

THE NEW YORK

PHONOGRAPH

RECORD MAGAZINE

THE WHO
IN AMERICA
BY RICHARD CROMELIN

JANIS IAN
TOP THIRTY THERAPY
BY LITA ELISCU

LOWELL
GEORGE &



WHITTLE FEAT
TAKE OFF

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RECORD MAGAZINE

DECEMBER, 1975

ISSUE # 63

VOLUME 6 NUMBER 4

THIS MONTH

LITTLE FEAT IN HEAT: Lowell George On The Offensive

With the release of *The Last Record Album*, Little Feat's fifth, the Midwest, the South and Northeastern United States have registered the kind of early air-play and record sales which generally signify "very large hit." In fact, most of this country seems unanimously aboard the Little Feat bandwagon, with the possible exception of the West Coast and particularly Lowell George's home town, Los Angeles.

Just over a year ago, however, in the midst of the type of indifference which still exists in L.A., Little Feat nearly split-up. But something held the act together, kept ranks tight....These Feats are made for Walkin'.

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PHONOGRAPH RECORD MAGAZINE is published monthly by Phonograph Record Magazine, Ltd. Editorial and advertising offices at 6922 Hollywood Blvd. Hollywood, California 90028. Phone (213) 466-6100. Subscriptions: \$6.00 per year. \$10.00 for two years. Single copies 60 cents per issue. Add \$2.00 postage outside U.S. and Canada (except APO's). Airmail rates on request. Change of address notices, undelivered copies and subscription orders should be sent to the above address. Not responsible for unsolicited manuscripts not accompanied by return postage. Entire contents © 1975 by Phonograph Record Magazine Ltd. All rights reserved. Reproduction in whole or in part without permission is prohibited. The opinions expressed herein do not necessarily reflect those of the editors, publisher, advertisers, or any distributor of Phonograph Record Magazine.

CHANGE OF ADDRESS: Allow four weeks advance notice and include old as well as new address.

Controlled circulation postage paid at Los Angeles, California and St. Louis, Mo.



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"Clonakilty Cowboys." The first album by Noel Redding in five years. Ride with him.

RCA Records and Tapes



Mickey Osterreicher

THE ROLLING THUNDER REVUE OF 1975

Bob Dylan-Joni Mitchell-Roger McGuinn-Joan Baez Ramblin' Jack Elliott - Eric Andersen - Mick Ronson

THE ROLLING THUNDER REVUE
Niagara Falls Convention Center
Niagara Falls, New York

By JOHN RIVERS

Only O. J. Simpson could stutter-step through security to the backstage heart of the Rolling Thunder Revue. Two shows had been announced at midnight a week before on Q FM 97 in Buffalo. By nine the next morning a thousand were queued up for tickets in front of the Niagara Falls Convention Center. As the week passed, rumors flew about who might be on stage with Dylan. Two days before the concerts it was positive that Joni Mitchell would appear. She had joined the tour two nights before in New Haven.

The Rolling Thunder Revue was set up for reasons not often heard of these days; because the performers got off on each other and the audience. The magnitude of the performers negated the need for heavy advance publicity and whirlwind interviews which only take away from a performer's calm. As if to add to that calm, the entire company sat down between the afternoon and evening performances to a leisurely backstage feast joined only by stutter-stepping O. J.

The evening edition of The Rolling Thunder Revue started with Guam, the back-up group. Bass player Rob Stoner moved the group smoothly through their opening paces, showing a calm professionalism that continued throughout the concert as he acted as an on-stage manager. I had hoped Joni Mitchell would be joined on stage by Tom Scott, since they were in town together. (They had dropped in on a Niagara Falls disco the night before and Joni had danced, unrecognized, with the disco-jock.) Joni came to the stage minus Scott, but no one noticed as she moved through her numbers and off stage to cries of "Don't leave us, Joni!"

Bobby Neuwirth, performing with Guam and acting as MC, guided the group into "Mercedes Benz" and introduced the audience to Janis Joplin's old guitar, which somehow had less *Oomph* than one would expect from that instrument.

By the time Ramblin' Jack Elliott meandered on stage (he does meander) the entire audience was wrapped up in 'the fun'. Ramblin' Jack (somehow just Jack isn't sufficient) handled those who were unaware of who this cowboy was, with an ease that was a joy to see. When he got to "If I Were A Carpenter," even a broken capo couldn't dampen the excitement. Ramblin' Jack and Guam, now with Roger McGuinn, got into "Muleskinner Blues" with a banjo solo from Roger that brought the audience to its feet. As Ramblin' Jack left the stage, Dylan used the opportunity to slide onstage and right into "It Ain't Me, Babe". He shared the spotlight with Neuwirth and Guam to the extent that for the first few bars I wasn't sure if Neuwirth was backing Dylan or vice-versa.

Unlike the first concert, when he wore a large tear below his eye, Dylan wore three white grease-paint triangles, one on each cheek and the third stretching from his forehead to the tip of his nose. The grey hat from *Pat Garrett and Billy the Kid* added to the brooding look brought on by accentuating black mascara around his eyes. Dylan's eyes seemed to shout at everything that passed before them, and yet, there was a occasional curvature to his mouth that suggested this was all more fun than he wanted to let on. Dylan pranced around as Guam moved into the opening chords of "Hattie Carroll", pausing only long enough to palm a harmonica from the vicinity of Bob Neuwirth's right ear. The Niagara Falls audience was up and the excitement stayed high as Dylan wrapped up the first half of the show with "Isis".

Curtain down, the second portion began with "Blowin' In The Wind". Dylan's distinctive tones were joined by the equally recognizable voice of Joan Baez. The crowd was up on their feet long before the curtain rose. The strongest display of emotion from Dylan came during this segment of the show and was directed toward Joan. Dylan and Baez performed as only they could, flowing through "I Shall Be Released". When Dylan moved off stage leaving Joan alone, she reassured with a firm note "Bob will be back". As Guam joined her, Joan did an Edith Bunker

monologue that would have made Archie look twice. Saying that Archie had warned her about joining a Rock 'N' Roll review because, "...some 'a them are pretty funky!...", she proudly announced, "But ya' know, I tried it and I liked it!".

The ode to Dylan, "Diamonds and Rust", opened her set with Guam and from there she moved into a solo "Swing Low, Sweet Chariot". True to the word going around, Joan is avoiding politics to a great degree at least on stage. The only exception this night was dedicating "Joe Hill" to the United Farm Workers. On her way to introducing Roger McGuinn, Joan passed through "Love Song To A Stranger, Part II", ending with the line "...love is a pain in the ass". Roger McGuinn did a dream version of "Chestnut Mare" with Joan on maracas and background vocals. Only Dylan moving back onstage could have broken the spell. He moved in dance-like movements, answering cries of "Bob, you are the prophet!", with "Not me, must be mistaking me for someone else". As the group rolled through "Tangled Up In Blue", "Sarah" (the new song to his wife), and "Just Like A Woman", I realized that for all the talk of a new Dylan, the old one was peeking out from behind that mascara.

In fact each of the members of the Revue lent a touch of their origins to the show. Where else would you see Dylan's intensity, the gangly Roger McGuinn strumming, Ramblin' Jack's studied big city countryfied singing, and the hard rock guitar posturing on Mick Ronson all on one stage? Yet, each added a distinct piece to the whole.

The entire entourage came on stage for a group offering of "This Land Is Your Land", with additions of Allen Ginsberg and Eric Andersen. Each artist took a turn with a verse, with Bob Neuwirth adding lines about O.J. Then, suddenly it was over with Joan Baez apologizing that there would be no encore, since they had already performed all the songs they knew. Even as the roadies were disassembling the stage gear, there was a hesitancy on the part of the hard core fans among the 10,000 assembled to leave the stage area.

Dylan had spent another night on stage

surrounded by friends, talent and an incredible amount of love. That's what this tour is all about. Forget the movie and the money. (He's only playing the large centers to help offset some of the loss on the smaller halls.) For four hours Dylan had played with those he respects and is, in turn, respected by. None of this adulation and dewy eyed awe, just talented equals having fun and doing it just the way *they* want to.

THE ROLLING THUNDER REVUE Tuscarora Indian Reservation Tuscarora, New York

By JOHN RIVERS

What was perhaps the most fascinating performance of the Rolling Thunder Revue was never seen by the 20,000 that filled the two shows at the Niagara Falls Convention Center. Sunday, the day after the concerts, Chief Arnold Hewitt of the Tuscarora Indian Reservation, north of Buffalo, received a call asking if the entire Rolling Thunder Revue could drop in for the day. The call came at nine in the morning. By three that afternoon preparations were made and members of the Revue had begun arriving. Dylan was a late comer, making his appearance at five. Joan Baez, Joni Mitchell, Ramblin' Jack Elliott and the rest in a totally acoustic situation, no electronics, just an artist and a guitar. Each singer managed at least one song in this setting.

The Revue wasn't there so much to entertain as to relax. Here, it seemed, members didn't have their "press awareness shields" up. They were as much the entertained as the entertainers, as the Tuscarora Indians performed native dances and songs.

By the time Dylan arrived at five, the members of the Revue had each performed and Dylan strolled among the crowd at the Indian Community House playing guitar and singing. Here there was no mobbing that would be "unavoidable" among most of Dylan's fans. The Tuscaroras respected Dylan's presence to a degree that would, at times, bother an artist less sure of his stature. Children ran and played tag as Dylan performed and talked with the crowd. Conversations swirled about him as he sat eating. This was the only time that Rolling Thunder Revue security was obvious on the reservation, and then only to ask autograph seekers to wait until Dylan finished. The security man had little to do as the Tuscaroras naturally respected his privacy.

The entire group dined on an Indian meal of corn soup, corn bread and venison. The Tuscaroras were tight-lipped about the visit from Dylan, explaining they had agreed with Dylan's people to confine all photos taken to the Reservation and to refrain from contacting the news media either before or after the visit.

We contacted Chief Arnold Hewitt to ask about the visit and were told that the visit was filmed for a documentary about Indian life. By whom? The Chief wouldn't say. It is known that Dylan is traveling with film crew that is preparing a movie about the Rolling Thunder Revue Tour. Would any of this footage be in the Dylan movie? No one, least of all the Chief, seemed to know.

When you stop and think about it, what better place for the Revue to spend a day off than an Indian Reservation that most Western New Yorkers refuse to admit even exists? The Tuscaroras know how to respect a person's wish to be alone. After all, the Tuscaroras have been left alone by the white man...just without the respect. Somehow, one gets the feeling, that's the reason Dylan spent the day there.

John Rivers is an announcer for WGRQ-FM [Q-FM-97], Buffalo's leading progressive radio station.

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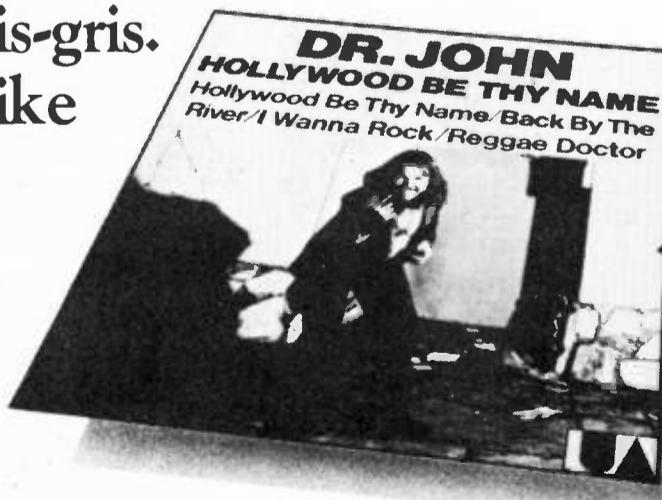
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(*Mon.- 12 Mid-6 AM)

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PETE FORNATALE (Friday- VIN SCELSA)
SCOTT MUNI
JONATHAN SCHWARTZ (Mon.-DENNIS ELSAS)
ALISON STEELE
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VICIOUS DIRT, RUMORS and SCANDALS from HOLLYWOOD by Rodney Bingenheimer

Greetings from Hollywood, boys and girls, from the Prince of Pop, Rodney! Well the word is out! And I DO NOT BELIEVE how this town is jumping over the return of the new First Family of California Rock in the Seventies, Ron and Russ Mael. There hasn't been this much excitement in town since Kim Fowley was arrested onstage at the Whiskey A Go-Go in 1969 for lewd conduct. People I haven't heard from in two or three years are clamoring for introductions to the successors to the throne of the Brothers Wilson.

Sparks will stay on permanently in LA after their current tour. Marianne Faithfull will join them soon to record a duet album with younger brother Russ.

David Bowie gave me a sneak preview of his new *Golden Years* album at Cherokee Studio, the in crowd place to record in Hollywood. It seems that his new phase is Latino Rock. Picture the best of Fernando Lamas and Ricardo Montalban on a 1984/Elvis Presley level. Speaking of whom...my spies in Palm Springs tell me that the Big El has passed the 270 pound mark, and is in the homestretch for the Big 300. They say he's been through doctors, shrinks, hypnotists, the works! He was seen at the RCA Studios wearing a huge cape, hanging out with new buddy Brian Wilson. Guess what the topic of their discussion was?

And GUESS who dropped in on Halloween Night during a wild costume party session? Wait for it--your Prince is still reeling -DAVE CLARK! Actual Dave Clark arrived, with tapes in hand, that he had just completed in London (with the legendary Madeliene Bell and Roger Cook of Cook/Greenaway and David & Jonathan), to play for old tennis partner Chapman. He seemed genuinely surprised at his frantic reception. Immediately pinned against a wall, all proceedings came to a halt as he quietly, graciously answered everyone's questions about the rest of our Fave Five (Mike Smith is doing studio work, Lenny Davidson, Rick Huxley, and saxman Denny Payton are all family men and own straight businesses in London), talked drums with a very excited Pete Spencer, Smokey drummer, and reminisced with me about the old days of the DC5's many visits to my hometown on the San Francisco Peninsula, where they were popular right to the very end. Yay yay for the DC5! Wayne County where were YOU!

I actually got up at 11 AM the other day to attend an Alice Cooper press conference to announce a gig at Sahara in Tahoe Dec. 12, 13, 14, & 15 on my birthday. HO HUM. Why don't he wake up the Osmonds in the middle of the night and tell THEM.

The London hotline tells me that the Spiders From Mars have just reformed, with original members Trevor Boulder, Mike Garson and Woody Woodmansey, who you remember of course from the Ziggy Tour. Two new additions are David Black and Peter MacDonald from Newcastle, hometown of the original Animals. Their new single on Pye Records, out now in England, is called "White Man, Black Man." Be on the lookout for an American tour.

Steve Harley was in town for finishing touches on tour arrangements, and the release of his new Capitol "Best Of..." album called *A Closer Look*. He made all the rounds with his old friend and ally, Kim Fowley, and went to a party at the Malibu home of ex-Steppenwolf Nick St. Nicholas where entertainment was provided by those Heavy Metal Schoolgirls The Runaways. Led Zeppelin packed up their Malibu campsite and blew town for Munich, Germany, to work on the forthcoming Zep album. Their American tour was cancelled by order of Robert "Percy" Plant's doctors, until his ankle, shattered in that auto crash, has healed properly. Percy managed to hop into the Rainbow most nights after Zep rehearsals, but things were getting pretty dull for Bonzo (Bonham), victim of the Old 86 all over town. Tsk, tsk.

Another spectacular sight we owe to Her Majesty's taxman --I saw with my own eyes, actual George Harrison onstage at an empty Troubadour with Frankie Miller (the pint-sized Scots singing sensation), and George's own Dark Horse's own Henry McCullough, and whole, entire British In Crowd! One can actually see George, Ringo, and other amazing cosmic pop stars, all over town in restaurants, clubs, and supermarkets. I even saw Ringo pull into the Rainbow a couple of times riding in Keith Allison's Volkswagen van! Let's hear it for the taxman!

Well boys and girls, there's much more but you'll have to tune in next month. A word to all teenage girls -- if you want to meet the stars, just look for my Cadillac anywhere on Sunset Boulevard and wave me down -- I am available for consultation.



Phil Ceccola



Kathy Cleary



THE WHO TOUR: Random Flashes of Brilliance

By RICHARD CROMELIN

Houston, Tx.-A magic circuit between the Who and its audience went dead forever when the group became an institution. Gone were the immediacy and the tension that bound together the mystique, and since then the Who and Pete Townshend, facing the added complication of aging, have been a bundle of contradictions, dead ends, clearly inferior material and flagging intensity -- though always popping with random flashes of brilliance. The question grew from the standard, "Can we do it anymore?" to the more taxing, "What are we supposed to be doing anyway?"

The solution they posited at the new Summit in Houston on the opening date of the first segment of their U.S. tour was to the point: backbreaking rock 'n' roll will turn the inconsistencies into affecting irony and bulldoze over any other conceptual difficulties. The set's reliance on older songs can't be encouraging to Townshend's creative ego, but the alternatives -- more music from *Quadrophenia* and *By Numbers* or quick retirement--are bad and unthinkable. Where these rock 'n' roll senior citizens found the intensity displayed that night is another question, but in any case their music hasn't attacked that powerfully since they were exploding on America in the first *Tommy* days.

"Substitute," "Can't Explain," "Summertime Blues," "My Generation," "Magic Bus," excerpts from *Tommy*, three Who's Next numbers -- reelin' in the years like that in the glare of the spotlight can be tedious and tortuous business, but the Who endowed them all with a lean, genuine vitality, as if the original spirit of the songs reentered the players as they churned out chords their hands must form in their sleep.

Concessions to their high-level status included a massive lighting setup that would have done an MGM sound stage proud, and a twice-used laser beam aurora. Useful and impressive, perhaps, but not nearly so crucial as Keith Moon's brash introduction to *Tommy* ("This is the way we think it should sound"), the magnificent fusion of power and irony that propelled "My Generation," the sheer majesty of "Won't Get Fooled Again" or the fact that John Entwistle was arrested at the hotel after a party.

Pete Townshend dominated the show as never before, while Roger Daltrey proved to be a virtual nonentity. Townshend acts the same as always onstage and it doesn't matter; Daltrey is likewise the same and it just doesn't make it anymore. His is still a handsome voice for the Who's songs, but, that aside, he seemed to be separated from the rest of the band, isolated in his cell of Adonis poses. Drifting apart is a more

likely prospect than their killing one another.

Another Amazing Journey with the DD&B Kid wasn't the most promising proposition, but it was in the middle of Tommyland that Townshend's guitar really began to burn, building to a prodigious peak with "Pinball Wizard."

Townshend's presence is still gripping, if not totally awe-inspiring, and the old moves -- the twists, leaps and the windmill arm -- came along less frequently than before, and with a bit less demonic aggression. Still, they regularly hit those deep nerves that Daltrey's showy prancing never approaches. One of the Summit's bonuses was a pair of screens, one at either end of the hall, alive with vibrant, excellently directed color video images of the Who. (A mixed blessing actually, for while it furthered the intimacy of the comfortable 18,000-seat hall, the colossal Townshends, Moons, Daltreys and Entwistles up there were sandwiched between Coca-cola cups of equal stature and ads proclaiming, "Serving the Texas Chemical Industry.")

The first part of the set was decidedly preliminary (it's too bad that the slightly sluggish "Substitute" and "Can't Explain" didn't come later when the pulse was racing). They got "Squeeze Box," "However Much I Booze" and *Quadrophenia's* "Drowned" out of the way, and Townshend announced that they were still finding their feet (confirmed by a shaky "Boris the Spider" and "Tommy's Holiday Camp") but, shucks, they were sure happy to be back in America. Benefiting from the momentum that gathered after *Tommy* were "Generation," "Summertime," "Join Together," a delightful throwaway snatch of "Roadrunner" and the climactic "Fooled."

The real *coup de grace*, though, hinged on restraint rather than brute force and followed the first encore, "Magic Bus." It was "My Generation" shifted into neutral, transformed into a slow, winsome bluesy shuffle and sung with voices like ghostly echoes from a faraway past. At once a good-humored lark and a quietly savage appraisal of the Who and its audience, this second "Generation" gently and tellingly put all the tangled Who questions into perspective before it thundered to a close with the prime chords from "Can't Explain," Townshend's grand signature.

Like Dylan singing "It's All Over Now, Baby Blue" at Newport, that finishing touch suggested either impending upheaval or a coming end. But on the Who's stage there were no tears, and if no answers were offered, there had at least been this relief: The Who, Townshend and his generation might be older and slower, but all involved can forget it and kick like mad. For a couple of hours, anyway, the kids are alright.

TOP THIRTY THERAPY



Janis Ian, a spokesman for her generation at 16 -- they wrote phrases like that 8 years ago -- and a pop star now. In between, 4 years out of, away from, the business. It is not just a classic story; this is *real*. She's been poked and prodded and analyzed and patted by the best, and she managed to come through it, a smart Jewish New York kid -- maybe the toughest kind of all -- and so she sits here now in the 12th floor conference room of Columbia Records, 3 albums on the charts, singles gone gold, and her stomach upset from a late night out. She is attentive to her stomach because she has learned that if she doesn't watch it, no one else will. When she talks, the education, the intelligence, the feistiness all come through. She talks about her music, the music industry, with the appraising disinterest of a doctor lecturing interns on The Pancreas in Bed 409. When she mentions "the kids," she is not thinking of herself at all...

So how does she feel about her new success which has occurred in the midst of breakdowns and disappointments of so many others from the folk days?

"...I think a lotta people got -- got wrecked. A lot of people got very bitter...They tried to do what was hip. Cut country albums, rock and roll albums, instead of what they were good at. Maybe I was young enough to not really know what I was good at yet -- I could have gone into it too, most of those people were the age I am now. I think a lotta people got *stuck*. You know, 10 years ago, everybody wanted to be as famous as Dave Van Ronk. The idea of making it was \$500 a night at colleges -- that was really making it. And then, to watch people who came after you, making thousands of dollars a night, get the girls. I think a lotta people got bitter....Some of them, maybe, pushed themselves into it -- plus I took 4 years out, so maybe I'll be doin' that in 5 years." The chances of which event occurring are approximately the same as The Tower of Pisa straightening.

The new album, *Aftertones*, has what might be called the 'typical' Janis Ian feel to it, a bittersweet regretful nostalgia, phrases jumping out of the lyrics, giving the music a texture and solidity which usually escapes people trying to write 'meaningful' lyrics. "I really do believe in some kind of tomorrow when it speaks to me." Lines like that. Or 'dreams die young' ... 'Love is old/dreams are not' ... and then, 'Sorry if I forgot your name...I know it ain't ladylike to do what I've done...Nobody's gonna pull you through/Nobody's knockin' on your door...'

What? Janis laughs, "A lotta people have asked me about that song, 'Boy I Really Tied One On,' and 'This Must Be Wrong.' Say it isn't my 'type' of song. But if you look at the lyrics, they're me...You just grow up and change...grow...I get tired of having to write from the female role all the time." Well the changes are there all right. On the first side, in addition to the typical "Love Is Blind" ("Love Is Without Mercy"), there is a lovely, very produced "I Would Like To Dance," featuring nice brass, very *salsa* beat, arranged by Mike Gibson and Larry Harlow, who is head of Fania Records and Orchestra Harlow, which has actually set the disco sound for so many *salsa* albums. Closing out side one is "Belle of the Blues," arranged by Jerry Ragavoy, whose R&B hits total well over two-dozen. "Belle" is very bluesy of course, quoting every great blues riff from "St. Louis Blues" onwards in the introduction and Janis throws her voice around, wailing and gutsy; it's very nice indeed.

Side Two includes a goodbye-to-a-lover song, "Goodbye to Morning," and then breezes into "Boy I Really Tied One On." It is a strange but warming feeling to listen to a woman's voice, the voice of what you *know* belongs to a Jewish-intellectual-smarty, telling some guy she slept with him just to get her rocks off, in memory of a memory. Ah, if only Holden Caulfield was here! Or J.D. Salinger. "This Must Be Wrong" has a very Randy Newman feel to both lyrics and melody, and says, "This *must be wrong*!! I know I'm right."

Religion came almost overnight

You were the high priest

I was the sacrifice.

This must be wrong....

The next cut, "Don't Cry Old Man," also reminds one of Randy Newman, but takes the emotional route instead of Newman's almost-cruel ironic tenderness. It is a song of strong passions, and

nearly mawkish sentiment, held together by the intensity of its emotion, and was written for Janis' father. Although she insists it is not merely personal, the truth is in the lyrics. The final cut, "Hymn," is sung by several voices with very little in the way of instruments behind them. Janis is very pleased with this effect, "It's a folk song, a real folk song, an Appalachian-Catskills folk song...This song, to me, is like a 'Stars'..." The voices on it include Phoebe Snow, Odetta, her father and her producer, Brooks Arthur. The song is very strong, intentionally somewhat harsh, and rather different from anything else on her albums.

Talking with Janis, one gets the feeling that she has thought out at least this part of, if not her whole, life; certainly the performing part.

"...Well, that's my job. Songwriting is something I do--that's part of me, I'd be singing anyway. But when I get on stage to perform--it's also a job. There's a responsibility. That's what I do well, I can talk to an audience and make them feel like I'm talking to them as opposed to singing at them. I think most performers go out of their way to either give the audience a good time or to communicate in a very different fashion, whereas I know many people...come to hear me sing certain songs. They're coming to *feel* those songs. It's a combination of me and the songs they came to hear--as opposed to just me."

How do you feel about the performing part, in terms of your responsibility, then--or does it also make you feel good?

"I'd say...performing...maybe 30 per cent is to sell the album, to keep it going to be able to write. 40 per cent because I do enjoy it, I have a good time. Another 30 per cent is -- for a writer, you hit points where you have to meet people. It's important, because you get insulated, you only have maybe 10 people at home...I wouldn't have been able to

Write 'Seventeen' for instance, if I hadn't toured. You may not get a 'feedback' but you do get a 'feet'."

You've really thought a lot about the business...

"Sometimes, you feel yourself getting locked into this Up/Down/Up/Up/Down go to the piano, two down songs, do an up song, then go back to 'Stars'...I have to do the singles in every set. Columbia would be very disappointed if I don't. That's part of my commitment to them--and because maybe 20 per cent of the audience is coming to hear those two songs, 'Seventeen' and 'When the Party's Over.' ...I don't talk business because my mother told me if I ever talked business again, she would kill me, but you *have* to know what's going on. If you don't know the business end of it to some extent--if I know that a radio station goes on my record and they never have before, then I should give them a call. If you don't know that, you're doing yourself a disservice because the less you know about that, the less chance you have to implement what you want artistically. You have to get to a point where that's not a struggle. 6 years ago, I would have said, 'OK I'm doin' this because I *have* to.' Now I can move that to: 'Yeah, it is a surprise that Buford is playing my album and I *should* call them, yes, as a person.' Not because somebody at Columbia mentions that I should call. You have to be able to put the industry side of it inside yourself and have it come out as a person....I was on a DJ's show in Philadelphia, I did some brassiere commercials! We had a good time, I larked around. A lot of that good time was engineered by the fact that the promotion man knew I would get along with the DJ. But I called him up, said, 'Hey, I really had a good time', I didn't call him because Columbia *told* me to, I called him because a year ago, I realized that people do not do that--and those guys are really knocked out if you do it. And if you can knock somebody out, that's a nice thing to do. You are the host--you have to realize that..."

She talked reflectively about the success of "Seventeen," that she was amazed at first at the incredible reaction to the song, especially in the South where young people seemed to feel as though it was their own anthem. And with a grin, she says they would drawl to her, "Why yore a good ole girl" -- "I'd transcend being a New York Jew."

I ask if she has thought about the changes in the last few months, or has been able to put the new album into perspective. She shakes her head fast, "I haven't had time to think. Ask me in five months."

ART FOR ART'S SAKE

By GARY KENTON

I was on the telephone to one of New York's successful management firms last week and, like all successful New York firms, they put me on hold for quite a spell. Luckily, they had one of those gizmos whereby you hear the radio while you're waiting for someone (anyone) to pick up and all of a sudden I hear Scott Muni introducing Patti Smith's new album, *Horses*, and he plays her version of "Gloria." By the time someone picked up on me, I had forgotten who I had called and why; flustered, I hung up and turned on the radio to listen to the rest of the song.

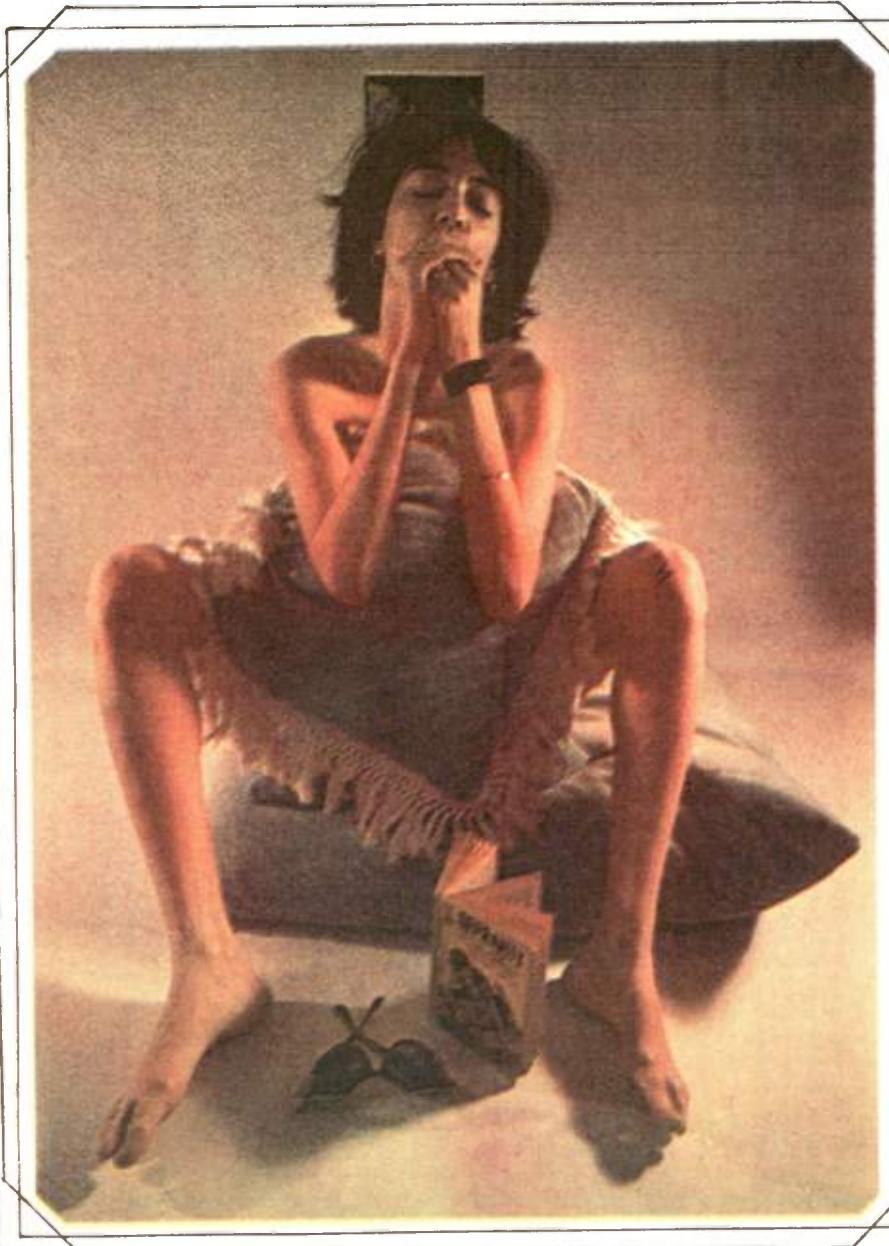
When I later recounted this experience to Patti, saying as how being heard on hold had to be even more space-age than being played in elevators, Patti says, "Yeah. And you could call your article 'Herd On Hold.' " Without the spelling to help, I didn't get it. Lenny Kaye, Patti's guitarist and renowned rock critic, helped me out: "Herd? Horses? Get It?"

Well, I got it, just like I sooner or later come to grips with just about everything Patti Smith says, recites, sings or does. Not that she doesn't get her point across clearly; it is only that Patti communicates in the same stream of ideas as the poems she writes and performs. And even when Patti's lyrical musings do become somewhat oblique, she lets you know what she means with a gesture, a look, or now with music. Like all of the great rock stars who have come and gone before her, Patti is at once too complicated to completely suss out and so pure in her simplicity as to be relevant on an almost universal level.

But talk of Patti Smith's conquest of the world may be a bit premature. She isn't the new rock messiah. She certainly isn't Bruce Springsteen. As a matter of fact she makes her fellow New Jerseyite (the New Jersey sound?) look like the '60's nostalgia act he really is. Aside from the fact that there is no immediately conceivable way that Patti could streamline her act to accommodate AM Radio the way Springsteen did, there are many other factors that will probably help to keep Patti's spreading fame well on this side of the underground, and out of the elevators, for some time.

Firstly, as I have already intimated, Patti is not a very simple personality and neither her lifestyle nor her music is very conducive to the one-dimensionality which has become the trademark of popular American music/culture. Even when handling material which is familiar (such as the strains of "Gloria" and "Land Of a Thousand Dances" that appear in the middle of larger pieces on the *Horses* LP) she is churning the songs through a filter made up of a kind of consciousness that the venerable originators of these songs could hardly imagine. To put it in another way, when Patti does someone else's songs, she borrows only a small idea and goes on to make the song very much different and very much hers. In fact, all of Patti's music is so utterly personal and full of artistic conviction that the very notion of a hit single would seem as far away as Jupiter. (Then again, it would seem that in Patti's world, *anything* is possible.)

WALKING THE NEW JERSEY-MERSEY BEAT WITH



for there is enough going on in each cut as to make each one a rewarding experience exclusive of the other seven. Briefly, however, the music is straightforward and basic throughout and helps (along with John Cale's excellent production) to give *Horses* an ultimate cohesion and singularity of impact.

"Break It Up" is probably the most inspirational song, at least in an anthem-like sense, with Lenny Kaye's soaring guitar punctuating an intense love battle. Even more direct in terms of rock punch are "Gloria," "Land," and "Free Money." The former two both begin with Patti's poetry and gradually build into familiar songs, with "Gloria" being rather faithful to the original and "Land" being an extended ode to freedom which exults: "Go Rimbaud...Go John Doe...And do the Watusi...Do the Watusi...There is a little place...And the places called space," without apologies to Chris Kenner's "Land Of A Thousand Dances." "Free Money" also starts out slow, with dreams of winning the lottery, and ends up with implications of stealing money "to buy you all the things you need for me...I'll buy you a jet plane babe...get you a higher plane to the jet stream and take you to the stratosphere..."

"Redondo Beach" is a reggae song which is as captivating in its lyric simplicity as most of the rest of *Horses* is dazzling in its display of wordy fireworks. (Patti seems to be a big reggae fan, by the way, and plans to do some recording next year in Kingston, Jamaica.) "Kimberly" is also light musically, sounding much like a Tommy James & Shondells track, only with a haunting organ and Patti singing her most Dylan-like lines: "I feel just like some misplaced Joan Of Arc...Sister, the fates are calling you." This is one of the songs that will no doubt make Patti a kind of Women's Lib hero (even though the concept is somewhat antiquated in Patti's world) and a portion of her growing audience is comprised of young tom-boys in hiking boots and older lesbians who look at Patti adoringly the way street punks and older faggots used to look at Mick Jagger.

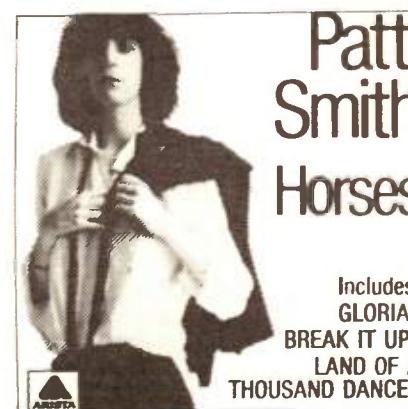
Finally, there is "Birdland," an incredible piece which combines a psychic vision akin to Alfred Hitchcock's "The Birds" with a triumph over the fear of death. The song ends after 9 minutes which pass like 2, taking you through more changes in one song since you first listened to "The End" by Jim Morrison and The Doors. The last song on the album, "Elegie," is a lament which was co-written by Blue Oyster Cult's Allen Lanier and is underlined by his eery guitar work. The song--and the LP--ends on a sad, mournful note, with Patti expressing her pity for the fact that "it's too bad our friends can't be with us today..."

Merely by virtue of the intellectual and physical energies put into *Horses*, it is the best album to be released in what seems like an entire generation. I imagine that in the next few years this album (hopefully along with many other Patti Smith albums) will find its way next to *Blonde On Blonde* on the shelves of rock connoisseurs all over the world. As more people see her, Patti's legend will grow, for charisma comes from her eyes like laser beams as it once did from Dylan's (the many recently published photos of Patti with Dylan make it obvious who's time has come and who's is past: Dylan looks like another nice Jewish boy next to her). Patti has simply become too important a talent to be kept like a secret by the coterie of fans, lovers and admirers in New York who have been attending her readings and concerts for years. Unlike Springsteen's early fans, Patti's hard core will not be covetous of her; Patti will become a new star for anyone who can enjoy her unique and profound perceptions.

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PATTI SMITH & THE KAYE STREET BAND

Secondly, this is a very dense album lyrically, especially when compared to most of the stuff you hear on the radio. Much of this is poetry and if there was ever a word to make AM disc-jockeys squirm, poetry is it. But even for those of us who like poetry but usually not mixed with our rock 'n' roll, this album will transcend both the stilted aura of poetry on a printed page and the rigid demands of primordial rock 'n' roll. I, for one, have always felt that Patti's poetry, even before she began to put together a band, was more rock 'n' roll than poetry; the rhythm and energy of her verse recall "Pa Pa Oom Mow Mow" much sooner than they do Rimbaud or any of Patti's other poet idols. But perhaps by taking her poems and translating them into rock music (while becoming, by the way, a spellbinding singer - she was always a transfixing performer), Patti may also succeed where Jim Morrison failed in replacing the fun and mystery in poetry for the many people who listen to rock but never heard of Arthur Rimbaud.



Patti
Smith
Horses

Includes:
GLORIA/
BREAK IT UP/
LAND OF A
THOUSAND DANCES

HORSES
Patti Smith
Arista AL 4060

By GARY KENTON

There are eight songs on *Horses* and an entire treatise could be written on each one. It is absurd to pick out "choice" cuts

The sign at the Springfield, Missouri, airport reads "Gateway to the Ozarks." Twenty minutes away is the rehearsal site of the Ozark Mountain Daredevils, two ancient buildings affectionately tagged "The Trout Farm" in reference to the hatchery next door. It was only right that I was driven there in a vintage (though well-preserved) pick-up truck with two dogs (enacting some procreation of their own) in the bed.

The Daredevils, as evaluated after an examination of their three albums and a visit to Springfield, are an almost confusing cross between commercial rock and roll of the slickest variety and a for-once genuine downhome rustic quality that's celebrated, if not actually practiced, by a number of Southern bands.



Comparisons are not only, as the saying would have it, odious; they also invite trouble. Nevertheless, old-timers might well recall having been fooled from time to time by the Beatles (did you realize that "Yellow Submarine," for instance, was them before having been told so?); thus is there no hint that the Daredevils' most popular singles so far, "If You Wanna Get to Heaven" and "Jackie Blue," were composed and performed by the same band. "Heaven" is the kind of roughhewn pseudocountry tune that one might naturally expect from a bunch of youngish hillbillies. "Jackie," though, is strictly urban in sound and intent. It's versatility, rather than any special instrumental or vocal virtuosity, that's the Daredevils' strong suit.

"Leatherwood," now the title of one of their songs) to become the present-day Ozark Mountain Daredevils. Rusty Chowning had the band record a demonstration tape in an 8-track studio in Springfield chiefly used for gospel sessions. He sent it to the Cowtown Ballroom, a Kansas City hall run by Plessner and Peterson, simply because he had heard that they were the nearest opportunity to be heard by anyone in a position to do anything. The tape reached the attention of Ballroom manager Frank Polte, who eventually routed it to Peterson.

It was the band's first break. Though Chowning didn't realize it, and had made his move from simple, near-blind luck, Plessner and Peterson's two companies all but own the Kansas scene. Cowtown Productions, an offshoot of the Ballroom (and an earlier, Plessner-owned club, the Vanguard), is the state's largest talent promoter, working colleges, concert halls and outdoor stadiums. Elton John and the Rolling Stones were both sponsored throughout Kansas by Cowtown.

Plessner and Peterson's Good Karma Productions manages the acoustic contemporary-folk duo Brewer and Shipley, and singer-songwriter Danny Cox. Both associations resulted from the acts having played the Vanguard years ago, and remembering Plessner favorably. Brewer and Shipley have recorded for a number of labels through the years, from A&M (Plessner says that his first job for Brewer and Shipley was arranging for their release from the label, not at the time in a position to handle underground acts) to Buddah, to Capitol. Cox's first album was on the Cowtown label; from there to Together to Sunflower to ABC/Dunhill; though his albums aren't best-sellers, he remains a top draw on the college circuit and currently isn't signed to a major manufacturer.

Plessner, impressed with the 23-song Daredevils audition tape, had the band cut several more sides and then skimmed off what he felt to be the best ten to be submitted to record companies. (Along the way, Brewer and Shipley, another Good Karma act, recorded Steve Cash's "Black Sky" for one of their albums). Warner Bros. and Epic passed; A&M, interested, sent staff producer David Anderle down to investigate.

"David heard the tape and was impressed enough to call in Glyn Johns," explains a band member who asked to remain unidentified. "Glyn had been working with the Rolling Stones and a number of other groups, and was trying to get something together with David. They saw us at the Cowtown Ballroom in Kansas City. Glyn was really happy with some of our songs, enough that he and David signed us."

"Glyn was going to be our producer. He wanted to work at Olympic Studios in London, (where the Beatles once recorded) so we were flown over there. It was the first time that some of us had been in an airplane, and the first time that any of us had been in one that big. They set us up in a big manor house, Headly Grange, outside town. Glyn wanted to work in the evenings, so every afternoon at 5, we'd drive into London to start recording."

(Thoughtful record company folk----Headly Grange came complete with goats, horses, ducks and sheep, as if to be homey for the boys.)

Though Johns' reputation as a producer was solid, and the Daredevils admitted novices in the studio, it became evident that things weren't going to jell properly. Homesickness comes quickly to the Daredevils (they still try to avoid tours lasting more than two weeks at a time), and they found Johns' musical tastes hopelessly at odds with their own.

A representative explains. "Glyn was just tired of rock and roll. It turned out that all he liked was the band's ballads. There's a lot of stuff on the first album

KANSAS CITY STARS:

brewer & shipley danny cox



But then, that's the first mistake-grouping the Daredevils with the increasing drove of groups to have emerged in recent years from the Southern states -- Georgia, Florida, South Carolina, Arkansas, Tennessee, and even Texas. The Daredevils are a *midwestern* band, from Missouri, and proudly so. (They have always stayed close to home, having become a local heavy via long-term engagements at Springfield's Bijou Theatre, the Daredevils' Cavern Club.) It's something that their managers, the Kansas City-based Good Karma Productions people, are counting on to open the central states in much the same way that the Allman Brothers Band's popularity encouraged Rebels to enlist with the Macon, Georgia, Capricorn operation.

The second mistake is trying to isolate the sound of the Daredevils. On one hand, everybody concerned is proud of the fact that all six of the band's members write occasionally, with four of the most frequent contributors either individually or in combination -- Steve Cash, Randle Chowning, Larry Lee, and John Dillon. (The two remaining band

members are Michael "Superman" Granda -- so nicknamed for leaping off stages in a single bound -- and Buddy Brayfield.) Though they have in common the fact that each has a talent for composing, and that as a group they get along together well enough to merit the designation "band," their various musical styles are at times so disparate as to confuse potential fans. Most hit acts have an established and identifiable style; the Daredevils possess several.

Hillbillies they are, though. When they came to the attention of Good Karma's Stan Plessner and Paul Peterson via an audition tape submitted by Randle Chowning's brother, most members of the band had neither automobile nor telephone. Today, there are Daredevils whose homes still lack indoor plumbing.

Success is coming rapidly. The band had originally come together as a collection of writer-musicians, most of whom has played in various top-40 groups playing the usual pizza parlors and fraternity parties. Each of the writers had material to perform, and nowhere to play it. Eventually, they formed the band that evolved through various stages (at one point they called themselves

continued on next page

They gave you the hit single, "Lady." Now they give you flowing lyrical passages and swirling bursts of thunder and lightning...

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EQUNOX

ON A&M RECORDS AND TAPES

that he didn't want to do at all -- including 'If You Wanna Get To Heaven.' On the second album, which he co-produced with David Anderle, there are four cuts that Glyn didn't want to include. Also, he was really trying very hard to press his trip as superstar producer on them. Apparently the Stones had made him do everything they wanted him to; this was his way of applying some force to a band for a change."

The first album, *The Ozark Mountain Daredevils*, sold well enough (just hovering below the gold mark as of this writing) regardless of any conflicts between band and producer and despite the fact that the single of "Heaven" wasn't even played on a number of major market Top 40 stations.

For the second album, *It'll Shine When It Shines*, there was still Johns to contend with, but as an effort to alleviate the homesickness, recording was done on the Reudi Valley Ranch, a largish spread leased by the band safely inside rural Missouri -- built in 1847, an underground railway stop during the Civil War, the farm resembles an old, pre-Emancipation Proclamation plantation. Today, in retrospect, it is the band's least favorite album. They blame rough sound -- due to the well-intentioned but, they say, badly-realized location recording -- and too wide a variety of styles of material. Evidently the band's audience agrees: though "Jackie Blue" was a high-selling single, the album did noticeably less well than its predecessor.

The just released *The Car Over the Lake Album*, was produced by Anderle alone, recorded at Norbert Putnam's studio in Nashville, and has what the band feels to be a more consistent set of songs. And also more sophisticated -- by abandoning their home makeshift studio in favor of Nashville's professional, no-nonsense clime, the Daredevils have upgraded their sound. Three tunes that the band liked but which they felt to be too odd to fit in with the rest are included in a special flexible-plastic seven-inch insert.

Various Daredevils (the name, incidentally, comes from Steve Cash, who is evidently the band's chief intellectual presence -- he once had some poetry published in *Rolling Stone*, for which, incidentally he's never been paid) live within an hour's drive from Springfield, all in the Ozarks. They gather socially from time to time, and of course to rehearse. And to travel.

So far, their touring has been largely confined to their home area; partially as the result of their refusal to spend too much time on the road. Their success as a recording act in Europe has been big enough, though, that they've spent time on the Continent and in Great Britain, where the locals look with reverence upon the Daredevils' fundamental lifestyles.

The band's homegrown funkiness impresses a good number of A&M's drugstore cowboys, as well. Jerry Moss, the "M" to Herb Alpert's "A", flew to Springfield to view the Daredevils at home, and -- probably more surprised than any of the band -- made a quite respectable showing, suiting up in Ozark clothing and availing himself of pianist Buddy Brayfield's backyard loo. Since then, a number of company people have taken it upon themselves to find one excuse or another to confer personally with the band on their own, extensive, turf.

There are some boys, though, that you just can't take the Hollywood out of. The Daredevils like to recall an especially enthusiastic, high-placed executive. "He came down," says Chowning with a smile, "and we did our best to make him feel like a real local -- we got him a nice hat, and a set of Big John bib overalls. It didn't work out, though. He put those Big Johns on, and all he could think about was how great they'd look tie-dyed!"



BELLY TO BELLY, BUTT TO BUTT SWEDEN SENDS US ROCK & ROLL SMUT

By Ron Ross

A lot of people didn't like Napoleon, but nobody doesn't like gurls. Which may account for the success with which Abba's top five smash of 1974, "Waterloo," swept across country after country. Flo and Eddie faves Bjorn Ulvaeus and Benny Andersson are the writers behind the '70s most under-rated hit factory. And Abbaettes Frieda, a ravishing red-head, and Anna, a pulverizing platinum blonde, are the vivaciously vocal reasons you want to send any kind of help they need the minute "S.O.S.," their current smash, hooks you like no bunch of Bay City boychiks has yet managed.

Much has been made of the Rollers' American TV debut, with comparisons to the Beatles' Sullivan show inevitable, but after winning the Eurovision songwriting competition, Abba performed "Waterloo" before a TV audience of 600 million. It was after this seductive sight and sound event that Anna and Frieda's belly to belly, butt to butt delivery conquered Europe like a rock 'n' roll reich. 'Cuz not only can you dance to their tunes and hum 'em on the way to work, but

Abba have created a musical reflection of the "Lez be in forever" fad sweeping the Continent's pop culture from Penthouse pix of girls together outrageously to the Sweet's "A.C./D.C." Not since the Shangri-Las has a girl group had so much potential to dominate teen dreams.

Anna and Frieda could sell anything from shaving cream to little cigars, but the material that Bjorn and Benny write, perform, and produce is a product that sells itself-infectious, clever, and above all, musical, Abba's repertoire can make you wonder, just as you did after you first heard "Downtown" or "Girl Don't Come." While Abba recently had both the #1 and #2 singles in Australia, Americans still seem to be looking for a rockstar they could elect president. Your Stateside progressive listener seems to be asking "how can anything that tastes so good be so good for you?" Yet Abba are the best example in years of the difference between distinctive pop and decadent pap.

Pop is no more or less than fantasy fodder, and it is the setting and sound of these fantasies that makes a record a hit. "Short Shorts" by the Royal Ters or Elton's "Rocket

Man" are merely melodic skits based on a premise anyone can immediately understand. But to the teen audience at which pop has always been directed, a hit has the power to become *their* song: paradoxically, the more popular a record gets, the more personally it's taken. If nothing else, the Abba aesthetic entails two adorable cuties singing "I" a lot about "you" to some of the catchiest melodies ever written outside of Brooklyn, Liverpool, or Southern California (not to mention Cleveland).

On their album covers, live, or on TV, Anna and Frieda evoke instant sex appeal, as much as the male stars like Jagger or Bowie who've come to epitomize rock as rape. And strangely, despite their cute enough to eat looks and sweetly nasal voices, Abba's songs are just as into the hurts-so-good/chains of love dynamic as "Cracked Actor" or "Live with Me." What's missing is the pretension and macho that makes rock "raunchy." Even though the most romantically adolescent emotions are evoked by Abba with convincing sincerity, they're undercut by silly unexpected puns or a slyly pseudo-classical arrangement.

Bombastically entertaining like Elton and just as quick with a hook, they take an old cliche like "do unto others" and translate the golden rule into "Bang-A-Boomerang," which takes all the lessons of Phil Spector's Ronettes' records and re-mixes them so that each musical brick in the wall of sound becomes evident. Plus, like every Abba song, there are so many good ideas that keep moving the tune along, that just when you think it can't get any better, it jumps the track completely and while you're still catching your breath from surprise and laughter, it slides right back into the hook. These guys can make Sparks sound like tragedians, and cunnin' as he may be, either of the girls is twice the man Russell Mael is.

There's one big difference between the girl groups of the '60s and Abba, however, and that's that Anna and Frieda aren't rebel rebels, or even hot tramps. They weren't born to run or to sympathize with the devil; they just know a good thing when they see, feel, and hear it, and they want it to last. Like the Crystals or the Shangri-Las (those pitiable victims of rock chauvinism), Abba were born to love, but as happy healthy Swedes they don't see why everyone shouldn't have multiple orgasms. And although Anna and Frieda are married to Bjorn and Benny, it's the winks the girls give each other that must make young Australian girls watch their boyfriends as they both watch Anna and Frieda watch each other. Abba-tunes, such as "Honey Honey," "Ring Ring," and "Mama Mia" are as much of a hoot as colored condoms. Before you catch your kid sister and her boyfriend making out to Black Sabbath, buy her an Abba record. It'll give her ideas about what she's got and some suggestions about where to put it. But by all means, if you walk in on her listening to Abba, don't take it away and give her *Greetings From Asbury Park*. She can't even register 'til she's 18.

A brand new recording by the original group

Quicksilver Messenger Service



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Solid Silver

ST-11462



She got her looks from her father.



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Island records, Inc.
Los Angeles, California 90046

Blind Date

with

FLO & EDDIE

A monthly blindfold test by those masters of slander rock, Mark Volman & Howard Kaylan.



Edited by KEN BARNES

FLO & EDDIE Engage in Non-Marxist Self-criticism (and a little generalized grousing to boot):

Last month was too honest, and not funny enough. There were too many good albums. You might as well read Christgau's Consumer Guide. No one smart reads Christgau's Consumer Guide! You can print that. They will! Let's see Christgau make a record.... (fades into further grumbling about a particularly ungenerous assessment of the Flo & Eddie album by noted critic Robert Christgau, providing an entertainingly jaundiced prologue to the month's Blind Date entries).

Excerpts from *Hello People* (ABC)

Dr. Hook. Artsy-craftsy band that a biggie picked up on--is that what you're saying? (PRM: I hope not.) Arlo Guthrie. Volume, volume! Stealers Wheel. Boy or girl? It's a group! They paint themselves up! (Recognizes characteristic chords immediately) Todd! The Hello People. They're good. They do a fantastic version of "Just One Victory." Let's hear something they wrote. They sound good in person. They mime, and they're really good players too. I still say, though, you can't put makeup on a record. If you're Kiss, or Skyhooks or Leo Sayer or the Hello People or Alice Cooper, if it's not there...They have been around a long time. 1967? "Book of Love" is too Sha Na Nauseating--they should have done it a capella. I may have just ruined Cut 3 Side 1 by dropping a lighted ash on it.

Excerpts from *Julie Tippett* (RCA)

Former British singer from the late 60's? Chris Farlowe. Oh, who changed her name...and who may have a brand new bag. Dustin Springfield! I thought when you said brand new bag you meant sexual. She's usually a Blind Date Wrong Guess? Nico. Sandie Shaw. Somewhere in between the two? Mary Hopkin. Genya Ravan. Married a jazz player? Sensation of 1968? Shirley Bassey! I love Shirley Bassey (potentially damaging confession). I can't hear her voice. Why is she mumbling? Sounds like George Harrison with cotton in his mouth. I know who it is--Chi Coltrane. The chick from Renaissance. A Dylan hit? Oh no, not Julie Driscoll! They still let her make records? She was cool when she was Jools. Tippett--new name. This is "Sunset Glen"--8 minutes long. I like it--she's got the sounds of the harbor--the little cat's feet fog and all that. It's Rod McKuen, sort of. This will never get played on the radio. Don't underestimate the gullibility of American FM! Editor's comment! You could even quote us as saying that--we'll take it (PRM: Done!). Eddie is impressed by this

Excerpts from *Terry Garthwaite* (Arista)

Ramsey Lewis Plays the Hits. Former singer of a hit group? Again? Chi Coltrane. Genya Ravan. Goldie Zelkowitz. Chaka Khan. "You Send Me"---Earthka Kitt. This is great--Nilsson should have cut this. I'm buying it. But I hear the same foghorns as on Julie's record. This is making the bid for the Maria Muldaur school...is this a Foxy Lady? Or would you say Maggie Bell? Why is this jazz month? Her group had a hit named after a Texas city? Galveston. At the wrong speed. Houston. Amarillo. Brownsville...we're in big trouble, folks. Is it Smith or something? Joy of Cooking, of course! We should have known it. Her name? Nope. Who cares? Terry Garthwaite--I don't know what to say. I like the Sam Cooke thing. Lots of reggae. Real Flo & Eddie freaks won't get this. But it's better than Isis. Isis better than tap water. She looks real cute.

Excerpts from *Come Taste the Band*--Deep Purple (WB)

Many personnel changes? Fleetwood Mac. Deep Purple! Without even hearing a vocal! Great licks. "Cement World," right? I really like Deep Purple--once in a while. Two original Purples left--that's enough. Great for driving home on the freeway. It sounds like Deep Purple. This is definitely going to sell a million. It's a better album than the last time. More pictures than you'd ever want to see, too.

Excerpts from *Artful Dodger* (Columbia)

You just want a reaction? Wonderful! Great! This is fabulous! (All of which would have perhaps been more gratifying to Artful Dodger and Columbia had the record actually been playing.) OK, here we go. New group. Starry-eyed & Laughing, right? Dickensian group name? Like Uriah Heep...Jacob Marley & the Wailers! Sings like the guy in Big Star. This sounds good. Artful Dodger. Probably three former members of Beacon Street Union. Are they cute? Girls, let's see if they're cute. Ah-h-h, they are cute! They're not that cute. Look out, girls, we lied. I like it. Very pop. Which is a compliment. A little Raspberries. Ben Edmonds says Raspberries without Eric Carmen? Think about the ramifications of that....This guy's voice is cool. I want this album!

Excerpts from *Indiscreet*--Sparks (Island)

Readily identifiable group, huh? (One vocal twitter later...) Sparks! They always make me smile. I know little kids who can recite their lyrics by heart! Every song. Their covers are constantly wonderful--great packaging. Definitely singing in a new voice. It still sounds like Sparks. (Eddie adopts Russell Mael falsetto, especially for this exclusive putdown): It's just how much of that



cuteness you can stand! Let's take it off. The single! OK! Sounds like Marc Bolan singing with Manhattan Transfer! That's not going to be a hit.

Excerpts from *Magma Live* (Atlantic)

This group made up their own language? Magmal Play me Magma. The Orcs (spelling dubious)! They're wonderful! You've got to understand the story--how the Orcs came here in the first place. There's a section here, not unlike Rick Wakeman, where the Orcs take the humans into the caves...A critic played this for me once. They talk somewhere. The vocals really add to it! It's not as accessible as Aphrodite's Child. It makes Kraftwerk look interesting. It makes Florian look like Mick Jagger. We've told Florian for years he should clean it up. He's getting too heavy. He could be the next Bjorn! Oh no--don't take Bjorn's name in vain.

Excerpts from *The Leslie West Band* (Phantom/RCA)

Second solo album? Imposing figure? Oh God! Buddy Miles. That kind of physique? No one has the same physique as Buddy Miles, except Mrs. Buddy Miles. This isn't People's "I Love You," is it? "Can't Find My Way Home." "Sunny Goodge Street?" "Dear Prudence"--Oh, I see. Guitar player? I know who this has to be. There's only one guy--Leslie West. This is only his second solo album? Don't give me that--it's his 8th solo album. Since he broke up his group...which time? Which group? The Leslie West Band. They all look like him on the cover. What do you mean it's his second album--it's his 20th label! (To Flo) He's just trying to capitalize on looking like you, man. I'm much better looking--you can quote me. Leslie knows it, too. Flashier guitar style...

Excerpts from *Original Quicksilver Messenger Service* (Capitol)

Nostalgic reformation time? Country-rock. Sir Douglas. Sounds like Johnny Rivers--on acid. Let him get to the chorus. That is the chorus! Bobby Arlin. The Hook reformed! Son of Robert Savage. I like it. San Francisco group? Moby Group. Charlatans. Don't tell me Big Brother reformed again. The leader wrote a famous Youngbloods hit? Oh no, if this is Quicksilver they don't sound like themselves. They sound great. Dino Valenti sounds like Johnny Rivers! I can't get over that. Are we the only people who think that? Buy Quicksilver. Print this one! I've been trying to sell them for 10 years. Dino, by the way, is wearing the Hope puka.

Excerpts from *Dick Dale's Greatest Hits* (GNP Crescendo)

Yeah! That's Dick Dale, no doubt about it. What is this? A new album!!! Gotta read the liner notes! "Peter Gunn 1986." All new versions, kids! Let's start from the top, with the new "Misirlou!" Joyful! This is great! Well, he's being recorded as well as ever. His drummer is as good as he ever was. Really an offbeat approach: This is authentic, nearly! I want to hear every cut! "Surf Beat" was everything to me once. He does "Sloop John B" as bad as he used to do it! This is my favorite album! I want to hear "Those Memories of You," written by Jim Pewter! What was that note? Turn it over--"Let's Go Trippin'"--this is the greatest album ever made! (Reads) "Dick picked up his sax on 'Mr. Peppermint Man' and got into the groove he wanted to play in one take!" Let's hear "The Victor." OK, "Peppermint Man" is the one! That's really tasty. Four stars. If you never heard Dick Dale, get the originals. But for those who have all the originals, you better own this one! It's a clean pressing!

Note: For those who have all the originals, or even the merely curious, the Dick Dale album is presumably available from GNP Crescendo Records, 9165 W. Sunset Blvd., Hollywood, CA. Direct the deluge of inquiries there.

"oh, what a Mighty Time!"



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11/11	Civic Center, Springfield, Mass.
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"I'd feel safe and we



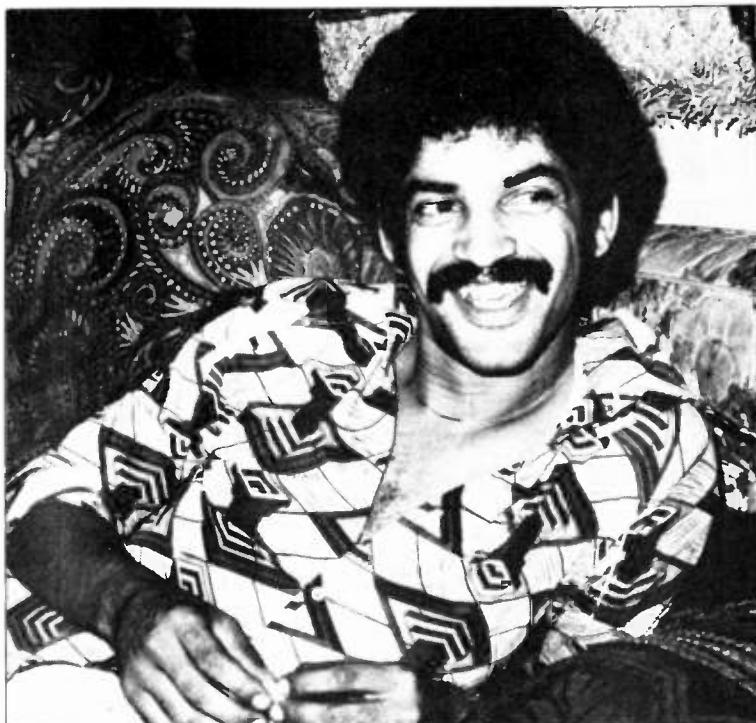
arm if I was in L.A."

LOWELL GEORGE & LITTLE FEAT

by Sam Sutherland

Lowell George is ravaged, eyes wired with fatigue beneath the peak of a floppy leather poorboy cap, face pallid against the dark beard. He smiles faintly at our interest in the albatross destiny of his band, Little Feat. His smile is as pale as his skin. You see, he begins to explain, at this point it's all too depressing. Tonight he is past hope.

Little Feat aren't going to make it. It seems unlikely they can last for another month.



•Kenny Gradney

FEAT



•Paul Barrere

It's probably for the best, though. The whole band is weary of critical rapture and public indifference, wearier still of months without work. Their first date here in New York must have set the pattern: Down at Ungano's the room was empty, chairs already stacked on some of the tables, and the only audience was a handful of friends from the record company. They sat out front, looking painfully embarrassed.

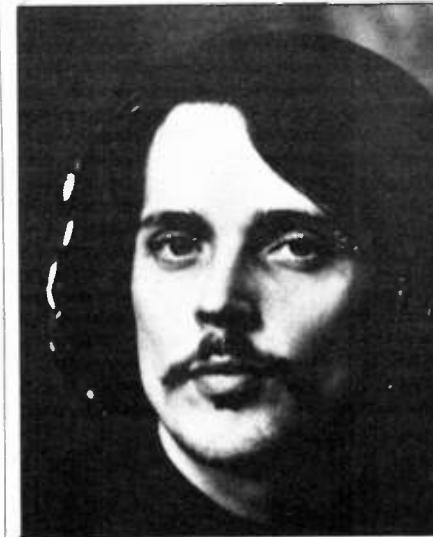
No, the chances are slim. At least, on their own, the six players can join established bands, pull down good session fees and make good money touring with the security of a weekly salary. Maybe they can finally upgrade their diets from peanut butter to prime rib.

B-movie tradition permits a dissolve here, the Carnegie Hall bar fading as time and space are apostrophized to slip from the jaws of defeat (no pun intended) to the smile of success. The winter of '74 is eclipsed by Hallowe'en, 1975. Dollying up the center aisle of Boston's Orpheum Theatre, we close in on Little Feat, the headliners. They hurtle toward the climax of a trademarked sizzler, and the packed hall heaves with collective frenzy.

What remains on the cutting room floor qualifies for another genre of potboiler,

the cliffhanger. And that category offers the most apt summation of Feat's five years as the ultimate cult band, making startling music while somehow remaining invisible.

Is it the lies
Is it the style



•Richie Hayward

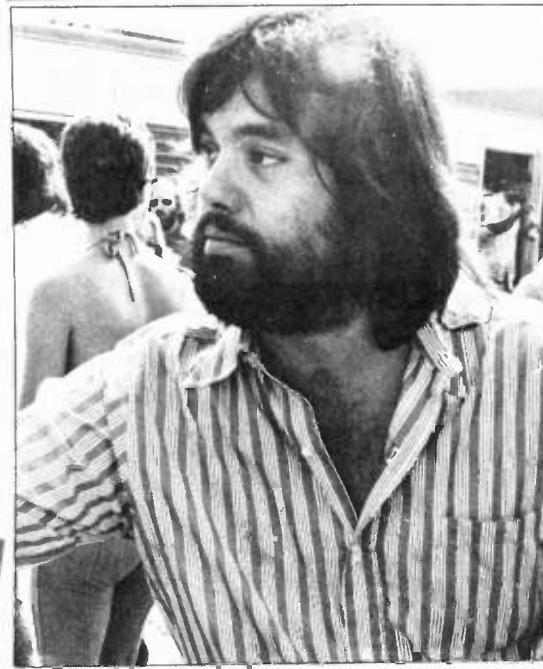
It's a mercenary territory
I wish you knew the story
I've been out here so long dreaming up
songs
I'm temporarily qualmless and sinking...

Lowell George

The Last Record Album, the band's new album, is their fifth, and the review editor at *Billboard* still insists on tagging Little Feat's style as Southern Rock. Sales and airplay, the twin fates, are kind: There is a strong immediate response from the Northeast, Midwest, South and points in between, with arcane phrases like "national breakout" suddenly appropriate. Significantly, the one major city slowest on the draw is the band's home town, Los Angeles.

Yet Little Feat's L.A. lineage is longer and more home-grown than that of most

LITTLE



•Lowell George

IN

performers who've come to epitomize Southern Californian music in the '70's. Lowell George, spokesman, producer, lead singer, slide guitarist and resident legend, was born here, growing up in Hollywood, going to Hollywood High

in 1965 with \$80 and his drum kit; and Sam Clayton, percussion and basso innuendo for the choir, is originally from Louisiana.

Where George's Hollywood diagnosis finds its validity is in the nature of the city itself, a transient, rootless culture where an immigrant with quick instincts is naturalized within months and qualifies as an authentic local within years. Add to that chameleon ambience the accelerated rhythms of the late '60's local music scene that served as crucible for the band's outlook, and Little Feat's credentials as a Glamour City band are impeccable.

Barrere's own assessment of the situation confirms that Hollywood focus as surely as the surrealized vista of Hollywood Boulevard on the new album's cover: "I would say that we're all more like motion picture producers or



•Sam Clayton

HEAT

and gradually learning the rites of passage amid Southern California's suburban sprawl.

"It's all kids from Hollywood," Lowell once explained. "You know, I parked cars, and worked at the Hollywood Bowl, all that stuff. Worked with Rick Cunha, who's a songwriter now. *That* was a long time ago.

"You grow up around this thing. Y'know, you park Frank Sinatra's car and two guys get out and look both ways, then go 'Okay.' " He simulated a bouncer's wary once-over.

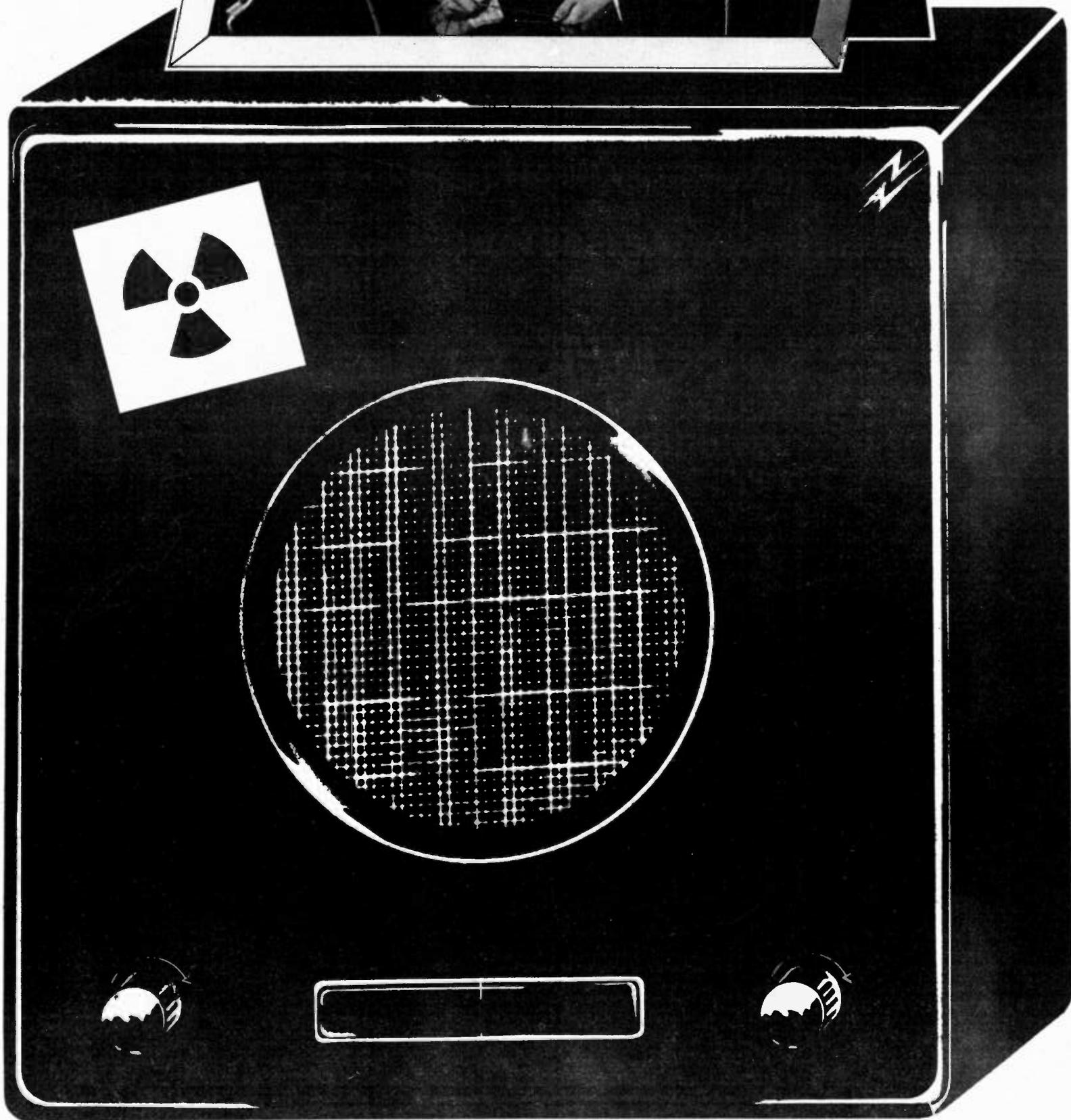
"It's very interesting to watch all the hype that's involved in all of that."

Technically, the band isn't entirely Hollywood in the strictest sense. True, guitarist Paul Barrere is another show biz kid, born in Burbank, and bassist Ken Gradney is from West L.A. But keyboard wizard Bill "He's got snakes for fingers" Payne was born in Waco, Texas; drummer Richie Hayward is an Iowan who grew up there before moving West



•Bill Payne

KRAFTWERK



RADIO-ACTIVITY 



NORMAN SEEFF

l to r: Kenny Gradney, Bill Payne, Sam Clayton, Lowell George, Richie Hayward, Paul Barrere

"LITTLE FEAT'S REPERTORY INCLUDES PIMPS, HOUSEWIVES, TRUCKERS, STREET WALKERS, HUSTLERS AND OTHER STREET LEVEL PROWLERS."

something...We'll take an area, a different part of the country, and try and reflect upon it in that manner, put it together in a colorful and illustrative manner." But are there musical landmarks as well?

"Bonnie Raitt once told me the L.A. sound was that pussy backbeat, whereas the Eastern sound was that heavy backbeat. But I could never really tell." A droll pronouncement, given Little Feat's ability to handle dizzying, sophisticated meters with the elan of jazz players.

There are more fundamental L.A. pop archetypes absent from the band's point-of-view, especially in the characters inhabiting their songs. Alongside the casual affluence of the sunswept California teen dream, and the post-psychadelic romanticism that has emerged in the '70's, Little Feat's repertory of pimps, housewives, truckers, street-walkers, hustlers and other street-level prowlers forms a stark contrast. In this world, people get lost and lonely, gain too much weight, pop too many pills. The classic California cosmos of sun, surf, mountains, desert is replaced by the nervous menace of city streets. Even the open highway narrows to two crumbling lanes baking under the desert sun, Next Gas, 120 miles.

Yet they never lose their sense of humor.

The son of a Hollywood furrier, Lowell George had left art school and surrendered to a rock 'n' roll fever when he turned from flute to guitar at 20. At 23

he played his first studio session, and at 24 his first song was recorded.

In The Factory, a mid-60's L.A. band, he met Richie Hayward, who would later recall answering an *LA Free Press* ad seeking, "Drummer, must be freaky." The Factory metamorphosed into The Fraternity Of Man, while George stepped into a brief assignment as lead singer with The Standells, a classic punk band gone to seed, before joining The Mothers Of Invention.

The Fraternity Of Man never achieved ground-level recognition, but, in addition to underground chestnuts like "Don't Bogart Me" ("Don't Bogart That Joint") and "Last Call For Alcohol," they did help set the stage for Little Feat. Lowell George was called in to play on sessions for the group's second album, and there he met a young, classically-trained pianist from Santa Barbara named Bill Payne.

Payne had migrated from Ventura, where he grew up, to Santa Maria and then Santa Barbara, passing through a series of bands that churned out five sets a night in rock 'n' roll nerve centers like Pismo Beach and Lompoc. He later summarized those hard knocks, explaining, "I wasn't with any band, and was at an age which I was draftable by the Army. Whatever the culture riff was back then, I found myself sleeping on the beach and reading rock magazines and wondering what to do next." Eventually, he headed south to Los Angeles.

Payne joined forces with Lowell and Richie in 1969, forming a band that took

its name from a crack by ex-Mother Jimmy Carl Black. Auditioning a string of bass players, they finally chose another Zappa alumnus, Roy Estrada. A demo tape of a Lowell George song, "Willin'," earned them a recording contract with Warner Bros., and in 1971 their debut album, *Little Feat*, was released. Glowing reviews and negligible sales set the pattern that would haunt the band for three years, despite popular covers of their songs by bands like The Byrds ("Truck Stop Girl") and Seatrain ("Willin'") in the first of many subsequent incarnations.

A second album, recorded with producer Ted Templeman, was released in 1972 and showcased a more ambitious clutch of ideas in both songs and performances. Lowell's husky vocals were more melodic on the ballads, yet ballsier on rockers, and his slide guitar playing achieved a new authority in its sweeping buzzsaw runs. He was now writing most of the band's material, singing most of the lead vocals and laying the groundwork for his reputation as a writer in songs ranging from country laments to flat-out rock and gutbucket Delta blues. Even the cover art was an advance, setting the album's mood through the mixmaster surrealism of painter Neon Park: Fusing Fragonard with Walt Disney and tossing in Gainsborough's "Blue Boy" for kitsch appeal, Park conjured a creamy white cake aloft on a swing, kicking its dainty female feet, a slice missing from between its legs. The implications were a bit too

extreme, so the working title of "Thank You, I'll Eat It Here" was shelved in favor of *Sailin' Shoes*.

Templeman, technocrat producer for The Doobie Brothers, Van Morrison and other Warner Bros. artists, would later remark that he produced two singles that year that he felt had smash potential. One was The Doobies' "Listen To The Music"; the other was "Easy To Slip," the surging opening track on *Sailin' Shoes*. Of the two, he added, "Easy To Slip" had seemed the clearer shot for recognition.

When their second album again slipped past unnoticed by the cash-carrying public, Little Feat regrouped, Roy Estrada having departed for the relative security of Captain Beefheart's band. Estrada's move triggered an expansion of the rhythm section that radically altered the band's style, for he was replaced by three musicians whose jazz and blues roots opened up a new rhythmic identity that has since become one of the band's most striking dimensions. As percussionist Sam Clayton later described the process, "We slowed Richie down so you could get the funk in."

Clayton, a soft-spoken giant who moves with easy muscular grace, had fallen naturally into his conga style, first playing percussion after being laid-off from an aircraft factory job. As a member of Delaney & Bonnie's band, he had met bassist Kenny Gradney, who had grown up with rhythm & blues in his living room:



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right here in Phonograph Record, and now
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**"The Dudes' debut album,
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Produced by Mark Spector.

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His father operated an independent r&b label, and the constant presence of music and musicians had obviously inspired Ken, who left his first professional gig with The Shirelles to go on to Ike & Tina Turner's band at the age of 16. By his early 20's, he was working with Clayton in Delaney & Bonnie's outfit.

The final addition was guitarist Paul Barrere, who had auditioned for Little Feat years before, hoping to become their bassist. Instead, he had passed through a series of garage bands, and had steeped his playing in jazz and blues before linking up with Little Feat.

With the release of *Dixie Chicken* in 1973, Little Feat unveiled its new format to the now familiar delight of the critics. Once again, professional respect was excessive and mass sales support practically non-existent, but this time the aftermath was more serious. Lowell George's expanded role as producer, chief writer and lead vocalist earned him the ticklish role of inhouse genius, at least in the critics' eyes, despite Lowell's often self-effacing emphasis on the other musicians during interviews. Much later, the band would confide that tempers were flaring all around, and producer George was "pissed off all the time."

Finally, there were angry confrontations, and the band's chances of survival seemed slim. When I first met a very bitter Lowell George, leaning against a pillar in the Carnegie Hall bar, he was on the road with Jackson Browne and Linda Ronstadt, and had enough offers of outside work to step clear of his own band: "I was way down. I had received a phone call, and stuff was really coming down. I was at my wit's end about what was supposed to take place."

As it turned out, the confrontation was the best thing that could have happened. "Well, for me," Bill Payne remembered, "it was like having gone through group therapy. What allowed us to come back together was that Lowell and I were absolutely honest with each other. I told him why I didn't think the group was a success, and he let me know...uh, we were very graphic in our accounts."

For the next month or so, the band dispersed, its individual members handling outside projects. Between *Dixie Chicken* and what would be its successor, the band appeared as an entity on albums with Kathy Dalton and jazzman Chico Hamilton; individually, they showed up on a wide range of recording projects. And in the interim Lowell George had another confrontation, this time with his manager, Bob Cavallo, and his record company chairman.

As in the flare-up with the band, candor bridged the gap. "Between Bob Cavallo and Mo Ostin -- initially Mo Ostin, then Bob Cavallo, after he and I had a heart-to-heart talk -- things altered. I said, 'Guys, I'm tired of crawling on my hands and knees through the halls of a record company to get a band what they need. Not what they want, but what they need, to perform, to make records, to feel like human beings.' Later, George would concede that the band itself had made some blunders, especially in their low profile in live performances. But the results were positive all around. Studio time was booked in a small Maryland studio, and the band holed up there with a few close musical friends like Emmylou Harris and Bonnie Raitt.

Lowell himself had been signed to a solo contract, thus giving him the option of an outlet for his more personal songs. In the studio, the goal was now a much clearer one: "I wanted the group consciousness to come forward...This was the first album where I didn't do any cuff flashes, I didn't do any ballads like 'Roll Um Easy.' " His production style was similarly minimized, in accordance with what George called the "leave it in" approach. "The album was done with

that intention in mind, to leave those clams in there, because it's real."

Feats Don't Fail Me Now was the result, a straightforward set emphasizing rockers and instrumental fire, and strikingly close to the band's stage style. If the critics mused over George's shift in priorities, the public didn't, and the album quickly outdistanced its predecessors, given added momentum by the first bona fide national tour in the band's history.

"The unity of the organization, when it was put back together, improved immensely," George said during that tour. "Everybody began to see the light at that point. I mean, I saw it. And I had never seen it before, to tell you the truth." During the album sessions, he continued, the boost had been almost scary. "I kept going, 'Something terrible is going to happen, it has to. It can't be this easy.'"

When they followed this new success with their first tour overseas, as part of the Warner Bros. Road Show, the old patterns were shattered. In England, their fans included Mick Jagger, Rod Stewart, Ron Wood and other pop figureheads, and reports revealed that Little Feat were emerging as the stars of the show.

* * * * *

Two degrees in bebop
A PhD in swing
He's a master of rhythm
He's a rock 'n' roll king...
Lowell George & Fred Martin

Venice, CA, is the dark side of Santa Monica and the L.A. beach continuum, its streets dimmer, narrow and somehow more purposeless in their sudden cul-de-sacs. To their neighbors on either side, the natives are menacing, for Venice, like Hollywood, has a street culture, something alien to the freeway consciousness of Southern California.

On the eve of their Fall, '75 national tour, Little Feat are gathering steam on the stage of the Fox Venice Theatre, an appropriately funky old movie house butting up against a supermarket. Though the promoter has proudly dubbed this an evening of "gourmet rock 'n' roll," the ambience is hardly cerebral: Little Feat have finally wedged their way into L.A.'s back door, and the last stronghold of indifference can be seen weakening as the crowd warms to this visceral, sexy stew of country, boogie, classicism and classic rock. Gourmet fare at a beggar's banquet.

Like all good potboilers, this movie is reaching its denouement and the good guys are ahead. *The Last Record Album* is, as Lowell's liner note insists and Bill Payne confirms, not a warning but actually a beginning. After the no-nonsense fire of the last set, the band feels confident enough to take new risks. The production style is again ripe with deft, subtle touches; Barrere and Payne are emerging as writers, and advancing the group's fluid jazz chops in the process; and Lowell George himself is at ease to turn in a "cuff flash" like the moody "Long Distance Love," which, like the Barrere/Payne element, offers variety to their recorded personality.

Even the record biz politics are positive. Warner Bros. is pushing for a second honeymoon, while other labels have reportedly wooed the band as well.

Best of all, the band's identity is finally becoming clearer to an audience that Lowell George has described as "music folks, which is basically who we're trying to reach."

On the phone from Atlanta, Bill Payne summed up the status quo neatly: "I've done everything I wanted to do when I slept on that beach. I wanted to be in a band that was well-respected by other musicians, that had the critics going for it, and would be uncompromising in its music."



ROCK 'N' ROLL IN THE YEAR OF THE BICENTENNIAL

By GREG SHAW

I predict that 1976 will be the most absurd year in the history of rock & roll. It will also be the most boring. At the same time, to those hard-core rock cultists whose awareness extends past the fringes of what's on the charts, it will be the most hopeful year since 1974, when a full-scale pop revival seemed tantalizingly within reach. It will be a year of confusion and saturation, a year of wholesome decadence, a year of cheerful conformity and revived traditionalism.

The bi-centennial will dominate pop music just as it will dominate every other facet of American life. There will be no avoiding it; as July 4th draws closer, everyone will be swept up in the media fever. If it had come in 1966, most of us would have thumbed our noses, while rock groups savagely attacked the hollow pretense of the American dream. In 1976, though, we'll all go along with it, and even get caught up in the fever.

The Jefferson Starship will make an album on the theme of patriotism. So will 14 other groups, including Grand Funk and the Nitty Gritty Dirt Band. There'll be a resurgence of groups with names like George Washington & the Cherry Bombs and the Boston Tea Party.



•David Bowie in Ken Russell's "The Life of Marilyn Monroe" scheduled for Fall '76 release.

Everyone who was a star in 1975 will be a much bigger star in 1976, except Helen Reddy. Bruce Springsteen will be proclaimed the new messiah. Someone will write a song about him and rhyme his name with "James Dean". Elton John will have 9 hit singles and 6 albums. Eric Carmen will have 6 hit singles. Barry White won't have any. There will be no surf revival in 1976. The Beach Boys will release an album and it will be disco.

Discos will be everywhere, but disco music will be entirely made by white musicians, or it will be reggae -- or both. There will be a new trend in black music, which it will take white audiences another two years to accept; couples will dance to it horizontally, in beds.

David Bowie will begin his film career with a new version of *The Al Jolson Story*, set in 7th century Baghdad. The soundtrack album will set still another new trend in black music. The Bay City Rollers will co-host the Mike Douglas Show and from there be catapulted into a record-breaking engagement at Caesar's Palace in Las Vegas. They will make a disco album.

An all-girl group of teenage prostitutes will be simultaneously launched on record and as the stars of a new TV situation comedy, with Xaviera Hollander as their mother. Despite protests,

the show will be tastefully done and enormously successful. They will sell millions of records to a generation of girls who find their example useful in relieving their boredom with sex. Sales will further soar when it's revealed that three of them are gay.

In short, all the nascent absurdities that have been steadily breeding in the body of popular culture over the past few years will break open like a runaway carcinoma in the spirit of mass hysteria that will grip the nation in its 200th year.

Discounting the inevitable preponderance of established stars, the music of 1976 will surprise a lot of people. Today's younger generation is as yet an untried market factor, and its tastes will for the first time become apparent. They will be radically different from those of the Primary generation, now in its late 20's and early 30's. The younger teenagers of 1976 are too young to remember the Archies. They know nothing about the Beatles except as a curious death cult, of which many of them will become ardent followers. They will think of groups like the Moody Blues as "jazz", and they will equate the term "jazz" with bubblegum music. What we called bubblegum music, they will think of as the Golden Age of rock & roll.

Definitions will change drastically. Just as the underground music of 1968 is now mass-appeal MOR (a possibility no fan of Pink Floyd or the Grateful Dead could have conceived, in his wildest drug flights, back then), so will yesterday's esoterica become tomorrow's supermarket music, and today's cult items will be next week's teen scream.

We've seen this trend accelerating already in the case of the German noise groups, until a year or two ago available only as imports, now selling like crazy, even though the main appeal of these groups is the psychological satisfaction of thinking you're the only one in your city who's heard of the group in question. Concerts by these groups must be as disconcerting for the fans as for the skeptics. At any rate, this trend will get a lot bigger. Klaus Doldinger will have a Top Ten single with a record made by monkeys playing synthesizers. It will be a disco hit. Ken Russell will try to get the lead singer of Kraftwerk to star in his next picture, based on the life of Stockhausen.

While all this is going on, there will be a new underground cult gaining popularity across the land. Ironically (if irony still means anything in the world of pop, which I strongly doubt), this new underground phenomenon will be a fanatical revival of the most popular, commercial music of the last decade, the teenage rock of 1964-66 that the very first generation of 'underground' aficionados was rebelling against. There will be a massive Monkees revival. Where once a *Popul Vuh* album aroused envy among the other kids at school, it will be the young collector with a *Syndicate of Sound* album that wins esteem.

By 1977, rock & roll will be overtaken by this growing cult, and nostalgia will combine with traditionalism to spawn an era of neo-classicism that will last for exactly eight months before something so shocking, so outrageously new and overwhelming, appears that the entire face of popular music will be irrevocably altered.

But I see I've gotten ahead of myself. That won't happen until 1977, so tune in this time next year for the full preview. Assuming, that is, you survive the next twelve months.

PHONOGRAPH RECORD REVIEWS



Vance Or Towers: From Santa Barbara with kissy...



VANCE OR TOWERS
Vance Or Towers
A&M SP-4551

By MARTIN CERF

"How can anything that tastes this good be so good for you?" asks Ron Ross of his sheer, unadulterated lust for Abba records. With reference to Artful Dodger's first LP, Ken Barnes observes the band "too hard for AM, but they're not weighty enough for FM 'progressives.'" Of Dwight Twilley's latest "You Were So Warm" single, Greg Shaw anticipated last month, "This record will bomb in the discos, but they (Twilley) don't care--the girls they want to reach are too young to do the hustle anyway." Abba, the Twilleys and Artful Dodger have a great deal in common with Vance Or Towers.

If you aren't particularly impressed with the breed of talent currently in favor and in the display racks at Korvetts, and feel as many that '70s rock just shrinks in comparison to what was available in the '60s, you've only to open your mind and wallet to solve the problem. There's still a hefty amount of sensational titles by new artists. Abba, the Dwight Twilley Band and Artful Dodger are but three of recent memory worthy of excessive exposure. Perhaps even more exciting than any of them, however, is Glen Vance and Michael Towers.

Santa Barbara's domestic rock 'n' roll activity is not like that of Cleveland's, being somewhat more akin to Boise's

local scene, historically. It is a California coastal community situated next to strategic stretches of beach and surf-geography that I find much more inspirational than Detroit's assembly-lines or Colorado's frigid Rockies. But it's a conservative retirement city for old Republicans, which doesn't help to promote any aspiring kids looking for a break in the biz. Santa Barbara's rock event of 1975 was the Michael Nesmith concert to which only 60 white-robed George Harrison/Sky Saxon guru-types attended. The only rock nerve to be found is a few miles up Highway 101 at the University of California campus in Isla Vista (site of the famous Bank of America bar-b-que in the '60s). Besides a local punk band, The Virgins, there's little *pop* consciousness evident in the whole area. Vance Or Towers live in Santa Barbara.

In 1976, just like in 1966, it's the *young* artist that will provide fresh new directions. However, Glen Vance and Michael Towers as *new* artists have the odds stacked against them by definition. But they've one factor working for them in addition to their hot, hot vocal work, playing, songs and good looks, 'cause *time* is on their side too.

This 7-week old first release by V Or T is a shocker. Amazing, because it's tight, very well made and virtually all sides front line stuff. I'm most taken back by these boys' imagery. "Well in the state I'm in, I would do most anything, to get me out of my mind, 'cause I work all day in a fast-food factory, pushin' burgers and fries." What else do Jack-In-The-Box executives have to look forward to if not a fistful of filled scripts and cheap alcohol.

Bruce Springsteen has no copywrite on suburban poetry. In "Scream Bloody Robbery," amid whirring sirens and a lyric-line delivered in double-time, they relive your weekly corner liquor store scene: "Close your door and don't make a sound, give us all your money or we'll blow your brains out." \$10 urban high = Manslaughter.

They handle Badfinger-Steely Dan-Big Star uptempo pop so well, demonstrated with tracks like "Robbery" and "Do Whatever You Want." Yet, their best ballads ("It's Up To You" and "Love Me

Lady") are more syrupy than Paul McCartney on Log Cabin, more authentic and dramatic than All My Children. I'm told they can pull all this off on stage as well, something Badfinger, the Raspberries and Steely Dan were never able to do.

I see absolutely no reason why anyone

with five bucks shouldn't give it to the nearest record retailer who was smart enough to stock a few copies of *Vance Or Towers*.

(Last month I knew there was something I meant to be thankful for besides Dusty Springfield and Marianne Faithful.)



SIREN
Roxy Music
Atco 36-127

By BEN EDMONDS

Roxy Music is among the handful of very best bands in the world. You didn't know that? You're not exactly alone, but the number of people who are aware of this band's capabilities seems to swell with each successive album release. Detroit knows it; they give the band Zeppelin-level airplay and a large enough following to fill the biggest hall in town. The same applies to Cleveland, proving that they're instant heroes wherever they're properly exposed, so it appears to be a matter of simply grinding out the yardage until they finally cross the goal line.

Like all good art-rockers, they have an active intellectual involvement with their music which takes art's delight in finding new ways to fill the same old space. Unlike the self-conscious electronic eccentricity of much of that European school, however, they prefer to apply their ideas to conventional rock forms and attitudes. The result is a thoroughly individual marriage of intellect and commerce. If they were in James Brown's band, they'd be up to their asses in fines for the notes they've missed in the course of the search for that balance. But if it's machinery you're interested in, get a subscription to *Popular Mechanics*. Roxy Music must be considered in terms of *personality*, and the fact that they even have one is these days almost enough to rank them with the heavyweights.

Bryan Ferry is the simultaneous object of the lion's share of the adulation and

abuse, which is right away enough to recommend him. He's got vocal limitations which may never be overcome, and if you can't see beyond them to what he's getting at, his voice can be hard to take. But Ferry uses his limited resources with a romantic conviction that brings his sentiments alive; he may not be a great singer, but he's certainly got style.

Though it's easy enough to fixate on the Ferry persona, it's the band that makes it work. Andy MacKay is one of the only rock sax players whose licks don't sound like grounds for the estate of King Curtis to sue; he's developed a style that's as distinctly white as it is European. Eddie Jobson's multi-talents (keyboards, synthesizer, violin) add just the right measure of educated virtuosity, while Paul Thompson's drums are powerfully blunt enough so you never lose track of the beat. And Phil Manzanera's guitar flexibility holds the disparate elements of the music together.

Siren is Roxy's most consistent album. It lacks the immediate intensity of their strongest performances ("Song For Europe," "The Thrill Of It All"), opting for a smoothly flowing middle ground which consolidates the stylistic evolution of their previous four albums. And the opener, "Love Is The Drug," is danceable enough to suggest that if promotion is intelligently keyed to those Midwestern markets where the band is revered, they should have their first Stateside hit single.

There's been a lot of uncomfortable talk over the last eighteen months about dissension within the Roxy ranks. Specifically, Andy MacKay and Phil Manzanera are said to be so unsatisfied with the emphasis placed on Bryan Ferry that they're constantly on the verge of filing their walking papers. If this talk has even the remotest basis in reality, somebody had better take it upon themselves to slap some sense into these bozos. Ferry, Manzanera and MacKay have all seen varyingly positive degrees of outside success, but as occasionally pleasing as they've been, none of their solo works has even been within sight of Roxy's collective power. Roxy Music is one of the very few genuinely personable and consistently interesting bands we have, and what they've achieved thus far is only a fraction of the aesthetic heights they should hit.

AL KOOPER REVIEWS E.L.O.



FACE THE MUSIC
Electric Light Orchestra
United Artists LA-546G

By AL KOOPER

Dear Jeff Lynne,
I've never written a letter like this before. I mean I'm not a groupie or anything. My friends and I all dig your records and we just went out and got your new album *Face The Music*. Wow! We all smoked some Colombian the other night and damn, you guys musta been high when you recorded that. Jeff, I'm a record producer just like you. I produced some Southern guys named Lynyrd Skynyrd and some real weirdos called The Tubes, so I thought I'd comment on your record, you know, one producer to another. I mean, you're English and everything, but I read somewhere you produced Del Shannon and he was your friend and all, so anyway I'll make it sort of like a review in some paper you get free in a record store or somethin'.

"Fire On High": This is like an overture that doesn't call on any themes that occur later. It's got clever rhythm stops, neat keyboard arpeggios, and the toughest acoustic guitar sound I've heard yet. Your drummer (Bev Bevan) plays great fills here. (Coincidentally, we did a track sort of like this on the Tubes album called "Up From The Deep." You might like it, Jeff.)

"Waterfall": Nice digital or tape delay on the voice. You liked the Beatles, huh? This reminds me sort of a little like "All You Need Is Love" and it's got those George Harrisonish double slide leads in it. But when you hit the instrumental, it's ELO all the way. I guess with all your influences and everything, you still got that spark of originality. I'm searching for it, myself.

Only you could get away with using this title, Jeff. Every Scottish, Welsh, Irish, English and American band in the 60's wrote a song called "Evil Woman." (Skynyrd did one called "Cheatin' Woman," but even they say "Evil Woman" in it.) This is real stylized; a cross between your other singles, "Showdown" and "Can't Get It Out Of My Head." It's got that AM hock. Jeez, you know, you got a slight R&B thing goin' on too, Jeff. The clavinet in the choruses and the instrumental sounds like an O'Jays record. I like it, but I know if they play it a lot, I'll get sick of it. But that's a good sign. Happens with all top ten records. "Nightrider": For Chris-

sakes, you guys sound just like the Beach Boys doin' "Darlin'" on this cut. I mean, I read reviews where they say 10cc sounds like 'em but, Jeff, this is great! And you got one of those parts that's one of your trademarks, where you splice in a wild track of strings in the middle and everything goes out of joint for 10 seconds and then BLAMM you're right back on it. Good splice job. And the cello line in the rubato part at the end; did you or the cello player make that up? It's great.

We're listenin' out here, Jeff. Great Side One.

"Poker": This is doubletime, a weird groove for you guys to be in. I think you play it real good. I like the lyrics too. I guess you mean that the world situation is like a poker game, huh? I mean, that's what I got out of it. Is that what you meant?

"Strange Magic": The little parts you write in between tracks (I call 'em segues) are exquisite, especially the one going into this song. The drums are real laid back in the beginning, not coming in full time until the third verse. This is the one we got off to the most on the Colombian. The fadeout reminds me of Thom Bell, the way you just keep repeating the chorus and all. He does that a lot with the Spinners. Nice chord sequence, too.

"Down Home Town": I didn't get this one Jeff. I mean, I got it if you're making fun of everyone. But poor Bev, the drummer. It sounds like someone gave him a part to play and he doesn't like it. And then quoting Dixie and KC & Sunshine Band. Jeff, you don't have to do this. You're better than that. "One Summer Dream": Boy, the strings on this are nice. It really sounds like the title when they play. The chorus reminds me of the chorus in "No Reply" by the Beatles. Real pretty and a nice fade.

Another great album, Jeff. That's three in a row (I don't count the first two 'cause I know you were just gettin' your shit together). To sum up, I'd like to say I always await your latest release. And you're getting more tolerant of drums. The drum sound is usually the flaw on your records, but on this album you got a much better sound. Now all that's missing is the bass drum sound. Maybe next time. What can I say? Someday, when I cut an R&B act I'll make 'em do a few of your songs cause it would sound neat. And if I could come watch you guys record sometime, please let me know. Keep up the good work.

Your pal,
Al Kooper

NEIL YOUNG with CRAZY HORSE ZUMA.



Includes Don't Cry No Tears/Stupid Girl
Barstool Blues/Through My Sails

ZUMA
Neil Young
Reprise MS-2242

By KEN BARNES

Now I remember why I used to rave about Neil Young...

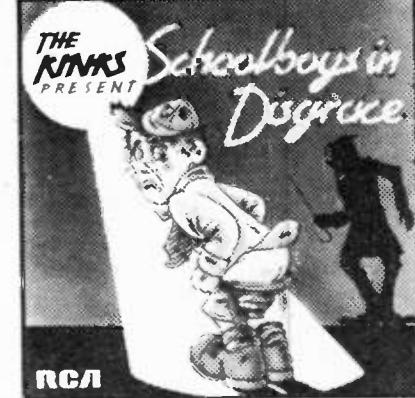
His last three albums were emotional ordeals—*Time Fades Away* (live and ragged), *On the Beach* (dead, bleak), and *Tonight's the Night* (angry but exhausted)—all suffered decidedly mixed reactions. Their critical reception grew increasingly more favorable, to the point where *Tonight* was almost universally hailed as a scarifying masterpiece. But it's hard inducing the public to listen to scarifying masterpieces. In that light, *Zuma* looks like a conscious attempt to return to relative normalcy, spotlighting a Neil Young unencumbered by near-suicidal desperation, bitterness, and virtual incoherence.

If becoming accessible again was Young's goal, he's succeeded with a vengeance—and without sacrificing that cutting edge which made *Tonight's the Night* such a painfully enthralling experience. *Zuma* is filled with well-arranged songs, backed with precise harmonies and full, powerful rock instrumentation. Only Young's singing is still ragged and off-key, but the cushioning renders it all the more effective in conveying a more subtle sort of desperation.

Bitterness and desperation still make their charged presence known, hovering behind clouds of ominous guitar chords or between lyrics of murkily evocative significance. "Danger Bird" is the most compelling example, an oblique but wrenchingly powerful song, fading out on bursts of tormented guitar. "Barstool Blues," again armed with magnificently hard-edged guitar, has a bleak final verse about a "friend of mine" (ambiguously enough) who, betrayed, "died a thousand deaths." "Stupid Girl" is a vicious, if indefinite, putdown.

But there are lighter songs, the best of which is clearly "Don't Cry No Tears," a natural single with a great *Searchers*-style riff. The worst is the Crosby, Stills & Nash guest-showcase, "Through My Sails," an acoustic plaint more suited to Crosby and thoroughly anemic in comparison to the rest of the LP. Appealing country-rock ("Lookin' for a Love" has a wonderful chorus) and straight rockers round it out, along with one final extended spectacular, "Cortez the Killer." This opus presents a rather rose-colored view of Aztec civilization, but has loads of lyrical guitar, reminiscent of "Down By the River" or "Cowgirl in the Sand."

Zuma as a whole has that Young/Crazy Horse 1969 sound, with the same rich hard-rock depth (much credit owing to rhythm guitarist Frank Sampedro here) and extraordinary lead guitar work. Musically it sounds like his strongest LP since *Everybody Knows This is Nowhere* (perhaps stronger). It slides back from the terminal precipice of *Tonight's the Night* while thankfully avoiding the blandness of *Harvest* at the same time. *Zuma* is a thoroughly impressive achievement, and not a moment too soon.



SCHOOLBOYS IN DISGRACE
The Kinks
RCA LPL1-5102

By KEN BARNES

Ray Davies' newest philosophical treatise directs itself to the topic of education and schooldays nostalgia. While a plot of sorts is undraped at the beginning of Side Two (a schoolboy, identified as the embryonic Mr. Flash of *Preservation* infamy, disgraces himself with a complaisant schoolgirl and is paddled publicly for his pains), most of the LP concerns itself with generalized misty-eyed musings on first love and boarding school camaraderie.

If *Schoolboys in Disgrace* sounds a bit thin after the quasi-mystical role reversals of *Soap Opera* and the *Preservation* trilogy's political melodrama, it is. But that's more of a relief than anything else. The LP is topically inconsequential enough so that instead of worriedly following the story line, you can readily enjoy it simply as a musical record album. As such, it's the Kinks' best in five years. Where previously (with the partial exception of the promising *Soap Opera*) you had to search out the occasional Davies gem among an excess of dross, here the first-class tunes outnumber the mediocrities by a considerable margin.

The Kinks' music nowadays falls into the broad classification of contemporary Mature Rock; the rock & roll, made by the older generation of seasoned veterans like the Who and Stones, or newer artists with equally lengthy pedigrees (10CC, Elton John). Consummately executed, smooth but complex, it's often suggestive of songs past, self-consciously spanning the two decades of rock developments (50's piano here, mid-60's guitar riff there). The Kinks are supreme adepts, and if the pure-excitement edge of "All Day and All of the Night" is gone forever, the band's more mature music has its rewards too.

Like "I'm in Disgrace," opening in lovely low-key fashion and mutating into a series of descending chords reminiscent of the Who's "Pictures of Lily." Or "The First Time We Fall in Love," which starts like a reject from *Grease*, a hokey 50's parody which becomes progressively prettier and more touching, rocks into an affectionate upbeat doowop tribute and sounds like the Beach Boys by the end. "Jack the Idiot Dunce" is an all-stops-out rocker, 50's style; "No More Looking Back" is a complex contemporary one. Much more hard rock than expected from present-day Kinks, and back to the basics, too (very few horns and no female chorus).

The Kinks are steaming along into their 12th year in fine form, selling their couple hundred thousand LP's every time out, playing and singing with obviously reinvigorated spirit. I wouldn't take it amiss if they decided to put out a mere collection of unrelated songs next album, but any Kinks project attaining a musical level as high as *Schoolboys* merits only the warmest commendations.

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POP SINGLES FOR THE 70'S BY GREG SHAW

JUKEBOX JURY



•Del Shannon in cahoots with Jeff Lynne.

DEL SHANNON - "Cry Baby Cry" - Island 038

The follow-up to "Tell Her No" is an original, co-authored by Shannon and Jeff Lynne of ELO, and a real treat for fans of both. A typically powerful Shannon vocal sets off some choice harmonies and a classic melody line, in the sort of masterful blend of pure pop and hard rock that Shannon's always specialized in. It's a winner.

PATRICIA DAHLQUIST - "Bang A Boomerang" - Epic 8-50176

Abba fans, take note of this latest cover version of one of Bjorn & Benny's niftier tunes. A big hit in Europe for both Abba and Svenne & Lotta, this is the first American version, produced by Bob Gallo, who is certainly no novice at this sort of thing. The airy majesty of the original has been retained, augmented by some added explosions, but the main thing that strikes you is the way it's been grafted onto one of those breezy disco beats. Let's hope it takes; the sooner we get Bjorn & Benny into the discos, the better.

NEW LEGION ROCK SPECTACULAR - "Second Cousin" / "Wild One" - Spectacular 11075

This is the first local record to be a pick in this column in some time, but it's so good I just can't bring myself to bury it down below. The group is an oldies band from Milwaukee, though their innate dynamism and sense of energy sets them above nearly every other band of their type. The singer has style and inventiveness, and the band rocks with heavy metal power. Top deck is an old Flamin' Groovies song, and it moves like your favorite early Stones raver. Flip is the old Buddy Holly spinoff tune, done as "Real Wild Child" by Ivan. It's less of a novelty in this version, more of a straight-out rockabilly stomper. The record can be ordered from John Mangold, Box 2641, Milwaukee, Wisc. 53217.

BEANO - "Candy Baby" - London 20085

This record makes me think of those great years when the London label could be relied on to bring us all manner of obscure British delights. Originally issued on Deram about a year ago in England,

this is one I never expected to see out here. It's got one of those patented Phil Spector "wall of sound" arrangements, and the first line is "I met you at the high school dance". You can probably take it from there. If you like the Rubettes, this is for you. I don't know who Beano is (are) but there's at least one other single by them out in England. The flip of this one is great too, in a sort of Glitter Band style.

MIKE BATT - "Summertime City" - Epic 50164

Mike Batt is the genius who brought us the Wombles, and this is only the latest of several fine solo efforts he's done over the past few years. It reminds me of any of the recent Jan Berry singles, in the way it vaguely glorifies the California aesthetic without ever making a really acute statement. But it has a nice semi-disco beat, solid harmonies as you'd expect, and would make a good hit for January.

I have to admit I'm not overly thrilled with the rest of this month's releases. There are no decent Christmas records to speak of; the best is probably "Light of the Stable" by Emmylou Harris (Reprise 1341) which features such guest singers as Dolly Parton, Linda Ronstadt and Neil Young, and an equally star-studded cast of musicians. Fans will want it for that reason alone, and that's about the only reason, unless the thought of blessed babes in mangers makes you go all mushy. The best Christmas records are the novelties, and this year hasn't brought any worth mentioning.

I should also make clear that at the present moment I'm utterly bored with the charts, even though there are some good records on. They all seem old and familiar; things I reviewed two months ago are just now entering, and the hits of four months ago are still lingering on. I like to see records come out of nowhere, blaze their way to the top, then slip away before the onslaught of new hits. That may be what I like most about Springsteen's "Born to Run" -- it appeared in the Top 10 as if by magic one week, although I've so far heard it less than 5 times on the radio, and now it's 58 with an anchor. I like that.

Whatever the reason, most of the records I'll be reviewing this month will be unfamiliar and may never make the charts, though there are some fine and

deserving ones among them. For instance "Sherry" by Adrian Baker (Epic 50163), the old Four Seasons song with a new you-know-what beat and astonishing vocals that are unbelievably like Frankie Valli's 1962 falsetto flights. Another oldie from the same era that's back in a disco version is "One Fine Day" by Julie (Tom Cat 10454). If she could sound as much like the Chiffons as Adrian Baker does the Four Seasons, this might have been a great record; as it is, it's merely a great song being recycled.



•Former Monkees & their trainers.

I wonder if Sparks will ever have an American hit. Their latest album is quite a bit more commercial than anything previous, but even so I suspect "Looks, Looks, Looks" (Island 043) is likely to prove no less confusing to our collective ears than prior efforts. "The face that launched a thousand hips"? I like the sound of this one, no electric guitars, only something that sounds like Glenn Gray's Orchestra. It would be great to see them do this on the Cher show, though not as great as seeing David Bowie sing his medley of Neil Diamond and 3 Dog Night songs.

If you like Pete Wingfield's "18 With a Bullet" (Island 026), check out "Oh Doctor" by Sparrow (Columbia 3-10234). Produced by Chris White, it's an ingenuous blend of doo-wop clichés. This kind of thing is only enjoyable to a point, but we're quite a ways from that point as yet, so enjoy already. For some reason we Americans are never as literal as the British in dealing with past styles; we can't seem to resist the urge to parody while paying homage. There are better examples, but the one at hand is Lily Tomlin's salute to "Detroit City" (Polydor 14283) which you might recall from her recent TV special. It pays tribute with obscure but inspired logic, to Detroit's auto industry by way of the Motown sound, and it's not on Lily's album so if you liked it on TV, grab it now while you can.

One of the few discs that really arouses me this time around is "Charlotte" by the Boyz (Kiderian 45130). These lads have been recording in Chicago since 1965, and their early sides are much sought-after collectors items. In its continuing drive to revive the Chicago sound, Kiderian has brought them back, and the result is a scorching rocker that reminds me a little of the Hollies but really defies comparison. The flip, "Laughs On Me" is equally good in a different vein, sort of like one of those English wimp revival rockers like Brett Smiley or Milk n' Cookies. Beautifully produced, subtly infectious. Order direct from Kiderian, 4926 W. Gunnison, Chicago, Ill 60630.

The two best heavy rockers I've heard

lately are by groups both of which are well known but haven't had nearly their share of hit singles. "You See Me Crying" by Aerosmith (Columbia 3-10253) has the full production sound that made "Dream On", their first release, so irresistible, and the same sort of restrained soulfulness. In fact, I wouldn't call this a heavy rocker at all except for the strength behind it, which makes it one of their most effective numbers. The real rocker in this bunch is Foghat's "Slow Ride" (Beachside 0306) which burns with the smoldering power of early Sabbath, and would make a fine hit.

In a lighter pop vein, we have several worthy entries. "I Remember the Feeling" is the latest by Dolenz, Jones, Boyce & Hart (Capitol 4180), names you might recognize as belonging to assorted former Monkees and their trainers. Concerts by this lineup have proved so successful that a record was made, and while it lacks the immediate vivacity of the best Monkees tracks, it's an above-average light rocker.

"Love Hurts" by Jim Capaldi (Island 045) is a (wait for it) disco arrangement of the song currently on the charts by Nazareth (A&M 1671). I think I prefer theirs, but at the same time I'm so pleased to see Capaldi making good pop records (his last, "It's All Up To You", is still a turntable favorite) that I can't fault his version. The flip is nice too, more of a rocker.

The second release from Jerry Cole & Trinity is as good as the first, which I reviewed 3 or 4 months ago. "Liberated Lady" (WB 8156) has the semi-acoustic, folk/rock/pop appeal of Lobo at his best.



•Emmylou Harris for Christmas.

though a little slicker and somewhat lacking in personality. A real nice sound though.

Tony Martin, Jr. (I'm always interested, at least initially, in records by the offspring of famous singers). Tony's no Mickey Rooney, Jr. but "Nina" (RCA JRI-10362) has the benefit of Bob Cullio's production expertise and the E. L. Fox boys lurking in the background, so not surprisingly it's a pleasant, exquisitely produced little tune. Mac and Katie Kissoon (whose records also never fail to interest me) have added veteran soul producer H.B. Barnum to their more familiar writing/production team of Bickerton & Waddington (who also bring you the Rubettes) for "Like a Butterfly" (MCA 40482) which, predictably, fills all the requisite criteria of British pop with a bit of discomix thrown in. It also includes the lyric "I saw you at the high school dance", and if I'm not mistaken that's the first time since 1958 that this line has appeared in two different records in the same month. Now that's a record!

The Who Tour

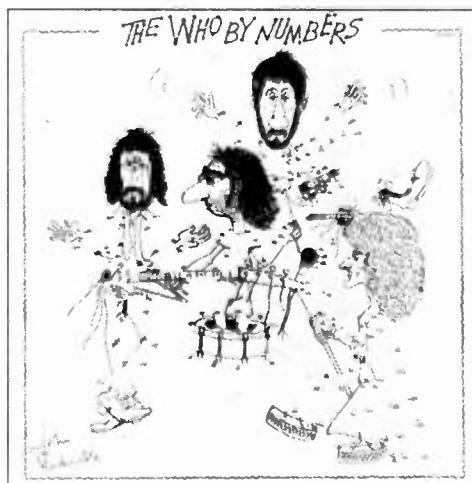
November	28	Greensboro, NC	8	Cincinnati, OH
20	20	Bloomington, IN	9	Cleveland, OH
21	21	December	10	Buffalo, NY
23	23	1	11	Toronto, Canada
24	24	2	13	Providence, RI
25	25	4,5	14	Springfield, MA
27	27	6	15	Philadelphia, PA

The Who Single

“Squeeze Box”

(MCA-40475)

From their new album “By Numbers”

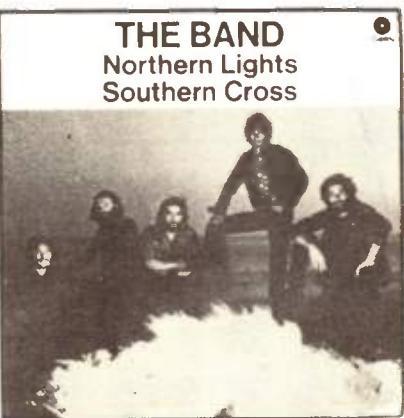


Produced by Glyn Johns
(MCA-2161)

MCA RECORDS



THE BAND'S NORTHERN LIGHTS: AN UNEVEN EXPERIMENT IN EVOLUTION



NORTHERN LIGHTS-SOUTHERN CROSS
The Band
Capitol ST-11440

By SAM SUTHERLAND

These eight Robbie Robertson songs -- the first new Band originals since 1971 -- sketch a disturbing portrait of one of the most influential late '60s groups in stasis. A primary emphasis on stylistic and thematic continuity, perhaps the most

striking aspect of the best Band recordings, has set traps, and *Northern Lights Southern Cross* points these up in its virtual restatement of the very themes that made *Cahoots*, their last set of fresh material, such an uneven experiment in evolution.

Robertson as songwriter, and The Band as interpreters, first established the pattern with *The Band*, their most popular and fully-realized album. There, the atmospheric range of moods combined with Robertson's evocative parables and the group's mature fusion of emotional fire with instrumental precision to form a compelling and varied whole. Lending the album an added coherence was the vantage point of the songs, one that looked to a mythic past for perceptual keys to the present. With the next album, *Stage Fright*, Robertson shifted that stance to the here-and-now, accompanied by a corresponding update in the record's cleaner, more pointed production.

The new album, like *Cahoots* before it, continues in this refinement of musical elements. Unlike *Cahoots*, however, the topics cover little new ground. Where the last album found Levon Helm singing, "Your old neighborhood ain't even there

no more," here he voices the same lament for lost idylls when he asks, "Why do the best things always disappear?" The difference between "Smoke Signal" on *Cahoots*, and the latter song, the new set's "Ophelia," seems restricted to a move from metaphor to direct statement, but even that slight change seems to diminish the statement's impact. Robertson's lyrics, once potent in their rustic allegorical style, are now verging on diatribe.

That the songs have been evenly divided into four rolling ballads and an equal number of brighter, punchier songs is itself a problem. For only harmonic changes and instrumental details provide much of a dividing line, the tempi remaining similar. The net effect is closer to tedium than unity.

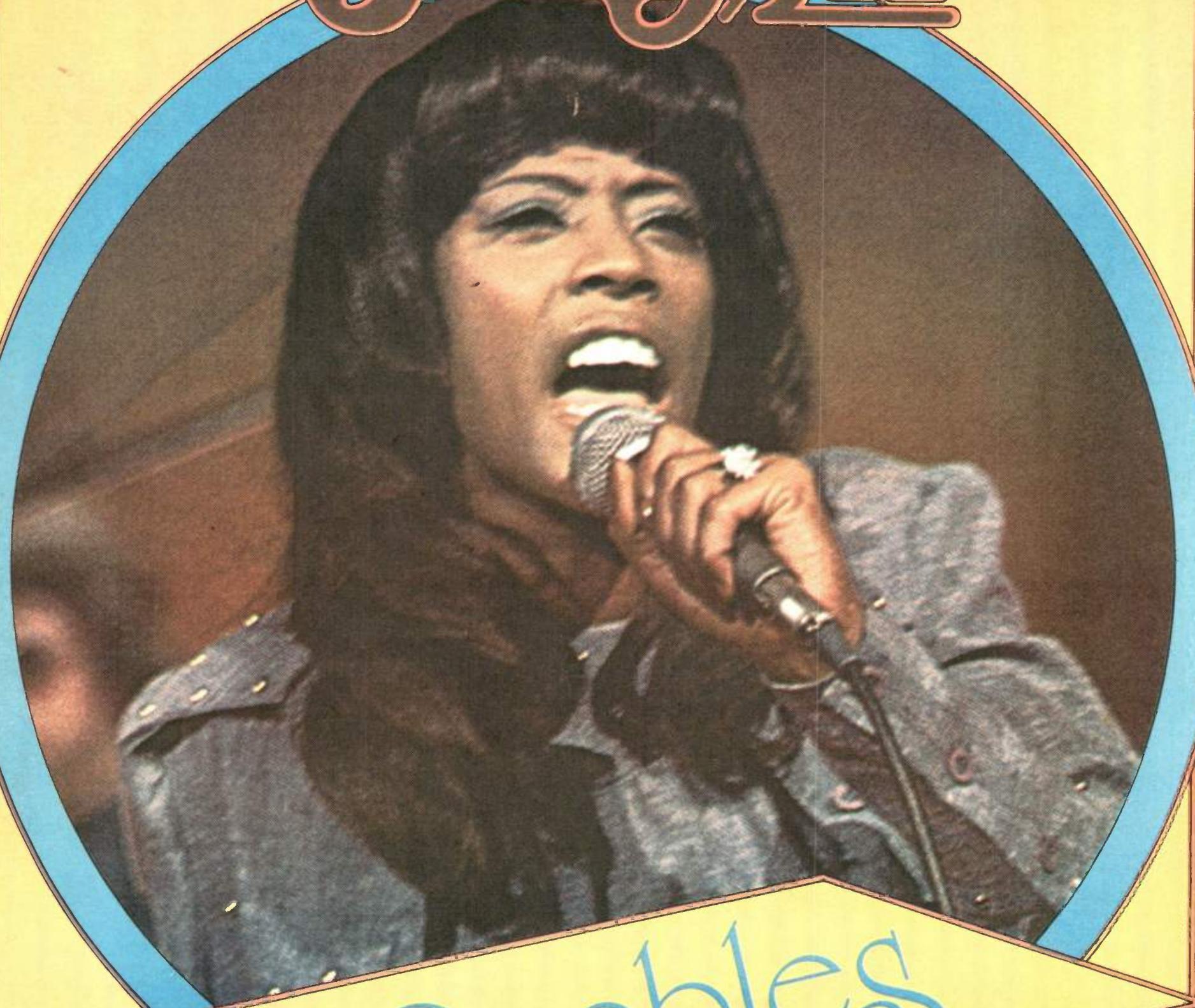
Significantly, the ballads form the more effective of the two groups, suggesting that The Band are somehow disinterested in the climactic power that was once a personal stamp in their fast songs. As a guitarist, Robertson himself has always been lauded, and rightly so, for an economy that made his ornamental fills and short solos pointed and exciting. Nowhere on this album does he approach the passion and invention he

displayed during his live work on the Dylan/Band tour, or on the group's national tours from 1969 on. Every figure is restrained by a concern for nuance, expressed in his increased use of pedal effects and his penchant for mixing the guitar at a level so subtle as to approach the subliminal.

At the end, we're left with two lush, rolling ballads, "Hobo Jungle" and "Acadian Driftwood," as the album's high points, and these songs represent something of a concession to the earlier style in their wistful gaze toward a past epoch. Garth Hudson's broad, nearly symphonic keyboard effects and Robertson's sweetly mourning acoustic guitar remain impressionistic, rather than explicit; the story lines -- one describing the death of a hobo, the other the personal impact of forced exile and religious persecution -- achieve greater power than any of the more plain-spoken moral lessons that dominate the rest of the album.

Were this the work of any other group, its assured performances might seem saving graces. For me, though, it's a disappointment. I hope The Band and Robertson can regenerate their style, but I can't truthfully say this album gives me room for optimism.

SOUL & JAZZ



Ann Peebles

The Return Of
DAVID RUFFIN

• Earth Wind & Fire •

December, 1975 / Volume 2, Issue 9

No one tells it like Ann Peebles.

Come To Mama
I Don't Lend My Man
I Needed Somebody
Stand By Woman
It Was Jealousy
Doctor Love Power
You Can't Hold A Man
Beware
Put Yourself In My Place
Love Played A Game

ANN PEEBLES
TELLIN' IT

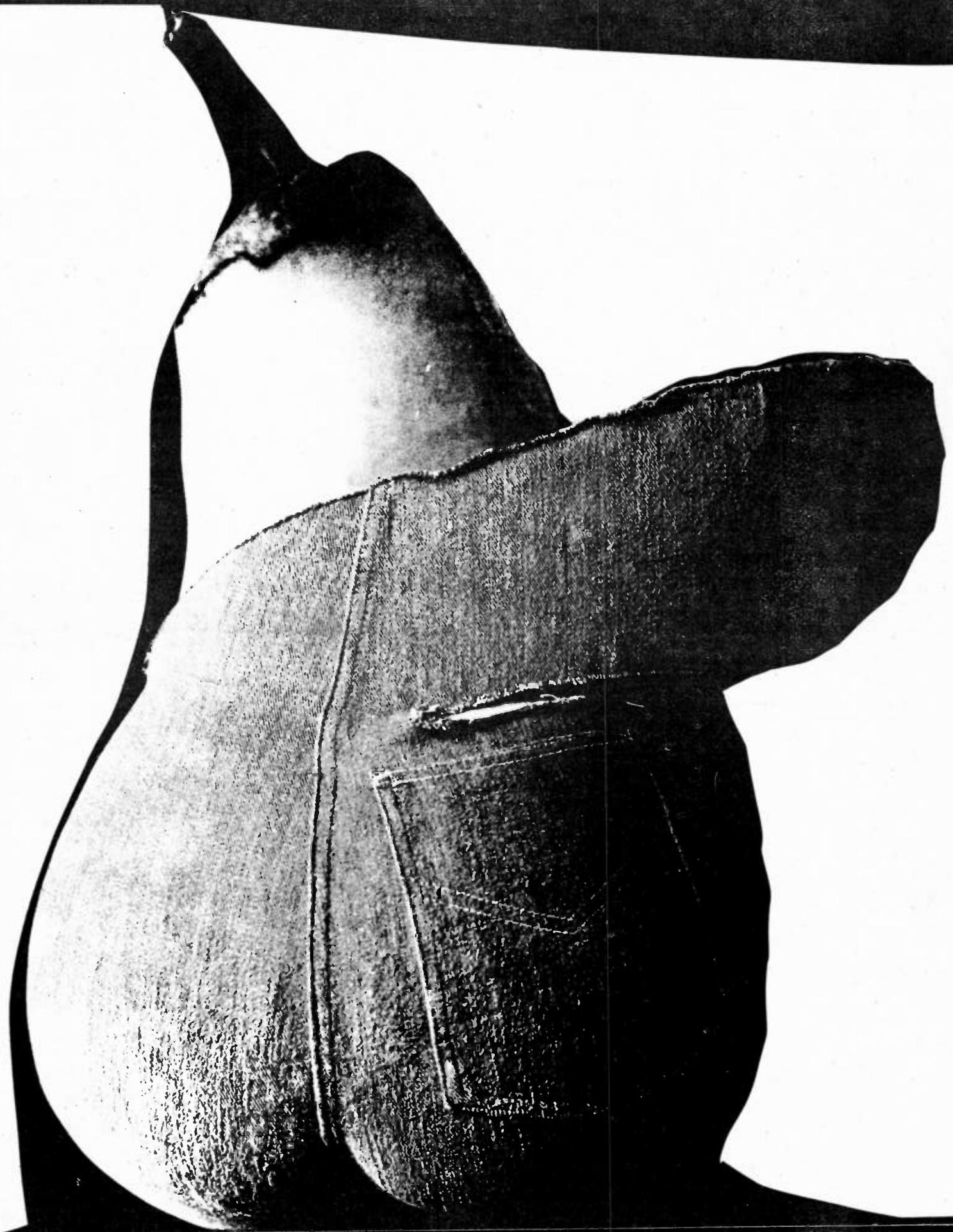


SHL32091

Hi *LONDON*

Produced by Willie Mitchell

Come in, take off your pants
and feel the difference!!



THE FRENCH JEAN STORE INC

227 East 60th Street, New York City

DAVID RUFFIN: *Back From Obscurity*



Photos by Kathy Clary

By Bob Fukuyama

David Ruffin has literally high-stepped back into the national spotlight with "Walk Away From Love," a trendy tune that may become his best seller since "My Whole World Ended" penetrated the top ten in February 1969. Both the single and the album from which it's pulled (*Who I Am*) definitely have Van McCoy's producer/arranger stamp well embedded, and there's no doubt Ruffin desired this instant disco relevancy. While it's super that David has regained his commercial footing, what must be explained are those lost seven years; ironically, years that witnessed the continued popularity of his former Temptations associates and the emergence of ex-teammate Eddie Kendricks as a solo star.

Deceptively, Ruffin has been quite active—with *Who I Am*, his albums now total six. Unfortunately, his early solo success carried him to heights from where it has been a long, downward descent. The first ten months of his solo sojourn yielded three hit singles, "My Whole World Ended," "I've Lost Everything I've Ever Loved" and "I'm So Glad I Fell For You." The following years produced substantially less.

"It was a comedown," muses David. "I started out hot and cooled-off. It's been hard getting gigs the last few years. So having this hit thrills me, and I gotta thank Van. He is the King, and I don't mean just disco.

"There's another thing I'm excited about, and that's me and Eddie (Kendricks) singing together. After Eddie fulfills his obligations, we'd like to do some dates; we'd do separate sets and then climax the show by joining for an oldies set. I think people would like the nostalgia—we'd do Temps stuff, other '60s songs and a few routines."

A melancholy admission that he suffered through several lean years coupled with a sudden urge to perform with Kendricks again...does this suggest that Ruffin regrets having left the Temptations at their summit?

"No, never. You have to understand, at the time I split, I was singing lead on 75% of the tunes. We'd do an hour show and I'd sing lead 45 minutes. So it wasn't much of a change going solo—all it meant was that I'd sing 15 minutes more, myself. As for recording, I kept working

with Norman Whitfield, anyway. Even with some slow years, I don't regret leaving the Temps. I had to do it."

When asked to express his feelings about the Temptations experience, Ruffin simply shrugs and says, "We had some good times." Judging by his answer's curtness, it's obvious that this topic makes him uncomfortable, and he carefully avoids this line of questioning. "If you want to talk about my past, the most interesting stories happened before the Temps. I've been singing on stage since I was five, so I've been around a long time. (Chuckling) Why, that makes me like Bobby Womack!"

Ruffin's confident and firm speech reflects his upbringing by a Baptist minister father who raised young David to be the same. "I left home (Why knot, Mississippi) when I was 13 to practice ministry in Memphis. I attended Booker T. Washington College there. But I had been singing since I was a baby—me, my brothers Jimmy and Quincy and my sister Rita Mae were known around Mississippi as 'The Ruffin Family'—and I fell into singing while in Memphis. This was 1955, '56, so the scene's happening. Elvis Presley and I sang on the same talent shows. And then I joined a gospel group called the Dixie Nightingales."

Ruffin adds that travelling back and forth from Memphis to Arkansas as a minister became taxing. He soon quit school and preaching. After turning solo, he began performing almost exclusively Sam Cooke material in local clubs.

"I first met Sam when I was a little boy singing in spiritual shows. He would come down to Meridian (Mississippi) and man, what a pro! He gave me advice, and not only how to sing and record. He had that businessman's sense of timing and that instinct for survival. He was an important influence. I'll tell you, that's an idea I've had in mind for a while, doing an album of Sam Cooke songs. Mellow mood music. 'Hey there, you with the stars in your eyes.....'"

Ruffin explains that when he was 17, he went to Detroit with the intention of recording.

"Detroit always had a good black music scene, and the nucleus of what Motown was in the '60s was there in the '50s. When I first settled in Detroit, I was a solo singer and I recorded for local labels. But then I joined a group, Harvey & The Moonglows that also had Marvin Gaye, Lamont Dozier and Ty Hunter. We were all friends in those days. I used to stay at Gwen Gordy's house, and her brother Berry would often sleep over. That was when Berry was writing for Jackie Wilson.

"Motown's always been in Berry's mind—at this time, he was always carrying a tape recorder around, asking questions. What made it happen was that there was so much friendship and interaction among everybody that once he started the company, it was easy."

As if adding a final footnote to his past, Ruffin comments, "And that's what led up to my Temptations gig." Then silence, and we return to recent history.

Ruffin is also conscious of the fact that he is now 35-years-old. "You know, your reminding me of how far back I go, that stuff about me and Bobby (Womack), that blows my mind. I've known Bobby since he was 13 and I was 15, when he was touring with the Womack Brothers—we were both born and raised on the gospel. Seriously, maybe that's what I should do after I get too old for the record business, go back to the church and the ministry. I mean (chuckling) Bobby ain't the only 'preacher man' entertaining today."

This return to the pulpit, remarks Ruffin, would be his way of "contributing to mankind." But for the moment, David is swaying souls in a different manner.



SLY STONE HIGH ON YOU

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Green Eyed Monster Girl/I Get High On You



HE WANTS TO TAKE YOU HIGHER.

Sly Stone. An artist of unique vision. His new album, "High on You." On Epic Records and Tapes.

Womack takes a giant step.

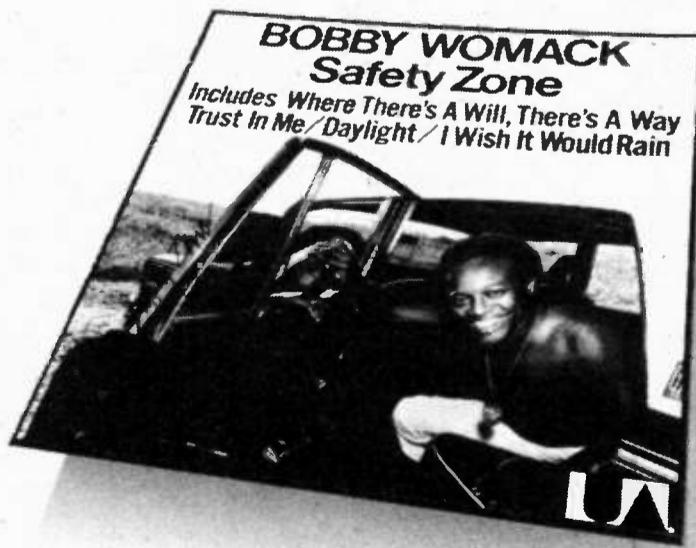
When he was with the Womack Brothers, Sam Cooke saw him and signed him immediately.

When he wrote and recorded "It's All Over Now," the Rolling Stones covered it and had their first American hit.

In 1974 he had one of the year's biggest records with "Lookin' For A Love." Over the years he's written for and played with everyone from Ray Charles to Rod Stewart to Janis Joplin.

Now, in collaboration with producer David Rubinson, he has delivered an album that demands everyone's attention. From every angle — the songs, the performances, the production — this is the perfect Bobby Womack album.

"Safety Zone"
Bobby Womack
at his best.
On United Artists
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Robert Foothtrap

Though Nashville, Tennessee, has proclaimed itself "Music City U.S.A." the traditional center of musical activity in that area of the country, and the city from which much of the best American music has developed through the years, is Memphis.

W.C. Handy gave birth to the blues in Memphis. B.B. King, the Beale Street Blues Boy, received his nickname while serving as a disc jockey in Memphis. Ike Turner, Howlin' Wolf, Junior Parker, Little Milton, James Cotton and Earl Hooker first recorded in Memphis. Rock and roll, in the opinion of many, was born of the cross between blues and country styles by singers including Carl Perkins, Elvis Presley, and Jerry Lee Lewis—all of whom recorded for Sam Phillips' Sun label. John Sebastian's "Nashville Cats" notwithstanding, those "yellow Sun records" came from Memphis.

Later, Memphis became the home of Stax Records, the huge black-operated (though white-owned) company, responsible for acts like The Staple Singers, Johnnie Taylor, Carla Thomas, Otis Redding, Booker T. and the M.G.s, and Isaac Hayes.

ANN PEEBLES

...and the Hi Records Story



By TODD EVERETT

Today, Memphis stands in a period of transition. Sun records folded several years ago, with the masters sold to Nashville entrepreneur Shelby Singleton (and profitably licensed, chiefly to European labels). Many of the bluesmen moved out of town, chiefly to Chicago. Stax, following a number of legal and financial crises, is entangled in so much red tape that it may take them years to clear it up. Even the once-thriving local club scene has shriveled up to practically nothing. Lafayette's Music Room, the local equivalent of Los Angeles' Troubadour and New York's Bottom Line, has changed policy with a production of "Godspell" currently playing (though it's hinted that the club will reopen at a different location sometime next year).

Yet there are glimmerings of musical activity. Ardent studios, where much of Stax' work was done, are still operating continually, with perhaps a surprise or two in store. Andrew Loog Oldham was in town recently, producing singer Jody Stephens, formerly of the highly-heralded, little-selling Big Star. Denise LaSalle, with Detroit-based Westbound Records, is recording in Memphis. B.B. King is making an avowed return to his Memphis roots, and has just released his finest album in years.

And, flowing through Memphis history since 1957 practically unnoticed but maintaining a consistent string of hits, is the tiny Hi label.

Best known today as the home of rhythm and blues artists Al Green, Syl Johnson and Ann Peebles, Hi was founded in 1957, to record an early rock and roll performer.

The singer and pianist was a cousin of Jerry Lee Lewis, named Carl McVoy. A young Memphian named Bill Cantrell had spotted him and was interested in preserving the Mississippi-born singer's style in vinyl. Cantrell, a former record-store owner named Joe Coughi (pronounced "Coogie"), attorney Nick Pesce and two other investors formed a record label with that purpose in mind. Cantrell and McVoy headed for a Nashville recording studio where, with a line-up of musicians including Chet Atkins on guitar and Ace Cannon on tenor sax, cut two sides. "Tootsie" and "You Are My Sunshine" were released as Hi Records #2001.

Coughi, president of Hi, had a regional hit on his hands. Unfortunately, as so often happens with small independent labels, there was difficulty collecting the money from distributors, and Hi found itself in financial distress with its first release. In an effort to scrape together some money to keep the label going, Hi sold the McVoy master to Sun Records' Sam Phillips, who re-released it as Phillips International #3526 in June, 1958.

(McVoy cut a number of sides for Phillips International, none of which were ever released -- unfortunate, since he was evidently a very strong talent, with elements of several of the other Sun stars in his performance. Today, he has totally disappeared from the scene).

In 1959, Elvis Presley's bass player, with him since his earliest recordings, decided to form his own group. He did so, and the Bill Black Combo was immediately signed to Hi, with their first single, "Smokie," a million-selling instrumental. Black retired from the Combo in 1962 at the age of 36, and died of an illness three years later. The Combo, under the leadership of guitarist Bob Tucker (a journalism teacher at Memphis State) continues, with more than 30 albums to their credit and a single, "Boilin' Cabbage," in the Country top 20 early in 1975.

Ace Cannon, the sax player on the McVoy session, was signed, and began to record a number of successful instrumentals beginning with "Tuff," in 1961. Like the Combo, Cannon continues to record and make personal appearances, with a strength concentrated largely in the Southern honky-tonk market.

The next two acts to make impressions on the Hi roster were a white vocalist, Jumpin' Gene Simmons, and the label's first black act,

Willie Mitchell, both in 1964. Simmons had two hits (the best-known being "Haunted House") and disappeared. Mitchell, who had been leading a popular local band for some years, grew to be an important part of the company.

At first, Mitchell was simply another of the label's instrumental acts. Unlike most, though, he produced himself. At first, Ray Harris engineered Mitchell's recordings, on the label's two track equipment. As four, and later eight, track recorders were set up in the venerable Royal Theatre, converted to serve as Hi's studio, Mitchell learned how to handle the boards. As time passed, he became the label's musical director.

(Coughi died in July, 1970. Pesce took over as the label's president, though he now says of his involvement "I just keep the books." Cantrell is the studio's chief engineer, and produces country fiddler Merle "Red" Tyler).

Today's Hi roster includes virtually all of the original acts save for rockabilly McVoy and Simmons; the Bill Black Combo, Ace Cannon, and Mitchell are as productive as ever. A number of r&b performers have been signed by Mitchell, and the label is making a solid attempt to capture a noticeable segment of the country market.

The strongest sellers on Hi today, though, are two of Mitchell's acquisitions, brought in within this decade. Al Green is the better-known of the two, the satin-voiced singer and sex symbol who's released enough big-sellers for a legitimate *Greatest Hits* album and who has been selling out large concert halls for a number of years.

Lesser known, though very possibly the greater talent of the two, is a petite, shy songstress with a voice

and style that's pure, raw emotion. Her hits have thus far been scattered over several years, and then largely on the rhythm and blues charts. But, for Ann Peebles, major recognition seems truly close at hand.

Difficult though it may be to get Ann Peebles excited about any subject, she is happy enough to talk of her admiration for gospel monolith Mahalia Jackson. "She's my idol," states Ann with a slightly awe-stricken look in her eyes. "And always will be. I must have every record Mahalia's ever made."

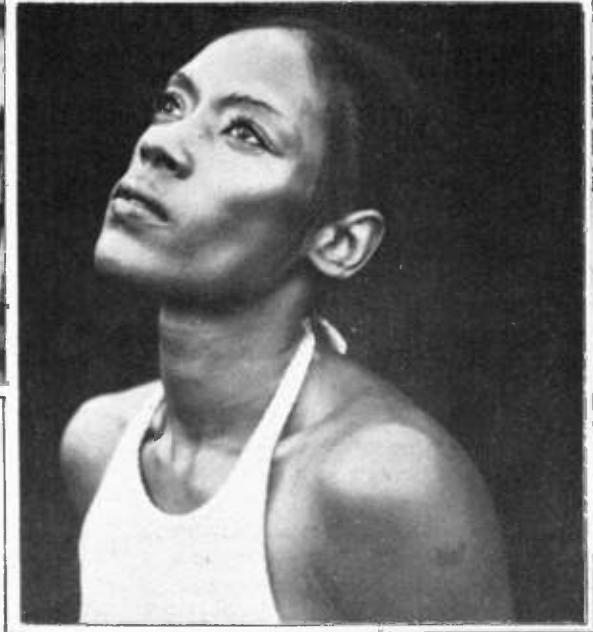
Ann has sung with Jackson, when the Peebles choir -- now as then led by Ann's father -- would back the legendary singer for midwest personal appearances. The Peebles Choir is a family institution going back three generations and comprising sisters, cousins and aunts, brothers and uncles. It's down to about ten members now, and the work (largely at churches and auditoriums around the East St. Louis area) is dwindling in proportion to Ann's father's advanced age. Eventually, expects Ann, a brother will take over the Peebles Choir.

Ann and some of her brothers and sisters (there are 11 in all) were on vacation in Memphis and visiting with the Rosewood club when her professional career took flight. Gene "Bowlegs" Jackson's band was playing, and the music was attractive enough that Ann was persuaded by her party to ask if she could sit in. "I just went up to Bowlegs and asked him if I could sing a couple of numbers". A slight blush. "We must've all been feeling pretty good. He said that it'd be O.K., and I did a couple of tunes. Afterwards, I was approached by somebody from the audience who asked me if I'd ever considered a recording career. I told him that I really hadn't, but his talk was so convincing that I told him that I'd think it over. We stayed an extra night, and the next day I went to the address he'd given me -- the Royal Theatre. Up until then, I didn't really know who Willie Mitchell was. I found out soon enough, though, and sang a couple of songs for him."

"I could tell that Willie really felt that he had something," recalls Hi Records president Nick Pesce. "He put Don Bryant right to work with her. Willie didn't usually see that that much effort was spent on an artist."



At left: Ann with husband & co-writer Don Bryant
Above: Ann is shown with two of Memphis' main men
Rufus Thomas & Al Green



Bryant had been a singer with Willie Mitchell's band for several years, and was involved in his own recording career. "I didn't care much for Ann at all at first," he now admits. "I had my own work to do, and Willie put me with her, selecting material, helping her develop her voice..."

Ann picks up the story. "I thought that I'd been a professional singer back in St. Louis, with the choir. But as far as phrasing, and learning what can be done with notes of music, that was all new to me when I got to the studio. Willie had Don work with me, and I was amazed at how much I had to learn."

The learning process proceeded, leading to a couple of happy endings. One was Ann's success as a recording artist. The second was the marriage two years ago of Ann and Don.

At the time of her signing, Hi's artist roster included the Bill Black Combo, Ace Cannon, Jumpin' Gene Simmons, Willie Mitchell, and Don Bryant. Ann was the first female to be signed to the label.

That she has been with Hi for several years, and now had four albums in release, skips the minds of those writers and disc jockeys who refer to her, quite inappropriately, as "the female Al Green." True, they appear on the same record label, but there the similarity ends. (Try thinking of Al Green as a male Ann Peebles, and you'll see how absurd the comparison really is). In contrast to old smoothie Green's voice, the spiritual descendent of Sam Cooke's Ann's is more powerful, more primitive, and -- in its way -- more soulful. Ann says that she writes her songs from personal experience. Watching her perform, there's no doubt as to who she had in mind as "99 pounds of pure dynamite." Not Steve Marriott, for damn sure, though he's recorded the song with Humble Pie.

"Well..." Ann hesitates when asked to evaluate the Pie's performance of "99 Pounds" and "I Can't Stand The Rain." "They were doing their thing. The Humble Pie thing." That may have sounded too negative, she decides, and tries to be a bit more gracious. "I was thrilled that they did it, though." Good save. But a fumble. "I'd be thrilled 'anytime somebody did one of my songs.'" Other versions of Peebles hits are "I Feel Like Breaking Up Somebody's Home," and Graham Central Station's of "I Can't Stand the Rain," which Ann praises highly.

That song, a huge hit in early 1974, seems to be destined to be Ann's signature tune. A chillingly simply-told tale, it combines the harshest gospel and darkest blues influences against a stark instrumental background. As is the case with a disproportionate number of strong singles, the song was practically an afterthought, a throwaway piece.

It was raining, as Ann tells it, so hard that she and Don decided not to drive to a concert appearance they'd had scheduled with B.B. King. Instead they stayed home and wrote the song, based upon Ann's response to the thunderstorm.

Typically, says Ann, she and Bryant will compose a song. Don will take a rough piano-and-voice demonstration tape, recorded at home, to the Hi

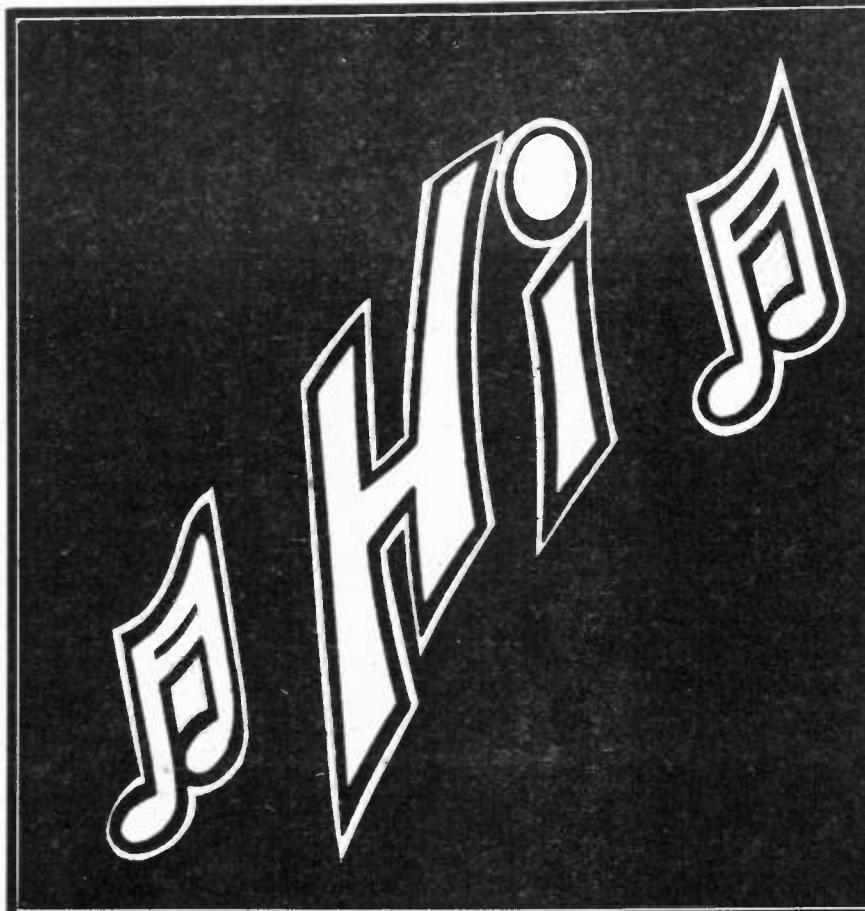
studio. There, he and Mitchell will work out an arrangement with the Hi Rhythm studio band, and record a backing track. Horns, strings and background voices may be added before Ann enters the vocal booth to record her lead. The process can take several days. With "I Can't Stand the Rain," the whole thing -- minus strings -- was done in two takes.

(On her records, Ann and Mitchell use the same band that appears on Al Green's -- drummer Howard Grimes; pianist Archie Turner; and the Hodges brothers, Leroy, Charles and Teenie, on bass, keyboards, and guitar. The vocal backgrounds are by Charles and Sandra Chalmers and

would remember and identify with me."

The songs on Ann's latest album, *Tellin' It*, released in November, are for the most part composed in various combinations by Peebles, Bryant, Mitchell and Hi staff writer Earl Randle (who composed "Playhouse" on the last album). As intended, it gives the most solid perspective yet on the amazingly talented singer -- but this isn't meant to be a review, so we'll put a temporary "hold" on the accolades.

In addition to the uncommonly long gap between releases, Ann's career has been hindered, she freely admits, by her lack of a strong personal-



Donna Rhodes. The three singers are white, but provide as soulful a sound as could be desired. The Memphis Strings are drawn from the Memphis Symphony; the Memphis Horns are led by Willie Mitchell's brother, James, who provides the string and horn arrangements.

Following the release of Ann's *I Can't Stand the Rain* album, her third, there was more than a year's delay. A second single drawn from the album, a cover of Joe Simon's version of the country song (Just Enough to Keep Me) "Hangin' On," won a Grammy nomination, as did "Rain." An earlier single, "I'm Gonna Tear Your Playhouse Down," had also done well. One of the problems, says Bryant, was the difficulty in coming up with enough appropriate material.

"We are writing most of it ourselves, now. The quality of what writers submit to us is pretty low. People seem to hear your last hit, and then try to duplicate it. Right after 'Playhouse,' somebody sent us something called 'I'm Gonna Tear Your Neighborhood Down!'"

Ann adds, "For the next album, we wanted something that would really show what I could do; a variety of types of tunes. We wanted to put out an album that would make a statement; something that people

appearance schedule. When she did appear, the reviews would generally praise Peebles and poke at her backup band -- often the local house group augmented by Teenie Hodges. That, she promises, has changed completely. "You have no idea of how hard it is to get a good road band. And a lot of my music is fairly complicated rhythmically, though it might sound simple enough on record." Finally, a group called Thumpin' Gizzards, hired as a unit, were selected to provide the necessary musical support. A personal appearance schedule timed to coincide with the release of *Tellin' It* should give Peebles fans the chance to see the singer, and Peebles an opportunity to demonstrate her abilities in front of live, responsive audiences.

Bryant, meanwhile, is content in his role -- their first child was born a couple of months ago, and there is a daughter by Don's earlier marriage. He is Willie Mitchell's chief assistant, working in the area usually referred to as artist development and bringing to others the experience and training that he brought to Ann. Even his singing career, interrupted some years ago, has been resumed -- Don's is the voice on a number of commercial jingles, ranging from radio station promotional spots to flour advertisements.

TELLIN' IT
Ann Peebles
HISHL 32091

By BOB FUKUYAMA

While listening to old Chantels records last night, I realized what it is that's wrong with most black music today. In attaining the highest levels of slickness, sophistication and style, the recent Philadelphia, Detroit and New York assembly-lines have sacrificed soul and human emotion. The Chantels were special because their records were personal and honest; that the girls and their producer/songwriter George Goldner were obviously committed to each other qualifies titles like "Maybe," "If You Try" and "He's Gone" studies in soulful inspiration.

Such artist-producer interaction is nearly extinct now. To me, Gamble-Huff, Holland-Dozier-Holland, Tony Sylvester and Van McCoy have become one large corporate *uninspired* disco bandwagon. Their talent is faceted; it's virtually impossible to distinguish one from another. Thankfully, there's one organization that retained the attitude that the combination of a performer's total emotional commitment and a producer's responsiveness to that artist's needs, is mandatory. That philosophy survives at Hi Records in Memphis.

From the opening bars of *Tellin' It*, it's acutely apparent that Willie Mitchell busted his chops to create this product. From the instant you hear that gutsy and hard-edged voice, full of gospel intensity and seething sexuality, you know that it's Ann Peebles in complete harmony with Mitchell. It is Mitchell's *dirty* and *dense* horn and rhythm sound (a welcome contrast to Philly's polished strings), that creates the humid ambient in which Ann's songs of adultery and other weaknesses of the flesh achieve gut-level authenticity and hot-blooded bitchiness. Mitchell's turgid instrumental track coupled with Ann's frustrated persona triggers this impression: this woman may be hurt and beaten, but she's sharpening her nails and tongue, readying herself to do vengeance. The Lord have mercy.

The chief trademark of Mitchell's Sound is a horn section that blows concise, gritty and aggressive funk. He manages also to arrange strings so that they never sound sweet or lush, but rather black 'n' blue romantic. Although the tracks sound clutter free, there is always a thick texture to this bottom-heavy music that *threatens* to bury the vocal in a muddled mix, but *never does*.

It is within this production context that Ann Peebles' singing must be assessed. Everything she invests into her performances seems to be of religious intensity, regardless of whether the subject matter is less than pious. My favorites on this, her fourth album, are (pay attention to the titles) "Stand By Woman," "It Was Jealousy," "I Don't Lend My Man" and "Beware," all sensuous, sulky, all potential hit singles. There's a thread that holds this album together, but it isn't the theme of wickedness and infidelity; rather it's the real life credo of loyalty and dedication of the people involved. Ann Peebles has never recorded with anybody else, having literally grown-up under Mitchell's fatherly ear. At least she's found one relationship safe from competing interests.

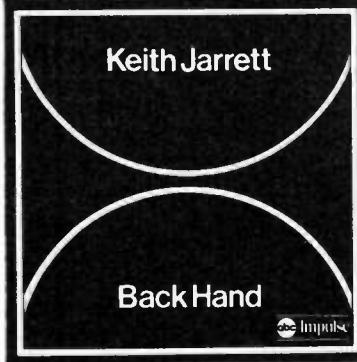
Ann Peebles/Willie Mitchell recordings (and all those on the Hi label) are authentic *black* music -- the only other organizations worthy of equal respect are Miami's TK Records and Sylvia's New York-based All Platinum/Stang Records Group. Admittedly, Hi recordings don't sell so well, but they're made very well, dear reader, and you would be well advised to check yourself and your collection; if *Tellin' It* ain't in it, you're not either.



THE BEST OF YESTERDAY AND TOMORROW

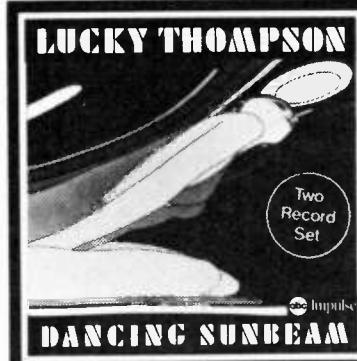
Brass Fever (ASD-9308)

Start with Wade Marcus charts of material by writers as different as Bach and Donovan. Next, recruit such luminous accompanists as Shelley Manne, Buddy Collette, and the otherwise-retired John Handy. And then turn the spotlight on most of the finest trombonists in jazz today—players like Kai Winding, Frank Rosolino, Garnett Brown, and Charlie Loper. The result: an album guaranteed to give all who hear it brass fever for months! Also available on compatible stereo—QS Quad.



The Gentle Side of John Coltrane (ASH-9306-2)

A burning intensity characterized much of John Coltrane's music, particularly that of the years immediately preceding his untimely 1967 passing. But this Michael Cuscuna-compiled double-album reminds us of how exquisitely the most influential jazz musician of our age could perform in lyrical, subdued settings. Duke Ellington and Eric Dolphy are among the supporting players on this entirely indispensable collection.



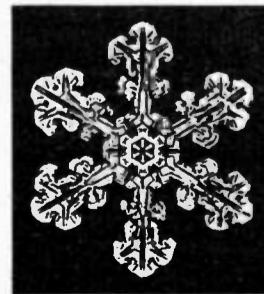
KEITH JARRETT: Backhand (ASD-9305)
"Music of overwhelming beauty continues to flow from pianist Keith Jarrett's fingers in an undiminished torrent!" We didn't say it—Rolling Stone's Bob Palmer did. With *Backhand* this former key member of Miles Davis's "Fillmore group" stands poised to be recognized universally as a true jazz visionary. Also available on compatible stereo—QS Quad.

**LUCKY THOMPSON:
Dancing Sunbeam (ASH-9307-2)**
Although the music on this two-record set was recorded in the mid-'50's, it sounds as though it could have been recorded last summer: surely few other tenormen who emerged during the Bop era developed so timeless a style as Lucky Thompson's. Bassist Oscar Pettiford shines incandescently on the trio sides, while the quintet sides feature some of trombonist Jimmy Cleveland's most stunning recorded playing.

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