot, and turned me off. Still sounds like Guess Who to me. It is? I



already guessed that way up the paragraph! Burton! This sounds better than anything I've heard from them in a while. I like his voice, the piano—they're very good in person, very professional. Why do they get 18 billion for every album cover? Cute! I see a melting watch on the front cover. A maple leaf... I like 'em. Everybody should own all their albums.

Excerpts from *Dream Weaver*—Gary Wright (Warners)

American from a fairly big British group? His love's the light? I never knew that. Black, right? That's what I said, white. B.W. Stevenson. Group had a ghostly dental name! Spooky Tooth, right. Great clue. Gary Wright, huh? Almost all keyboards? Ambitious... I can remember a time when I thought Spooky Tooth was all right. Good. I'm surprised I like that, but good. The title of the album was inspired by—Fritz Weaver.

Excerpts from *King Harvest* (A&M)

A regal name. The King Family. Queen. One-shot hit? "Brandy." Vanity Fare. Canadian... Parliaments! King Harvest. Who? I like them. I like that record a whole lot. That guy played on the Beach Boys tour. Lots of good records this month. Nothing great, though—it's not like the new Led Zeppelin album came out, which might be a good thing...

Excerpts from *Back Street Crawler*—Paul Kossoff (Island)

Larry Coryell. Guitar city. Bad Company. Robert Savage. The Further Adventures... Trio? Ron Wood? Is he ever gonna sing? Mostly instrumental... This could be Mahogany Rush. You think this is better than Jeff Beck? Oh my God, now I'm starting to wonder where I'm at. Peter Green? I get real tired of this stuff, fast! I'm tired of it—take it off. Too spacey for me. This is the guy singing from his old group. I hesitate to say it. Paul Rodgers coming back to guest with one of the guys in Free who didn't make it. Paul Kossoff, huh?

Soul & Jazz

QUINCY

**MORE CREATIVE INSANITY
FROM THE "Q" CREW OF
LOS ANGELES:**

- The Brothers Johnson
- Paulette McWilliams
- The Watts Prophets
- Leon Ware

Once again the editors of Soul and Jazz have asked me to comment on my current undertakings. I was delighted to contribute last year in the form of a review of *Body Heat*, so quite naturally this more extended opportunity is a welcome prospect.

Last year, as many of you may know, I had a serious bout with death in the form of a cerebral aneurism which stopped my work flow for about six months. In layman's terms, a cerebral aneurism is when the blood vessels leading to the brain explode, which consequently reduces blood flow to the brain. After two major brain surgeries those vessels were repaired. I have now fully recovered. While in the clutches of such a serious illness I learned a lot philosophically, and I've changed my head towards certain things as a result.

In essence what this means is, I want to do the things that I feel in my soul that I should do and if it works, cool, if it doesn't I will know that I failed by my own choice. *Body Heat* was the first step in that direction I suppose; for many years I was put in the bag of being a jazz musician, which I accepted. But the title was ludicrous for I have yet to figure out what a jazz musician is. *Body Heat* was not a jazz album *per se*, it was a *music* album, in which I tried to express the music that I feel. Critically I received some grief from some of my die hard jazz friends but on the whole it was well received and my best selling record (gold as a matter of fact).

It is important to me as an artist, arranger, composer and producer to play and record the things I feel, for there is no greater artistic crime than creative dishonesty. A lot of my jazz peers have gone through this same realization, the pioneers being, Miles, Herbie Hancock, and Donald Byrd to name a few—we ask ourselves "Do I really want to play what I played ten years ago because that's what my category is or do I want to play the music that my soul says yes to?" When the soul says yes, the mind can't say no.

I have long sought to assemble a permanent band. My past recordings feature studio players, solely because my movie and television schedule made it virtually impossible to keep a band together. About a year and a half ago I decided to stop doing film scores for I had begun to feel like a machine; churning out scores at the rate of nine a year. Consequently, I have been able to put a band together that can stay together and grow together.

Mellow Madness follows in the direction that I began to establish with *Body Heat* in the sense that the emphasis is on the rhythm section and vocals, as opposed to a big, full orchestral sound. *Mellow Madness* was a joy to record because I became aware of some people who blew my mind.

First of all, while searching for a female singer for the band's winter tour (and the *Mellow Madness* sessions) my friend Phil Upchurch sent me a tape of a lady named Paulette McWilliams. "She can sing her ass off," he said. The tape had five songs on it. By the time I'd listened to the third I was so excited I got right on the phone to Chicago to Paulette and told her that I *had* to have her for the band and album. I couldn't believe the power, pathos and intonation in this woman's voice. Later I learned that Paulette was the original lead singer of Rufus, in the group's "Chicago" days. During our recent tour, (six U.S. cities and twenty four in Japan) Paulette literally tore the audiences apart. This lady is beautiful artistically, mentally, and physically, and I plan to produce an album with her in the fall.

During the *Mellow Madness* sessions a friend of mine, Joe Greene, brought a couple of young cats down to the studio who wanted to meet me. At the time I was having a bit of a problem securing a bass player for the band, so I

was forced to use session guys like Willie Weeks, and Chuck Rainey on some of the dates. Don't get me wrong, I love Chuck and Willie, they're among the best in the business but I wanted a permanent cat. The two guys that Joe brought to the studio were Louis and George Johnson, 20 and 21 years old, respectively bass and guitar players. When Louis picked up the bass and started playing, I didn't know if I was actually hearing what I heard. He blew the roof off of the studio. I mean this cat was a monster bass player, I could not believe it.

Then George picked up the guitar, played his ass off—they proceeded to play me some of the tunes they had written. I was amazed, thrilled, impressed and relieved at the same time for I had found exactly what I had been looking for, two young dudes who could play, write, sing, and were beautiful cats. Needless to say I signed them both for the band. Four of the Johnson Bros. tunes are on *Mellow Madness* and now we're mid-way through the recording of their debut album, which will be released

nowhere he started to get calls to do sessions for Bob James, Grover Washington, Bill Withers, Gabor Szabo, Sergio Mendes, and Herbie Hancock. It makes me feel really good to see this happening for the cat is so damn good.

Louis' brother George is a heavy-weight as well. He's an excellent writer, which is evident by his tunes on *Mellow Madness*, a fine guitarist, and a helluva good singer. These two cats have put more energy into me than I have had in a long time, I can't wait until we finish their album so the rest of the world can see how bad they really are.

George and Louis are just two elements of my new band in whom I find constant sources of inspiration, there are others. We've got some of the old-line players like Frank Rosolino on trombone who's played with practically everyone, dating back to Stan Kenton). "Roz," besides being one of the finest trombonists I have ever heard, is probably the craziest guy on the planet. We've been friends for more years than either of us care to admit. Frank is a fountain of knowledge and experiences, his true worth and value far exceeds the

permanent fixture ever since. The rest of the band at the moment consists of studio stalwarts like "Wah Wah" Watson on guitar, Harvey Mason on drums and Don Grusin on an array of keyboards. "Wah Wah" has played on countless records; he is likely the premier L.A. session man. He was on all of the Motown stuff as well as Barry White and all of his spinoffs. He's on the new Pointer Sisters album as well as the next Herbie Hancock. "Wah" can be heard throughout *Mellow Madness*, he's featured on a tune that he and I wrote called "Cry Baby." "Wah Wah" is the undaunted king of jive and a constant source of laughter and craziness, a truly beautiful brother...

Harvey Mason is one bad mother, I only wish that we could keep him as a permanent member of the band, but he's recently signed with Arista, and has an album of his own due shortly. Since Harvey came to town, LA hasn't been the same, since without a doubt he's *the* drummer supreme.

Don Grusin, our keyboard player, came to me via the group Azteca, and with a strong recommendation from his brother Dave Grusin, one of the leading film, television, and session composer/arrangers in the world. Don is the type of cat who can sit back and take things real easy, all the while playing his ass off. I got him three synthesizers, and a clavinet and he hasn't been the same since. Don is one of the bright hopes for the future, and a young beautiful cat whom I love a lot.

The rest of the band consists of a young 19-year-old trumpet player Bill Lamb, who Clark Terry turned me on to. Chuck Findley is also on trumpet, with Ernie Krivda on saxophone and Tommy Bahler and Leon Ware providing the vocals. I was also turned on to a guy named Gus Mancuso who plays eleven different instruments. Instead of naming all of the things he plays, just say it and you can bet that he plays it.

About twelve years ago while a vice-president at Mercury Records, I was given a tape of a young singer named Lesley Gore and asked if I thought that there was anything I could do with her. (I did,) and in the years that followed, produced a healthy lot of gold records, among them, "It's My Party," "Judy's Turn to Cry," "You Don't Own Me" and "Sunshine, Lollipops and Rainbows" to name a few. When the hits stopped five years later, we parted company amicably—both in search of new directions. Earlier this year, Lesley and her writing partner Ellen Weston came by my house with some new material that they had written, and it blew me out the door. We decided to get together again and make some music. We went into the studio and cut four sides. I took those trades to Jerry Moss (president of A&M) and he flipped. He asked me to produce an album on her. We have already released a single, "Immortality," and the album will be ready in the fall. I really feel the time is right for Lesley to happen again, for she is writing tunes that are fantastic to my ears and it's just a matter of time and exposure before she starts hitting again. I hope that I am right.

That is pretty much what I am into as of this summer. For the rest of the year I hope to finish an album, film, documentary and book on the history of the Black's Man's involvement in the world of music, from slavery to the present. So far, the working title is the *Evolution*. The project is the realization of a life long quest to uncover the true contributions of the music of our people.

In closing, I would sincerely like to thank the editors of Soul & Jazz for the opportunity to express myself in their pages again. Many times the true essence of what an artist feels is lost in the translation from journalist to print. Thank you all and be safe and peaceful...Quincy

MY KIND OF MADNESS

An autobiographical report on the latest recordings, performances and film projects of Quincy Jones

by QUINCY JONES

in the fall on A&M. Incidentally, Louis Johnson has a style of playing bass with his thumb where he hammers the strings, creating a melodic percussive sound. Watching him do it is a trip; the band has thus dubbed him "Thunder Thumbs." Besides some brief work with Billy Preston a few years ago, Louis has recorded virtually nothing but the musical grapevine is a great thing and when word spread that I had this great young bass player who was bad, out of

limitations and boundaries of music.

Another cat who's been with me since 1960 is Sahib Shehab, certainly one of the finest baritone saxophonists and flutists in the business today. Shehab, like Roz has played with virtually every major artist in the world. He left this country for Copenhagen ten years ago as times were a bit more lucrative for a musician of his caliber then. He returned to the states in 1971 when the L.A. studio scene began to flourish, he's been a



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"I dedicated the album to Stevie Wonder; the music and poet laureate of our times."



MELLOW MADNESS
Quincy Jones
A&M SP 4526

By QUINCY JONES

As I mentioned earlier *Mellow Madness* follows in the musical directions of *Body Heat* in the sense that the major emphasis is on the rhythm section instead of the horns that I relied upon so heavily in the past. The reason for this change was because I realized throughout my years as a composer and arranger I'd more or less ignored the dynamics a rhythm section has to offer, opting to use the horns and strings as the major thrust of my sound. *Body Heat* opened my head to this, and I decided to explore these ideas further with *Mellow Madness*.

My rhythm section is Harvey Mason on drums, Ralph "the King" MacDonald on percussion, George Johnson and "Wah Wah" Watson, guitars, Louis Johnson bass, and Don and Dave Grusin, George Duke and Jerry Peters on keyboards and synthesizers. Objectively speaking I don't think there is a better rhythm section in the world.

The album opens with a tune written by George Johnson and Debbie Smith called, "Is It Love That We're Missin'." The song features George on lead guitar and vocals, Ralph on various percussion instruments, and a vocal group consisting of Tommy Bahler, George and myself. A smooth flowing, hustle-disco number, it has a cool air about it that really turned me on the first time I heard the demo George brought me.

The second tune on the album is a feeling that many of us have had at one time or another, but few care to admit. "Paranoid" is the title, my friend Richard Pryor wrote the lyrics for me. He wrote some great stuff but he felt it wasn't right, so I asked Joe Green, to see what he could do with it.

Actually, I wrote the music, but Joe's interpretation was so strong that I gave him full credit for the tune. "Paranoid" features the multi-talented Leon Ware on lead vocal, and Wah Wah on lead guitar and voice bag synthesizer. Leon Ware is a true giant who seems to remain somewhat underground. He wrote "Body Heat" with me as well as "If I Ever Lose This Heaven," "Don't Say Goodbye Again," for the Jackson Five and four songs on the new Minnie Riperton album (including her latest

single, "Inside My Love.") Leon recently signed with Motown and he is currently recording his first effort for them. He had an album released a few years ago on United Artists which is really hard to find these days, but if you happen to come across it, it is well worth checking out.

The title tune is next. "Mellow Madness" is a feeling; to me, it's what you feel around midnight in front of the fire with your particular lover when the love jones hits and it is time to get down. The tune has some fine spacey keyboard work by the Grusin Brothers with vocals by Paulette McWilliams.

The fourth tune has an interesting story behind it. We were sitting around the studio late one night, the party spirit had come and gone and we began to jam. I told Louis to play this lick and everyone fell in. The tune smoked but I couldn't figure out what the hell to do with it. I thought of putting a lyric to it but the feeling wouldn't come, so I considered adding horns on top, but that didn't hit me either. Finally, I decided to hold onto it until I got an idea.

About six weeks later, while heading home from a session I got this blast; put some poetry, a really hip rap on top, cut the first verse of music out and put Ralph MacDonald on top! My friend Pete Long reminded me of some cats called the Watts Prophets so I called them up and they had this piece which was an ode to the beauty of the black woman and I freaked. That was it. I took them into the studio the next day, recorded the track and there it is, "Beautiful Black Girl." Words by Otis Smith of the Prophets, and the music by me.

The final tune on side one is "Listen! (What It Is)," which was the first tune that the Johnson Brothers brought to me. When I heard the tune I immediately had them go into the studio and cut it. The vocal features George and Paulette, with a unison bass line by Louis and Don Grusin on synthesizer. "What It Is," has become a motto phrase with the cats in the band saying, "What it is?" and inevitably the answer is, "T'aint no nothing." I really dig this tune, as a matter of fact we were doing it in Japan and the guys learned it in Japanese which really freaked out the audiences there.

Another Johnson Brothers song opens side two or rather the 'J2,' as we call them with their song "Just a Little Taste of Me." George talks about all of the folks who seem to want to get behind a particular trip; having to get up each day and put some clothes on your behind and get out in the street and hustle for some bread. I love the tune, and it features George on vocals and a good friend Tommy Morgan on bass harmonica. It has a slightly funky reggae feel to it, kind of like Bob Marley meets Quincy and the Johnson Bros.

The second tune, I've wanted to record for quite awhile, "My Cherie Amour," Stevie Wonder's opus from the summer of 1969. I love Stevie, I dedicated this album to him for he is truly one beautiful brother, and the music and poet laureate of our times. I decided on this tune over all of his others because its melody intrigued me the most, and I just love the feel of the song. It features



In Japan: Top, Quincy; center, Paulette McWilliams, and below, "Wah Wah" Watson, Q, and George Johnson.

Hubert Laws on echoplex flute, Leon Ware, Paulette MacWilliams and the amazing Minnie Riperton on vocals. The keyboard solo in the middle is by George Duke who we couldn't give credit to on the album because his company (BASF), wouldn't allow us to, but I thought I'd let you know anyway.

Harvey Mason is out front on drums on another J2 jam called "Tryin' to Find Out About You." A nice taste of bumpin' funk that feels good, just listen to Harvey on drums, playing all those polyrhythms, that dude is bad news. When we cut this we overdubbed Harvey and I told him to just cut loose and believe me, he did!

Wah Wah Watson (a.k.a. Melvin Ragin) is featured on a track we wrote together called, "Cry Baby." Wah is playing lead guitar, voice bag and lead vocal, while I'm doing the support vocal.

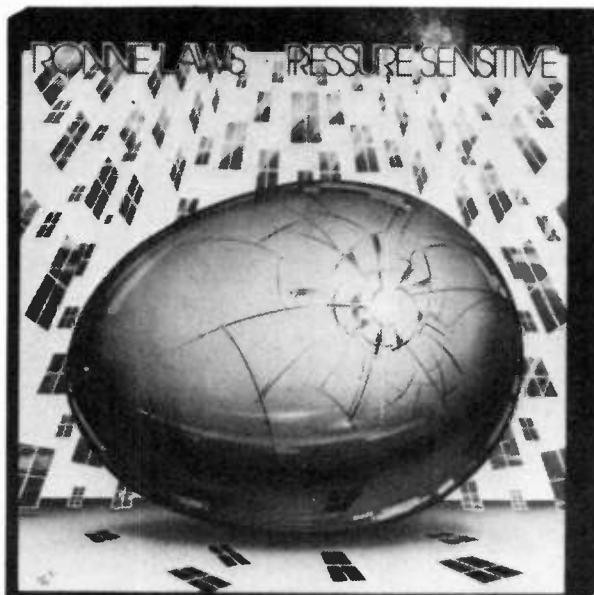
The tune depicts his life's philosophy which says when things screw up, just bounce back, and don't be a cry baby. This is Wah Wah's first tune recorded where he's actually received writers credit. Considering all of the people that he has made records for, he

deserves to get more credit. I hope that this will be a beginning for him, for he is a true talent.

The album closes with a jazz standard by a great friend and one of my biggest musical idols, Jean "Toots" Thielemans. Toots is so bad that I can't stand it! I've used him on many of my previous albums and he shines again here. Toots is featured on lead guitar and whistlin', with a screaming trombone solo by Frank Rololino, and a growling lead vocal ending by Jim Gilstrap, whom I featured on, "Buffalo Soldier" from *Body Heat*. Jim also has had two excellent singles and an album on Chelsea that you should be hip to for he can really sing.

Mellow Madness is not a jazz album, it is a music album and I suppose that I will hear a great deal from the diehards saying that I have copped out to pop once again, but believe me this music came from my soul and what ever you choose to call it suits me fine, for I had a hell of a lot of fun making it, and I even have more fun dancing to it and grooving with it.

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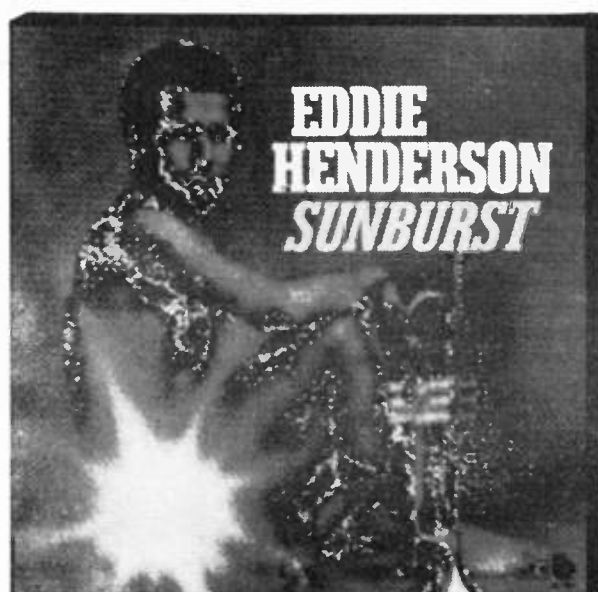
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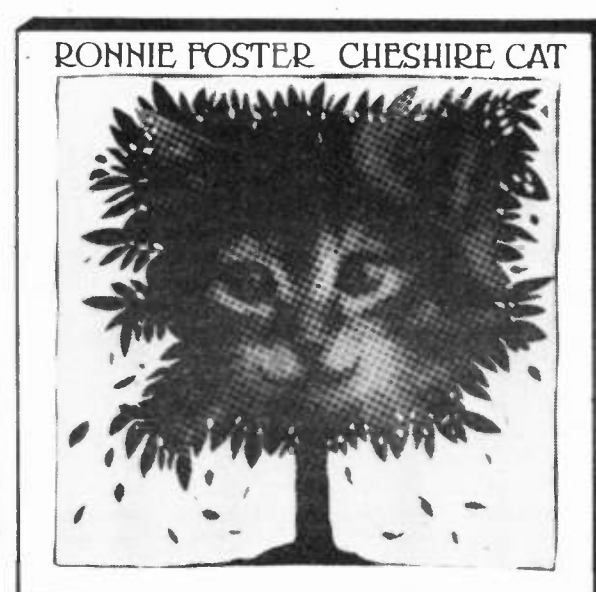
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ON BLUE NOTE RECORDS & TAPES

PERFORMANCES

ROBERTA FLACK-- No Spice in the Sauce

ROBERTA FLACK
Summerfest
Milwaukee, Wisconsin

By DAVID W. CHANDLER

Roberta Flack's music has been categorized as black MOR and analyzed as personifying the aspirations of the newly affluent black middle class, but if nothing else, her audience at Milwaukee's Summerfest demonstrated the broad spectrum of her appeal. She drew capacity crowds of 25,000 persons, almost all of them young, slightly straight, and white, in vivid contrast to the strutting Inner City multitudes who turned out earlier in the week to high-sign Earth, Wind and Fire.

Each show was virtually identical, with Flack striding onstage, waving her arms to acknowledge the cheers, then sitting down at the piano to float "Killing Me Softly" into the damp lakeside air. Although there were mild problems with echo in the sound system, from the first Flack established a remarkable immediacy and presence.

As the band tip-toed behind "Feelin' That Glow," many of the young women in the crowd could be seen swaying gently from side to side, eyes closed in faces suffused with a blissful aura. During "Jesse" it became obvious that this preemie reaction is the object—Flack has abandoned her original jazz-singing style in favor of the careful control and manipulation of tone for maximum emotional effect, rather than experimenting with flexible time and melody for musical points.

Even Flack's raucous shouts of "Alright!" and strained attempts at earthy humor couldn't dislodge the smugly safe mood by the time she reached "Feel Like Makin' Love," Gene McDaniels' definitive paen to middle class romantic ideals which she declaimed from stage front and center to the delight of the crowd.

Just how carefully controlled is everything Flack does was glaringly apparent on "The First Time Ever I Saw Your Face" which she made a great show of singing in a "free" style—while keeping perfect synch with a mechanically reproduced string section. Surprisingly, she closed both shows with a new version of "Reverend Lee," McDaniels' classic setting of a persistent vignette of rural black folklore—the conniving minister tempted by the archetypal "big legged woman"—which enlivened Roberta's early *Chapter Two* album. The music was the best of the show, with a bit of hard gospel in the vocal interplay and just enough sauce to enliven an otherwise bland and boring program.

STAN GETZ
Avery Fisher Hall
New York City, New York

By MITCHELL S. COHEN

The characterization "survivor" is tossed about with abandon these days, as we seem to be congratulating everybody, including ourselves, for having come through. Well, Stan Getz really has gone through a rather difficult period, and stands before us with his



•Roberta Flack—Faking it for maximum emotional effect.

gifts intact; if anything, time and its bruises have improved his playing, made it more resonant and evocative. And on one night of the Newport Jazz Festival, some of Getz's friends gathered to join and pay tribute to a man who has taken the tenor sax to many exotic and beautiful places.

Getz in the sixties, and now into the seventies, has been a major jazz catalyst, a genuine leader of trends and explorer of new territory, unlike Herbie Mann, who is always where the action was a half-beat ago. Getz's alertness to outside influences and his lyricism shone through his various collaborations, whether with Gilberto, Legrand, Sauter or, more recently, Corea. In fact, two contemporary relatives of Getz's forays

Hat, White Tie and Tails," and glided through three more impeccable acoustic guitar numbers before turning over the stage to pianist Jimmy Rowles (alone among the concert's participants, Byrd did not play with the man of the hour). Rowles capably handled a few piano solos, and then was joined by Getz, making his first appearance of the night, looking dapper and serious. The two went into Ellington's "What Am I Here For," and the sound from the sax was unmistakable: smoky, effortless, the epitome of "cool" without the lack of energy that term might imply. Getz and Rowles did Wayne Shorter's "Lester Left Town" and Rowles' "The Peacocks," then Gary Burton came out to play solo vibes.

"Getz was loose, inventive: It's good to have him back"

into the melodies and rhythms of Latin America appeared on the Avery Fisher stage in the early show preceding the Getz midnight gathering: the swinging mariachi-tinged figures of Chuck Mangione and the explosive, percussive intensity of Gato Barbieri. Getz, after Gerry Niewood and Barbieri, was the third excellent saxophonist to play the hall that night, and it was evident why he was honored with a program dedicated to his accomplishments.

The structure of the show allowed for more musical variation than most Newport evenings. Getz got the chance to play with a handful of group and duo formats and cover a wide range of expression. Charlie Byrd and his trio opened the set with Irving Berlin's "Top

The concert's second portion included an opening short set by Getz's regular new quartet, featuring the strong piano playing of Albert Daley. Joao Gilberto, announced for the evening, didn't appear due to illness, and was substituted for by guitarist Sam Brown and two other Gilbertos: Mrs. Eloisa, and Joao's little daughter. The elder sang a new Jobim composition and Cole Porter's "Just One of Those Things," while the youngster sang with some charm in her native Portuguese. Ending the night on a decidedly mixed note was vocalist Mabel Mercer, an excessively mannered and much beloved lady who over-dramatizes good material. Each time Mercer butchered a lyric, however, Getz would fill the gaps with eloquent phrases that conveyed every emotion

Mercer's vocalese couldn't. Her vision of "These Foolish Things" made me yearn for Bryan Ferry, not to mention Ella Fitzgerald, but Getz saved the day with a stunning essay on the theme of the song, breathing bittersweet remembrances into the standard melody. It was a peak not to be matched by the remainder of the set. On balance, An Evening With Stan Getz was a loose, inventive session, showcasing a musician of rare talent and taste. It's good to have him back.

THE SUPREMES
Knott's Berry Farm
Buena Park, California

By BOB FUKUYAMA

Knott's Berry Farm is indeed dimensions removed from Caesar's Palace or even the *Ed Sullivan Show*, but, to mention only the obvious, this isn't 1967, Ed is dead, Diana is long gone and the Supremes haven't had a hit in years. However, talent aside, the Supremes possess one enduring (and endearing) trait that will always assure them soul music eminence: Class.

Performing in the Los Angeles-area for the first time in two years, the Supremes played it safe, catering their song selection to the expectations of the predominantly white middle-class audience in attendance; an ugly manifestation of this being a banal rendition of the soulless "Way We Were." Fortunately, the obligatory medley of oldies was terrific, the Mary Wilson-led trio delivering abbreviated versions of "Stop!," "I Hear A symphony," "Reflections," "Love Child," "You Keep Me Hanging On" and more...Euphoria-inducing memories kept rushing through my mind.

Most significantly, this medley afforded a brief glimpse of new Supreme Scherrie Payne (Freda's younger sister), whose passionate intensity transformed "Love Child" into a angrier statement than the one expressed by Diana. After her sizzling lead vocal on "He's My Man" (a tune from their latest LP), one point was dramatically evident; Scherrie's funky soulfulness, contrasted against the more restrained, polished stylizations of her predecessors, Diana and Jean Terrell, adds the "get down" dimension that the group has traditionally under-emphasized.

Too, Scherrie's contagious youthful exuberance inspired holdovers Mary and Cindy Birdsong to sing with celebratory animation in support. True pros that they are, the Supremes have their act together, with the individual roles clearly defined; Mary handles all of the ballads and most of the oldies, Scherrie's spotlighted on the uptempo, disco-oriented burners, and Cindy always helps close-harmonize.

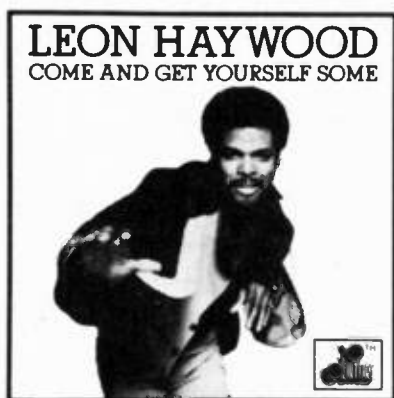
Following Mary's beautifully sung bittersweet ballad, "Where Is It I Belong" (also from the new album), Scherrie, acting as if possessed by the soul of Tina Turner, sensuously wriggled and wailed through the rousing set-closer, "Tossin' And Turnin'," the Bobby Lewis classic. Supremes enthusiast that I've always been, I felt strange standing, moving to the body and beat of a temptress, who, calling herself a Supreme, willfully aroused the male element of the crowd as she did. It's a different approach than this group has had in the past, yet they've retained the class that has made them the top female soul act of all-time.

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IN THE SEVENTIES



By COLMAN ANDREWS

A jazz musician is simply a musician who plays jazz. But what is a jazz vocalist? So much of what a jazz vocalist sings is "pop". The changes he or she works on "standard" (or, more recently, rock or even sometimes classical) songs are seldom as dramatic, as demonstrably unattached to the base material as are the improvisations of, say, a jazz pianist or trumpeter. There are vocal improvisers, of course—singers who use their voices like an instrument, wordlessly or not, to extend and transform the premises of the original song. But the jazz vocalist's art is for the most part a subtle one, an art based on attitude, a style based on phrasing and temperament.

Two new albums on the RCA label demonstrate how a couple of men most of us would identify as R&B singers were able to approach the vocal art of jazz—neither entirely successfully, but both with occasionally worthy results.

Sam Cooke Interprets Billie Holiday (APL1-0899) is strange stuff, a previously unissued set of standard and blues songs identified with Holiday (some to a lesser extent than others)—ranging from Rodgers and Hart ("Blue Moon") to Ellington ("Solitude") to Harold Arlen ("I Gotta Right to Sing the Blues"). The sharp edge of Holiday's voice on these songs is here replaced by Cooke's rounded whisper; if he makes any

conscious effort to imitate the Lady's inflections or her emotional energy, it doesn't show up very plainly. Sometimes

Cooke's voice works well for the material, though, as on the romping "Lover Come Back To Me"; other times, as on his sugary "Blue Moon," it doesn't. (The complete lack of recording information, by the way, is a maddening stupidity.)

Yesteryears by Jesse Belvin (APL1-0966) works better. Belvin was polished where Cooke was only smooth. Like Cooke, he had to sometimes strain to finish phrases, sometimes cheat the scale by sliding into breathy recitative; but he seemed always much more in control of his tricks, much less dependent upon them. Unlike the Cooke LP, this one has some recording information: five of the songs are previously unreleased; one is Belvin's hit "Guess Who"; others include: "What's New" (also a big song for him), "Angel Eyes," and "Zing! Went the Strings of My Heart." There's a jazzy, uncluttered feeling to some of the

tracks, and an orderly majesty to others.

Julie London deserves more consideration as a jazz stylist than she is usually accorded, for her reedy, after-hours tone if for nothing else. *The Very Best of Julie London* (United Artists UA-LA437-E) would be a good introduction to her for novices. Here, there's no information of any kind (we're lucky to get the song titles), but there are some good standards with a few kickers thrown in. Two of the sadest songs in the pop lexicon, "A Cottage For Sale" and "Guess Who I Saw Today," are included, and London does them superbly, never quite getting maudlin but always threatening to push a little further into sorrow.

Three other new LPs by singers whose jazz credentials need no explanation: *The Talk of the Town* by Helen Humes,

with the Ellis Larkins All-Stars (Columbia KC 33488), by a splendid, warm, big-voiced singer who has been far too obscure in recent years (though at

one point she was considered good enough to follow Billie Holiday into Count Basie's band), accompanied by Larkins on piano, Major Holley on bass, Oliver Jackson on drums, Buddy Tate on clarinet and tenor, and, of all people, George Benson on guitar—the latter of whom turns out to be an absolutely first-rate accompanist, not to mention the fact that his solo on "It's the Talk of the Town" is a small masterpiece; *Tell Me The Truth* by Jon Hendricks (Arista AL 4043), produced by Ben Sidran (the white Mose Allison), featuring new lyrics by Hendricks to jazz standards like Coltrane's "Naima," and Gil Evans' "Blues for Pablo," and also to (yes) "On the Trail"; and *Easy Livin'* by Cleo Laine (Stanyan SR 10122), another of Stanyan's releases of older English material by Laine, with good songs, competent arrangements, and that incredible, sometimes tiring, Laine voice.

Finally, three albums that might be called "easy listening" jazz: First, *The Restful Mind* by Larry Coryell (Vanguard VSD 79353), with Ralph Towner, Collin Walcott, and Glen Moore from the Oregon group—a real eye-closer, though not an unpleasant one; second, *Images* by Phil Woods with Michel Legrand and orchestra (RCA BGL1-1027), on which that lively saxophonist gets mired in that extravagant pianist/arranger/composer's thickly melodic orchestral style; and last, *Pure Desmond* by Paul Desmond (CTL CTI 6059 S1), the best of these three by far and, in its quiet way, the album of the month—a quartet date with Desmond sounding as beautiful as ever but much stronger, more alive with invention, and with Ron Carter on bass, Connie Kay on drums, and a fine, off-handed Canadian guitarist named Ed Bickert—and, miracle of miracles, with none of that usual CTI string-and-horn-section crap.



The Michael Ochs Archives

•Sam Cooke—Strange stuff indeed!

SOUL & JAZZ SINGLES



By JOE MC EWEN

Following closely on the heels of Gwen McCrae's "Rockin' Chair," the chant "do a little dance/make a little love/get down tonight" in KC and the Sunshine Band's ebullient Miami soul stomper, has broken out of disco's and soul radio, into Top 40, and may be the year's most unlikely pop hit. Without formula or homogenization, Miami's TK complex continues to be the hottest thing happening in black music. While the KC-produced "Gimme Some" (Alston 3714) by Jimmy Bo Horne is a bit too elemental for my tastes, the real disco queen, Betty Wright, has followed up "Where Is The Love" with something even tastier, the tantalizing "OohLa La" (Alston 3715). Written and produced by Clarence Reid (who is suffering with Atlantic), it's a choppy funk track recalling "Clean Up Woman," with a cooing vocal and lines like "Thrill me/even if it kills me/use me/as long as you groove me." It almost seems as if Eddie Kendrick's "Cream Off The Top" (Tamla 54260) was written in answer to Betty's plea, "A mouthful of love/is all you've tasted/without the rest of it/life can be wasted." Eddie's sass is a Holland/Dozier/Holland conception, and coupled with the jackknifing "Forever Came Today" by the Jackson 5, Brian Holland seems ready to stir up a stagnant Motown.

Back From The Dead. The summer seems to bring all sorts of wallflowers out of the woodwork and old favorites are popping up everywhere. Archie Bell and the Drells are back in Philadelphia, scene of their most triumphant recordings ("I Can't Stop Dancing" and "There's Gonna Be A Showdown"), with a Bunny Sigler-produced gem, "I Could Dance All Night" (TSOP 4767), that's become an

anthem to party and disco goers. Chicago's Major Lance has spent a lot of time in England the last few years and after moderate success at Playboy a few months ago, the Major has inaugurated a new Memphis label with a current favorite, "You're Everything I Need" (Osiris 001), combining the most attractive elements of Philly/Barry White and mid 60's Chicago. Whatever happened to the Detroit Emeralds?

Embroidered in legal and internal disputes, the group has been under wraps for quite awhile. Now officially known as A.C. Tilmon and the Detroit Emeralds, "Yes I Know I'm In Love" (Westbound 5005) tries to recreate past success with heavy bass drum, oft-repeated hook and relaxed tenor lead, without really igniting a fire. More satisfying is the return of Jackie Moore on a TK subsidiary with "Make Me Feel Like A Woman" (Kayvette 5122), borrowing unashamedly from "Precious, Precious" and Al

Green, "Every woman wanna feel that way, bhayybay." Others who've been away too long include Chuck Jackson with an engaging, if archaic, "Shout" inspired "Love Lights" (All Platinum 2357); Cissy Houston (former Sweet Inspiration) and a deadly slow Don Davis production "Nothing Can Stop Me" (Janus 255 and not the old Gene Chandler song) and sly Joe Tex with a

surprisingly slick, Buddy Killen track and more giggly storytelling, "Under Your Powerful Love" (Dial 1154).

Just when it seems the Spinners are hopelessly caught in a rut, Thom Bell reaches back for some new delight and the latest collaboration, "Games People Play" (Atlantic 3248) is a marvelous summer record, a top down, convertible sound as the man used to say. Although no credits are given, everybody's guess is

that Bell's partner in song, Linda Creed, is the foil for Phillippe Wynn's tenor. The hook chorus is ultra lush but underneath Thom has fashioned a stuttering bass/drum line that sounds like a lot of the things Allen Toussaint does with the Meters. While SeaSaint in New Orleans has been quiet since the LaBelle explosion, Allen has recut "Country John" (Reprise 1334) from *Southern Nights* and the result is a churning piece of Bayou funk, noticeably higher-keyed than the album cut. A record that's been

out a while now but seems to have been ignored by almost everybody is New Orleans perennial Willie West's "It's Been So Long" (WB 8087). Buttressed by George Porter's twanging bass and Zig Modeliste's stop and go drumming, the record is steeped in the best tradition of New Orleans second line soul.

On the lighter side, Rhetta Young's "S.O.S." (All Platinum 6146—sorry I have an English pressing) has the type of simple melody and instantly memorable hook ("And I'm sending out an SOS/For your love") that All Platinum seems to have a knack for turning out, as does the Ritchie Family's "Brazil" (20th Century 2218), a TSOP inspired instrumental with a 3 Degrees chorus chanting "You got me where you want me" over Earl Young's thumping drum track. Just as simple, if a bit rawer, is Philadelphia party people People Choice and "Do It Any Way You Wanna (Do It)" (TSOP 4769), a Booker T and the MG's inspired group (remember "I Likes To Do It" a few years back) with a booming bass drum.

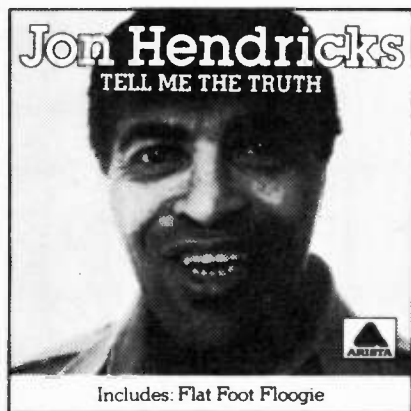
In the New Group With An Old Sound Dept., Chapter Four's "(It's My Nature to) Cry" (Pip 6506) is a tortuously slow ballad with a female lead who sounds like Brenda Payton's double (Brenda and the Tabulations), while Linda Carr's "Highwire" (Roxbury 2009) is a crackling Gene Page/Kenny Nolan production, that could pass for a 1966 Martha and the Vandellas single. The record is so good and Linda sounds so much like old Martha Reeves.

Also recommended: Syreeta's calypso laden "Harmour Love" (Motown 1353); Ronnie Walker's cushy "Just Can't Say Hello, Once You've Said Goodbye" (Event 225); "Headquarters (Augusta, Ga.)" by Bobby Byrd (Int. Brothers 902) and Natalie Cole's exuberant "This Will Be" (Capitol 4109). Keep on dancin!



•Betty Wright—Miami's Disco Queen.

SOUL & JAZZ REVIEWS



TELL ME THE TRUTH
Jon Hendricks
Arista 4043

By MICHAEL LEHMAN

Much has been said about Scat, and thanks to the Pointers and Joni (her version of L,H&R's "Twisted" confirmed a direction she began in *Blue*) and Dan Hicks and Crosby and Aretha and the rest, modern vocal enthusiasts have become conscious of this glorious style of singing. They still are a bit puzzled by names like King Pleasure, Leo Watson, even L,H&R. Hopefully, after this album

that will end...and L,H&R will become the proper owners of America's vocal throne.

Generously, Jon starts things off with "Flat Foot Floogie" with the Pointers in tow. A bop-scat, it features Jon (doing Jack McVea's sax solo), followed by Judith Hendricks, (doing Diz) Jon again (Bird), and June Pointer (Slim Gaillard, who wrote it). The Pointers as a whole fill in the piano comping. The concept of scat (so as not to confuse the issue) is to vocalize a written instrumental solo. The effects as displayed herein, are devastating. "Naima," Trane's famed masterpiece, follows and shows regions that only Jon can travel into. Mystical and elated it is a rare example of someone doing Trane true justice, rather than aspiring to show Trane's influence. "No More" is from the Hubert Laws grabbag, a funky opening and a rocking finish with a blistering Allmanesque solo by the ever-surprising Boz Scaggs. "On the Trail" closes the side with 7:00 of varied swing tempos highlighted by Jon's mad, marvelous, wordless scat which centers the piece and runs for an incredible 1:20 non-stop.

Side two opens with the title track, a self-penned progression from samba to gospel to avant-dissonance (the ele-

ments unravelled and flying about) and back to samba. The musical collage seems a condensation of ideas Jon has always been involved with (his play "Evolution Of The Blues" confirms this)...the historical elements of vocalising. Along with Picasso, Pound, Eliot, Stravinsky to name a few, he is intrigued by the rearrangement of "classical" elements, as well as their order. "Old Folks" is next...elegaic and sinuously bluesy, touched up by Hadley Caliman's subtle contapuntal lines on sax and flute. "I'll Bet You Thought I'd Never Find You" is a Les McCann samba, flavored by Caliman again, here with a constant stream of gliding flute lines. "Blues For Pablo" was written by Gil Evans and performed by Gil and Miles during their *Miles Ahead* sessions. The liners note that Gil wrote it for Picasso and Casals. Hendricks' lyrics fit the music's call for personal/artistic liberty. A five-voice chorus plays Gil's arrangements while Jon evokes Miles' solo with such proficiency and sublime emotional concentration that there can be no encore. There isn't. Producer Ben Sidran shares Jon's good taste, luckily. This is one album where everything is *just* right. A fitting welcome back to a real swinger...or as King Pleasure once sang: "Thatsallnow!mthroug."

instance, begins nicely enough with a sax duet but gradually dissipates. The album's nadir is reached during Haden's bass solo on "El Juicio" where the percussion accompaniment begins hesitantly and the whoops of encouragement sound forced. "Gypsy Moth" is somewhat better, a relaxed groove somewhat weakened by Motian's stiff, metronomic drum work.

The strongest cuts are the shortest. Keith's solo excursion, "Pardon My Rags," is a catchy delight that is instructive in showing how he adapts ragtime conventions for his own use. The concluding "Piece For Ornette (S.V.)" is cute and concise but at 0:12, it doesn't have much time to be anything else.

So, not a heck of a lot of exceptional music here. The high standards Jarrett has set for himself, particularly in his current string of winners for Impulse and ECM, probably make this seem weaker than it is but I can't see recommending it to anyone with just a passing interest in the man's work. For fanatics and collectors only, I'm afraid.

TRIBUTE
Paul Motian
ECM 1048

By MICHAEL DAVIS

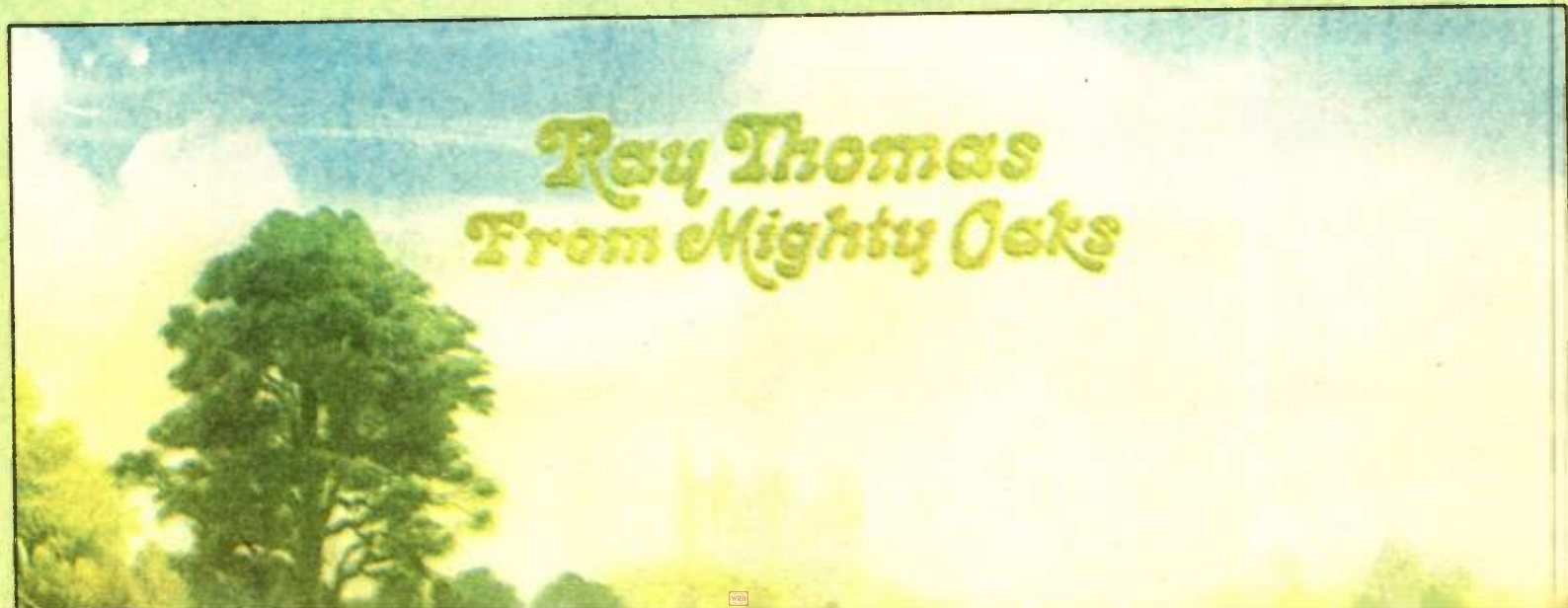
I may as well confess out front that Paul Motian has never been one of my

JON HENDRICKS - KING OF SCAT

Now...from the Moody Blues

Ray Thomas

and his first solo LP.





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ECHOES OR PRAYER
Grachan Moncur III
JCOA LP 1009

By LITA ELISCU

This is a superb album, the result of 19 musicians' interaction and discipline. The music takes chances and succeeds, it keeps asking questions and supplying the source for answers. Nietzsche said, "In music the passions enjoy themselves" and it is not overstating the case to say that in this music, everyone enjoys themselves, listener and musician alike.

So much for evaluation. Grachan Moncur plays trombone. He used to play with Jackie McLean, a fine sax player who was one of the few left standing after Charlie Parker went on his way; he used to play for Ray Charles when The Man's roots were still showing; he used to play with Herbie Hancock and Bobby Hutcherson, even cut a few LPs with them. Then he went away for a while, eleven years or so, and he did not make records and he probably did not even make music some of the time. Now, here is this wonderful album, and I am very glad he is making music again.

This is an album of great passion and passions, yet crafted with precision and intelligence. The musicians, who represent all the great traditions and heritages which have poured into jazz, are using the very demanding and disciplined structure of free form jazz to create sounds which move your feet as well as your soul. This is dance music of the most exalted and ecstatic sort! Bossa nova flute skimming over polysyncopated African drums; piano chords trading off the drums, a violin making staccato comments. Suddenly, it all turns a corner into street music, wild and insistent,

making it impossible to sit down. The sounds of the heart adrenalized, sounds of the city and the jungle, polyglot voices in the background snuffling and screaming, reinforcing the sensations.

Trying to single out specific musicians is very difficult. The list reads like a contemporary Who's Who in Jazz, and the success of the music is that it rises so admirably above any single effort. Truly, the whole is greater than the sum of the parts. Any section finds something interesting going on: risking ugliness to achieve effects, understanding the beauty hidden in dissonance and unsettling polyrhythms; demanding response rather than asking for it; refusing to give into commercial notions of time, melody, and acceptable pain. Charlie Haden and Cecil McBee on bass. Beaver Harris on drums. Carla Bley playing piano. Pat Patrick on flute. These people and the others on this album represent most of the credible directions jazz has been taking these past few years. Archie Shepp, Sun Ra, Coltrane, Pharoah Sanders, Ayler, Don Cherry...

It is interesting to think about the future of this album, and albums like this one. The music here is easily better than most of the jazz currently popular, and it is much more akin to real Latin-Soul/Pop than the tin-trumpet cockerel noise currently passing for that. Still, how is anyone going to hear it, and decide themselves? One does not get an immediate picture of radio stations adding this music to their playlist. The record company, Jazz Composers Orchestra Association, is a *non-profit* record company, based on the presumption/assumption that jazz is an art form which needs subsidy just as any other fine art. Until such time as jazz is as collectable and valuable an art form as painting, the chances of avant-garde jazz holding its own are slim.



EL JUICIO (THE JUDGEMENT)
Keith Jarrett
Atlantic SD 1673

By MICHAEL DAVIS

This is not one of Jarrett's most inspired sessions, to put it bluntly. The group is his current quartet, true, but since this is available on Atlantic, it was probably recorded back in '71 or '72 when Keith was contracted to that label. The fact that it wasn't released until now is not necessarily a comment on its quality but I don't hear anything here that matches the wah-wahed buoyance of "Mortgage On My Soul" or the amazing free-form explorations of "Remorse," both of which can be found on Keith's last Atlantic LP, *Birth*.

I don't mean by this that *El Juicio* is a total washout; whenever Keith Jarrett, Dewey Redman, Charlie Haden and Paul Motian get together, the results are at least worth hearing. It's just that the music rarely sustains itself well; the few times it really comes together—

"Piece For Ornette (L.V.)," for

reverts to a more traditional, though he is certainly adept at suggesting a multiplicity of rhythms, he has occasionally been called upon to keep a simple beat and that seems to be beyond him. The most notorious examples of his shortcomings in this area can be heard in the rock sections of *Escalator Over The Hill* where John McLaughlin and Jack Bruce lay down some heavyweight post-Creamisms and all Motian can add are simplistic cymbal mashes.

Fortunately, for this recording, he has chosen both his sidemen and his contexts with care. His rhythm mate in Keith Jarrett's band, Charlie Haden, is heard on bass; the front line consists of alto player Carlos Ward and guitarists Sam Brown and Paul Metzke.

Four of the five tunes are ballads and follow similar formats: the melody is stated simply on top while Motian rumbles below. Slight differences in arrangements give each piece distinction: Brown's elegant intro to "Victoria," the break that gives Ward a chance to show his stuff on "Sod House," the intricate intermeshing of guitars on "War Orphans." Only during "Song For Che" does my attention wander, despite it's lovely, mournful melody; I'm not sure if that's because it's simply too much of a good thing or that the fully fleshed-out version from Haden's *Liberation Music Orchestra* LP has been a part of my private sound track for too long.

The odd song out, "Tuesday Ends Saturday," provides some upbeat contrast to round out the album. Brown and Metzke get a chance to stretch out while the rhythm section responds aggressively for the first time. Motian's playing resembles a sparser, freer Cobham in places and during the brief moments when he descends into aimless crashing, Haden provides enough strength for both of them. The piece may not be totally successful but it suggests another interesting direction Motian's music may take in the future.