

PHONOGRAPH

THE NEW YORK RECORD MAGAZINE



Waking Up is Hard to Do

**LAURA NYRO
IS BACK!**

by Lita Eliscu

Mondo-Deco in Tahoe

**ALICE COOPER,
CASINO ROYALE**

by Flo & Eddie

Making of a Thoroughbred
**CAROLE KING
ON THIS SIDE OF
GOODBYE**

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Chapter I: FLEETWOOD MAC

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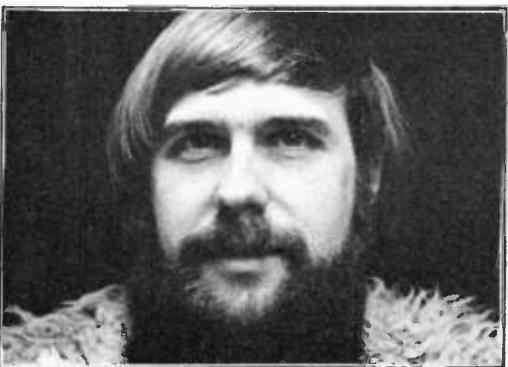
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2-6pm



ALISON STEELE
10pm-2am



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2-6am



DAVE HERMAN
6-10am



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10am-2pm



DENNIS ELSAS
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PHONOGRAPH

RECORD MAGAZINE

JANUARY, 1976

ISSUE #64

VOLUME 6 NUMBER 5

THIS MONTH

CAROLE KING: *On This Side Of Goodbye*

1976 begins a new phase in Carole King's career. A new album, *Thoroughbred*, is on the way to the nation's racks. Following a few trial runs as a not-so-surprise guest on a recent Crosby and Nash tour, King is set to make her first lengthy, concentrated attempt at promotion through live appearances in two years. Further, the new album reunites (Gerry) Goffin & (Carole) King as a writing team.

This month's cover story outlines recent developments while tracing the last fifteen years of Carole's most exceptional career.

An abridged history of the pop music experience.

By Mitch Cohen.....20-28

LAURA NYRO: *Lady Madonna Gives Birth*

After four years of seclusion, the enigmatic urban gypsy responsible for a dozen late '60s/early '70s classics—"Eli's Coming," "And When I Die," "Stoney End," to name but a few—emerges with an album that should re-establish her as matriarch of the sensitive female singer/songwriter class she originally defined.

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DAVID BOWIE: *Ziggy Starstruck In Hollywood*

When Bowie goes into hiding, he does so with Presley-like seclusion. When Bowie wants to be seen, he does it like no one has ever done it. Within the next few weeks, expect a new Bowie-LP, *Station To Station*, and a three month tour of the States. Further, Bowie will soon make his feature film debut in "The Man Who Fell To Earth." There will be no Bowie shortage this Winter.

What's it all about Ziggy?

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Alice COOPER: *The Nightmare On Stage*

Jet-setters Flo & Eddie, those masters of Freebee Rock, jam with the stars as Alice and his portable circus invade Tahoe. With a little help from his friends, Alice beats the odds.

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VANCE OR TOWERS: *Good Hooks & Good Looks*

From Santa Barbara come Glen Vance and Michael Towers, a hot young pop-rock act with a flair for composing lush ballads and stirring rockers, whose lyrical range encompasses celebrations of teenage hooliganism and maturely melancholic love songs.

Interested?

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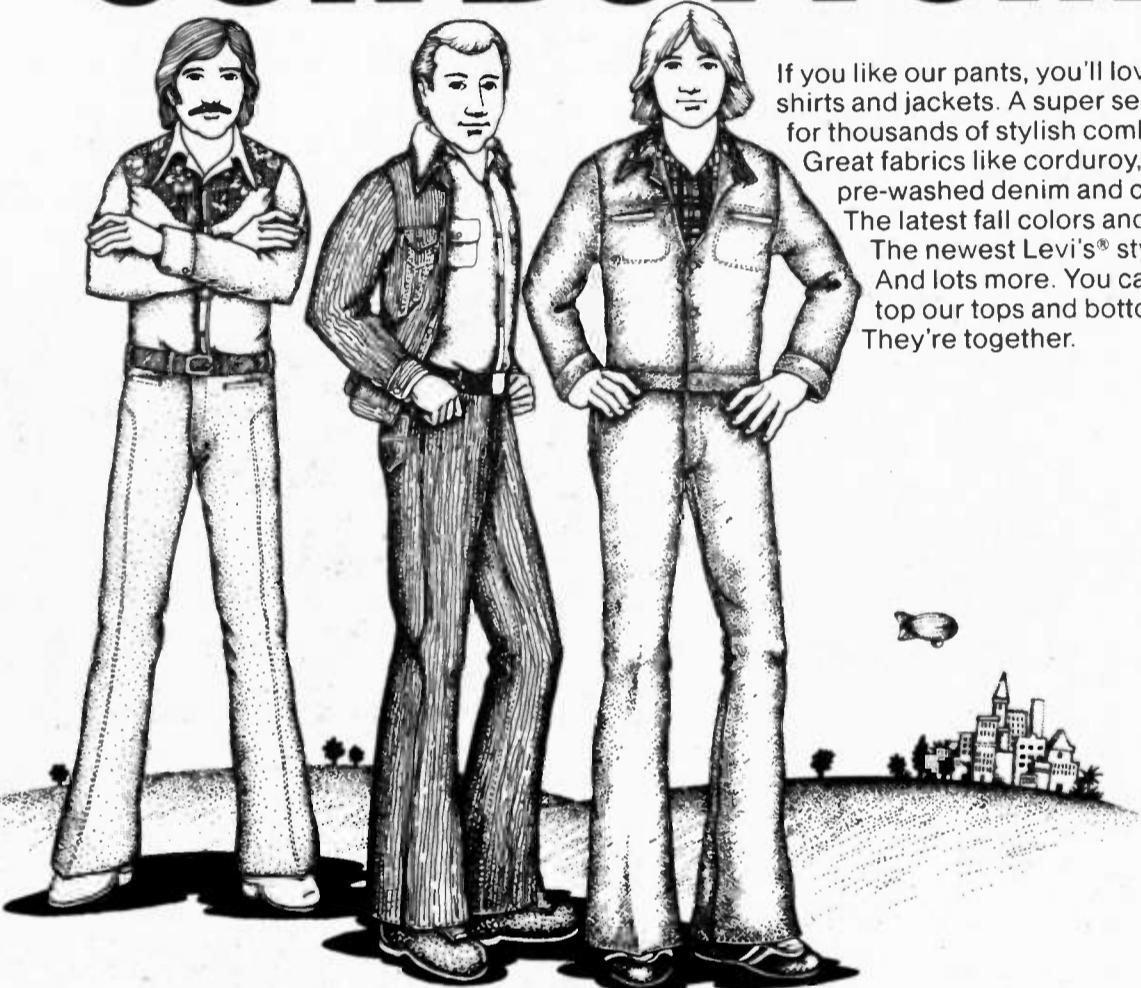
The new Rita Coolidge album features the quiet country vocals and fine musicians that established her as a distinctive contemporary artist. It also includes several fully orchestrated numbers and a couple of old standards that are unlike anything she's ever done. It's one of her finest achievements...

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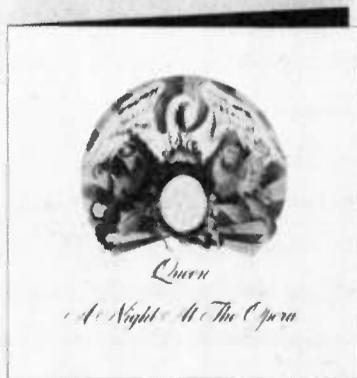
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Palace Theatre, Waterbury, Conn.

January 29-30
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January 31-February 2.
Tower Theatre, Philadelphia, Pa.

February 5-8
Beacon Theatre, New York, N.Y.

February 11-12
Masonic Temple, Detroit, Mich.



Their new album "A Night at the Opera" is available now on
Elektra Records & Tapes



LAURA NYRO: Five Years of Silence

Born Laura Nigro, she was fated to sing the blues. Though her solitary visions weren't attuned to the pop pulse of the movement-minded sixties, she succeeded by winning the souls of many for whom the mass idealism was irrelevant or scarifying.

[She was Clive Davis' favorite during his prime CBS years: "pure, art."]

*The four years since Laura Nyro's last album, *Gonna Take A Miracle*, has seen the center-stage glorification of the sensitive female singer-songwriter: Carole King, Janis Ian, Joni Mitchell, now objects of mass adulation, were once chiefly regarded as either mercenary commercial talent [Ms. King] or little-girl neurotics whose work was anti-socially personal [Ian and Mitchell].*

Combining commercial writing ability with a vulnerable persona reeking of her Manhattan Spanish-Jewish roots, Laura Nyro pioneered the genre. As early as 1966, she sang of womanly loneliness and martyrdom [which painted an image of the all-suffering Madonna], entrancing even those listeners with hard-core pop sensitivities.

*Always a private individual, Laura became a total recluse after the failure of the non-Nyro composed *Miracle* in 1972 [with Labelle supporting, she covered Philly and Motown soul standards]. That means her forthcoming LP will be her first truly original work since 1970's *Christmas & The Beads Of Sweat*.*

Those five years away raise questions—rumors explaining Laura's inactivity range from her artistic laziness, a happy marriage [now dissolved] to a fling with Oriental culture.

"Smile," the working title of Nyro's sixth LP since she began recording in 1966, is suspected to be one of 1976's most important releases. At least according to thousands of Nyro cult maniacs who are just waiting for this chance to shove her down your throat once and for all. In order to be real good, love has to hurt a lot. So when the forthcoming Nyro push does come to shove, prepare for some hard-core wrap-around joy action.

In the paragraphs that follow, Lita Eliscu presents the advance audition.

By LITA ELISCU

I remember once playing a Laura Nyro record and my father walked in. "Who's screaming?" he asked, only half-joking, "I thought someone got hurt." Nearly a year later, he would still ask me again, about "that record where the girl screams." She makes that kind of impression, even on people whose lives have little to do with the soul-beat of the Sixties. And she does scream: some hear the music around the sweet pain, and others, like my father, hear the pain first.

On stage: the dark, wistful lady and her piano, maybe a rose, an awkward, long, thrift-shop dress and shawl; few words to the audience, and suddenly music flooding the hall, music that they used to say--before Laura Nyro--only black people could know because their hunger and rhythms were their own. Chords would fall out, thundering and soft, persuasive, jungle-bred and city-trained, and her voice, which is a

melodia of rock-and-soul and a little something extra.

Laura Nyro has made a new album, after a four year break. There was a time when singer-songwriters were "new" and a minority; Joni Mitchell, Laura Nyro, Jackson Browne (who waited to make records but whose music was alive) were just crystals on a beach covered with sand. After them, the deluge for sure.

The album was produced by Charlie Calello and Ms. Nyro, recorded in New York City. The musicians include Richard Davis on upright bass; the Brecker brothers on various horns; Alan Schwartzberg playing drums, minimal and spare, always providing the backbone of the beat; Joe Farrell and George Young on sax, with Young also performing a beautiful flute solo. Laura Nyro plays piano of course, and some guitar.

The album opens with "Sexy Mama," the one non-Nyro composition. A rousing bluesy number, it establishes Ms. Nyro's voice as one of the classier instruments around, using her full range of four octaves to croon and warble and shout. The next song, "Children of the Junks," is the result of a trip she made to Hong Kong, where the peasants often live on junks (sailing house-boats) in the harbor. The separate but equal importance of both her lyrics and music is apparent here.

*flowers in the sun
shining on the children
of the world...*

*...all the junks are sleeping
but alley cats and renegades.**

The jazz influence is present--with these musicians it would have to be--but tempered by something Oriental in its understated, steely delicacy.

"Money" is a strong number, "I found the system/and I lost the

pearl" is what she says. The sound is closer to the soul music she does so well, and the choruses are rousing, gutsy, and full of crashing piano chords, dancing all around.

"I Am the Blues" starts as a waltz, gradually turning into a blues as the words lead down the path, the music building and molding the patterns.

cigarettes
I'm all alone with smoke and ashes
cigarettes
take me night flyin'
maybe Mars has good news
who...? who am I?
I am the blues...*

"Stormy Love" would seem to be an obvious single, its conga beat muted but there, the song about a love which isn't perfect. The next song, "The Cat Song," is just wonderful. It is about Ms. Nyro's cat, Eddie.

"Smile" is the last song, and here the power of her words is very apparent. Ms. Nyro knew she would close with this song long before she was sure of the order of the rest.

*the world's insane
the paper's gone mad
but our love is a peace vibe
yes **

And to hear that "yes" is a beautiful moment. She makes use of the koto, a stringed instrument of Japan whose notes are piercing, high and melancholy in that kind of abstracted, Oriental way that makes them sound other-worldly and contemplative. Mars plays a big part in Ms. Nyro's universe, and the song has a chorus which is spacy, dreamy, passionate, a kind of aural Jackson Pollock. The effect is haunting and effective.

The album is due to be released around end of January-early February. It should prove the recorded event of the season.

* © All songs Tuna Fish Music (BMI)

AMBROSIA: "We're Beatles Children"

By STEVE HANSEN

"A lot of people think we're English, but there's no bloody truth to the rumor." David Pack's exaggerated brogue breaks up Ambrosia cohort and co-founder Joe Puerta, but the error is common enough. While the band originates from Southern California, their rich, multi-layered "Holdin' on to Yesterday" invites comparison to the similarly lush "I'm Not in Love" by British counterparts 10cc, and the intricate, meticulous sound on their debut 20th Century album *Ambrosia* is a throwback to the Sgt. Pepper-era Beatles.

Pack acknowledges the sound-alike and offers a possible explanation. "We're Beatles children. We grew up with them, loved them and now it's a turnaround. We can't help being influenced by that, because they made some great music." In their choice of Alan (Dark Side of the Moon) Parsons for the final mix-down, the band found a direct link to that sound. Alan served his apprenticeship at Abbey Road Studios, working with the Beatles from the White album through *Abbey Road*, although the band sought him not for that reason but



L to R: Burleigh Drummond, Joe Puerta, David Pack, Christopher North

rather because they felt simply "he's the best in the world."

It is the tight four part harmonies that compare favorably to those of their South Bay (a beach-conscious, middle-class L.A. suburb) neighbors and summer tour colleagues, The Beach Boys.

Working with the Beach Boys was a golden opportunity for Ambrosia, and a dream realized for Dave, Joe, Christopher North and Burleigh Drummond. "When we were

listening to Beach Boy albums we were just young musicians learning our trade," says Dave, "and it blows your mind when they come back and say, 'Wow, we loved your set.'"

The fluid agility they display on their first album was achieved only through five years of hard work. Dave recounts their history: "We've played in everything from country bars to biker bars. We've had to get down and boogie or get our asses kicked. We played a lesbian bar for

eight months where we had to play R&B and they had to dance. In between that we played jazz standards at wedding receptions. All the time we were formulating Ambrosia material in the background, but we were doing the other things to keep the band together and playing, and paying the rent." They also made loans of their individual talents to such diverse musical entities as Frank Zappa and Leonard Bernstein. From Dave's association with the latter came Bernstein's concert master violinist Daniel Kobialka to add the haunting violin on 'Yesterday.' "He walked into the studio, heard the song and said 'Let me have a microphone'" says Dave. "And this is a classical violinist," Joe points out. "Most people think they don't have any soul."

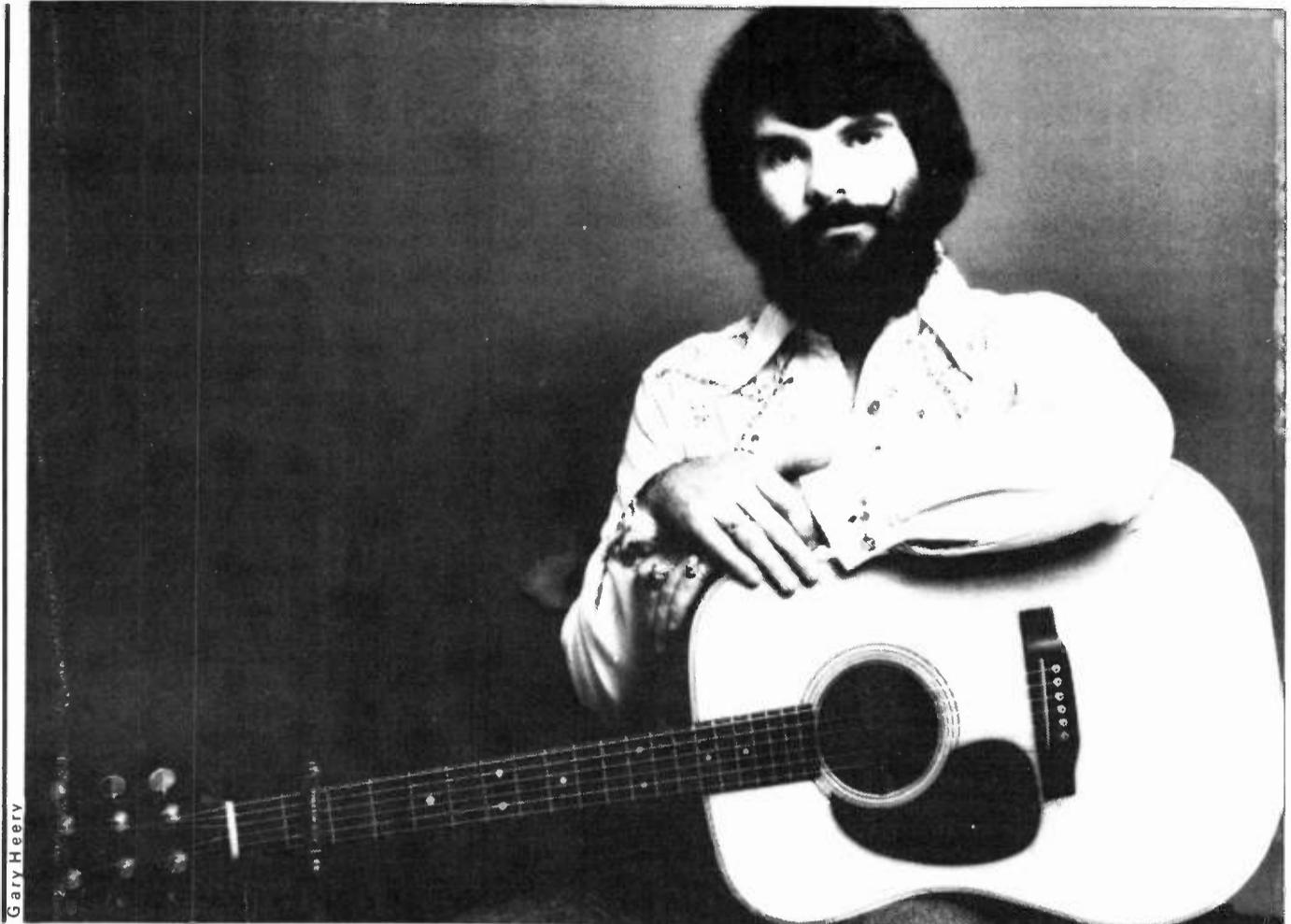
But years of covering other people's material nearly stripped the band of their own identity. When they first began recording the album Dave remembers "We just really didn't know...we had so many songs we just wanted to record a lot of them and choose from those. We personally like the more progressive vein because that got us off more." Ambrosia's present manager and producer, Freddie Piro, duly impressed by the band's demo tape, then approached friend Russ Reagan President of 20th Century Records (Reagan is responsible for launching the careers of Elton John, Neil Diamond and Barry White among others).

"When Russ initially heard the tapes" explains Pack, "we stuck in three of the more heavier tunes and he said: 'Give me an album that's great from cut to cut.' He helped establish a direction for the album."

Following up the regional success of their first single "Holdin' on to Yesterday" was "Nice, Nice, Very Nice," the group's most popular concert draw. The song was co-authored by the group and Kurt Vonnegut Jr.

Currently, the group is assembling material for their February-March recording sessions. The album as yet untitled, will be released in April. Allan Parsons, who mixed *Ambrosia*, will produce with Freddie Piro (sole producer of the first album). Piro's credits include ownership of Good News Records, a "very successful" contemporary gospel label, and upcoming producer status of Arista's country-rock hopefuls, the Funky Kings. Piro also owns a recording complex called Mama Jo's; it's an old-style San Fernando Valley bungalow ranch facility that Piro built himself.

Things have fallen into place very well for Ambrosia, who were originally known as "Ambergris Smart." Fortunately some other unlucky soul had grabbed the "Ambergris" title first (and when was the last time you heard of them?) forcing them back to the dictionary where they found "Ambrosia", just one listing up. "We liked the way the word sounds when you say it..." here Dave illustrates: "Am-brooo-oo-shi-ahhhhhh" as if to blow a kiss. "In Greek mythology "Ambrosia" stood for everything that was good -- the nectar of the gods. It was a substance that they used to make them immortal".



LARRY GROCE: Killing Me Softly With Twinkies

By MARTIN CERF

The best way to break into the record business these days is from the outside. It's utterly mutated now, and growing more and more difficult to tell the players from the audience. The most recent case in point would be Larry Groce, who joins an ever-growing list of hit record artists whose initial product began as non-releases. (Head East from St. Louis and C. W. McCall from Omaha are other examples.)

Non-release in that initial pressings of these acts' product was manufactured, distributed and promoted by the act itself (or its management). "Junkfood Junkie," for those who haven't heard, is the first novelty record to sing the praises of America's fine food manufacturers. Frito-Lay, Hostess and General Mills are exalted here and this 3:03 cassette-quality, live acoustic recording from McCabe's Guitar Shop in Santa Monica, California is already the most programmed record in Detroit (sales in Battle Creek alone must be awesome).

It all began when Randy Nauert, Groce's producer and manager, decided to press 1000 copies of "Junkfood," floating them out to stations across the country. "I was tired of the cold and somewhat closed-minded reaction from nearly every record company A&R man. I played it for," says Groce. "With rare exception everyone that heard the tape just couldn't hear it. I wonder how far away from America's current craving for good times, good jokes and uncomplicated lifestyle these manufacturers of the culture's recorded art are going to get?"

Reaction from stations Nauert sent

his garage pressings to, most of which were *not* in major or even secondary cities, came quickly. "College stations and commercial AMers in places like San Luis Obispo who put the record on, logged massive phone response from the listeners consistently. It wasn't ten days before we realized America was indeed laughing with us" (and consequently at itself). Nauert, armed with these facts and figures from a veritable army of inconsequential minor stations in even less strategic cities by potential sales standards, once again shopped the record to the major manufacturers. Mike Curb, who expressed interest the first time around, was now a believer and promptly purchased the Peaceable Record's master (Peaceable is Nauert's label), re-issuing the side on Warner Bros. Records, by way of his Warner/Curb production-label deal.

Nine weeks after circulating his 1000 Peaceable pressings, "Junkfood Junkie" appeared as fresh new Warner vinyl and subsequently managed to get added to CKLW, Detroit's #1 top-forty station. WJR, Detroit's high-rated middle-of-the-road (adult) station was the reason CK first noticed the record. "They were getting great phones (requests, inquiries) over there," explains CK's Les Garland. "Based on that, our morning man, Gary Burbank, started to play it. Then the phones started here, and they haven't stopped for over three weeks now." Since the station added the record full-time, local Detroit distributors haven't been able to fill the orders fast enough. As recent hits like "Mr. Jaws" by Dickie Goodman and C. W. McCall's "Convoy" (both held the #1 position on Billboard's Hot 100) demonstrate, the U.S. is now experiencing the strongest novelty

crisis since the early sixties when titles like "Monster Mash," "Martian Hop" and "Ahab, The Arab" were commonplace.

"I'm a friend to old Euell Gibbons," a lyric line in "Junkfood Junkie," was thought to be in poor taste since Gibbons passed away in January. CK edited the line out for play and Warners will follow suit, issuing edited copies to stations shortly (no word on store copies). Garland laid to rest other possible lyric problems with regard to the song's direct promotion of such readily available consumer products as Moon Pies, Hostess Twinkies and Pringle's Potato Chips: "We don't consider it advertising, it's entertainment." Such references are no more a conflict than Sammy John's "Chevy Van" or The Hondells' "Little Honda."

Groce is no stranger to the business, having released two albums through RCA (on Daybreak, a short-lived subsidiary) in 1970-1, and another on Peaceable. The latter LP, *Larry Groce & The Currence Brothers* pressed this past summer originally, will be revived on Warners soon. Nine of the record's 15(!) sides coupled with the "Junkfood" single will serve as the next LP.

Groce, raised in Dallas, Texas, now resides in Philippi, West Virginia. He's worked the college and folkie-club circuit for nearly 10 years, spreading his Guthrie-ish folk humor/commentary generously, to all those with a willing ear.

"Junkfood Junkie" may overstate Groce's comedic side, since he's also a serious, or semi-serious bluegrass/folk singer-songwriter, too. More like Ray Stevens or Randy Newman in this respect than Dickie Goodman or Reunion. What "Day For Decision" did to Johnny Sea couldn't happen again though, could it?

STATION TO STATION: "IT'S NOT A MUSICAL ALBUM AS MUCH AS AN EMOTIONAL ONE"

By BEN EDMONDS

A year ago, David Bowie's public face was a mess. The "Diamond Dog" tour he'd recently completed had certainly been successful enough, but it was a case of Bowie preaching to the already-converted. At a time when Elton John was tearing the rock & roll demographic spread a new asshole, it was difficult to make a case for Bowie as the most fabulous star. His audience was still too specialized. And he was said to be nearly finished with an album that would be quite unlike anything that devoted audience might expect of him; a risky proposition at the very least. And there was trouble on the horizon at MainMan, the organization from which Tony DeFries launched a thousand Col. Tom Parkerisms in Bowie's name.

When the situation finally came to a head, it was often even more confusing than the rumors that preceded it. Bowie renounced DeFries and MainMan on the eve of the release of the *Young Americans* album, and the ousted manager retaliated by initiating a legal injunction to prevent the album's release. Though the injunction was lifted only a few days later, the action offered no promise of immediate relief from this complex business entanglement. Some contended that Bowie had walked away with his economic assets intact; others were the picture of conviction as they told you horror stories of DeFries making his escape with the cash and Bowie left with nothing. They were *positive* that was Bowie they'd seen, wasted and defeated, driving down Santa Monica Boulevard in a battered old Volkswagen. Really, now....

The *Young Americans* album itself was the source of much initial discomfort. It was so heavily r&b oriented that, at first listening, it was virtually indistinguishable from all the other disco muzak that had infested the airwaves. The point seemed seconded when the "Young Americans" single, like so many other disco attractions, ran out of steam before it could get over the top. (England remains relatively indifferent to the album to this day, preferring to see "Space Oddity" at the top of the charts its third time around than any of that alien jungle music.) And, furthering what has now almost become a tradition, he swore that the road would never again claim him.

Out of all this chaos and uncertainty, some concrete action was finally generated. He made the plunge into cinema that had been forecast for years, taking the lead in a sci-fi romance called *The Man Who Fell To Earth*, directed by Nicholas Roeg (whose credits include participation in the filming of *Performance*). And just when it looked like he was turning his back on music, as he'd always stated that he eventually would, "Fame" exploded off *Young Americans* to become his first #1 single in the States. This success did



DAVID BOWIE 1976

NEW ALBUM, FILM DEBUT & THREE MONTH U. S. TOUR

create the feared schism in his audience, but the repercussions weren't nearly as dramatic as some had predicted. As it turned out, many of the kids who'd danced and drooled to Bowie and Suzy Quatro at Rodney's had now graduated to heavier playschools, where they danced to whatever was playing. And what was playing was disco. David was right there.

The entanglement with Tony DeFries was ultimately resolved outside the courtroom, and Bowie immediately formed a production company called Bewlay Bros. to handle organization of the promised plethora of media projects he'd undertake. He mentioned film projects based on *Ziggy Stardust* and *Young Americans* and production on an album by his current guitarist Earl Slick, but when it came time to lay it all on the table, the first order of business was to break his oft-made promise never again to tour.

Bowie announced the tour via satellite hookup with English chat-show host Russell Harty. It comm-

ences on February 2nd, and in its 35 stops will hit nearly every North American market of major consequence. When the North American dates conclude in the last week of March, he catches a ship to Cannes and dives into a six-week European homecoming tour. When that winds down in early May, there's the release of *The Man Who Fell To Earth* and the attendant soundtrack album to pick up the pace again.

And somewhere in the midst of all of this there is an album. An album that, although a large portion of the customary Bowie buzz has been channeled toward the film and the tour, is nonetheless crucial to the momentum of his media assault. Bowie's first appreciable success was with his *Ziggy Stardust* persona, which carved out his specialized audience so intensely that he was trapped by it for the three years that followed. The breakthrough he enjoyed in 1975 generated immediate sales and a widening demographic turf, but the novelty aspect of a Bowie r&b album fueled very little in the way of tangible

expectations. *Young Americans* was a successful experiment, but rather than creating another entrapping persona, he had simply created an audience for his work that was apart and very different from his *Ziggy* army. So his task became not the creation of yet another persona, but the unification of an audience he'd divided by success. That's where the new album, *Station To Station*, fits in.

The great single, "Golden Years," nutshell it effectively. The groove is obviously r&b inspired, but the treatment is rock & roll guitarband; people tell me I'm crazy, but I hear echoes of "Gloria" right alongside the disco derivations. Nearly all of the songs retain an r&b sense of motion, but they all have additional references to other stations along Bowie's musical legacy. The title track comes off in part like *Ziggy Stardust*; "Stay" takes a little from "John I'm Only Dancing," and the strategic theme of the album as an introduction to a tour situation was exercised before with *Diamond Dogs*. The small band he utilizes here (and which will accompany him on the road)--Earl Slick/lead guitar, Carlos Alomar/rhythm guitar, George Murray/bass, Dennis Davis/drums--gives him his first real rock & roll continuity since the days of the Spiders From Mars.

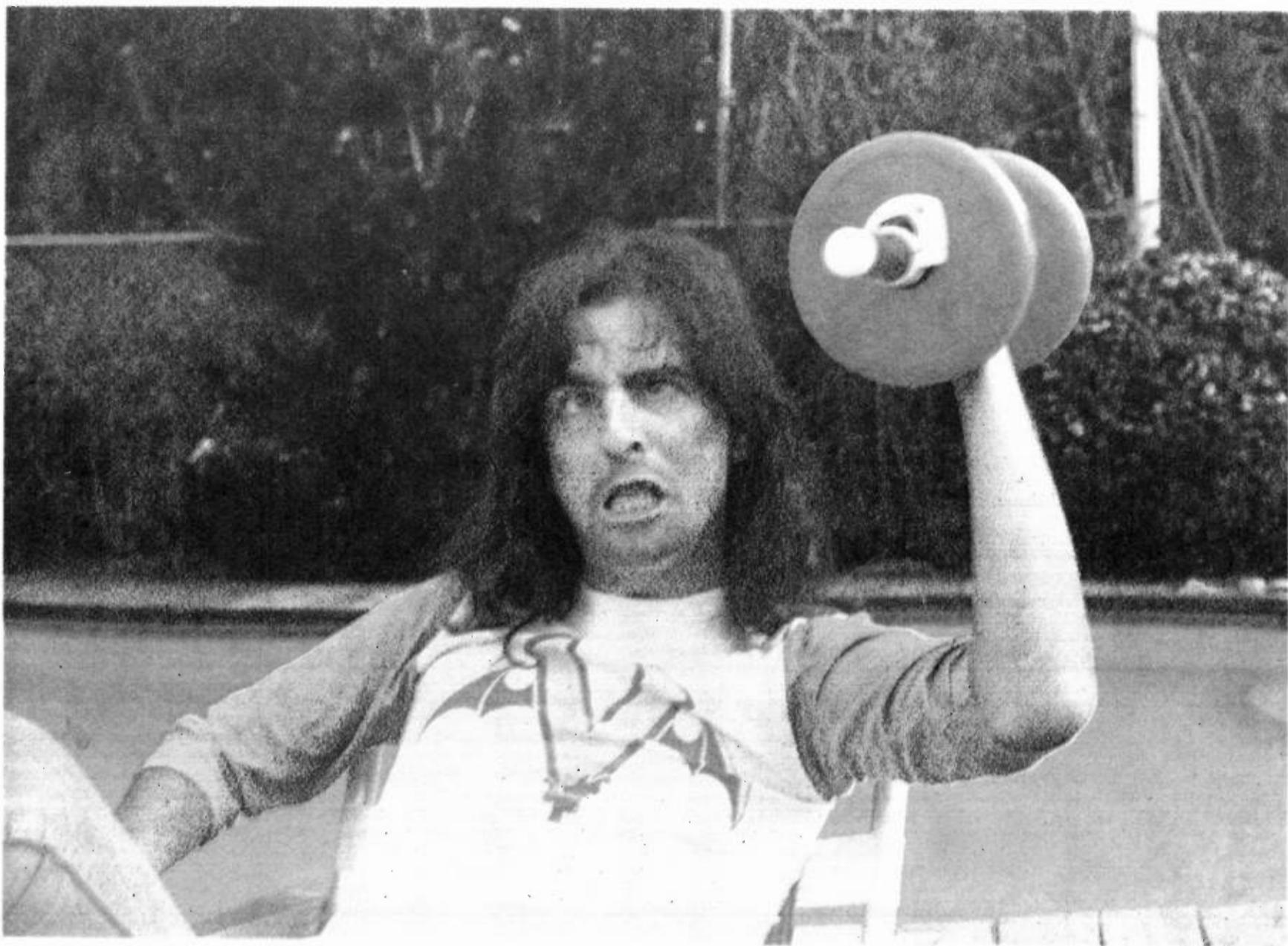
What critics have always found lacking in Bowie's music was *commitment*. It's hard to imagine young David Jones hearing Elvis or Little Richard on the radio late at night and dedicating himself forever to rock & roll. Like any actor, his commitment was not to the form, but to his ability to manipulate that form to inspire commitment in his audience. He's done most of his previous posing as *characters*, but his filmwork has taken it beyond that; as an actor, he has to project the *emotions* that define character. *Station To Station* isn't a musical album as much as an emotional one; the question, as put in the title song, is "Who will connect me with love?" He offers sentiment more than scenario and, in "Golden Years," seems to be offering his audience even a bit of reassurance and hope: "I'll stick with you baby for a thousand years/We can do it, all right, but we gotta get smart." The first step in getting smart is getting together, hence the unification moves that dominate *Station To Station*. It ties up all the loose ends.*

This is not David Bowie's best album by any stretch of the imagination. It's mainly a stopping place where he can look at where he's been and collect his energy and audience for the next Big Move which his followers always expect him to make, and which *Station To Station* most assuredly is not. But with Bowie's talent and multi-directional work momentum, that Next Big Move won't necessarily be an album at all.

*© 1976 Bewlay Bros. Music, BMI/Chrysalis Music Corp./MainMan ASCAP

HIPPIES IN THE LOUNGE

ALICE COOPER BRINGS MONDO TO RENO



Suzan Carson

Ah, home at last---after six non-stop weeks on the road, the Flo & Eddie group returns *home*, to our families and Los Angeles. And not a moment too soon! (Did you see us when we played in your town?) Still at the airport--in baggage claim--and a mysterious page for Mr. Kaylan over the public address cuts through the clamor. Why, it's Mandy Newall, long time friend and Alice Cooper Press Co-ordinator. Something about flying to Lake Tahoe on a private plane to see Alice's opening at the Sahara Hotel the next day. The NEXT DAY! Oh, now, Honey, don't look at me like that! It's not *my* idea! Let's just call Alice's manager, Shep Gordon, and find out *what's the deal!*

"Look, we know you're family guys, and your wives are leaving you and all that, but it's really important to Alice that his friends are around him right now."

And so, Flo & Eddie, friends of rock and roll spring to the rescue...or rather fly. Starship One was waiting for us the following afternoon at Butler Aviation. It's an elaborate converted and customized 707 already used by Elton, the Stones,

the Zeppelin and others, blatantly successful. It was painted "Welcome To My Nightmare" on the side.

After a brief delay--I think we were waiting for Jimmy Webb, in fact--the beautiful Starship replete with

videotape units, an incredible bar, bedrooms, showers, cushions and lounges and fully staffed with hot food and friendly stews, took to the air. At the amazing Thomas Organ, ladies and gentlemen, that's Flo and Stacey, the latter being Stacey

Keach, as great a human as he is an actor, and their own inimitable brand of avant-garde jazz--Lou Reed, eat your heart out! There are 37 seats on Starship One, the plane that flies for \$5000 an hour. They were occupied by:

IN CROWD STARSHIP CAST OF CHARACTERS

MARK VOLMAN
(Flo)

HOWARD KAYLAN
(Eddie)

STACEY & MARILYN KEACH

(Hi, you guys.)

WON-TON-TON

The Dog Who Saved Hollywood

(more about him later.)

His Trainer, Carl Miller

PATSY & JIMMY WEBB

(Big Star)

ALLEN DOUGLAS & HIS WIFE

(producer)

DAVID WINTER

(producer & director of "Welcome to My Nightmare")

WINONA WILLIAMS

(Shep's good friend)

DONNA DOBBS

(Shep's secretary)

BARRY SCHULTZ

(photographer)

HAROLD SCHWARTZ
(Hollywood Reporter reporter)

MR. & MRS. GEORGE ALBERT
(President of Cash box)

SUE BARTON

(Alice's P.R.)

DICK CLARK PLUS ONE

(Big Star)

MRS. ROBERT EMMER

(wife of West Coast promo guy of Atlantic Records)

ROBERTA WAX PLUS ONE

(United Press International)

CYNTHIA KIRK

(ABC)

SPENCER BERLAND PLUS WIFE

(Record World)

NAT FREEDLAND PLUS WIFE

(Billboard)

MICHAEL WINNER

(director of *Won-Ton-Ton, The Dog Who Saved Hollywood*")

KAY TIPTON
(an Alice secretary)

BOB SHAPIRO

(attorney)

JOAN BUCK

(British and French Vogue & Women's Wear Daily)

ROB ISKOV

(editor of Alice's TV special and choreographer of *Jesus Christ Superstar*)

CHRIS HODENFIELD

(Rolling Stone)

TONY KARODI

(Sigma photographer)

BOB KEMNITZ

(LA Herald Examiner)

DAVID PICKER

(producer of *Lenny* and, lest we forget, *Won-Ton-Ton, The Dog Who Saved Hollywood*)

SKIPT TAYLOR

(manager of the stars, who was conspicuous by his absence)

FROM CHICKEN HEADS TO THE SAHARA TAHOE "MOM, HERE'S ROCK & ROLL EVEN YOU CAN UNDERSTAND."

"Mr. Miller," Flo was saying in his nicest tone, "Is there a particular word that'll make the dog strike--I mean, *go for the throat*, or something?"

"Hmmm, let's see..." Then, noticing Volman's attire, "Hmmm, yes, 'Red Vest.' That's it! 'Red Vest,' Gus. Ha ha ha."

Poor Gus (renamed Won-Ton-Ton for his Big Break). He would hear the words "Red Vest" in his sleep. The Starship landed in Reno and was met by a "luxury bus" from the Sahara Tahoe. Flo & Eddie, of course, lurch in the back seat. The token hippies, just like "on tour" again. Bar service, compliments of Del Webb, was served by Janice, Donna and Bob all the way to Tahoe, where our luxury jet had been too large to land. More drinks.

"Get that *!!t%tt&? dog away from me!"

"'Red Vest,' Gus. Hiccup! 'Red Vest!'"

"Back, Gus, back!"

"Glug, glug-hic! 'Wed Best'...ho-ho, 'Wed best'--hee hee."

Poor Carl. Gus didn't move.

Before the Nightmare entourage could even head through the casino to our rooms, Flo & Eddie spot long-time pal, Dick Wagner. Dick co-wrote a song with us and played on our last Reprise album, all the Cooper records and then, with Lou Reed, even. A fine guitarist! So, the three of us sat around a bit, drinking wine and eating cheeses and fruits supplied to each room, compliments of Del Webb's Sahara Tahoe, of course.

"Yeah. I've been rehearsing the horns and strings for a couple of days now, by myself. Alice didn't ever show up. Oh, well." Sorry Dick.

"Hey, let's find Vince." What could he say? Then, it was ON with the backstage passes and through an elaborate complex of underground hotel corridors to Alice's dressing room.

"Oh, my God, it's the Bobsey Twins," Coop exclaims, jumping to his feet, and momentarily ignoring his new girlfriend, lead dancer, Cheryl. Which, by the way, is not an easy thing to do. It just goes to show you, no matter how big you are...etcetera, etcetera.

Stars need friends, too--yadda yadda.

That was the general tone of the loose conversation that helped Alice, I think, mellow down a bit for the show--a big change from 20,000 seat arenas to 1500 capacity Casino showrooms. Before the show, spirits, most of them V.O. and Cola, ran high. Agent, Johnny Podell pulled strings and allowed us to be seated quicker than Maitre'd Sean would have liked, and after a typical rock and roll delay and a younger-than-expected audience was seated, the \$15 a ticket Alice Cooper Show



Excerpts from Alice's Reno Nightmare-on-stage, back-stage, under-(st)age

began. Won-Ton-Ton's trainer was too drunk to be let in.

Resplendent with a 32-piece orchestra, the new "Welcome To My Nightmare" Overture played for, what sounded admittedly, like the first time. Well, they'll get comfortable with it soon, we reassured ourselves. If only you could hear the guitars!

Here comes the giant roll-out brass bed and, yes, here comes *Alice*, bouncing in time to a more laid back than ever band and the show's title song. A new guitarist, Danny Weiss of the Iron Butterfly and Rhinoceros, replaced Steve Hunter from the last Cooper group. Alice easily swung into full-length versions of "No More Mister Nice Guy" and "Eighteen," both songs previously only sung in a hits medley and the sound and group got better and more confident.

The skeletons danced in Black Light with Alice in hats and canes and went back into the giant toy box from which they had come. The monster cyclops chased the Coop around the stage and was duly decapitated for his impudence--the kids loved it. "Mom, here's some rock and roll even you could understand!"

From chicken heads to the Sahara, Alice has gone full circle, still remaining the Rock Hero.

Alice kicks, punches, and simulates copulation with the lady mannequin that magically turns into the lovely Cheryl when the lights go out during "Only Women Bleed." Truly beautiful, she soars across the stage, leaping and floating during the legendary Doll Dance--a classic of staging and movement. Hat's off to Mr. Winter, Mr. Cooper and to Cheryl.

The lights go to black once again and from the bottom of the stage a large spider web climbs high, pulling taut across the stage. Three large figures creep out dressed in the most incredible costumes of the show--black widow suits so lifelike and believable, they're fantastic.

Out of the shadows and onto the stage walks Vincent Price, yes that's right, you heard right, the real live Vincent Price. Of course we all knew he was going to appear, thanks to the lavish ad campaign everywhere in the hotel and TONIGHT ONLY he was making a special appearance during the "Black Widow" sequence to recite what turned out to be no more than two paragraphs of about 12 stanzas each, through a mike sound that could only be compared to Wollensack: a bad Wollensack.

I must say in viewing the show for the second time, I think the illusion of not seeing Mr. Price and only hearing his voice on tape was much better. He proved his superstardom later to us, by remembering appearing on the Della Reese show, seven years ago with the Turtles. Thanks Vinnie...



PULL INTO NAZARETH.

One of the brightest success stories of 1976 is the emergence of Nazareth.

They've combined their incomparable raw power with their devastating sound to create their first hit single, "**LOVE HURTS**", from their latest album, "**HAIR OF THE DOG**".^{AM 1671 SP 4511} Which will soon be heard on their U.S. tour with Deep Purple.



Jan. 14	Fayetteville, N.C.	Jan. 28	War Memorial, Buffalo, N.Y.
Jan. 15	Capitol Center, Largo, Md.	Jan. 30	Coliseum, Greensboro, N.C.
Jan. 16	Civic Arena, Pittsburgh, Pa.	Jan. 31	Johnson City, Tenn.
Jan. 18	Spectrum, Philadelphia, Pa.	Feb. 1	St. John's Arena, Columbus, Ohio
Jan. 21	Civic Center, Providence, R.I.	Feb. 3	Omni, Atlanta, Ga.
Jan. 22/23	Radio City Music Hall, New York, N.Y.	Feb. 4	Lakeland, Fla.
Jan. 24	Boston Gardens, Boston, Mass.	Feb. 7/8	Miami, Fla.
Jan. 27	War Memorial, Syracuse, N.Y.		

L.A., San Diego, Chicago, Dallas, Houston and San Antonio dates to be announced—between Feb. 9 and Feb. 29.

KEEP YOUR EYES AND EARS ON NAZARETH ON A&M RECORDS & TAPES

Produced by Manny Charlton



"Alice has never forgotten how to throw a party"

By the time "Only Women Bleed" finished, aside from the podium mike problems in "Black Widow," the sound was definitely coming around to what we were expecting from an Alice Cooper Concert.

I feel I must point out that regardless of the sound difficulties at the beginning, and in spite of the fact they did not have the rehearsal time they would have liked with the strings and horns, it all came off totally entertaining, thanks to the cool and organized attitude of the real star, Alice himself.

From the moment he hits the stage in "Nightmare" until the end of the encore, all attention is focused on Alice, and deservedly so.

Despite the great choreography and stage production directed by David Winters and the excellent sets designed by Joe Gannan, Alice has a way of making you forget the problems they all must have had putting this particular show together and making it work on a night to night basis.

Enough, enough, it's a great f--king show--no shit--it has everything... tension--adventure--romance--fear, and most of all fun, good clean entertaining fun, and it was obvious to me that the audience was enjoying the entire thing. And even as the encore faded from our ears, shouts of "more," "more," "boogie," "more," rang through the Sahara showroom.

A lot has already been speculated as to how bringing acts, such as Alice Cooper, will effect the future of entertainment in venues like Sahara, Tahoe, or even Las Vegas. The fact is, that the normal pop audience is growing up and I don't believe even they would spend \$15.50 a ticket to see, just say, Rod Stewart or J. Geils or some other, sit down and listen to

my songs type of group.

Rooms like the Sahara will only appeal to acts capable of creating that attitude of old schoolism, which is to say, an act that creates a show designed to entertain and the artist(s) must have enough of a sense of humor to appreciate and be able to laugh at himself and his surroundings. Alice is only the first of what will be many more attempts from the pop music world to break into Vegas or Tahoe.

From the showroom to suite 1453 for "THE SO-CALLED BIG AFTER-SHOW MAYBE IF ANYONE/EVERYONE COMES PARTY" which as it turned out was just that, EVERYONE AND ANYONE, we drank more drinks and waited to see if Alice would show up at all. About 45 minutes after showtime, in walked most of the cast, musicians and Alice himself.

Of course, he had no time at all to hang out and the photographers were going mad. "Just one more Mr. Price," "This time with Alice," "Alice...Alice..." "How 'bout one with you and Won-Ton-Ton in the sunken bathtub..." You know what I mean, a real pushing, pulling, drinking, boring scene, "get it?"

After about 30 minutes/30,000 flashbulbs later, we were approached by Dave Leibert (more about him later) who handed us a set of car keys and said to meet him in the lobby in 10 minutes. So we took the keys and headed off to the parking lot to find the car which we did and we drove to the front of the hotel pulling up behind the Cadillac furnished by the hotel for Alice. A mob of people came pushing out of the hotel and piled into both autos and out into the Nevada night we drove.

About 10 miles down the road we

came to a semi-private drive, we took it down to a house right on the lake. There was water crashing up under the metal pilings, and right in front was a police guard. The guards are stationed there 24 hours a day and again this place, called "THE STAR HOUSE" is furnished by the Sahara Tahoe. It is a nice place with 4 bedrooms, 2 living rooms, a pool room, video tape, color TV in every room, and a kitchen complete with chef. We found out later all performers at the Sahara are furnished this luxury, you know the really big stars...Totie Fields, Helen Reddy, The Step Brothers, the really big ones.

We made ourselves at home and looked around to see who else had made "The Escape" here with us. Besides Alice and Cheryl there was, Frankie; bodyguard and all around good guy, just ask him.

David Pearl, Alice's personal valet sort of and former second baseman with Alice and I on the Hollywood Vampire Baseball Team...a good pal...a few succulent young admirers, and Dave Lippert.

Cheryl made us all ham and cheese sandwiches with Miracle Whip and while Alice and I shot pool with all the vigor of Fats and Fast Eddie, Dave Leibert pounded out the hits of the 50's and 60's on the piano. Dave by the way is a former member of The Happenings and has been working with and around Alice for as long as I can remember. Again a terrific fellow who loves his beagle named Dolly. "Dolly has a gold record for Billion Dollar Babies". No kidding.

So on and on till nearly five A.M. we sang every great Beatle, Beach Boy, Turtles, Happenings, and every other great 4 part harmony song there was: DAVE, ALICE, FLO & EDDIE. What a group, we blended incredibly well,

sort-of, and before the sun had shone in the sky, we bid farewell to Alice and Cheryl, wished him luck on the up-coming week and made our way back to the hotel and a few hours rest.

The next morning rose at 11:00 for a noon all you could eat brunch, which was really our first meal (since we missed the dinner planned for us the night before).

An announcement told all the members of "Welcome to My Nightmare Entourage" we were snowed in, and it would not be known if we could drive back through the pass to Reno before perhaps 3 PM. So off to the Black Jack table for about 2 hours, and a couple of hundred dollars later the bus was ready to leave.

The ride was quiet with most people suffering from either fatigue or headaches including I'm sure Won-Ton-Ton. We had a few more drinks and finally stumbled onto the plane.

We spent the entire flight-time home jamming morning Raga's with a RICHER, if not wiser Stacey Keach, a terrific person whose friendship we hope to expand on in the years to come.

All in all, a fantastic journey into THE WORLD OF JET-SET made possible, once again, by the unforgettable Shep Gordon, Alice's manager and friend. He has never forgotten how to throw a party. "Ah, Munich was great and Copenhagen was incredible, Amsterdam, New York and now Sahara Tahoe: It's nice to be part of their family." "We love them all very much."

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THAT'S THE WAY I'VE ALWAYS HEARD IT SHOULD BE

THE RIGHT THING TO DO MOCKINGBIRD

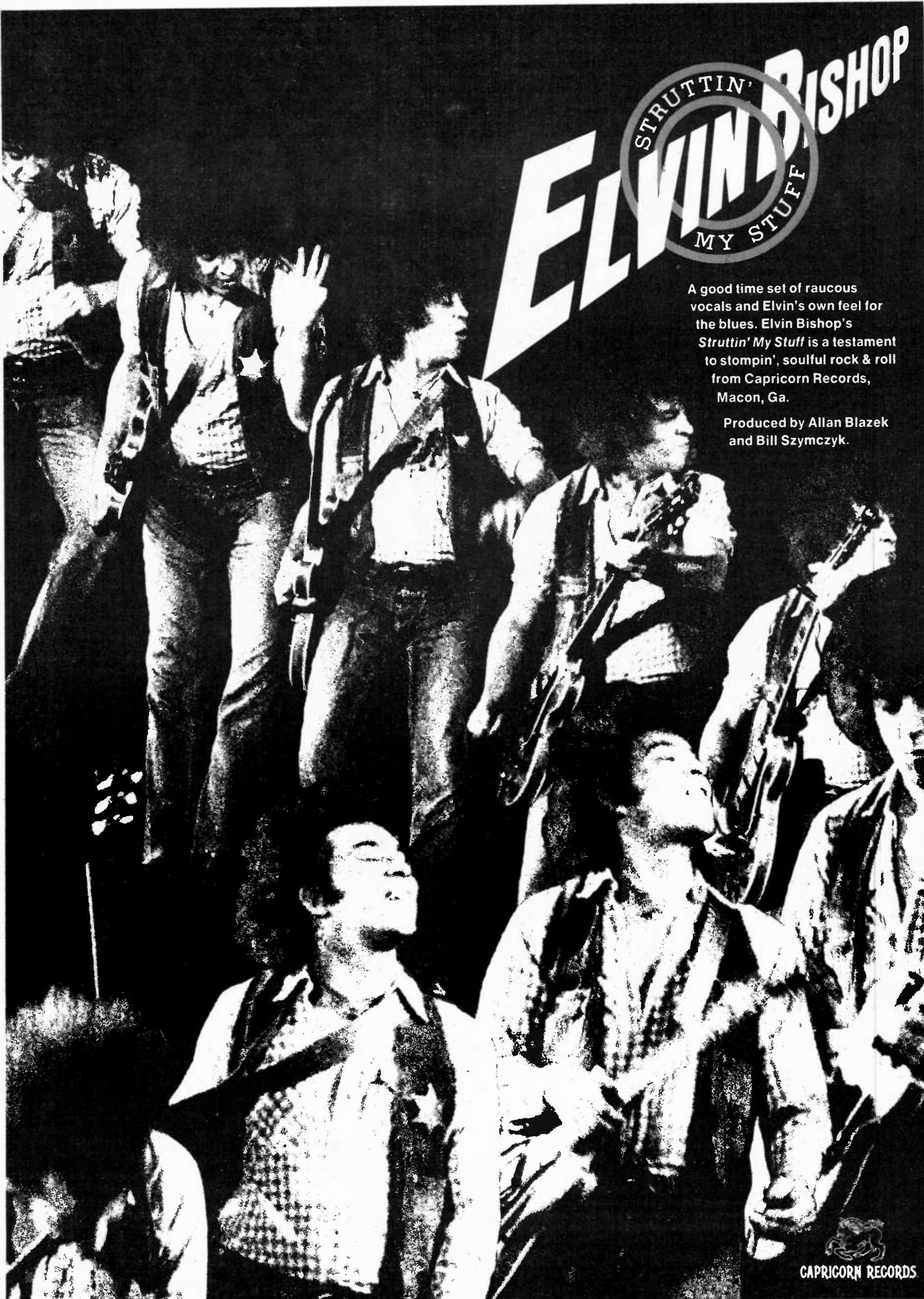
LEGEND IN YOUR OWN TIME HAVEN'T GOT TIME FOR THE PAIN

YOU'RE SO VAIN (WE HAVE) NO SECRETS

ANTICIPATION NIGHT OWL ATTITUDE DANCING

ON ELEKTRA RECORDS





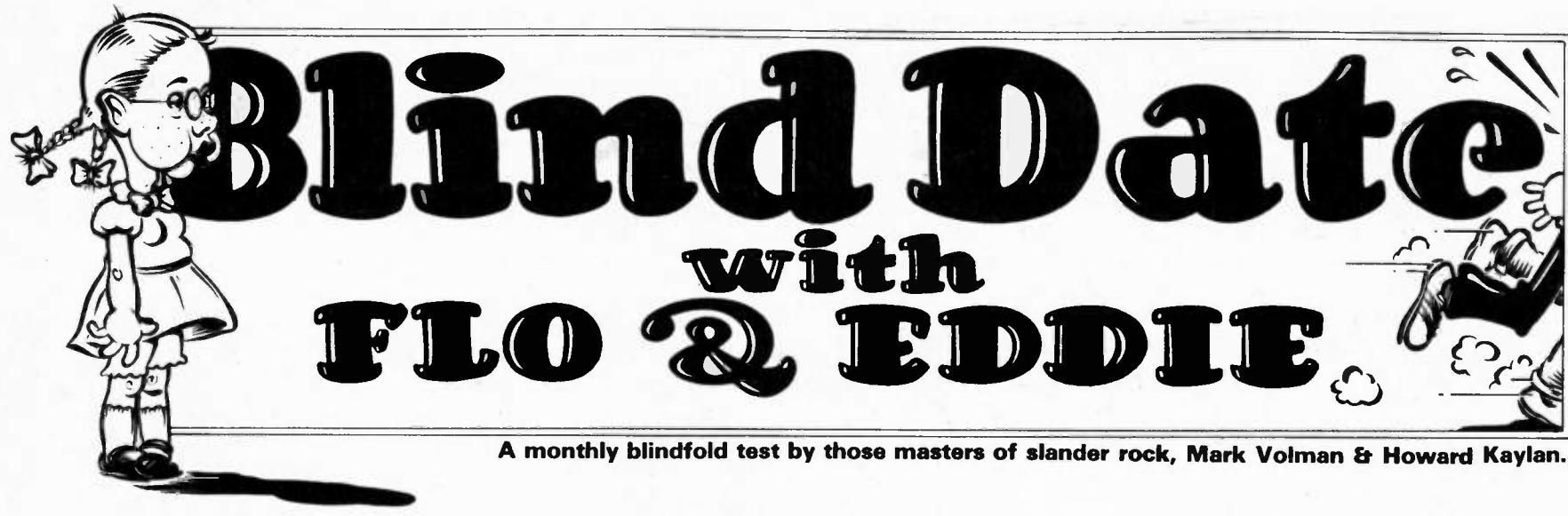
ELVIN BISHOP

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MY STUFF

A good time set of raucous
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Struttin' My Stuff is a testament
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CAPRICORN RECORDS



Blind Date with FLO & EDDIE

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

Edited by KEN BARNES

Before settling down to the usual hilarity-packed routine, this month's Blind Date was plagued by ceaseless attempts by the awestruck Flo to register his rave review of the latest Electric Light Orchestra album. It started innocently enough: "Can I say something? By all means?" He proceeded to deliver an unabashed plug, cut off when judged to be a trifle *too* unabashed for the normally impartial and magisterial Blind Date. "--and it's the best album I heard in 1975." Enough about that, on with the Blind Date. "--I had to play it three times last night--" Truly inspiring. Now this first act is an old Flo & Eddie fav--"The last cut is God!" Damn it, a Flo & Eddie favorite, always--"The first cut on Side One--I mean, Side Two, is the next hit!"

This stimulating conversation went on for ten more minutes (*valuable* minutes, too; if you think people can make a living just from editing Blind Dates, you're crazy), until Flo was bought off with a recent British Mud single and a revokable promise that he could review the next ELO album later this year. Finally the Blind Date formally began:

Excerpts from *Rufus Featuring Chaka Khan* (ABC)

A Flo & Eddie favorite? One of the first families of music. Oh, Chaka Khan! Is her husband in the band? No? Big lips on the cover. Nice spread. You could drop a Mack Truck into that thing, couldn't you? (the lips, it's to be hoped). Just kidding. The cover really says it about Rufus. Anyone who thought their teeth were white and their lips were...Steve Barri should produce them. I'll tell you, though, for all the Flo & Eddie fans--stay away! Will you please cover up the rest of those albums?

THE FOUR SEASONS Who Loves You

Includes
the Title Hit
Single

Also Includes
Silver Star
Slip Away

"Silver Star," "December 1963"--Four Seasons (Warners)

Group with a history? Mandrill. What? Grass Roots. Good Guess! Beau Brummels. Yes. Shawn Phillips. They definitely have that Italian guitar sound. I

hear French horns in the background. Jack Nitzsche oriented. Argent. Real old group? Tommy James? Tons of hits? Four Seasons. This sounds great. Doesn't sound *anything* like the Four Seasons. "Who Loves You"--great record. They have really done it. Is it without what's his name? Those are *his* eyes. Oh, what a lovely cover, he said sarcastically. That's not the Sound of Frankie Valli. Who? Don Ciccone, in the Tradewinds and the Critters? Illustrious credits. There's the Sound of Frankie Valli.

It's not such a pure transition into disco as the Bee Gees made--they could follow up with "Nights on Broadway" and keep the Bee Gees sound, but this is not recognizable. Even "Who Loves You" had that recognizable Four Seasons sound, but this one ("Dec. 1963") doesn't. Who's this girl on the inside? What a spread! Looks like Hugh Masakela. It could be Frankie's old lady. Could be a guy. Make sure this gets printed. One of the comebacks of the year. Buy it and put it with the old Veejay ones.

Excerpts from *Ommadawn*--Mike Oldfield (Virgin/Columbia)

Progressive hero of the 70's? Ted Nugent. Barry McGuire. Eno. Lee Harvey Oswald. Those are all good guesses, aren't they? John Lodge. Justin Hayward. Michael Quattro. Colin Blunstone. Nick Drake's follow-up to *Pink Moon*. Rick Wakeman's *Lisztomania*. Mike Oldfield. I knew any record that bored me as much as this...

"Up on the Roof," "Naked Man"--Grass Roots (Haven)

Venerable group? America. Manfred Mann. Doesn't that sound like Paul Jones? Southern group? Why do they do it so exact? Maybe they're the Grass Roots. They are? All right! To be able to guess the Grass Roots... (reads) Lambert/Potter, Lambert/Potter. Lambert/Potter. "Naked Man." You just can't have hits with Randy Newman songs. Tell that to Three Dog Night. I will, next time I see them. The Grass Roots will have hits forever. They should always have hits. They cut all the tracks and just brought in the guys to sing. That's kind of weird when you want to go out and play the stuff. They play fine. Joel Lardon rejoining after a brief 8-year hiatus. We worked with them in Anchorage. Do they do their hits? 90 of them, like the Beach Boys.

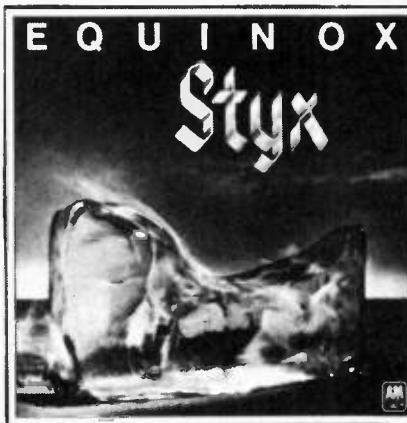
"Bohemian Rhapsody"--Queen (Elektra)

Number One in England? Sparks. Queen! Turn it up! I like Queen! Really nice guys. They have a sense of humor and they play heavy and they sound good. Taken over England? Yeah, but look, the Sweet did, too. You can take over England for a day and be gone the

next day. T. Rex, Slade, they've all proven that does not work any more. I've seen Noddy Holder sitting around the Coke machine in a Holiday Inn going "call me, call me!"--thinking it was an American phone. He doesn't know. They're dying! Queen's great, though. They're really releasing the 6-minute "Bohemian Rhapsody" as a single? Well, maybe it's time for another "El Paso", or "Layla." Or "Hurricane."

Excerpts from *It's Only Love*--Rita Coolidge (A&M)

Another old favorite? Carly Simon. Jackie DeShannon. Maureen McGovern. Jessi Colter. Pavlov's Dog. Fleetwood Mac. Laid-back consciousness? Anita Bryant. Bad guess--she's always juiced up. An old Marc Benno tune? *That's* a good guess? A sheltered lady, right. Does she smile ever? Does she wear 18 tons of turquoise around her arms? Rita Coolidge. She's great. She's mellow. It's too early in the morning. If you'd played her first, we might have mellowed ourselves into having a one-album Blind Date. If you got a bunch of people around and you've promised them a *boogie evening*, don't play Rita Coolidge!



Excerpts from *Equinox*--Styx (A&M)

Hit group from early this year? 10cc. Roxy Music. Sparks. Navasota. First two bars make it. If we don't hear anything else, this is a great album. Take it off now, then. French horns--played on guitars. Sugarloaf. Hamilton, Joe Frank & Reynolds. No? You let me say their whole name without stopping me?

Argent. Everything sounds like Argent. Sounds like Uriah Heep. Mythological name? Here we go. Methuselah. Unicorn. Vulcan. They sound like Three Dog Night. Kind of like a gay Neil Sedaka. That's redundant, isn't it? Don't print that. They've got every hook around. Famous river? Euphrates. That's a cracker, isn't it? Styx! That's a really terrific cover. Is that a plastic sculpture lying on a beach? They're great guys. They sure look terrific on the cover. Another artistic award.

PETE WINGFIELD Breakfast Special



"Kangaroo Dip" and "Whole Pot of Jelly"--Pete Wingfield (Island)

New English star? Rolf Harris. Novelty dance record here, kids. Sounds like "Alley Oop." "The Hully Gully." (sing). "Peanut, peanut butter!" It's the guy with "18 with a Bullet," right? He's gonna try to make more of these and it's not gonna work. He's not as promising as Billy Swan was. It's a cheap soul bag. All of a sudden he's turning into Ian Whitcomb. It's Hurricane Smith. It's not bad. He's a rock critic? Well, I'll tell you, in the immortal words of Robert Christgau, critics usually make lousy rock albums. Take it from critics. Pete's cool.

Excerpts from *Buckingham/Nicks* (Polydor)

Rereleased because of success with another group? Buckingham/Nicks! That was speedy! She looks great. This might work. It sounds like the Fleetwood Mac album, which is great. Who produced it? Keith Olsen? He produced the Fleetwood Mac album? Executive producer Lee Lasseff...can't keep White Whale down.. Lee, make some money on this and pay me! Everyone likes Fleetwood Mac. I'd definitely say one of the Top 5 resurgent groups of the year. Jefferson Starship, Fleetwood Mac, Four Seasons, Flo & Eddie...Elton John came back real good this year. Jimmy Piersall....

"Born to Run"--Allan Clarke (EMI-import 45)

Not what it appears to be? The Hollyridge Strings. Why would anybody put this out? Hollies! Allan Clarke. Why would he do that? Did he beat Springsteen out? Neither made the charts! I like him singing this. Does he say "1-2-3-4"? Then I don't want to hear any more. Barry Ryan could have had a big hit. It's pretty close, but no cigar. But when you get down to *imitating* Bruce Springsteen...ladies and gentlemen, I ask you--Mr. Clarke, what?? What happened to your taste? I like the Springsteen version much better. And that's a frightening thing to say.

VICIOUS DIRT, RUMORS and SCANDALS from HOLLYWOOD

Rodney Bingenheimer

Greetings from Hollywood, boys and girls. Your Prince of Pop, with the aid of his Hollywood Rock Research Crew, has uncovered two key developments to look for in '76 -- Hip Chick Rock, and the rise of the Cleveland scene on a Liverpool level.

Why is it so bloody hip in Cleveland, Eric Carmen, Kingpin of the new Liverpool? "Because WE LIVE THERE!"

I, who've been first to arrive on every scene to spring up in the last thirteen years, definitely concur! So does David Cassidy, Gerry Beckley, Carl Wilson, Ricky Fataar, Billy Hinsche, and Joey Molland. Would the Roxy stage have held any more enthusiastic supporters, the few teen stars left in Hollywood would have been there too.

The crowning triumph for Eric's Christmas week here was that short drive with Hinsche and Fataar to Bel Air, to meet actual Brian Wilson for the first

3



time. Brian couldn't be coaxed out of his den (where he likes to sit in the dark), to come down to the Roxy. And Eric? He was just speechless over the whole thing.

Ex-Raspberries Wally Bryson and Scott McCarl, "just happened to be in the neighborhood", with a small army of Cleveland In-Crowd musicians (deal hunting?), to lend moral support to their boy Eric. And how Sweet it is: Eric has signed to open 40 cities on Sweet's tour. Go all the way Eric!

Cherokee Studio Watch: D. Bowie, in with Paul Buckmaster recording the soundtrack for the film "Man Who Fell To Earth", was spared a parking ticket by a fan, who while camping out overnight waiting for a glimpse, put money in the parking meter by Bowie's car, every hour until he emerged at noon time.

Bill Wyman celebrated his birthday at the Record Plant, where he's recording his second album with Dallas Taylor.

We hear that Gary Glitter's British fans have reacted violently to his new Soul record. Gary hired New York Soul In-Crowders Tony Sylvester and Bert De



Couteaux to produce, and the kids have NO time.

Tony DeFries, Mick Ronson's manager, and his wife the former Melanie McDonald, whom I actually introduced to each other in London, are the parents of a brand new baby girl. Ronson, on the road with Bob Dylan's Rolling Thunder Revue, was heard spouting sour grapes on stage about David Bowie's NOT having written "Life On Mars."

Sparks and their manager John Hewlett (ex-John's Children) gave a party after their return to the Santa Monica Civic Auditorium with the best food I've EVER had. I don't believe they actually served iced-tea and Tab, cheese and fresh fruit, chocolate mousse cake and pie, some wine and NO booze. Somehow, Sparks, who are about as rowdy as Donny and Marie Osmond, managed to join the distinguished ranks of Rod the Mod, Keith Moon, and CERTAIN members of Led Zeppelin, who have all (at some time or other) been "rejected" by the World Famous Riot House. Some of the guests (including the son of a famous rival hotel owner) took advantage of their

hosts hospitality -- bagels were seen floating out of a tenth floor window.

I also hung out with Ron and Russell at Steve Harley's opening, where they, Kim Fowley and myself were mobbed for autographs. A prized leather jacket belonging to Russell was nicked in the crush.

The closing night of his month long tour, Harley was more than gratified by a riotous mob of diehard Cockney Rebel supporters who tore the place to pieces, knocked over tables and each other, singing all the while along with their boy. Rod Stewart left early.

Rod, who hasn't had a stitch of time for a single soul since the last time he was failing, stopped me to ask for a mention. So, here it is, Rod.

An ex-girlfriend of mine, Nancy Tandl, who you saw with me in People and Newsweek magazines, took me to the Forum to see Aerosmith for the first time. The party afterwards was one of the greatest. Mott, also on the bill, were the life of the party. They will always be a favourite of the Hollywood In-Crowd.

Here's a sight! Ted Nugent wheeling his new(d) girlfriend around the huge parking lot of the Long Beach Arena in a German WW II tank. He was still coming down from the stimulating experience of a staredown with an armed gunman at

has re-issued "Can The Can" on Big Tree Records.

Another big European star (who we hear has been messing around with Ringo lately) about to take her shot here is GORGEOUS Lynsey De Paul. One thousand times as stunning as your drab Olivia, she sings her own songs about very naughty intentions DRENCHED in sugar and honey. (And check out that giant mascaraed beauty mark near to luscious Lindsey's lips - eat your heart out, Dusty.)

Patti Smith, meanwhile, was invited for a return engagement at the Roxy Theatre -- provided -- that there be NO more spitting on stage.

Angie Bowie jumping on the bandwagon with her ex-Mainman, Dana Gillespie, to do her own album.

Kim Fowley has added a new, fourth member to his all female, teenage Runaways. Each Runaway has girl and boy lookalikes who attend all their appearances.

Bet-you-wonder-what's-happened-to Dept.: Marc Bolan (ex-T. Rex) has just completed producing his own new album *Futuristic Dragon* featuring PRM's own Flo and Eddie. The single is called "New York City" already a hit in England.

Mark and Howard, meantime, have just

Rodney holds court: [Photo 1] Rodney, Michael Quattro. [Photo 2] Russ Mael, Rodney. Famous Groupie Ms Uno Watzename, Steve Harley, Kim Fowley Ron Mael. [Photo 3] Steve Tyler (Aerosmith), Rodney "Wrist" Bingenheimer & Over and Watts. [Photo 4] Steve Stills, Howard Kaylan & Mark Volman (Eddie & Flo), Neil Young.



his Spokane gig the night before. Seems the would-be assassin scared everyone in the band except Ted, who played on till the cops came.

L.A. fans are pissed-off that the Sweet aren't going to play here during their current U.S. tour. They'll have to follow the English double-decker busses that Capitol Records is sending Press and In-Crowd down to San Diego in. Are you ready to get the next Sweet, *Give Us A Wink*, out probably Feb. 9th?

Rock and Roll Chicks are About to Take Over the World Dept.: Suzi Q. who will be returning to America to tour in February,

completed a smash tour with Stephen Stills, where they joined him nightly for his encore of "Suite-Judy Blue-Eyes". Now if they'd just work up a medley of "She's My Girl"/"Mr. Soul".

All you would-be Hollywood starlets, if you wanna see *actual* Rodney, cum to the Starwood, where every Monday and Tuesday the stars rub elbows dancing to English disco. (And who is the surprise group that'll hit the Starwood in March? Remember, if you *listen to what the man(me!) says*, you're allright.)

MORE V.D. & R. NEXT MONTH

JKBOX JURY

Once again it's year's end, and time to gaze backward for a moment before blundering onward into 1976. Without consulting any charts, my impression is that 1975 was a pretty good year. The biggest-grossing groups weren't necessarily the most gross, and the most popular recording artists all managed to maintain a fairly high standard. I can't think of anybody in the upper echelons

that didn't make at least one single I liked, which indicates a generally rising level of quality. There were a lot of new trends, a welcome sense of fluidity and change in the music scene at large, and a gratifying number of left-field hits.

In that light, it seems odd that, in trying to compile a "top ten" for the year, I had no trouble limiting it to 10 truly classic

hits, and was barely able to think of another 10 of what I'd call lasting value. This of course excludes disco records, which no longer fall within the purview of this column, and it's true that several of the year's classics ("Lady Marmalade," "Get Down Tonight," "Rock Your Baby," "Rock the Boat," etc.) fall into that category. Still, it's far from a bumper crop.

Street Shuffle" without the beat. Equally lacking in distinction is George Harrison's "This Guitar" (Apple 1885) whose chief value is in being the last release on Apple, probably the most widely and avidly collected label of the past ten years (Note: I'll pay \$10 for a copy of 1883....).

The Ozark Mountain Daredevils have another likely hit in "If I Only Knew" (A&M 1772), with its gently droning beat and nicely understated arrangement. Montrose, on the other hand, are at their most bloatedly Black Sabbath-like on "Matriarch" (WB 8172) though it's good for what it is. Flo & Eddie, meanwhile, are sounding extremely commercial with the Hammond-Hazlewood song "Rebecca" (Columbia 3-10264). This is the kind of big production they've always admired in the work of Gary Puckett & the Union Gap, and have here outdone in their usual fashion.

The Leslie West Band contributes to the genre of overweight pop with "We Gotta Get Out of This Place" (Phantom 10522), a quite admirable update. And Greg Lake has a new single, not to be included on any album, called "I Believe in Father Christmas" (Atlantic 3305). He's not too bad without E&P, in fact I might almost call this enjoyable, but then you could perhaps discount that as merely a symptom of my lingering Christmas cheer. Anyway, get it while you can.

A few interesting odds & ends this time. Nanette Workman, mentioned in passing in my Dudes story a few months back, is one of Montreal's leading lights, and her "Crying Crying" (Atco 7034) is a strong American debut. It's nominally disco, I suppose, but only in the sense that it's danceable. And I like her voice. Sunshine & Vinny have an unusual remake of Bruce Channel's "Hey Baby" (RCA 10526). What makes it more than just another in the long line of discoified oldies is the taste of "Sugar Sugar" they've thrown in, and a certain bounce that makes it a natural for the dance floor.

The Bellamy Brothers, produced by Tony Scotti and Phil Gernhard of Lobo fame, are back with "Let Your Love Flow" (WB 8169), their second release, and another fine pop rocker in the warm, bright, harmony-laden style this team is known for. Little Richard is back too, with "Call My Name" (Manticore 7007), which he produced himself and co-wrote with James Booker (remember "Gonzo"?). Nothing to scream about, but at least he's back in New Orleans where he belongs. And speaking of oldies, Joey Welz, who's made a career out of being a former Bill Haley's Comet, is still trying. "Disco Boogie" (Discgo 302), his own release, has a kind of wah-wah keyboard sound, quite novel. Good luck, Joey.

Biggest surprise of the month is Rampage, a group from Pascagoula, Mississippi, managed by Steve Rossi of the Allen & Rossi comedy team. With all that and 5 of the ugliest faces you ever saw going against them, they have a surprisingly polished boogie-pop sound on "Part Time Lover" (Rampage). They may not be great, but they're as good as Charlie Daniels, and it's always good to see local talent persevering.

Finally, speaking of local talent, don't forget the New Legion Rock Spectacular, with their electrifying version of "Second Cousin", reviewed here last month. If you tried to order it, my apologies; a typographical error gave the wrong address. Send your buck back to John Mangold, Box 588, Brookfield, Wisc. 53005. You'll be glad you did.

GREG SHAW'S TOP TEN 45's OF '75

1



"Born to Run" - Bruce Springsteen. This towers so far above the rest of his work that even non-believers can safely acknowledge its greatness. It's raw, excessive, too fast, too loud, and it disappeared as unexpectedly as it arrived. It's not "Da Doo Ron Ron" but it's as good as "19th Nervous Breakdown."

2

"I'm On Fire" - Dwight Twilley Band. The year's most remarkable occurrence could well be this record's apparently effortless rise to the top, despite being from a totally unknown group, and a complete throwback to the mid-'60s. Of course it's a great disc, but that doesn't necessarily mean a thing. Something is changing, and the door has been opened for all the other Dwight Twilleys out there who want to believe that rock & roll is enough.

3



"S.O.S." - Abba. It's certainly been Abba's year, with this, "Ring Ring" and "So Long". They're now being imitated and their songs covered all over the world, which is only natural since they've come up with the most viable and

Well, that was the year that was. Now for a quick look at the opening chords (I should say opening bars, but it's morning and the bars are still closed...) of 1976.

Eric Carmen - "All By Myself" - Arista 0165

It was no easy choice picking a single from Eric's superb album, and while something more easily programmable like "That's Rock & Roll" or "Sunrise" might have been more obvious, this is the cut that best showcases Carmen's

contemporary combination of pop confection and rock & roll rave since the Beatles. It's a sound uniquely theirs, and while it may be somewhat artificial, you can't help loving it.

4

"Bad Time" - Grand Funk. Whatever their limitations, you must give these boys credit for coming up with a song and a record destined to be remembered and revived for years. If they never equal it again, at least they've fulfilled their potential.

5



"I'm Not in Love" - 10cc. Another timeless statement, perfectly woven with ethereal harmonies, even better in its way than "Rubber Bullets", their classic of last year. Though still an uneven group, one song like this every year will ensure 10cc's fame.

6

"Philadelphia Freedom" - Elton John. Musically, this is probably the least memorable of my top ten, but due to his astonishing number of hits in 1975 Elton must be included, and I think this is his most significant (though, as an Elton John record, "Someone Saved My Life Tonight" is better) because it symbolizes his universal appeal and his ability to reflect perfectly the state of mind of his audience. It also represents the ubiquity which may be Elton's most notable attribute.

7

"When Will I Be Loved" - Linda Ronstadt. This was also the year that Linda reaped the rewards long overdue her, and this particular

all-round qualifications to be the next Elton John. Still a bit long at an edited 4:22, it seems to be taking off all right, so let's hope it goes all the way.

Danny Kirwan - "Ram Jam City" - DJM 1004

Kirwan, who presided over Fleetwood Mac's best years, makes a long-awaited return with this thoroughly likeable track, in the buoyant spirit of early Mungo Jerry. It's got that simple exuberance you just can't argue with, and would make a fine hit.

song I believe is destined to become her trademark. It's an ideal vehicle for her talents and her persona; if she'd written it herself, it couldn't be better suited to establishing the image that's always been the missing element in her search for stardom. It was wonderful to hear Linda Ronstadt crying out for justice, and getting it at last.

8

"Miracles" - Jefferson Starship. I have to admit it, this is an outstanding record that holds up and even improves with age. I still detest the San Francisco mentality in all forms, but I guess anybody can make a great record, if they keep trying long enough.

9

"Ballroom Blitz" - The Sweet. Not really one of my personal favorites, being overly strident and rather too predictable, but the belated success of the Sweet in America deserves notice, and also stands as one of the year's more portentous events. If they can make it, anything can happen.

10

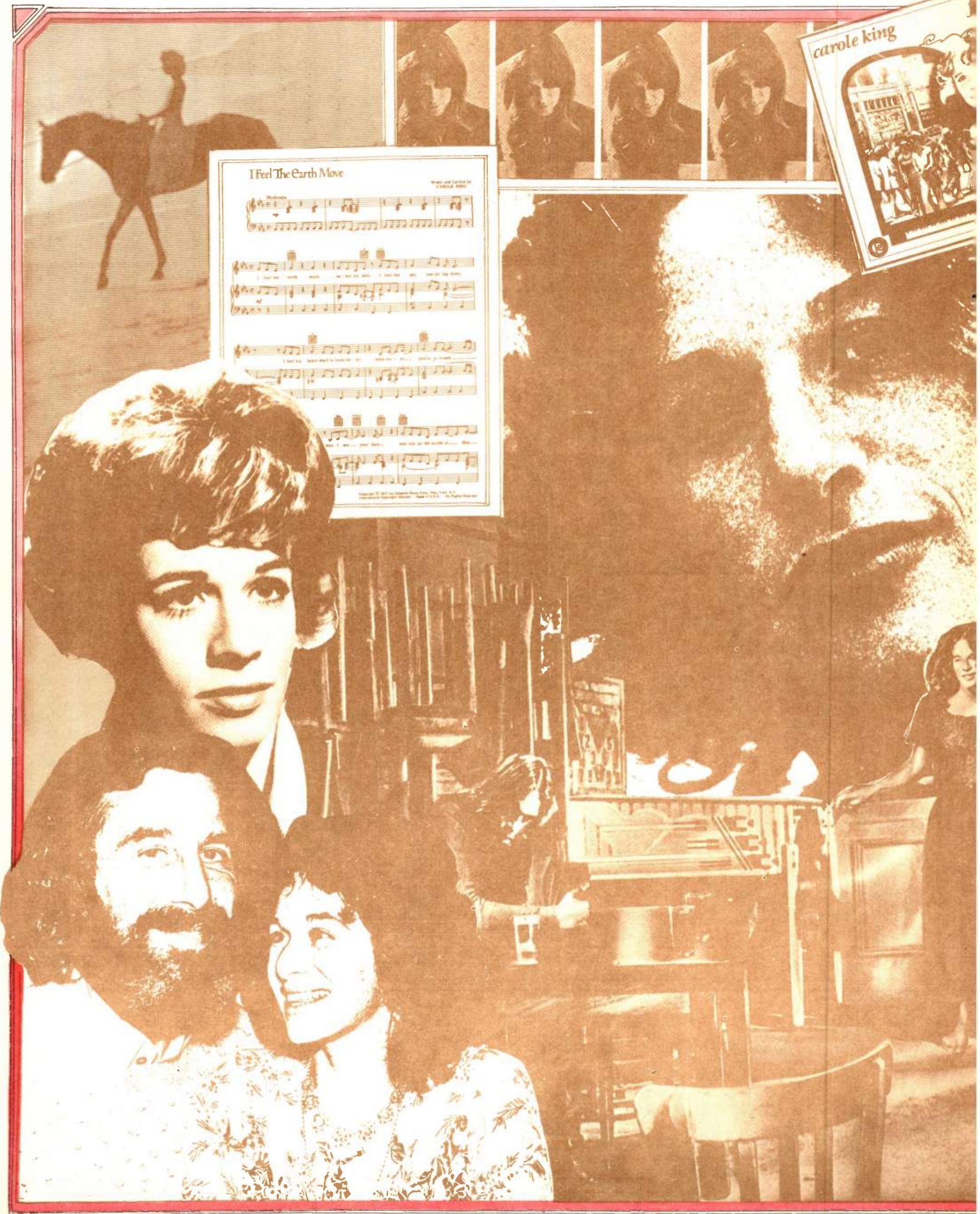


"Rendezvous" - Hudson Brothers. We didn't quite have the orgy of summer/surf music that characterized 1974, but this irresistible piece of fun-set-to-music, together with Johnny Rivers' delightful "Help Me Rhonda" made up in quality what was lacking in quantity. I'm beginning to doubt if the Hudsons will ever do anything truly monumental, but as long as they keep turning out this kind of material, one can think of them as a sort of super-Wombles and take pleasure at face value.

Fox - "Imagine Me Imagine You" - Ariola 7608

In many ways I like this one better than "Only You Can". The group has a different sound that reminds me slightly of Abba, though Kenny Young, for all his years in the business, is no Bjorn or Benny. It's good pop though, and that's enough.

Aside from these few, it's a pretty slow year so far. The latest from 10cc, "Art For Art's Sake" (Mercury 73725) is not as immediately impressive as most of their singles have been. It's a little like "Wall





CAROLE KING

Everyone knows Carole King writes pretty songs and sells lots of records, but how many are aware of how enormous the effect of her music has been on the last fifteen years of pop music? Did you know that by 1963 more than 200 of her songs had been recorded? That she has written #1 hits for everyone from Steve Lawrence to James Taylor? That *Tapestry* has sold over 10,000,000 copies, more than any Beatles album?

Even if you knew all that, noticed her name on all those hundreds of your favorite records, and realized the full impact of her influence on virtually every singer and songwriter of our age, what really do you know about Carole King? For someone whose stature can only be drawn in terms of Presley, the Beatles, Dylan, hers has been a most reclusive life, avoiding all forms of public posturing. She stands above the music scene, shrouded in silence.

This year marks the beginning of Carole King's 19th year in the music business; a decade and a half of that spent at the very peak. And now, in 1976, Carole King has arrived at a major turning point.



by Mitch Cohen, Lita Eliscu
& Sam Sutherland

1976 begins a new phase in Carole King's career. A new album, *Thoroughbred*, is on the way to the nation's racks. Following a few trial runs as a not-so-surprise guest on a recent Crosby and Nash tour, King is set to make her first lengthy, concentrated attempt at promotion through live appearances in two years.

The last tour, which included 14 American and six European dates, found King backed by a band including her then husband, Charlie Larkey, on bass, plus guitarist David T. Walker and drummer Harvey Mason. This year's edition of the Carole King band will be fuller, centered around members of The Section -- guitarist Danny "Kootch" Kortchmar, bassist Lee Sklar, and drummer Russ Kunkel. Additional personnel, drawn from the Los Angeles session ranks, will include percussionist Bobbie Hall Porter and Clarence MacDonald, and guitarist Robert "Waddy" Wachtel.

Tour dates set as of this writing, mid-January, are almost entirely college performances: Illinois State (Normal), Jan. 23-24; University of Michigan (Ann Arbor), Jan. 26, 27; University of Indiana (Bloomington), Jan. 29; University of Minnesota (Minneapolis), Feb. 1; Iowa State (Ames), Feb. 4; Southern Illinois University (Carbondale), Feb. 5; Vanderbilt University (Nashville), Feb. 7; and the San Francisco Opera House, Feb. 9. Apparently, the schedule has been set to break in the band before setting any more "important" dates, in big cities where national and international media are likely to look on. Though none have been announced, it seems a fairly safe bet that some will be.

Rumors of a King disassociation with Ode and Lou Adler appear to be unfounded; both MCA Records and ABC Records were the companies most frequently suggested as King's next label. King was, typically, unavailable for comment; an Ode representative

suggests that the ABC rumor came about as a result with the singer's connection with Crosby and Nash.

Rumors aside, King's current contract with Ode will soon expire. Undoubtedly, a re-negotiated agreement with Ode will be forthcoming as it would be difficult to imagine future King recordings without production direction from Lou Adler. (Adler's studio talents haven't been "for hire" in years. What few acts he produces are released on his Ode label).

Adler, like King, chooses to remain in the background. Intelligently he avoids dissection of his work beyond "what's in



the grooves". Perhaps that's why for more than a dozen years now they've consistently reached new creative and commercial peaks from one year to the next. Adler & King may not be the sweethearts of the record biz social scene, a la Elton and Janis Ian, but they are respected. Without spilling their guts in print or on the air with each release, second guessing and complacency from within the industry and subsequently the buyers is nearly impossible, or at least easily avoided.

Thoroughbred re-united Carole King with Gerry Goffin, in and of itself this fact is history.

out the music's harmonic richness with delicate, supportive melodic leads and rhythm parts. With choral harmonies intermittently enriched by backing vocals from David Crosby, Graham Nash, James Taylor and John David Souther, the resulting music is breezy, low-keyed and archetypally mellow.

That transformation is especially underscored in her new collaborations with Gerry Goffin, her partner during the '60s. The pair's stunning catalog of prime pop and rock 'n' roll during that era encompassed emotional extremes from abject romantic surrender to vengeful fury; though sentiment was never in short supply, the old romantic values were salted with glimpses of the street and the pressures of urban life. This urgency survives in King's melodic turns and in her plain, yet affecting singing.

But the songs themselves almost exclusively address the emotional trials of lovers and friends. Even in the best late '60s Goffin-King ballads, a continuing emphasis on discovering self was cushioned by a sustained belief in romantic ideals. While King, both in her own songs and the collaborations with Goffin, still holds love up to us as prime mover and spiritual key, she now couches these goals in more cautious terms. "So Many Ways" begins the album as a devotional hymn to a romantic partnership, as reverent as it is hopeful. Performed by King in a solo context -- just voice and piano -- the song is filled with wonder, an evocation of romantic innocence.

This same warmth and optimism, a familiar King trait, resonates in "High Out Of Time," one of her collaborations with

Goffin, where the choruses are buoyed by Crosby, Nash and Taylor to provide an aural equivalent of a rush. King's solo compositions extend this further, with "Only Love Is Real," "I'd Like To Know You Better" and "It's Gonna Work Out Fine" mirroring this dedication to true love in their very titles.

Though the gentle mood is consistently expressed with an elegance of style and precision of lyric that demonstrate King's craft, there is greater force when King concedes the uncertainty of emotional bonds. On "I'd Like to Know You Better," a characteristic tension between major and minor keys is resolved when King concedes,

...We seem to get along so well
Whether or not we'll stay that way
It's much too early to tell...
Meeting you has been so good for me
And if only temporarily
I want to be your friend, your lover...*

In that intrusion of love's more perilous potential, King touches on a contemporary romantic tradition of personal growth and emotional fragility as the goals and consequences of self-knowledge. "We All Have To Be Alone," written with Goffin, probes this tension more fully, and contains some of the album's most fully-realized lyrics, at once plain-spoken and evocative.

If stylistic restraint gives *Thoroughbred* greater focus, it also poses problems, especially in terms of pacing. These ten songs are primarily ballads, medium tempo works with a dynamic restraint that matches the subdued texture of the playing. A few moments of uninhibited energy helped give *Tapestry* its easy but

GROWING UP WITH CAROLE

By LITA ELISCU

In 1961, I hardly ever thought about the people who sang the songs playing on the radio, and absolutely nobody I knew ever thought about or mentioned the people who wrote those songs. Of course. The world then turned around in 1965: the term "singer-songwriter" became synonymous with money and chic, indeed the vocation of a whole generation and still going on. Still, it was 1971 before I thought about Carole King. An album, *Carole King: Writer*, was released, and the songs on it were wonderful. "Up On The Roof," "Goin' Back," and "There's No Easy Way Down." Songs written with Gerry Goffin, all successfully recorded by other performers, but the way she did them was simple, it was a relief to concentrate on the words and melody -- the black music roots came through, that "Motown" love-longing and heavy sweet rhythm. And then I remembered a day in school after gym class, 1961, a clique of black girls caroled and pranced through the lockers doing three-part harmony and looking tough. The meaning of the lyrics they sang broke over me, through me, made shivers. "Will You Still Love Me Tomorrow?" A simple question, but the exact one we all asked in those days of sweet surrender and battle. Oh the longing and the supposed needs.

And so I backslid into appreciation of Carole King who wrote that song, as so many others, with Gerry Goffin. It wasn't poetry but musical prose. The very realness of the perceptions shone through. *Writer* proved that the team had not lost the gift. Then *Tapestry* came out, now her words as well as music, and the statements so fit my time and place that I

wore out a copy or two of the album. The precious meaning of *Tapestry* seemed to be that men and women could be friends, friends and lovers, could keep on meeting.

In the '60s, we looked to our songs for reassurance and teen morality; in the '70s, we look to songwriters to make pronouncements, to show the way in deed. Looking for myth-building from Carole King proves fruitless. Perhaps because she was there in the late '50s and '60s, watched the first soaring stardrives and the crashes, so grew up not needing to taste it -- not wanting to pay the price. Whatever, she has kept her life for herself, kept gifts of time and energy for friends, just as should we all, just as she has said in songs. Actually, her pronouncements exist, but they are a gentle reminder that we each must live a life before we tell anyone else how to do it. Her huge commercial success prompted some to say she was undeserving, the lyrics superficial and the music simplistic and repetitive. I don't know. In 1968, David Crosby refused to sing a song Roger McGuinn wanted to have on an album. So the first and greatest combination of The Byrds broke up, and different faces appeared on the album cover. The song was "Goin' Back" and Crosby felt it was too slick, a product of Rock Pan Alley. David Crosby and Graham Nash sing the back-up vocals on Ms. King's latest *Thoroughbred* album, and Crosby said the sessions were among the best he has ever been a part of. I think he just forgot for a while the sweet, sneaking thrill, kinda scary, of singing along with "Up On The Roof" and "Will You Still Love Me Tomorrow" or doing "The Locomotion," the honesty of "You've Got A Friend."

THOROUGHBRED: "A Cautious Re-Evaluation of the King Style"

THOROUGHBRED
Carole King
Ode SP 77034

By SAM SUTHERLAND

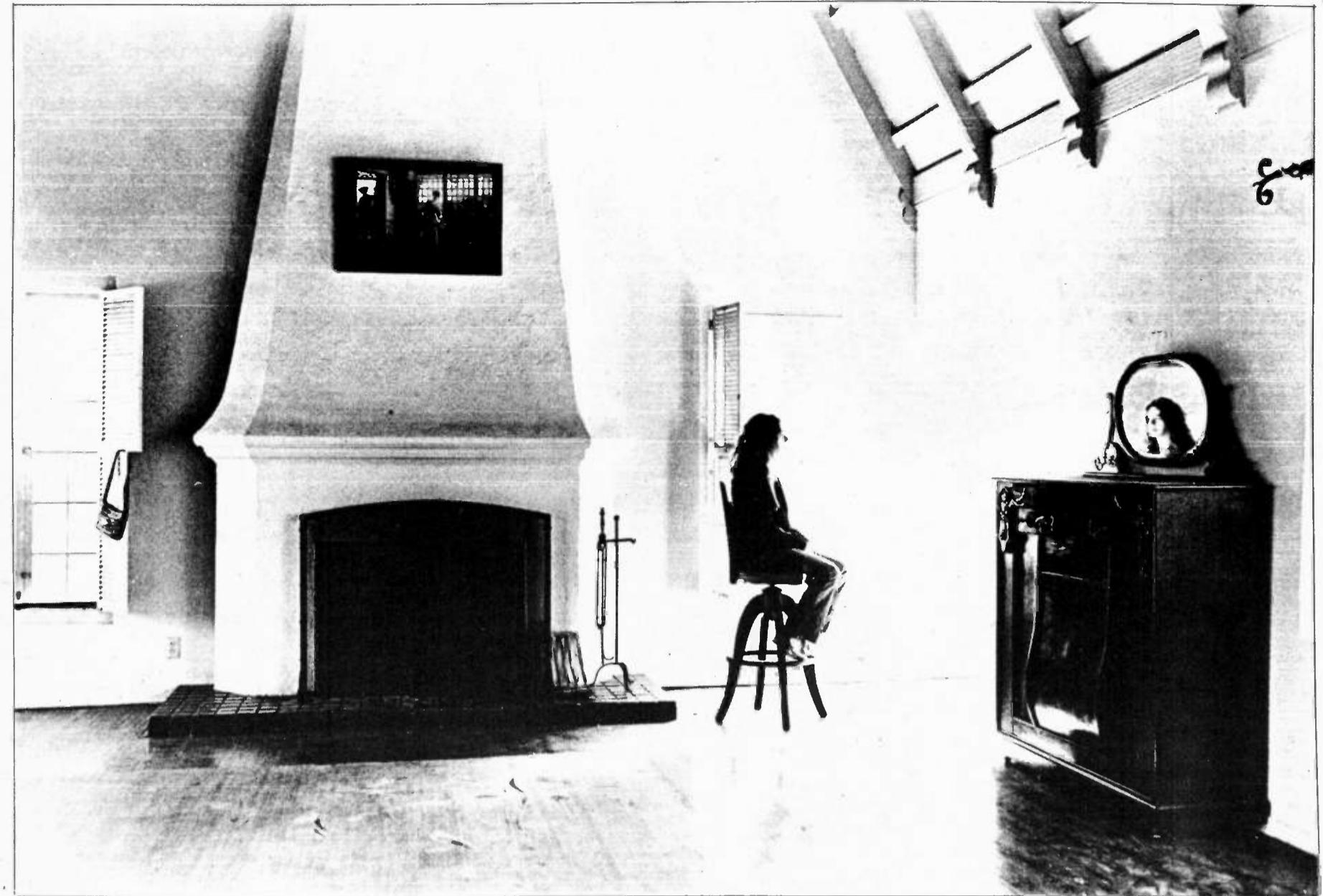
Thoroughbred is Carole King's seventh album, and in its cool modulation of mood and image, marks a striking return to the elemental style and emotional intimacy that were central virtues in *Writer* and *Tapestry*, her first two solo works. The new album isn't a precise reconstruction of an earlier musical period, but it does share in those albums' characteristic balance of structural restraint and verbal economy. While there are minor variations in musical color and detail, as well as in the point of view expressed lyrically, that attest to the music's vintage, these songs return to King's highest ground, the realm of the love song. Past forays into social commentary are shelved here; Carole King is currently concerned with the most basic and enduring of pop themes, romance.

In explicating these new love songs, King and Adler have completed the move back toward a smaller, more skeletal session band that began with last year's *Wrap Around Joy*. Drummer Russ Kunkel, a standout on the early recordings, crafts a supple, sympathetic pulse, working in tandem with his long-term partner, bassist Lee Sklar, himself a master of melodic, syncopated bass accents. Another old confederate, guitarist Danny Kortchmar, is paired with guitarist Robert Wachtel to gently flesh

infectious momentum; last year's *Wrap Around Joy* still recognized that vital need in its brisk, sly title tune, and in the slick but still propulsive single, "Jazzman." Here, the mood of the lyric dictates a quiet, reflective instrumental framework; melodic instrumental excursions are reined accordingly, and only King as vocalist takes flight. Given her vocal limitations, that choice isn't always wise: her voice has never been technically strong, and the flatness of her upper range too often disperses the atmospheric quality she achieves in her quieter, more tremulous moments.

Thoroughbred thus emerges as a cautious reevaluation of the King style, its restored sense of economy lending an enviable coherence. Old fans will be charmed, and some listeners who strayed from the fold during the excesses of her middle period albums will doubtless be won back. For those like myself -- and I confess to membership in that group of early fans somewhat disaffected by the narrow emotional bandwidth of her style -- the response will be mixed, for the new album's chief virtue, its coherence, is achieved at the cost of musical and thematic variety. Still, even the most skeptical will probably be forced to concede that Carole King's sense of craft, and her continued directness as a performer, point toward a second decade as an American pop fixture whose sense of trim, appealing melody and flair for lyrics with the balanced insight and familiarity of pop lyrics, insure a continued impact on the pop mainstream.

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CAROLE KING: ON THIS SIDE OF GOODBYE

AN ABRIDGED HISTORY OF THE POP MUSIC EXPERIENCE

By MITCH COHEN

He comes home from a night of petting heavily in the back row of the RKO Fordham. Aching from the pains of halted passion, he undresses carefully and slips into bed, clicking on the seven-transistor radio under the pillow. Somewhere in those semi-conscious moments before sleep, amidst the commercials for land developers and all-night clothing stores in New Jersey, muffled strings leap out at him, followed by the sweet voice of Shirley Alston singing lead for the Shirelles:

*Tonight you're mine completely
You give your love so sweetly
Tonight the light of love is in your eyes
But will you love me tomorrow?*

On the radio, in the last days of the year 1960, it doesn't get much realer than that. Talk about your shocks of recognition. Those succinct lyrics, the anxiously pleading lilt of the melody, the suggestive sway of the strings, the purr of Shirley's little girl voice - an unspectacular surrogate voice, so easy to relate to. The song seems to float on the repeating pattern of the violins. "So tell me now and I won't ask again/Will you still love me tomorrow?" Such a recognizable and timeless expression of sexual doubt and the need for even temporary human security. In 1960 there were very few pop songs that could match it for honesty and explicitness,

mad, none the less so by the implied innocence of the sound of the Shirelles. An epiphany of sorts for the teenager beginning to find out that passionate embraces and emotional commitment are not necessarily flip sides of the same coin. The song makes one of those magical connections between art and life.

Suddenly "Will You Still Love Me Tomorrow" has drifted away, replaced by more jingles, but it resonates, even though he didn't quite catch all the words, as he lies with his head against the tiny covered speaker. Maybe if he hears it once more in the pre-dawn hours, because he forgets to turn the radio off. And when he wakes up he's humming the chorus and wondering if Kathy heard it also as she was getting ready to go to bed. On the way home from school he stops at Music Makers and buys the single, and within weeks it's the number one record in the country, the first hit for a young songwriting team from New York City: lyrics by Gerry Goffin, music by Carole King.

This is about Carole King. Which means that it's about the past fifteen years or so of popular music, because she was there the whole time.

Some background data: born Carol Klein, February 9, 1941 in Brooklyn, New York to a middle-class Jewish family (father an insurance salesman, mother a public school teacher). An intelligent and obviously talented child, she learned to play the piano. By the mid-fifties - her young teenage years and the early days of rock and roll - Carole is star-struck, a

fan and camp-follower of a local group called the Tokens, whose lead singer is a boy named Neil Sedaka, and in emulation she forms a singing group called the Cosines (probably was taking geometry that semester). Like herself, Sedaka is an accomplished pianist for his age with show business aspirations, and the two teenagers are attracted to one another. When Sedaka leaves the Tokens to strike out on his own, the record that establishes him as a star is called "Oh Carol!" an emotional tribute to his biggest fan.

For Carole as a young, kind of plain-looking girl in Brooklyn, as for many of her contemporaries who maybe were forced to take piano lessons, pop music was a new way to go: a path not out of the ghetto, like in all those John Garfield movies, but out of middle class expectations (in the late sixties Carole wrote and produced for a group called the Myddle Class). She was seeing it happen to Sedaka with the Tokens. Two years older than Carole, not very handsome, non-athletic, with a high-pitched voice, he, by means of pop, was achieving local success and attention. Finally the kid whose mother made him go straight from school to practice piano could be a high-school celebrity, and youngsters like Paul Simon in Queens, Neil Diamond and Carole in Brooklyn, could sense the possibilities. It was an early '60s teen dream for the bright, musically inclined kids at Erasmus, Midwood, Madison, Forest Hills: you didn't have to be black, or a heart-throb Italian to make your mark in rock; you

could even be a nice Jewish girl.

Luckily, the right doors would open for any hopeful with enough chutzpah to bang on them and make a pest of him or herself. Rock 'n' roll had changed the rules: nobody knew what would hit anymore, so the record moguls were taking blind throws at a moving dartboard. It was possible to get people to listen to your songs, to get the chance to cut demonstration records and maybe even make a commercially released single of your own. And once that was done, anything was possible, including a lip-sync shot on American Bandstand.

Against her parents' wishes (naturally, they considered Sedaka and rock a bad influence on their daughter, who had already adopted her new name), Carole plunged into the New York City music business, where there's a broken heart for every number one with a bullet on Broadway. Along with Queens College classmate Paul Simon, she made a number of demos, a few of which actually became hits for other people. She also made some records under her own name. One, on the Alpine label, was "Oh Neil," an answer to Sedaka's hit. There was a record on RCA Victor as well, "Short Mort," a parody of Annette's "Tall Paul." But the most interesting of Carole's early 45s as a singer-composer were made for ABC-Paramount in 1958-59, arranged and conducted by Don Costa. Costa at that time was working with Steve Lawrence and Eydie Gorme and teenage teen idol Paul Anka. Listening to the King ABC sides, it is obvious that what Costa and

THE BRILL BUILDING 1960 - 1963

Sedaka & Greenfield, Mann & Weil, Leiber & Stoller, Barry & Greenwich, Goffin & King

the company thought they had on their hands was a female Anka: an ambitious adolescent who wrote her own material and sang in the acceptable manner of the femme rock crooner: squeaky, perky, enthusiastic.

Not to belabor the point, but a brief description of some Carole King ABC artifacts might be in order. Banal they may be, but in context they're nothing to be ashamed of, and they are historically valuable, so....The voice singing "The Right Girl" is unmistakeably that of Carole King, though she's been coached to imitate Anka, breaking up syllables into chokes and gasps. It's a grinding ballad with staggeringly inane lyrics ("I know I'm the right girl/The right girl for you-oo-oo-oo/And you are the right boy for me too"). Add some "I'll never tell you goodbye," "It was love at first sight," "Then you asked me to dance..." and you've got the picture. The flip, "Goin' Wild," is formula N.Y. studio rock and roll about a girl who's "goin' crazy, goin' batty" about her "rock 'n' rollin' daddy." Adequate sax solo and hand-clapping background. A solid 75: you can dance to it. "Baby Sittin'" is a novelty record in the Dodie Stevens "Pink Shoelaces" mold. The singer is baby sitting for her 17-year old boyfriend. Cute. "Under the Stars" is the B-side, a drastically overproduced cha-cha with every known cliche under the rock and roll stars. Sample verse:

*Under the stars you held me tight
Under the stars we kissed goodnight
Under the stars and a moon above
Under the stars we fell in love*

Around the time when these memorable songs were being put on wax for posterity, Carole met a chemistry major at Queens College named Gerry Goffin. Dropping out of school, the two formed a personal and professional relationship as Gerry became her husband and lyricist. Goffin was less anxious than his wife to make music a full-time pursuit, but he was finally convinced to give it a go, and Neil Sedaka introduced the songwriting team to Don Kirshner, who along with Al Nevins headed Aldon Music, a publishing firm. The Aldon plan was to concentrate exclusively on well-made, uncomplicated catchy songs for the ever-expanding young market. Kirshner would hire young songwriting teams at a couple of hundred bucks a week, stick them in an 'office' in the Brill Building on Broadway and order them to write hit records. Most of the time they did. "Will You Love Me Tomorrow" was Goffin and King's first attempt at pleasing Kirshner, and it worked. The song was turned down by Mitch Miller, head of A&R at Columbia Records so Kirshner brought it to Scepter Records' Shirelles.

The record hit, and the team was well on its way to becoming one of the most productive musical pairings in the business, along with fellow Aldon staffers Sedaka & Howie Greenfield, Cynthia Weil & Barry Mann (who went to Madison with Carole) and Jack Keller, and other freelancers Jerry Leiber & Mike Stoller and Jeff Barry & Ellie Greenwich. It must have been a heady time, 1960-63 in the Brill Building and vicinity. Tin Pan Alley had seen its power slip away momentarily when rock 'n' roll burst, and would see it happen again, but for now the tunesmiths, and New York City, were in control again - a younger breed, of course, and the energy was fierce. The lyric-music teams would sit and pace in their little one piano-one

bench-one window (if they were lucky) cubicles and try to fill the shipping list of the day. Bobby Vee needs a follow-up to "Rubber Ball," Spector wants a new single for the Crystals; Connie Francis had to have a hit to break a dry spell. The writers would kill for an A. M. hook, a catch-line that would become a by-word, an instantly hummable melody line. There were demonstration records to be

half minute gems. These musical prodigies from Flatbush, clever phrase-makers from Jackson Heights; none of them were very far out of their teens and all of them had access to the ears of millions of their contemporaries through the miracle of the transportable radio. The Brill Building teams were at least as closely related to Rodgers and Hart as to Jerry Lee Lewis, trained musicians who

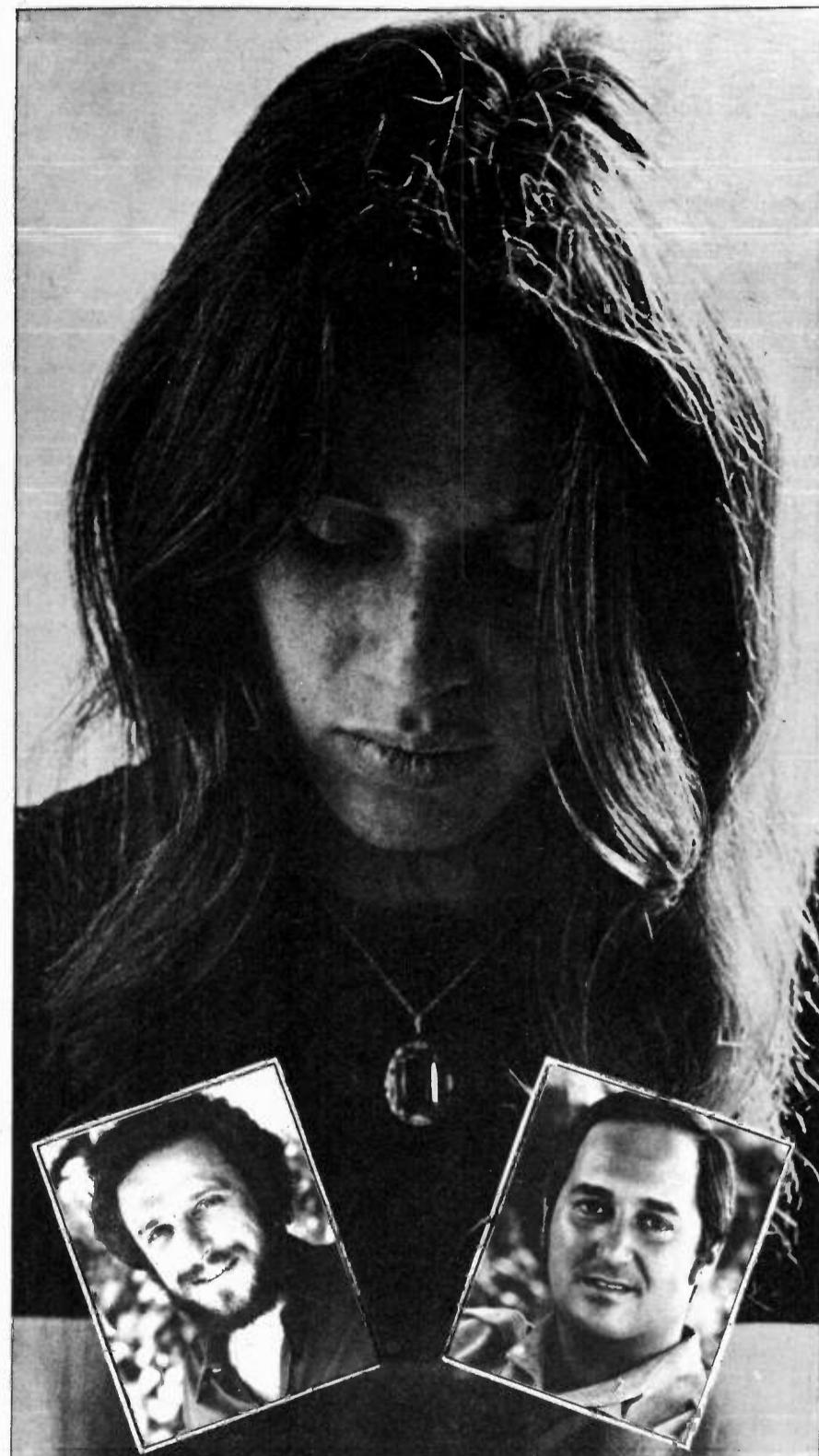
"Moonbeams," a World War II chestnut about a boy and girl who literally bump into each other at a dance, whirl deliriously around the floor and live happily in a cottage of lilac and laughter for ever more, from, say, Barry & Greenwich's "Da Doo Ron Ron," "You Should Have Seen The Way He Looked At Me," "Then He Kissed Me" or, to the point, Goffin & King's "I'm Into Something Good"? The romantic impulse is precisely the same, the narratives stunningly similar, even down to the meeting at a dance. Twin dreams: love at first sight/happily ever after. What is changed is the frame of reference, the language, the musical vocabulary aimed at teenage 1961 sensibility. Kids who dismiss Sinatra singing "Don't Worry 'Bout Me" as hopelessly corny could accept and embrace comparable self-pity from Bobby Vee in "Take Good Care of My Baby."

* * * * *
The times called for pajama party platters to hook on your thumb and commiserate over, to make radio dedications with. The lovelorn sadderbutwiser laments weren't boozy and melancholy or cleverly flippant, but like plaintive entries in a 14-year old's diary. It took understanding of emotion and idiom to get it right, to make perfect portable, disposable (most discs had a 10-12 week life span) music, and the Aldon crew, along with their related songspinners, had it down. It wouldn't be totally supportable to say that Goffin & King were the best of them all. Too many factors must be taken into consideration: Barry & Greenwich's songs were more streetwise and had more sidewalk immediacy, Sedaka and Greenfield had more irresistible hooks and melodic sophistication, Leiber & Stoller were far wittier, Mann & Weil experimented more and rocked harder. But at their best, Carole & Gerry's songs felt more true than anyone's. They had a touch of reality, the joy or poignancy of experience, that would very rarely leave their music.

*My tears are falling
Since you've taken her away
And though it really hurts me so
There's something that I've gotta say...*

Four piano chords under the verse, then into the title line, "Take Good Care of My Baby," and a peppy, but a little wistful arrangement and a voice that sounds as if it's straining to hold back tears. The formula for one of the biggest hits of the summer of '61, and as impeccable a pop record as ever was conceived. The song itself is the star-the instrumental bop-shoo-bop-shoo-bop background; the plucked strings; the first known use of the patented Carole King piano transition; the climbing chords that rise from the break and lead back into the last singing of the chorus and take your breath away and later are repeated to equal effect on violins. It's a time-capsule disc with great use of the cliche ("Once upon a time that little girl was mine") and an example of the mileage that Gerry and Carole could get out of one syllable ("so") as a conjunctive device.

There are those who could argue, and not without justification, that the type of record represented by "Take Good Care of My Baby" was heretical to the spirit of rock and roll; a betrayal of the virile promise of pre-Army Elvis. Certainly when the producers, A&R men and hit factories who were the children of the Gershwin's, Dietz & Schwartz, and Cahn & Van Heusen took over, they brought craftsmanship and slickness to rock and roll and in effect brought to a close the first era. The raw edge was taken off, the dynamic focus moved away from the crotch and away from the primitive natural-Holly, Elvis, Little Richard. New York, as always, was often too sharp, too calculated, and too ready to accept Paul Anka along with Phil Spector and Dion DiMucci.



Barry Mann, Neil Sedaka

made, the music machine had to be fed, and these were the kids who kept it functioning. New York, the Brill Building and Aldon were at the center of it all, and the hits just kept on coming. What a rush.

Just as twenty years before, the writers and executives were predominantly Jewish. The pop music demands, however, were different than when Harold Arlen was writing for the stage. They took the emotional message of rock 'n' roll, smoothed the rough edges, added Production Values (just like M.G.M. films in the thirties), cleaned up the sound and came up with two-and-a-

knew about melodic construction, about technique. The verse-an introductory passage that led into the body of the song and was abandoned when country and blues crashed into their songs without any polite prelude-came back. A certain spontaneity was lost. King and Sedaka could read music! The record makers and technology took over in the guise of rock and roll.

Beneath it all, there was a throw-back to sentimentality about love and romance that would have sounded familiar to the parents who detested what they considered the cacophony of rock 'n' roll. How far, really, is "Polka Dots and

In some ways the change was inevitable and cyclical, and anyone with a knowledge of pop music could have predicted the quiet revolution symptomized by Aldon's pragmatic romanticism. The brittle, cynical sophistication of the '30's songwriter was supplanted in the next decade by the slushy sentimentality of the songs of the second World War. Similarly, the slamming eroticism of rock 'n' roll was coopted by the professionals, tempered and made more acceptable to the adolescent who may have found Gene Vincent a bit...risky. The pros knew their market - budding females - and tailored their tunes to the teens, aiming straight at the tender sensibilities with a carefully formulated purpose: the pop fantasy. The male voices that stood for the dream were, for the most part, high and ineffectual, asexual and therefore nonthreatening: Vee, Sedaka, Bobby Rydell, Tony Orlando.

Carole King and Gerry Goffin flourished under the Kirshner regime because they could deliver the merchandise; whether for the boy tenors, the girl groups (it was a golden age for female trios); the rhythm and blues singers. Considering the enormous output and the pressurized working conditions, it's somewhat surprising that the overall song quality remained so high (there were exceptions and they won't be overlooked). Kirshner had exacting standards for a saleable record, and Goffin and King could live up to them.

1961, the first full year of Goffin & King's tenure under Kirshner, was the beginning of professional associations for the team that would result in some of their finest work. Besides starting their relationship with Bobby Vee, which was a most fortuitous one, they also in that year wrote "Every Breath I Take," a driving Gene Pitney record produced by Phil Spector, "Some Kind of Wonderful," a highpoint in the career of the Drifters, and "Halfway to Paradise" by Tony Orlando.

*I want to be your lover
But your friend is all I stay
I'm only halfway to paradise
So near yet so far away*

Orlando's involvement began with his discovery in a singing group by Kirshner, and he was brought into the organization as a songwriter and demo-singer. His recordings for Epic have recently been re-released in a *Before Dawn* package, and a few cuts on the album are good examples of the Brill Building approach to song structuring. Not surprisingly, the best tracks by far are those which were arranged and conducted by Carole King (and it should be noted that it was rare for a woman to be assigned such chores in the industry), specifically the three hit singles. Carole's style of arrangement owed a lot to the pioneering use of strings by Leiber & Stoller with the Drifters, and was applied successfully to the less forceful voice of Orlando. "Halfway to Paradise" opens with a full string section and timpani, then Orlando's cloying voice reads the lines quoted above, a classic sentiment. The construction is, as on "Take Good Care of My Baby," superb. Every time the title is coming up Goffin & King draw you towards it with a phrase like "you lead me..." that serves as a musical and logical hook.

The follow-up was "Bless You," written by Mann & Weil and arranged with special attention paid to a throbbing bass line. "Happy Times Are Here to Stay" (Goffin/King/Weil) was the third single, and not much of a hit although in some ways it's the most well-crafted of the trilogy, with strings that harken back to "Will You Love Me Tomorrow" and prominent Spanish guitar.

At times the Brill Building teams would indulge in some creative partner-swapping: Goffin & Mann cooked up a novelty record, "Who Put the Bomp," that was a hit for Mann as a vocalist; Goffin & Keller frequently wrote together, most notably Bobby Vee's "Run to Him;" King & Weil composed "Help Me" for Andy Williams, and Carole's first hit in 1962, the most successful year of her career until the '70s, was written with Howard Greenfield, Sedaka's lyricist. "Crying in the Rain" by the Everly Brothers, a standard raindrops-hiding-teardrops lyric supported by a lovely melody and Everly harmony, was produced by Lou Adler, the West Coast representative for Aldon Music who went on to become a key figure in Carole's musical life.

The California operation was centered on Colpix Records, a division of Columbia Pictures (later, Kirshner would sell Aldon to Screen Gems-Columbia, the company's music publishing wing) and most of the product was under the producing-arranging control of Stu Phillips. The Colpix connection, by and large, was not the proudest moment of Kirshner's stable of writers. For if the Kirshner Klan was responsible for many, many excellent pop records as interpreted by

Drifters, Vee, etc., they must also be prepared to take their share of the blame for some awful manifestations of pre-Beatle pop. There was a constant attempt from 1960-63 to get chart records out of TV series and film teenage personalities: Dwayne Hickman (*Dobie Gillis*) did an LP, Richard Chamberlain recorded for M.G.M., even "Beaver" Jerry Mathers cut a single ("Don't Cha Cry"), and Johnny Crawford of *The Rifleman* had some of the Brill Building's best on call for his Del-Fi discs. Colpix had Shelley Fabares (Lou Adler's

World) (in which he's off to join the circus), and each subsequent release extended a similar metaphor in a try for a second crack at the top ten. "Majesty" is a strident put-down of a haughty girl, and "Oscar," well... The verse alone is an example of excess. Darren half-speaks half-sings: I'd like to contest the awards given out by the academy/cause I know of a great performance/That the judges didn't see. You see, she led him on even though she loved another guy, giving the "best performance of the year." Words like

perish. Real gutcrunching stuff. With hindsight, one can see how the manipulation of television stars as recording artists, and the precedent set by Ricky Nelson with his weekly nationwide exposure for his records, might have planted a seed in Kirshner's mind for the further use of the medium as a music vehicle, but the results of that idea would not come until some years later.

Meanwhile, back in 1962, things were really going well for Goffin & King. February brought another splendid record by the Drifters, "When My Little Girl Is Smiling," and in May Bobby Vee released "Sharing You." Bobby Rydell had a respectable Goffin/King hit with "I've Got Bonnie," and in recognition of all the revenue they were generating for their firm, Carole and Gerry were given by Nevins and Kirshner a small reward: a record label of their very own. In actuality, Dimension Records was a Nevins-Kirshner company - they owned it, after all. But in practice, the label was an outlet for the special projects of Goffin & King. The story of Dimension starts off with a minor rock and roll legend.

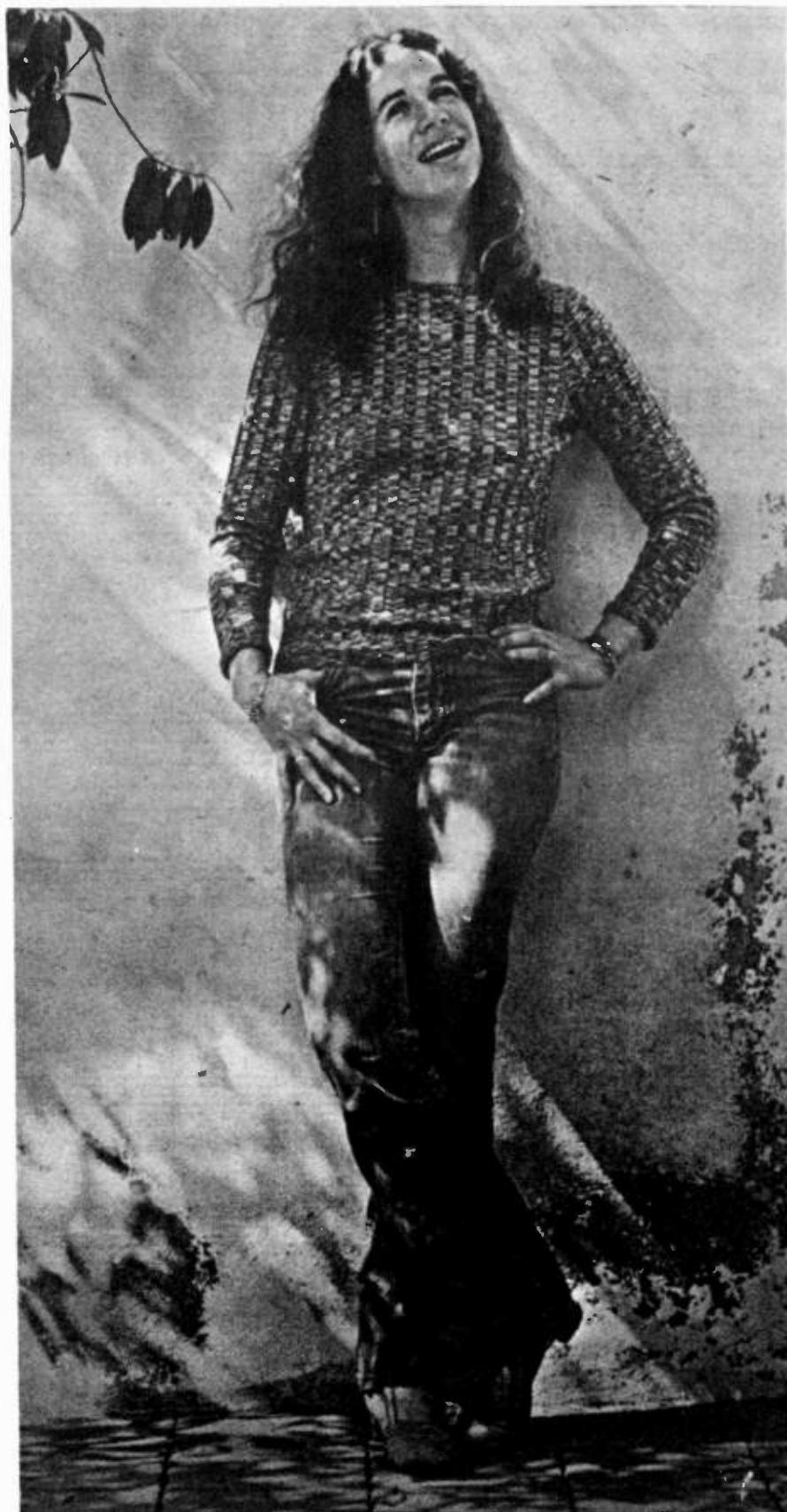
By now everybody knows that Eva Narcissus Boyd babysat for Carole & Gerry's children, and that one night the couple arrived home, heard Eva singing and decided to teach her a new song that they'd been working on. As Little Eva, Miss Boyd recorded "The Locomotion," and the premiere record on Dimension, like the premiere Goffin-King song for Kirshner, became number one, produced by Gerry Goffin, arranged by Carole King. It's kind of fable that pop dreams are built on.

What is there left to say about "The Locomotion"? It's a cornerstone of pop. The opening drum roll-and-chord alone has become the foundation for a whole school of contemporary rock (like Chuck Berry's guitar lick that opens "Johnny B. Goode"): you can hear it in the Raspberries, in Bruce Springsteen's "Born to Run."

There were no hits on Dimension as big as "The Locomotion," although for a short time the label seemed to have a promising future. Big Dee Irwin, with Little Eva on background vocals, scored with an update of "Swinging On A Star," the Oscar-winning song first burbled by Bing Crosby. And the trio of girls who sang behind Eva on "The Locomotion" also recorded a hit of their own. The Cookies - Dorothy Jones, Margaret Ross and Earljean McCree (who as Earl-Jean had a regional hit with "I'm Into Something Good" on Colpix) - were Goffin & King's contribution to the girl-group boom (their friends the Tokens had the Chiffons, Spector had the Crystals) and "Chains" made the charts in November 1962.

Carole, who abandoned making her own vocal records after "Oh Neil" bombed in late 1959, had not stopped singing. Very often she would make the demonstration records of songs written by herself and Gerry to submit to record companies. Her demos would sound close to a finished, polished product in order to present the composition in the most attractive setting, and a small music industry cult began to collect these private recordings. In mid-'62, Carole and Gerry wrote a song that they had in mind for a Bobby Vee summer release, "It Might As Well Rain Until September" - seasonal records, particularly those built around the teenage summer situations, were always good sellers. Vee eventually did record the song, but the hit single on it in the summer of '62 was an embellished demo of the song by Carole King on Dimension. A top three record in England, it almost made the top twenty in the United States (although not, strangely enough, in New York City) and might have been the start of a nice recording career for Carole had she been willing to do a more thorough promotion on the song. The next two Carole King Dimension singles, autumn's self-explanatory "School Bells Are Ringing" b/w "I Didn't Have Any Summer Romance" and "He's A Bad Boy" (one favorite topic of the early '60s was the nice girl in love with the disreputable fellow) didn't make any impact at all, and again Carole went back to writing on a full-time basis. Her last songs as an artist on Dimension, along with "September," appeared on an album in July 1963.

In addition to songs for their own company, Carole and Gerry were continuing to come up with hit records on a free-lance basis. Gene McDaniels, on Liberty like Bobby Vee, did a good job with "Point of No Return," and the



wife) and Paul Petersen of the Donna Reed show, plus James Darren of the *Gidget* movies. A case can be made for the songs provided by Goffin & King and Mann & Weil to these artists representing the absolute nadir of their songwriting careers. Goffin & King gave "Keep Your Love Locked (Deep in Your Heart)" to Paul Petersen - it came in between the s**t "She Can't Find Her Keys" and Mann & Weil's maudlin "My Dad." But even that wasn't as bad as the James Darren records. Mann & Weil are still embarrassed by "Conscience," and if Carole and Gerry aren't mortified by "Her Royal Majesty" and "They Should Have Given You The Oscar," they should be: the songs just may be their worst. Darren had one major hit, "Goodbye Cruel

"scene," "critics," "acting," and "audience," are thrown into a razzamataz production that Darren grates his way through. Then again, maybe he, Goffin and King were all in on a joke. Whatever the case, it flopped. Another relatively obscure Goffin/King Colpix cut was "Good Buddies" by the James Boys.

Before writing off Colpix (a forerunner of Colgems to come) as a total disaster, it should be mentioned that the Ronettes did some time there before joining Spector; that the Marcells' "Blue Moon" is a sublimely ridiculous doowop version of the Rodgers & Hart classic; and that in '63 Goffin & King turned out one of their best soul-ballads for the label's Freddie Scott. "Hey Girl" is a dramatic song in which Scott begs his girl not to leave him or he'll

peak of the teaming of Goffin & King and the Drifters was reached with "Up On The Roof," a classic by any standards. As on "Some Kind of Wonderful" and "When My Little Girl Is Smiling," the smooth vocalizing of the Drifters was reached with "Up On The Roof," a classic by any standards. As on "Some Kind of Wonderful" and "When My Little Girl Is Smiling," the smooth vocalizing of the Drifters blended beautifully with the sensuous movement of Carole's melody, and Gerry rose to the occasion with what is possibly his most vivid lyric.

*When this old world starts getting me down
And people are just too much for me to face
I climb way up to the top of the stairs
And all my cares just drift right into space*

The neat internal rhyming of "stairs" and "cares," the inspired use of the word "drift," the separation of the crowd below and the space above - it's a song to learn from.

Goffin & King had another chart-topping record as 1962 drew to a close, and proved that they could compose credible MORiented music. Kirshner had an obvious soft (and just as obviously blind) spot regarding Steve Lawrence and Eydie Gorme that lasted for many years - eventually they were signed to his own label - and the married couple was constantly programmed singly and jointly by the Aldon factory. Lawrence, as smarmy as ever, whimpered "Go Away Little Girl," a dandy little tune, fabulously produced with double-tracked vocals and every piano, and sounded like he was driving home and fending off a particularly precocious baby sitter. The song had the same appeal as "Take Good Care of My Baby" - the martyrdom of self-denial, and was a hit three separate times in ten years.

It was, for a while, contrary to Jagger and Richard, the song not the singer, an aesthetic of the 45, a concept into which any malleable vocal talent could be plugged with a fair chance of success. Michael Lydon, in his book *Boogie Lightning*, tells a story about how the Chiffons came to record Goffin & King's "One Fine Day": "Carole King and Gerry Goffin had completed a ready-to-press master of the tune sung by Little Eva...At the last minute they or Little Eva's management decided against it for her. So King and Goffin went back to the tapes, erased Little Eva's voice, and looked for someone else to sing the track." They brought the song to the Tokens, who were producing the Chiffons (nice how this community ties together, isn't it). Carole taught the vocal parts to the Chiffons, laid them on the already-existing master and voila! a top five record. The artist, in most cases, had minimal say over what the next record would be. It was all controlled by the producers, the A&R people. Men like Kirshner rose to the top of the industry because they knew how to mix and match. All their creativity was in The Deal, in having a combination of song and singer in his head and arranging for the consummation of his dream union. Not for nothing was Kirshner called The Man With the Golden Ear. Whatever talent he may possess is in the area of instinct - being able to sense the potential in a Bobby Darin, a Tony Orlando or a Carole King and riding with them until they pay off. Sticking to a policy of simple, accessible pop has made him a subject of much controversy in the rock world, coming under attack from those who see him as an enemy of rock. No one can contend, however, that Kirshner ever misjudged his audience.

And that audience was comprised of young buyers of single records. The A-side was king and all other manifestations of the music business were secondary to the big profit, fast turnover of the hit single. The big shows were vaudeville treadmills, presided over by hot-shot deejays who ushered the acts in and out. The "performances" were attempts to imitate the disc and were more communal memory-joggers than musical experiences. Nobody paid much attention to the long-playing album. LPs were, as the saying goes, the hit, the flip, the follow-up and filler. No artist, composer or producer was expected to sustain quality over the length of two album sides, so the only albums worth buying were collections of hit 45s. There were very few albums issued on Dimension, and the one album of any real interest was a composite sampler called *The Dimension Dolls*, consisting of four tracks apiece by the label's female roster: Little Eva, The Cookies and Carole King.

Carole had a hand in writing seven of the twelve songs included. Interestingly, two of

rather thin rendition of "Breaking Up Is Hard To Do" really charming as a tribute to Neil Sedaka, and "It Started All Over Again," an insipid song by Goffin & Keller, the least listenable of her tracks, is kind of touching for the way she pronounces "agin." On her own "Crying In the Rain" her voice is doubletracked and sounds quite a bit like Annette Funicello (for whom she wrote "Dreamin' About You"). She's a pleasant enough vocalist with authentic Brooklyn inflection ("togedah"), and the song is so good that it transcends petty criticism. The highlight of her quartet, however, is undoubtedly "It Might As Well Rain Until September."

*What can I write?
What can I say?
How can I tell you
How much I miss you?*

The song has one of Carole King's most glorious melodies, disguised somewhat by the too-jolly arrangement of her own version. The string section sounds like they're playing on the Spector Christmas album, the piano is prominent and Carole's singing is fittingly slight, making the song a summer classic.

The Cookies kick off the LP with the follow-up to "Chains" (also represented). "Don't Say Nothin' Bad About My Baby" has the command of teenage vernacular more commonly found in Ellie Greenwich. The guy is obviously rotten, but the girls make an admirable defense. He's good to her, after all, so what else matters? (see "He's Sure the Boy I Love" and "He's A Rebel"). They sing so purringly, "so girl you better shut your mouth," like all the tough junior high girls with razor blades in their bouffant hairdos. You don't mess, man. Also by the Cookies are an almost note-for-note copy of the Shirelles' "Foolish Little Girl" and a fascinating pre-Drifters version of the Leiber-Stoller-Weil standard "On Broadway." Sung by the Drifters, the song tells of a guy who was lured to the big city and found it hard going. The female protagonist of this version also recorded by the Crystals by Phil Spector, hasn't made it out of her small town yet, so the subject of the song becomes pre-disillusionment. With this song plus readings of "Uptown" (Mann-Weil) and "Up On The Roof" by Little Eva, the album contains three of the four songs that ushered in a new consciousness in urban rhythm and blues (the fourth was Jerry Leiber and Phil Spector's "Spanish Harlem"). These four songs face the realities of city life, and are adult reflections on common ghetto/rat race pressure. In the hands of the Drifters, Crystals and Ben E. King, the songs made you feel the environment they were written about. Little Eva and the Cookies don't seem to comprehend what's going on. Much more in Eva's territory is "Keep Your Hands Off My Baby," a believable expression of teenage possessiveness and the limits of friendship: you can borrow my comb, but don't touch my guy. "That boy is mine!" Enough said.

Lennon and McCartney never made any secret of the fact that they patterned their songwriting partnership closely on that of Goffin and King, and some of their earliest and still best songs - "She Loves You," "Please Please Me," "All My Loving" - show the lineage quite clearly. The change that the Beatles made was to play these pop songs as a self-contained rock band: music, lyrics, voices, instruments, arrangements all coming out of the same unit.

When the Beatles came they washed away many U.S. performers identified with the pre-Mersey sound, and may have had the same effect on American songwriters were it not for the simple fact that the majority of English groups had been weaned on American pop and r'n'b and were affected to the point where they would record their personal favorites. The Stones did "Under The Boardwalk," Manfred Mann's first U.S. hit was "Do Wah Diddy Diddy" by Barry & Greenwich, nearly all the Searchers' hits were American in origin, as were many by the Dave Clark Five (critic Mike Saunders contends that they based their entire sound on the three chords under the sax break in "The Locomotion"). 1964 was a slow year in productivity for many U.S. composers, but royalty checks kept coming in, and there were still opportunities to write for home-grown acts, particularly rhythm and blues singers. "Oh No Not My Baby," was given to Maxine Brown by Goffin & King, and it was a nice-sized hit in one of their most tried-and-true formulas: the girl refuses to

believe what other people are saying about her boyfriend - she's vindicated by an engagement ring. Old friends the Tokens recorded "He's In Town" in the style of the Four Seasons - among the few American singing groups to thrive in '64.

The biggest hit for Carole and Gerry in 1964 was a remake of "I'm Into Something Good" by Herman's Hermits, who also covered "Walking With My Angel," Bobby Vee's Goffin-King flip of "Run To Him." Probably Herman's producer - Mickie Most - a hitmaker who would have felt at home in the Brill Building - saw the potential in "Something Good," which hadn't had a great success its first time out. He imitated Earl-Jean's record faithfully, and Herman's Hermits were on their way to enormous popularity in the States.

The Kirshner assembly-line was forced to slow down somewhat as acts from the United Kingdom took a huge bite out of the market for American-produced popular music. So Goffin & King took refuge in what they must have believed would be a safe harbor. They had written songs for and with Phil Spector previously, but Spector's biggest chart successes had been with Barry-Greenwich and Mann-Weil compositions. In the early '60s Carole and Gerry penned a controversial single for the Crystals, "He Hit Me" (and it felt like a kiss), that may have been a bit too violent or sado-masochistic for most radio programmers. "No One Ever Tells You," also for the Crystals, and "He Knows I Love Him Too Much" by the Paris Sisters (and by Arlene Smith, lead singer for the Chantels) were other Goffin-King-Spector collaborations that fell short, but now it was 1965 and they reunited. At the beginning of the year, Spector, Mann and Weil fairly revolutionized the pop single, or at the very least expanded its boundaries, with "You've Lost That Lovin' Feeling," a long, varied, complex and dramatic record by the blue-eyed soul voices of the Righteous Brothers. Spector had always packed a great deal of emotion and energy into his productions, but now the dam had burst, and with Bob Hatfield and Bill Medley he had reached new heights - not as magnificent a rock record as "Be My Baby" (what could be?), but a more challenging, sophisticated sound. It was a smash, and Goffin & King were brought in to work on a follow-up in the same format.

The result, "Just Once In My Life," was a cluttered masterpiece. As a "song song," in Spector's words, it didn't match "Lovin' Feeling," but it remains an extremely strong record, and one that marked a new direction for its writers. "Just Once In My Life" is the start of those late-period Goffin & King ballads that close *Dusty(Springfield) In Memphis*, as are the two other works with Spector in '65: "Is This What I Get For Loving You" (what a Jewish title!), a typically grand Ronettes record and the Righteous Brothers' beautiful "Hung On You" ("Why did I have to get..."), sublime masochism with a superb melody and Spector bombast. How could it miss? It did, as did all of Spector's ingenious records to follow, including "River Deep, Mountain High" and "You Came, You Saw, You Conquered!"

Simplify, simplify. And if possible, imitate the already successful. Things were getting tougher as the new rock age was dawning in the second half of the decade. An anti-pop bias was beginning to emerge as rock got closer to its roots: blues, country; and began to experiment with electronic sounds. Even though the English bands needed material and got much of it from Tin Pan Alley-type writers, the attitude was slightly contemptuous of teen pop. Ironically, Eric Burdon and the Animals, who pointedly mocked Bobby Vee's "Take Good Care Of My Baby" in an autobiographical talking blues, made their two best Animal tracks from songs by Brill Building composers: "We Gotta Get Out of This Place" by Mann & Weil and the extraordinary and passionate "Don't Bring Me Down" by Goffin & King. Boundaries were indeed being drawn, but it was sometimes hard to tell what side some people were on. Garage bands flourished, the solo artist was becoming less important (Dylan was, as always, a special case), and if you wanted to have your songs exposed you either had to find a group outlet or sing them yourself. Carole and Gerry weren't ready to become a vocal duo, so they needed a band and they got two of them. One was a Hollywood creation; the other was comprised of five boys from New Jersey. Both spelled their names funny. The Monkees made it; the Mydelle Class didn't.

The Mydelle Class was a noble attempt by Carole and Gerry to go the independent route. They formed their own label, Tomorrow Records, distributed by Atco, and wrote and produced for the Mydelle Class, who released

a trio of singles, "Gates of Eden" - a stab at cashing in on the folk-rock protest trend - and two good Goffin-King songs, "I Happen to Love You" and "Don't Look Back," the latter distributed by Cameo and lost in the psychedelic summer of love. None of the three songs by the group, who were managed by Al Aronowitz, made so much as a ripple. The Mydelle Class, like so many moderately talented East Coast bands (The Magicians, The Strangers), never cracked through, never even put out an album. It's not a tragic story, but it is a typical one. Carole and Gerry were looking for a vehicle in a hectic scene that created a plethora of groups. Those few years ('65-'67) were exciting chaos, and it was perhaps better not to have the stigma of professionalism if you were to make it with the emerging underground rock audience. Of the four singles on the ill-fated Tomorrow label, three were by the Mydelle Class. The fourth, "A Road to Nowhere," was by Carole King and it, too, was a flop.

It is worth mentioning that essentially Eva, Earleean and Carole all sang more or less alike, with the same range and phrasing. The logical conclusion is that Carole cut the basic tracks, worked out a vocal arrangement in her key, etc., and then added the singing voice on top, forcing it into a mold.

Barely a week went by for almost two years that a song by Goffin & King was not present on the charts. Counting records by Darin, Orlando, Mann & Weil, Teddy Randazzo, Sedaka, Keller...., the Kirshner operation had what almost amounted to a pop monopoly, and there were no signs that the well-oiled machine would ever break down. Aldon and its various branches had established itself as a major force in the music business by sticking to a steady output of songs that were both impeccably crafted and easy to relate to.

Goffin & King, however, seemed to be getting into a rut by 1963. Their songs were still very popular, but fewer of them really surpassed the usual standards or were important hit records. The amazing creativity of their '61-'62 period gave way to a group of songs that were noticeably less inspired retreats of what they'd done before. Naturally, this was not always the case: "One Fine Day" is a totally delightful record, absolutely blissful in its optimism, "One fine day, you're gonna want me for your girl" "Hey Girl" has lost none of its strength over the years, and Goffin & King continued to do nice things with the Cookies.

For Little Eva, the couple could spin out nothing better than the overly adorable "Let's Turkey Trot" ("gobble-diddle-it") and the desperate "Old Smokey Locomotion." In the last days of the year Goffin & King were on the boards with a pair of records: "I Can't Stay Mad At You," a very Sedaka-ish song done by Skeeter Davis, and a final minor hit single for the Cookies, the most enjoyable "Girls Grow Up Faster Than Boys" ("I'm everything a girl should be now: 36-21-35"). If something hadn't happened to shake up the hierarchy of the music industry, Carole and Gerry might have gone on fashioning such pleasant trifles indefinitely.

"Goffin and King, the Americans, are fine writers." - Paul McCartney

"I think John and Paul are fantastic composers - right up there in the Gerry Goffin-Carole King class." - Ringo Starr

If to most pop fans the names Goffin and King meant little more than names in parentheses on record labels, if that much, the Beatles had a great respect for their songwriting talent. It's well known that when the Beatles came to the U.S. they were anxious to meet Carole and Gerry. Go-between Al Aronowitz set up the date in a hotel room. For the Beatles it was like an acknowledgement that they would never have gotten to America were it not for the musical influence of people like Goffin & King.

One of the most charming early Beatle performances, done for their Decca Records audition and available only on bootleg albums, is a version of Goffin & King's "Don't Ever Change," which was originally done by the Crickets. The song, a variation on the concept of Leiber and Stoller's Elvis Presley record "You're So Square (Baby I Don't Care)," is done as a quintessential Lennon-McCartney vocal duet; brisk and infectious, with good use made of that stirring Carole King note progression out of the bridge and into the chorus. (Although not a big hit in the States, "Don't Ever Change" had a sizeable impact on English rockers and has in recent years been recorded by Bryan Ferry and Brinsley Schwarz.) The Beatles also paid tribute to Goffin & King by including "Chains" on their debut album, sung nasally by George Harrison.

A continent away in Los Angeles, a television brainstorm was taking place in the spring of 1966. T.V. networks were never known for their innovations, so nobody was surprised when N.B.C. announced that they were filing a weekly series based on the antics of a four-man rock group. Anybody who'd seen the movies that Richard Lester made with the Beatles-breakneck comedies with jump-cuts, non-sequiters, puns and, of course, music - could have told you what the Monkees would be like, and once it was learned that the group was assembled by placing ads in the Hollywood trades, and that the musical supervisor of the show would be none other than Don Kirshner, you could hear the cries of "Plastic!" rising up from coast to coast. The television people - and they were good folks, too, like Bert Schneider, Bob Rafelson, Paul Mazursky and Larry Tucker - just knew that rock was where it was at and that *A Hard Day's Night* had made money. Kirshner saw in the Monkees an opportunity to fill a need in the music business: a group that would bring back pop fantasies, appeal to the young adolescent audience that rock was leaving behind, put his music machine back to work and be exposed to thirty million people for a half-hour every week. Paradise.

Kirshner moved quickly to mobilize his forces. The series was being produced by Screen Gems-Columbia, which had sometime earlier purchased Aldon Music, so naturally songwriters from Kirshner's publishing stable would be providing the songs, which would then be released on Colgems, the record division set up by the same company and headed by Kirshner. Eventually these entanglements, and Kirshner's lust for control, would get out of hand and he would get into legal battles with the various companies involved, but at the beginning things were functioning smoothly and it was like old times. The Monkees (in case you've forgotten: Mike Nesmith, Micky Dolenz, Davy Jones, and Peter Tork) were doing what they were told and everybody was making money. All the old gang: Sedaka, Mann & Weil, Jeff Barry, Goffin & King, Jerry Keller, and Neil Diamond, Barry-Greenwich protege, plus new kids like Boyce & Hart, David Gates, Harry Nilsson, Michael Murphy, John Stewart, were brought in to supply the music, and a lot of it was better than most people were willing to admit.

Carole and Gerry were involved with the Monkees from the very first single, writing what turned out to be the B-side (at first no one was sure which song would catch on), "Take a Giant Step," which is both a love song (he wants to mend her broken heart) and a coy commercialization of consciousness-expansion ("Take a giant step outside your mind"). *The Monkees*, the debut album, also included a song credited to Nesmith-Goffin-King, a relatively hard rocker with fuzztone guitar, "Sweet Young Thing," sung by Mike. For the second LP, *More of the Monkees*, they contributed, and produced, "Sometime In The Morning," a romantic ballad handled unusually well by Davy.

But it was the scorn from the underground and the emerging rock press that began to irk the Monkees, particularly Nesmith and Tork, who were less the show-business types than Dolenz and Jones. They were tired of being ridiculed as manufactured teen idols. Not one year into their career, the year that Lou Adler was organizing the first official gathering of the flower children up in Monterey, the Monkees had a small revolt, wanted more control over their recordings, wanted it to be known that they played their own instruments, wanted to matter. Over this little issue, Kirshner was out (his next project would be the Archies, an animated group guaranteed not to request artistic integrity), replaced as musical supervisor by Lester Sill, the "les" of Philes Records (Spector, of course, was the "Phil"). The Monkees were now produced by Chip Douglas, but the cast of writers remained more or less identical - still the Screen Gems-Columbia crew. *Pisces, Aquarius, Capricorn and Jones*, possibly the best Monkees LP, contains good songs by Nesmith, Nilsson, Murphy and Mann & Weil, and two songs by Goffin & King that try too hard. "Pleasant Valley Sunday," a top three single, is an obvious attack on conformity, and the opening line, "The local rock group down the street is trying hard to learn their song," is maybe a touch too bitter: a lot of local rock groups were riding high and encroaching on Goffin & King's turf. Equally facile is "Star

Collector," an early anti-groupie song. Carole's simple melodies are functional enough; it's Gerry's lyrics that sound forced. The Monkees on the decline kept on doing Goffin-King songs: "I Won't Be The Same Without Her," "Man Without A Dream," and the team wrote and Gerry produced the theme from their film *Head*, "Porpoise Song." Carole, with Toni Stern, wrote another song for the movie, "As We Go Along." Both songs, like *Head* itself, slippery, spacey and jumbled; infuriating and intriguing.

Fortunately the Monkees were not the only recording act to which Goffin & King offered their services in 1967. At the suggestion of Jerry Wexler of Atlantic, and with a title already provided for them, they wrote a terrific song for Aretha Franklin, "Natural Woman," a song with more conviction and eroticism than they'd been able to muster since "Will You Love Me Tomorrow." Two other important Goffin-King songs appeared late in the year on *The Notorious Byrd Brothers*, one of the two having been put out as a single some months earlier. You can hear time passing in "Goin' Back," a playful and serious, wise and naive song that is absolutely right for the Byrds and their whole aura of innocence regained. Also on side one of *Notorious* is "Wasn't Born to Follow" - more ordinary hippie stuff. The melody is ersatz country-western with a comfortable shapelessness to it, but Gerry's lyrics are only a few steps up from "Elusive Butterfly" or "Windmills Of Your Mind" in their celebration of instinct over logic. "Natural Woman" and "Goin' Back" were more crucial songs, however, and coming in the same year they promised a new maturity in the songwriting partnership of Goffin & King.

There were a number of other first-rate songs to come out of this period from the Goffin-King team, but the team itself found it couldn't sustain both a marriage and a career together. They split up, and Carole took their two daughters and a batch of Goffin-King songs to California (Gerry followed West later and the joint songwriting resumed). While in Los Angeles she formed, with a guitarist and a bass player, a group called The City. She wasn't overly excited by the idea of becoming a performer, but saw the trio as a medium through which her songs could be exposed. Although based in Los Angeles, the city they had in mind when naming the group was undoubtedly New York. All had very definite roots there: Danny Kootch Kortchman was a member of James Taylor's Flying Machine, a group that was a mainstay at the Village's Night Owl; Charles Larkey was another Villager, a Fug, in fact, but his connection with Carole was through the Myddle Class, for whom he played bass; and Carole was Brooklyn through and through. When the threesome decided to make an album, the logical person to approach in California was Lou Adler. The producer, who scored big with Johnny Rivers and the Mamas and the Papas and now had his own record label, Ode, then distributed by CBS Records had been a business associate of Carole's over the years through Aldon and Colpix, and had always admired her as a vocalist (through her demos) and composer. So under the guiding hand of Adler, and on his label, Carole King, with her two new musical partners and L.A. studio drummer Jimmy Gordon, made her first album as a singer, *Now That Everything's Been Said*.

The sound of The City on this album is thin; the session sounds hastily slapped together, with little of the care for texture that marked Adler's work with the Mamas and Papas. Nonetheless, *Now That Everything's Been Said* is a casual, very palatable album that contains a number of fine pop songs, all but one ("My Sweet Home") written by Carole either with Gerry, Toni Stern or David Palmer. "Snow Queen," which kicks off the album, is a Goffin-King jazz waltz about a lady with a reputation for being aloof. It's paced nice and easy, swinging lightly, and the small group instrumentation was obviously a touch too subtle for its time: the year of the power trio. Carole's voice has, as expected, become richer since her days as a Dimension doll, and even since the indifferent "Road to Nowhere." "Snow Queen" is followed by "I Wasn't Born to Follow," and somehow in the hands of The City it sounds less like a calculated attempt to be hip than the Byrds' version (Alan Price, who also did a bracing reading of Goffin & King's "On This Side Of Goodbye," has the most sensible approach to "Follow"). Carole's earnest, unadorned voice and insistent piano style give the song some real force behind it. On the whole, however, the Goffin-King songs are not the most impressive on the album: "Lady" is rather imitative of "Snow Queen," its main point of

interest being Gordon's drumming; "Hi-De Ho," none too impressive by Blood, Sweat & Tears, is so poorly mixed it's like listening through a filter; "All My Time" is an ambitious album closer that is reminiscent of the psychedelic bubblegum Carole wrote for *Head*. "Man Without A Dream" is high-quality Goffin-King, sung by Kootch. The piano on the cut is a close view of what would become full-blown on *Tapestry*: the halting, broken-up groups of musical phrases.

The album's title song, written with Stern, is the first to pop right out at you, though the lead of Carole's two voices is buried. Still, this is an indication of a promising partnership. Her songs with Stern, as with Goffin, dealt honestly with person-to-person conflicts. Here the singer, after much talk, still doesn't understand why her man is walking out, but the melody is such pretty pop that it hides some of the pain. The same theme is taken up on the LP's two other King-Stern collaborations, "Why Are You Leaving" and "I Don't Believe It." The two King-Palmer songs show him to be the weakest of her three lyricists, although he too was capable of a clever line. Artistically, the main problem with The City was that no member was willing to take the initiative and push toward the front. Carole's personality should dominate the album, but she hesitates to assert herself. Adler was lax in his role as producer; he should have seen that the album needed strengthening and then supplied the necessary push.

Even if *Now That Everything's Been Said* had been all that it could have been, most likely nobody would have heard it. Singer-songwriters were not yet a dominant force upon the market; particularly oldies-but-goodies like Carole King -- those who knew the name at all did so in connection with the then decidedly untrendy early Sixties. And Ode Records was at the very bottom of the CBS promotion staff's list of priorities. The only Ode act to achieve any recognition during the label's tie with Columbia, after McKenzie's one-shot success, was Spirit.

Another Ode album allowed to pass by was a lovely effort by *Mod Squad* star Peggy Lipton. Adler's then-current girlfriend, she received star treatment at his hands -- meaning the cream of Hollywood session musicians, and a number of Carole King songs. While Lipton's rather wispy voice isn't outstanding, neither is it unpleasant. *Peggy Lipton and Dusty in Memphis*, rather than *Now That Everything's Been Said*, proved to be the choice showground for Carole's most recent songs -- "Who Needs It," "Wasn't It Love?" "Lady of the Lake," and the vintage "(You Make Me Feel Like a) Natural Woman" and "It Might As Well Rain Until September" in the case of Lipton's album, and "So Much Love," "Don't Forget About Me," "No Easy Way Down," and "I Can't Make It Alone" on the Atlantic label, Springfield disc.

Following the failures of The City and Peggy Lipton, Ode and CBS Records parted company, and Lou Adler found an inevitable home for his label. In the early '60s Adler collaborated with Herb Alpert on producing Jan & Dean and such timeless acts as the Roosters and Dante & the Evergreens. Now, in 1970, Alpert was the co-head of one of the most powerful independent record labels in the country, A&M Records, and it was there, closing another circle, that Adler took Ode. With Adler involved nearly full-time producing Robert Altman's film *Brewster McCloud*, Carole decided she was ready to have a fling at a solo album, encouraged by James Taylor, whom she had met through Kootch and found a strong rapport. She played piano for him on *Sweet Baby James* and joined him on stage on a few occasions, and he repaid the favor by playing on *Writer*, recorded in March and April of '70. In Adler's absence, John Fishback handled production chores and Goffin did the mixing. The band was essentially The City (who'd become, minus Carole, Jo Mama) plus Taylor, drummer Joel O'Brien, organist Ralph Schuckett and Fishback; the arrangements, piano and vocals were by Carole King, and the album had some of the same faults as The City's: she was still making demos - selling the song rather than herself - and the instrumental backing remained too cool and without punch.

All the songs but two were written by Goffin, including three Goffin-King "standards." "Spaceship Races" is the opening track, an atypical rocker not really right for Carole. Once more, her voice doesn't come through strongly enough. The bridge is good, however, and the song might have been a

successful Byrds vehicle in 1968. "No Easy Way Down" here suffers compared to Dusty's version; the production asks too much of Carole's voice and not enough of her piano. Not until the third song, "Child of Mine," do you feel some of what would make *Tapestry* so special. In some ways the next album grew out of this cut's sparse piano, simple and unaffected singing, uncluttered melody with that unmistakable keyboard style linking the melodic phrases. Carole's version of "Goin' Back" can't match the familiar Byrds reading, and she rushes when she should be leisurely on this most nostalgic of songs.

Side two has some bright spots on the way to its satisfying finish: King & Stern's "Raspberry Jam", another "snowqueen" jazz waltz that serves as an instrumental showpiece for the band (Carole does a little scatting at the end); a cheery friend-lover song, "Sweet Sweetheart," and finally "Up On The Roof." "Roof" is a song that Goffin and King can be most proud of; it is a cornerstone of their legacy - an urban pastoral (if that's not a contradiction). And Carole does it proud, as if she knew damned well how great it is, could sing it confidently and with conviction, and felt no need to tamper with it at all. The album, although nicely received by the critics, did not do well commercially.

Despite that little setback, Carole King was well on the way to a full-fledged singing career. She began to perform more often with Taylor - at first as accompanying pianist and later as the second act in places like the Troubadour and Toronto's Massey Hall and as part of a roadshow consisting of Taylor, herself and Jo Mama - winning praise and fans and gaining confidence. She'd done more guest shots on albums by people like John Stewart and B.B. King. Soon she was ready to put her whole performing self on record.

As a commercial event, *Tapestry* is nothing short of astounding, even more so because so unexpected. It's only rival for chart longevity (as this is written, more than 240 weeks on Billboard's Top 200 with no sign of dropping off) is a greatest hits collection by Johnny Mathis. In terms of sales (approximately 10 million) the closest competition comes from *The Sound of Music*, the soundtrack from the largest-grossing musical film of all time, and *Bridge Over Troubled Water* by Simon & Garfunkel. *Tapestry* outsold by millions the top Beatle LP. It managed to touch the elusive common nerve, make a mockery of demographics, reach out and really affect people on a personal level.

When the album took off, so did Carole. After a summer tour that began with a triumphant home-coming at Carnegie Hall, she went into seclusion, granting no interviews, even to national magazines that wanted to put her on the cover. Adler, as producer of *Tapestry*, Carole's friend and head of her label, became her spokesman. She didn't want to be a star, he said. All you need to know about Carole King you could find in her music. So while *Tapestry* dominated the year 1971, eventually winning four Grammy awards (Best Album; Song - "You've Got a Friend," Record - "It's Too Late," Female Vocalist), Carole hid away from her public, away from the impact her album was creating.

An immediate effect of *Tapestry* was the inspiration it gave to a few people who shared Carole's N.Y.C. hit factory background and now wanted to carve a slice of the recording success they saw her achieve. Barry Mann, like Carole, had had one hit single early in his career, and now was emboldened to take another crack at record-making. Carole helped him directly, giving him a solo spot in her L.A. Greek Theatre show with a warm, reminiscent introduction, and playing along with her band on two cuts of Mann's *Lay It All Out* LP. The album, which includes a pair of Goffin-Mann songs, plus reworkings of "On Broadway" and "You've Lost That Lovin' Feeling" and originals by Mann alone or with Weil, didn't make any impression on the public. Neither did Neil Sedaka's *Emergence* for Kirshner, or Ellie Greenwich's 1973 *Let It Be Written, Let It Be Sung*, an overlooked delight (she'd also had an earlier singing career, solo and with Jeff Barry as The Raindrops). Whatever magic Carole King had, it wasn't contagious.

So Carole fled from the limelight that she had always seemed to crave - a girl who spells her first name differently (like Streisand, another gutsy Brooklyn kid), changes her surname to King and is hustling her songs to fellows like Ahmet Ertegun at age 16 is not seeking to fade into the crowd - but continued her free-lance studio activity, doing back-up vocals for Jo Mama's *J Is For Jump* and piano for Taylor's *Mud Slide Slim*. For Merry Clayton who sang behind her on *Tapestry* and was an Ode artist

produced by Adler, Carole made a major contribution: three brand new songs written, arranged and keyboarded by Carole King. Carole had sung "After All" at Carnegie but never recorded it, so Clayton's version is a special treat. It's a wonderful song in a Motown (Smokey) vein that celebrates a love that keeps getting better. The other two songs, although welcome additions to the King catalog, are less impressive. "Walk On In" is another bouncy run-to-me-if-you-need-a-friend song and "Same Old Story" builds itself dramatically, gospel-fashion, on a very basic base. Around this time Carole also wrote and recorded the theme from the movie *Pocket Money*, of which she was in no short supply.

At the end of the year, perhaps too soon on the heels of *Tapestry*, *Music* was released, a blatant but largely successful attempt to recreate the magic formula. It was doomed to fall short of its predecessor's cohesive perfection. Song for song, however, the album is quite satisfying.

Rhymes and Reasons, released in 1972, was both a continuation and an extension. The cast has been increased to include the harder-riffing David T. Walker on guitar and Red Rhodes on pedal steel, and Harvey Mason has taken over drumming chores. The horn sound of Curtis Amy has been replaced by a horn-woodwind section. The album has a definite flow about it, on the first side most obviously, that is more textural than thematic.

Personal appearances by Carole after the '71 tour were infrequent. Her one major concert in the next year was a political one: a fund-raising event organized by Warren Beatty for the Presidential campaign of George McGovern. Headlining Barbra Streisand, James Taylor, Carole King and Quincy Jones' orchestra, the show at the Los Angeles Forum collected \$300,000 for the noble but hopeless cause. Then, in the spring of 1973, Carole went on the road again, the highlight of her tour being a gift to the people of New York: a free concert on the Great Lawn in Central Park. May 26th was a cloudy, cool Saturday, but approximately 70,000 fans gathered to welcome Carole back to her city. Staged by Chip Monck, the hour-and-a-quarter concert was filmed for TV, and some footage eventually was shown on a late-night Geraldo Rivera show. About the concert, attendee Jack Nicholson was quoted in the New York Times: "This and the Ellsberg trial are the only two events it's proper to be seen at in public." She opened solo and did a number of audience favorites, but the bulk of the show began when, with group and horn section, she introduced a series of songs from her forthcoming album, *Fantasy*.

In response, perhaps, to the critics who suggested that she was falling into a complacent pattern, Carole decided to try something totally new, an album unified not, as were her previous LPs, by one woman's observations on love, but by a position paper on a number of social issues placed within the framing device of Carole King's "fantasy." It was a mistake, as it turned out, but only a misguided one. A decade earlier she was making comments through "Up On The Roof" without having to slip out of her "real life role" to do it. As a concept, *Fantasy* is confused; as music it is often brilliant. Most of the songs really do have fine melodies, the horn and string sections are superb (now only Larkey is left from *Tapestry*) and Carole is looser and jazzier than ever. The LP works as a sound suite; it's the ideas and lyrics that bring it down. It seems ironic that some of her most inventive music and best singing is found on an album that is an overall disappointment.

Cover versions of Carole King songs continued to proliferate while the composer was becoming a recording superstar. Aside from *Tapestry*'s tunes, which had become familiar fare from every middle-of-the-road singer with a microphone, artists with taste or producers with ears were digging up older hits from the King catalog and decking them out in contemporary clothes. Bobby Vinton droned his way through some Goffin-King ballads; Aretha recorded a bristling version of "Oh No Not My Baby," as did Rod Stewart, who also changed the gender of "Natural Woman," and Donny Osmond clicked with "Go Away Little Girl." Spring's only LP, produced by Brian Wilson, contains a pair of Carole's songs, "Now That Everything's Been Said," a close replica of The City's track, and "Down Home," a Goffin-King song that appeared on the flip side of "Let's Turkey Trot." More recently, Nils Lofgren cut a pleasant "Goin' Back," and Grand Funk lumbered through "The Locomotion" like a creaky locomotive heading for the graveyard of the Iron Horse, featuring one of the most hilarious guitar solos ever committed to vinyl. Fact: in the history of the Billboard charts only two songs have

reached the number one position on two separate occasions by two different artists, and both were written by Gerry and Carole, "Go Away Little Girl" and "The Locomotion." As this activity was going on, Gerry Goffin was slowly building a career away from Carole, writing a delectable song for the Partridge Family ("I'll Meet You Halfway"), recording his own two-LP set for Adelphi (*Not Exactly Entertainment*) and starting to write lyrics for Barry Goldberg, former organist for the Electric Flag. This teaming has produced one big hit for Gladys Knight and the Pips, "I've Got To Use My Imagination," an often-recorded soul song, "It's Not the Spotlight" and a song for the movie *Stardust*, "C'mon Little Dixie." Goffin has also written the lyrics of the theme from *Mahogany*, a recent best-seller for Diana Ross.

Carole also has been composing for projects other than her own LPs, including "No Sad Song" by Helen Reddy and "Dixie Highway" by Martha Reeves, but kept most of her songs for herself. Her 1974 album was a conscious shift back to the pre-*Fantasy* style called *Wrap Around Joy*, and a successful single for Carole came out of it, "Jazzman," with Tom Scott blowing fine sax on the song's break. But again the album as a whole is a let-down. David Palmer, her weakest songwriting partner from her days with The City, has contributed most of the album's words, and on songs like "The Best Is Yet To Come" and "We're All In This Together" they are reminiscent of the level of *Fantasy*. "Nightingale" also manages to rise above the album's mediocrity and made a good single, yet even the best parts of *Wrap Around Joy* don't seem to connect to anything. The long period of time between albums (spring '73 through autumn '74) and the collection that eventually emerged began to suggest that Carole's creativity was drying up.

As always was the case with Carole King, predictions like that were totally premature. Within a few months following *Wrap Around Joy*, she was the lead acting voice and composer for an absolutely charming animated television show based on the children's books of Maurice Sendak. A proposed variety special with James Taylor and a complete broadcast of the Central Park show had fallen through, so this appearance in *Really Rosie* (originally called *What Ever Happened to Chicken Soup?*) was Carole's TV debut, and a wonderful one. She played Rosie, an imaginative Jewish girl from Brooklyn who assembles her neighborhood friends to act in a film in which she is star, writer and director. Not only was Carole perfect as Rosie, but Sendak's verse proved to be her best lyrics in ages, entirely suited to her personality, and vehicles for some joyful tunes. The album from the show, with vocal assistance from Carole and Gerry's two daughters, was easily her finest since *Rhymes and Reasons*. Geared toward children, with alphabet and counting lessons disguised in the rhymes, the songs Carole wrote and sang for *Really Rosie* had a simplicity and lack of contrivance that had slipped away from her. Given Sendak's lyrics, she was freed verbally and allowed to express herself musically and vocally. The results, on such songs as "Chicken Soup With Rice" (with twelve stanzas, one for each month) and "Such Sufferin'" ("Give me a Bufferin'"), were superb. Of course, *Really Rosie* represented a one-shot deal and Carole couldn't repeat it, but it did act as an injection of new vitality to her music. Since then she has made one other appearance on television, a cameo role on a Mary Tyler Moore episode.

As this is written, at the close of 1975, things are looking up in terms of Carole's activity. She showed up on stage at a Crosby-Nash concert (she's on their *Wind On The Water* LP) in the fall and sang three brand new numbers, reportedly quite good, and there's talk that she may be considering a return to the road. And perhaps the best news of all is that those three new songs were written with Gerry Goffin, and that at least the songwriting partnership has reconciled.

Circles keep closing: Tony Orlando hosts a network variety series; Neil Sedaka has had a series of top ten records as composer and singer; half of the Monkees plus Boyce and Hart have signed a recording contract; Don Kirshner is planning to concentrate more on signing promising composing teams, and the Tokens are semi-regulars on his *Musical Chairs* game show; Cynthia Weil is writing with Rick Derringer; Barry Mann is recording for RCA - his album is called *Survivor*. If ever the time was right for Goffin & King pop music, now is that time.

*Over and over and over again
My friend, there's no end to the music*

THE CAROLE KING TOP 99

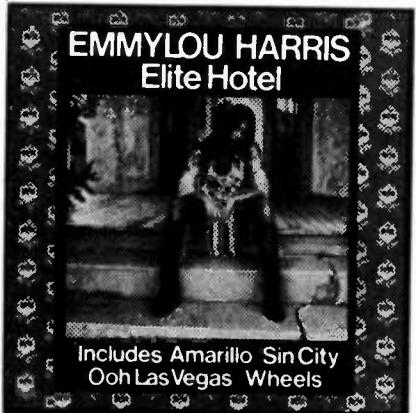
(Chartmaking Copyrights 1960 - 1975)

DATE	TITLE	ARTIST	* POSITION
10-60	WILL YOU STILL LOVE ME TOMORROW	SHIRELLES	1
3-61	SOME KIND OF WONDERFUL	DRIFTERS	32
5-61	HALFWAY TO PARADISE	TONY ORLANDO	39
6-61	HOW MANY TEARS	BOBBY VEE	63
6-61	POINT OF NO RETURN	ADAM WADE	85
7-61	WHAT A SWEET THING THAT WAS	SHIRELLES	54
8-61	EVERY BREATH I TAKE	GENE PITNEY	42
8-61	TAKE GOOD CARE OF MY BABY	BOBBY VEE	1
9-61	DEAR MR. DJ	TINA ROBIN	95
12-61	I COULD HAVE LOVED YOU SO WELL	RAY PETERSEN	57
12-61	WALKIN' WITH MY ANGEL	BOBBY VEE	53
12-61	HAPPY TIMES	TONY ORLANDO	82
12-61	I'D NEVER FIND ANOTHER YOU	BILLY FURY	4(UK)
1-62	CRYING IN THE RAIN	EVERLY BROTHERS	6
1-62	HE KNOWS I LOVE HIM TOO MUCH	PARIS SISTERS	34
2-62	I'VE GOT BONNIE	BOBBY RYDELL	18
2-62	WHEN MY LITTLE GIRL IS SMILING	DRIFTERS	28
4-62	WHEN MY LITTLE GIRL IS SMILING	JIMMY JUSTICE	9(UK)
4-62	WHEN MY LITTLE GIRL IS SMILING	CRAIG DOUGLAS	9(UK)
5-62	SHARING YOU	BOBBY VEE	15
5-62	WHY'D YOU WANNA MAKE ME CRY	CONNIE STEVENS	52
6-62	LOCOMOTION	LITTLE EVA	1
6-62	HOW CAN I MEET HER	EVERLY BROTHERS	75
6-62	KEEP YOUR LOVE LOCKED	PAUL PETERSEN	58
7-62	DON'T EVER CHANGE	CRICKETS	5(UK)
8-62	IT MIGHT AS WELL RAIN UNTIL SEPT	CAROLE KING	22
8-62	POINT OF NO RETURN	GENE McDANIELS	21
11-62	KEEP YOUR HANDS OFF MY BABY	LITTLE EVA	12
11-62	CHAINS	COOKIES	17
11-62	GO AWAY LITTLE GIRL	STEVE LAWRENCE	1
11-62	UP ON THE ROOF	DRIFTERS	5
1-63	UP ON THE ROOF	KENNY LYNCH	10(UK)
2-63	LET'S TURKEY TROT	LITTLE EVA	20
3-63	DON'T SAY NOTHIN' BAD	COOKIES	7
3-63	DON'T BE AFRAID LITTLE DARLIN'	STEVE LAWRENCE	26
4-63	HE'S A BAD BOY	CAROLE KING	94
4-63	THIS LITTLE GIRL	DION	21
5-63	POOR LITTLE RICH GIRL	STEVE LAWRENCE	27
6-63	ONE FINE DAY	CHIFFONS	5
6-63	OLD SMOKEY LOCOMOTION	LITTLE EVA	48
7-63	WILL POWER	COOKIES	72
7-63	HEY GIRL	FREDDIE SCOTT	10
7-63	I WANT TO STAY HERE	STEVE & EYDIE	28
9-63	I CAN'T STAY MAD AT YOU	SKEETER DAVIS	7
9-63	EVERYBODY GO HOME	EYDIE GORME	80
6-64	I CAN'T HEAR YOU	BETTY EVERETT	66
6-64	I'M INTO SOMETHING GOOD	EARL-JEAN	38
8-64	HE'S IN TOWN	TOKENS	43
10-64	HE'S IN TOWN	ROCKIN' BERRIES	3(UK)
10-64	I'M INTO SOMETHING GOOD	HERMAN'S HERMITS	13
10-64	OH NO NOT MY BABY	MAXINE BROWN	24
12-64	SHOW ME GIRL	HERMAN'S HERMITS	19(UK)
1-65	AT THE CLUB	DRIFTERS	43
2-65	IT'S GONNA BE ALRIGHT	MAXINE BROWN	56
4-65	JUST ONCE IN MY LIFE	RIGHTHEOUS BROTHERS	9
5-65	IS THIS WHAT I GET FOR LOVING YOU	RONETTES	75
5-65	OH NO NOT MY BABY	MANFRED MANN	11(UK)
7-65	HUNG ON YOU	RIGHTHEOUS BROTHERS	47
8-65	YOU'RE MY GIRL	ROCKIN' BERRIES	c.25(UK)
10-65	SOME OF YOUR LOVIN'	DUSTY SPRINGFIELD	8(UK)
1-66	DON'T FORGET ABOUT ME	BARBARA LEWIS	91
5-66	SO MUCH LOVE	BEN E. KING	96
5-66	SO MUCH LOVE	STEVE ALAIMO	92
5-66	DON'T BRING ME DOWN	ANIMALS	12
7-66	GOIN' BACK	DUSTY SPRINGFIELD	10(UK)
10-66	GO AWAY LITTLE GIRL	HAPPENINGS	12
10-66	ON THIS SIDE OF GOODBYE	RIGHTHEOUS BROTHERS	47
2-67	IS THIS WHAT I GET FOR LOVING YOU	MARIANNE FAITHFULL	40(UK)
7-67	PLEASANT VALLEY SUNDAY	MONKEES	3
9-67	A NATURAL WOMAN	ARETHA FRANKLIN	8
11-67	GOIN' BACK	BYRDS	89
2-68	WILL YOU STILL LOVE ME TOMORROW	FOUR SEASONS	24
3-68	TAKE GOOD CARE OF MY BABY	BOBBY VINTON	33
4-68	UP ON THE ROOF	CRYAN' SHAMES	85
4-68	HEY GIRL	BOBBY VINTON	23
7-68	HALFWAY TO PARADISE	MONKEES	62
10-68	PORPOISE SONG	FAITH HOPE & CHARITY	51
5-70	SO MUCH LOVE	BLOOD SWEAT & TEARS	14
8-70	HI-DE-HO	LAURA NYRO	92
10-70	UP ON THE ROOF	BOBBY VEE	88
11-70	SWEET SWEETHEART	CAROLE KING	1
5-71	IT'S TOO LATE/I FEEL THE EARTH MOVE	JAMES TAYLOR	1
6-71	YOU'VE GOT A FRIEND	FLACK/HATHAWAY	29
6-71	YOU'VE GOT A FRIEND	STEVE ALAIMO	72
6-71	WHEN MY LITTLE GIRL IS SMILING	DONNY OSMOND	1
8-71	GO AWAY LITTLE GIRL	CAROLE KING	14
8-71	SO FAR AWAY/SMACKWATER JACK	DONNY OSMOND	9
11-71	HEY GIRL	CAROLE KING	9
1-72	SWEET SEASONS	ROBERTA FLACK	76
1-72	WILL YOU STILL LOVE ME TOMORROW	CARPENTERS	12
4-72	IT'S GONNA TAKE SOME TIME	CAROLE KING	24
11-72	BEEN TO CANAAN	MERRY CLAYTON	72
12-72	OH NO NOT MY BABY	CAROLE KING	28
7-73	BELIEVE IN HUMANITY	ROD STEWART	59
10-73	OH NO NOT MY BABY	MELANIE	82
12-73	WILL YOU STILL LOVE ME TOMORROW	GRAND FUNK	1
2-74	LOCOMOTION	CAROLE KING	2
8-74	JAZZMAN	CAROLE KING	9
1-75	NIGHTINGALE	CAROLE KING	9

*UK-British chart position

PHONOGRAPH RECORD REVIEWS

"If you have any interest at all in folk or country, you must listen to *Elite Hotel*"



ELITE HOTEL
Emmylou Harris
Reprise MS2236

By TODD EVERETT

Emmylou Harris understands the idiom in which she chooses to work, and respects it: this separates Harris from the country-rock crowd, and makes her virtually the only person identified with it to be accepted by the more conservative element of the Nashville elite, even though she refrains from indulging in the powerful political scene of the local musicians and music businessmen. Dolly Parton has recorded singing backup on an Emmylou Harris single. Harris was asked to duet with Charlie Louvin on the Grand Ole Opry 50th Anniversary telecast.

Her second country-oriented album is an extension of the ideas begun on the

first, though here with a clearer focus. Having won acceptance on her own terms (what finally emerged from *Pieces of the Sky* as a hit single was the most "pure" country selection on the album), and confident of healthy sales (*Sky* has sold somewhat more than 150,000 copies domestically, and she is rapidly becoming a huge star internationally).

The material here is less accessible to the casual listener than the generally-light pieces on the earlier album. Like it, there is a token Beatles song (her producer, Brian Ahern, is a fan of the Fab Four; he had Anne Murray record a couple of their tunes when he was producing her); this time it's a stunning version of "Here, There, and Everywhere," delivered with a chillingly aching quality. The Beatles song and Rodney Crowell's "Till I Can Gain Control Again" are leftovers from the *Sky* sessions, and thus cut with a slightly different band from her regular touring unit -- basically guitarist James Burton, pianist Glen D. Hardin, bassist Emory Gordy, steel guitarist Hank DeVito, and Crowell on rhythm guitar and backing vocal; joined by various ringers from track to track.

Two songs on *Elite Hotel* are from George Jones' repertoire; Wayne Kemp's "Feeling Single -- Seeing Double" and Earl Montgomery's "One of These Days." "Together Again" is, of course, Buck Owens'.

Harris composed "Amarillo" with Crowell. It's a valuable addition to the album for two reasons. First, it's one of the few uptempo numbers on a relatively downbeat album. And second, the song

gives an idea of Harris' sharp wit, a facet heretofore relatively unavailable on record though apparent in live performance.

Three of the songs are compositions by Harris' mentor, Gram Parsons. Two were originally heard on the first Flying Burrito Brothers album; "Sin City" and "Wheels." Both have a near-spiritual quality, and it should give some idea of the album's feel to know that at one point it was going to be titled *Wheels* after that song. The third, first heard on Parson's *Grievous Angel*, is the other uptempo selection, "Ooh, Las Vegas." Burton's and DeVito's solos on this number are particularly outstanding.

The album's low point is "Jambalaya." Though it's a good enough version, the song is available in far too many versions already. There are too many good, unknown (to much of her audience, at least) songs around to have to waste time on that one.

The album is sequenced with a definite feel, getting more intense toward the end of each side. The pain and sincerity in "Satan's Jewel Crown" is so excruciating that "Wheels," a pretty strong number on its own, comes in like fresh air.

If you have any interest at all in folk, country, or any of the permutations thereof, give *Elite Hotel* a listen. Very likely, you'll be coming back for more and more. You'll find it on Parson's two Reprise albums, *G.P.*, and *Grievous Angel*.

MALPRACTICE
Dr. Feelgood
Columbia

By BUD SCOPPA

People who have seen this determinedly primitive English rock & roll combo on stage tell me Dr. Feelgood is very exciting and great fun, qualities which the band's two British albums (*Down by the Jetty* and the recently released *Malpractice*) only hint at. I admire the impulse that caused the band to record *Jetty* in mono and free of

overdubs, and I like *Feelgood's* zealous regard for raunch, so readily apparent (through performance and material, original and non) throughout each album. But while it seems the band is attempting to recreate the austere and innocent gutsiness of the first-album *Stones*, *Feelgood* comes across (on record, at least) rather stiff and stodgy by direct comparison.

On the other hand, by direct comparison to other current rock & roll bands, *Feelgood* exudes (even in its stodginess, I daresay) a straightforward punchiness as charming as it is invigorating, and reminiscent, in its best moments, of the New York Dolls. Horns, choruses, and crystalline production wouldn't enhance the band's recorded persona, they'd sabotage it. So instead we have *Feelgood* playing it absolutely straight in the studio: live but without the energy provided by a captivated audience; a bit tight, perhaps, but clutching its identity resolutely in all eight hands.

If the rhythm section (John B. Sparks-bass; Big Figure-drums) tends to be mechanical at times, if singer/harpist Lee Brilleaux's gruffness sounds forced and finicky, these flaws are compensated for by the steely, slicing rhythm guitar of Wilko Johnson. If the other three members make a determined stab at the idea of being hard, Johnson epitomizes it as an Act. And if the others sound self-conscious, the guitarist sounds possessed. The fact that Johnson's guitar parts are most often isolated only serves to underscore their naked tenacity.

The notion of playing a record in order to hear the rhythm guitar work may seem extreme, but it's completely in keeping with the hard-line rock & roll essence of Dr. Feelgood. I.e., if that notion seems plausible, you should have these records, even if you already have two or three versions of "Boom Boom Boom Boom," "Don't You Just Know It," or "Riot in Cell Block #9." For a hot guitar part, there's always room for one more. It'll be available shortly in this country, courtesy of Columbia Records.

three years ago was a 70's sadomasochistic classic, "Sugar Me" by name, with deftly timed whips cracks punctuating a chillingly pretty little tune sung in a typically wispy little voice. "Getting a Drag" followed -- her boyfriends kept turning into poofs in this one -- but when the spider-web allure of "All Night" failed to attract chart numbers, she converted to straight MOR ballads, with a couple of pleasant Spector-style hits interspersed ("Ooh I Do" and "No Honestly").

The songs here are in the same safe vein -- polite disco/reggae rhythms alternating with slushy ballads. But the ballads have multi-overdubbed harmonies not unlike the Carpenters or American Spring, and drift away delightfully, while the "upbeat" (by comparison only) numbers have the usual coy, whispery appeal. The lyrics are pretty nonsensational, though "Hungry for Love" is appetizingly erotic (next single?).

"Love Bomb," for the inquisitive, turns out not to concern explosive sex but thermonuclear goodwill-toward-men (the ultimate extension of all those messianic "Love Trains"). But the standout is "Central Park Arrest," the dramatic tale of a female cop who thwarts a rape attempt by gunning down her assailant -- it's complex, holds your attention, and has a lot of breathy voice-overs just like the one she contributed to Mott's "Roll Away the Stone."

Like her voice, Lynsey De Paul's music is fragile, insubstantial stuff. It's pure marshmallow, sure, but it's spiced marshmallow, and it leaves a remarkably piquant taste.



LOVE BOMB
Lynsey De Paul
Mercury SRM1-1055

By KEN BARNES

Lynsey De Paul's new Aimed-at-America image seems to be Sex & Sleaze -- with class. Visually, as any potential consumer can see by directing an orb or two towards the cover of *Love Bomb*, she fills the bill admirably. Musically she may give rise to misdirected expectations -- one excited reaction around PRM was "Dusty Springfield, only tougher!" But Lynsey is no Dusty -- in fact, she doesn't have much of a voice at all.

What she does have is image, cleverness to spare (she's written everything she's recorded -- often, as on the sprightly British hit "Dancin' (on a Saturday Night)", with fellow pop star Barry Blue, and impressive credentials as a hitmaker in England. Her first hit

PHONOGRAM RECORD REVIEWS

Nils Lofgren: "Defending the Gates Against Bi-Sexual Barbarians"



BACK IT UP!
Nils Lofgren
A&M [authorized bootleg]

By TOM NOLAN

After four albums with Grin, guest-work with Crazy Horse and Neil Young, and one solo album, Nils Lofgren--creator of a body of songs establishing him as a fresh and exciting voice in rock--seems caught in that limbo where critics love you but recordbuyers don't know your name. "Tour," the critics urged at the time of Nils' solo debut. Good advice that was, and still is. Extensive touring is essential to making his name and spreading his word. In similar fashion, the act of playing live seems crucial to keeping Lofgren in touch with his energies and his art. This performer needs to perform, and we deserve to hear him at his best.

This aircheck of a live broadcast Nils and his band made last year over San Francisco's KSAN may not present Lofgren under optimum conditions; judging from the wild but scattered clapping, there cannot be more than thirty people in the studio. (Trying to mix in appropriate applause with your own ears is a bit like mentally erasing an annoying laughtrack from a teevee show that's genuinely funny.) Yet Nils lets go with such enthusiasm that this unreleased but "authorized bootleg" (unavailable in stores, pressed up solely for the enjoyment of radio and press types) becomes a fine example of the sort of concert that has made believers wherever Lofgren has toured.

The band--Nils and brother Tommy on guitars, keyboards and vocals; Mike Zack on drums, Scotty Ball on bass, joined here in places by Al Kooper on electric piano--creates a driving, textured music that whips like a vaulter's fiberglass pole and gurgles like a favorite ionized swimming hole. Nils the singer fits into it like a jogger in an Esso tracksuit, or a young man doing slowmotion cartwheels. Play finds its way into the similes just as it suffuses these songs: a "Mary had a little lamb" intro to the Goffin-King song "Goin' Back," which itself is about a conscious return to childlike perception; the tension-and-



release of abrupt tempo changes; one wonderfully evocative title: "Soft Fun."

Recent writing about this talented performer tends to portray him as the Ultimate Punk, a sort of crown prince of street rock. My glimpse of Nils is of the undying romantic for whom punkishness is part of the pose with which an uncaring world is held at bay. Time and again the lyrics underline his commitment to qualities which it suits his muse to find unfashionable. He's passionate in his defense of Love and Honor, the last gaudy cavalier defending the gates against bisexual barbarians. And mere love isn't enough for him: "I need devotion to back it up." Vulnerable despite his bluster, he's often wounded but never bitter; he doesn't regret the perils of the chase, which often (usually, one suspects) ends in heartbreak. And if you're lonely, he'll take you to the movies tonight.

The vehicle for Lofgren's personal quest is rock 'n' roll, which he celebrates with teenage spirituality. (Adolescence is an interesting if agonizing halfway house; Nils makes it seem a place where grace is possible.) Not to suggest Lofgren is emotionally stunted; only that he has retained an unashamed belief in magic long after most have accepted their bachelor-of-life degrees. How many others could pull off his impassioned fan letter to the Stones' guitarist, which pleads, "Keith Don't Go"?

The songs included in this set span a good section of Nils' output, like a forty-minute interlooping riff which you're welcome to plug into at any point. Of course you'll have to imagine such Lofgren antics as giving himself a gash above his left eye doing a flashy move with his guitar; or turning no-hands standing somersaults while playing; or... But first you'd need this record. Try writing to A&M's Publicity Department; maybe they'll send you one. Maybe not, but if there's enough interest expressed, it may become available in one form or another. It's the next best thing to seeing the fellow in person, which is something else I'd bet you'd be happy you did. And he's in the studio now, which means we'll all have an album of some sort before too long.



PARIS
Paris
Capitol ST-11464

By BEN EDMONDS

The source material for the composition of Paris makes the heavy metal success of their debut album all the more surprising. Guitarist Robert (formerly Bob) Welch made his fair share of history with Fleetwood Mac, but it was with a lighter touch that often seemed obviously headed for jazz. Bassist Glenn Cornick came from the original Jethro Tull, whose eccentric mutations weren't heavy metal by any liberty of definition. Drummer Thom Mooney has recently been replaced by Hunt Sales, both of them exes of various Todd Rundgren vehicles (Nazz and the first incarnation of Utopia, respectively). Noteworthy credentials, to be sure, but the only halfway logical points of reference for the metal thunder they espouse in Paris would be "Angel" from Fleetwood Mac's *Heroes Are Hard To Find* and "Under The Ice" by Nazz, and even then you have to stretch severely to make the association.

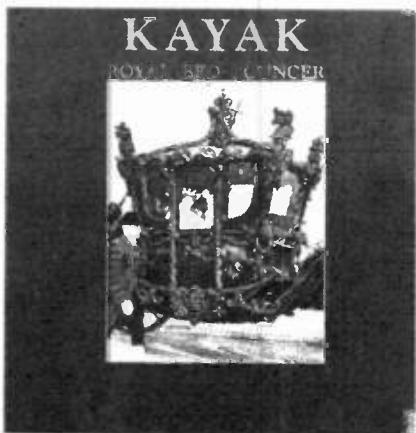
Taken on its own terms, this is the most auspicious genre debut since Bad Company. Like that band, Paris doesn't really tell us anything we don't already know, but the intelligence of their presentation, coupled with the obvious need for new masters of this style, singles them out for special attention. The diversity of their backgrounds provides the perspective twists that give them their distinctive edge over the inexperienced kids whose only option is to regurgitate Led Zeppelin riffs straight from their record collections. It's as if, instead of accepting the aging process gracefully, these guys have somehow managed to get a generation *younger*. Beautiful regression.

Welch was never a technically intimidating guitarist (especially in the axe lineage of Fleetwood Mac), but he understands the simplistic beauty of high decibel music so thoroughly that you'll be amazed by the authority of his playing. His effectiveness here lies with how he layers his guitar tracks to put muscle behind their superficial flash; the solos are minimized. Both Cornick and Mooney have appropriately to-the-point attitudes about their roles, in a way that's workmanlike but never dull. (Mooney's very appealing ultra-simple style is not far removed from the kind of drums Hunt Sales plays, so what you see here should be consistent with what you'll get in the future.)

Almost as satisfying a discovery as the band is the work of its producer Jimmy Robinson. He gets a big sound, the kind of heavy sound that fills up a room rather than suffocating it. He operates on a vocal mix concept that's akin to *Exile On Main St.* or *Born To Run*: that rock & roll doesn't necessarily depend on the words, and that a lyric can only become significant if the music is strong enough to pull you in first. So it's a perfectly healthy situation when the music is aggressive enough to challenge--and occasionally even overpower--the voice. It's all down to giving power music a power presentation and, even with a few erratic moments, Robinson immediately sets himself up as one of the better sound

translators in hard rock.

Four of the five excellent tracks ("Black Book," "Beautiful Youth," "Nazarene" and "Breathless") clock in at under four minutes, which in itself is a positive indicator. (The fifth track, "Narrow Gate," is the exception in terms of both time and texture; its six-plus minutes rely on the manipulation of melodic structures to achieve an alternately spacey and hard end.) The other songs, while they don't have the full personality development that distinguishes the album's best material, will certainly be found more than tolerable by metal maniacs. The insistent abrasiveness of Paris may initially make it too hard for AM radio to get at them, but this album should prove to be a goldmine of FM programmers. When you discover five out of ten superior cuts on a first album, you know you're onto something hot.



ROYAL RED BOUNCER
Kayak
Janus JXS-7023

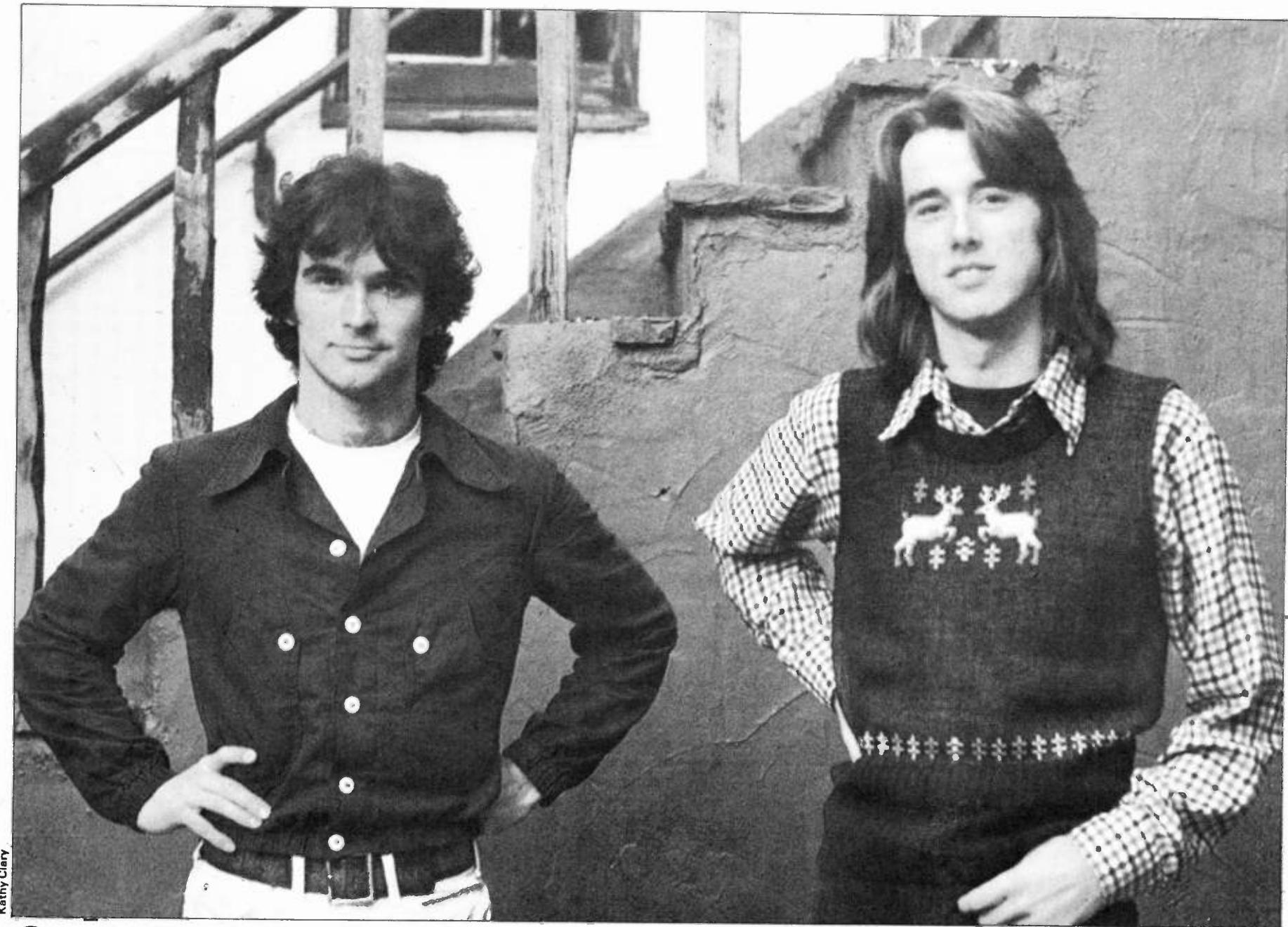
By ED SCAIKY

Kayak is a Dutch classical pop band that has survived through three albums with only a change in bass players. The first album was *See See The Sun* (a 1973 U.S. Harvest release), the second *Kayak* (1974, no U.S. release). There seems to be a conscious effort on *Royal Red Bouncer*, their latest, to limit the previous albums' extended instrumental tendencies (hallmark of Kayak's *Nice/Yes/Genesis* mentors), in favor of vocals and ten relatively short tracks (the longest, "Said No Word," runs 5:16). The result approaches the sound and style of 10cc, in the way that *Triumvirat* takes ELP closer to pop, but the emphasis on vocals taxes keyboard man Ton Scherpenzeel's lyric writing ability.

While consistently clever, concise and quite original in print, Scherpenzeel's lyrics too often sound awkward and over-crowded as mellotron player Max Werner forces all the words in. At times verses are repeated unnecessarily, where an instrumental break would have served better. Still, Scherpenzeel's beautiful melodies and the excellent playing and production here more than sustain the album which does in fact have its share of near-brilliant and original moments as well.

Red Bouncer's killer track is "Life Of Gold," a piano dominated ballad, lushly produced a la "I'm Not In Love," a real gem. Similar and equally excellent is "Bury The World" replete with a great melody hook and an all to brief instrumental ending which fades abruptly and leaves me craving more. The title track is a cute idea (again, most like 10cc lyrics, style and production,) as is "You're So Bizarre" (recalls *Sgt. Pepper's "Mr. Kite"*) and "Patricia Angliaia" (drummer Pim Koopman's short but sweet contribution with a pure 10cc wordless track).

The album closes with "My Heart Never Changed," a fitting tribute to "Hang On To A Dream" by The Nice who, after all, created the genre that Kayak will no doubt explore further and even more successfully in the future. I can't wait to hear the next one.



Kathy Clary

Santa Barbara Pop Sexuality

Vance or Towers; Good Hooks & Good Looks

By KEN BARNES

Seals & Crofts. Cecilio & Kapuno. Loggins & Messina. Brewer & Shipley. Crosby & Nash. Batdorf & Rodney. Another day, another duo. All pretty boring, too, with a unifying sort of limpness. The obvious initial reaction, then, to Vance Or Towers, despite their odd taste in conjunctions, is one of ennui. Just what the world needs.....

Maybe it's that "Or", but Vance Or Towers is no ordinary folk-sap duo. They're a hot young pop-rock act, with an evident flair for composing lush ballad delights and stirring rockers, a lyrical range encompassing celebrations of teenage hooliganism and maturely melancholy love songs, and loads of potential. They look 18 (but are both 23), have worked together since high school, and if they and their band can play live as memorably as they do on their debut album (called *Vance Or Towers*), the results could be spectacular.

The "Or," to try and clear it up quickly, is a managerial conceit, shrugged off by both Vance and Towers. The former finally suggests, rather half-heartedly, that "it's just supposed to outline choice." As in picking a favorite? "Yeah," Towers says, "we have a Vance fan club and a Towers fan club." A&M have further heightened the ambiguity

by failing to identify the duo photographically speaking anywhere on the album (for the record, L: Glen Vance, R: Michael Towers. And while we're on the subject of ambiguity, one might well wonder just what the dark, menacing gentleman in the back cover mirror is supposed to represent; unfortunately the question never came up).

Vance and Towers come from Santa Barbara, 90 miles up the coast from L.A. Santa Barbara shares the same teen-paradise attributes as the immediate L.A. suburbs, but it's isolated from the action epicenter by distance. It's a pleasant, established seaside community of less than 100,000, so enamored of its civic quality of life that it's tried to limit population growth by the constitutionally dubious method of discouraging new residents. But it's by no means free of the scourges of modern life--its University of California branch, up in Goleta, was transformed almost overnight from an academic vacation spot to the bank-burning symbol of college radicalism; and it's had its share of rock & roll, too.

The big group, as Towers pointed out, was actually from nearby Ventura. Thee Sixpence, a hot rock band whose solid Stones and Love covers met with local success, changed their name in order to stay contemporary with the Let A Million Flowers Bloom ambience of 1967, to the Strawberry Alarm Clock, and blanketed the nation with "Incense and

Peppermints," the hottest combination since coffee and donuts for awhile there. Other bands took their shots at the big time--Alexander's Timeless Bloozband, indefatigably gigging at UCSB, later made an album for the Clock's label, Uni. Ernie & the Emperors became Ernie's Funny's (correct spelling) became the Giant Crab, with two albums for Uni, who must have thought they'd found a flower-power Liverpool in their own backyard. Turquoise had less success (though reportedly Little Feat's Bill Payne was a member); same for the Calliope, Planned Obsolescence, the Rain, and the legendary if erratic soul revue Dick Boner & His Bonerheads (later Hot Poop).

Towers was part of that scene, gigging actively in various "party bands, top 40," playing clubs, Air Force bases, college soirees, etc. Vance was more reclusive--"Well, I once played at the Harbor Restaurant for four nights, but then it burned down."

They met in high school ("gym class," Towers recalls); both played, and they started writing songs together, becoming serious about it four years ago. In between, there were the odd gigs, the stints in the fast food emporia, the education blues ("we never made it to college--three weeks apiece, Santa Barbara Shitty College").

Through a mutual friend they met their management (who also handle, eclectic-

ally enough, Dr. Demento and Kenny O'Dell), who in turn arranged for the A&M deal. It was hardly a toil-laden trail of tears to the top, but that's the suburban style. What matters in the end is not the total amount of dues paid, one may pontificate, but the essential talent of an artist, and Vance Or Towers is very talented.

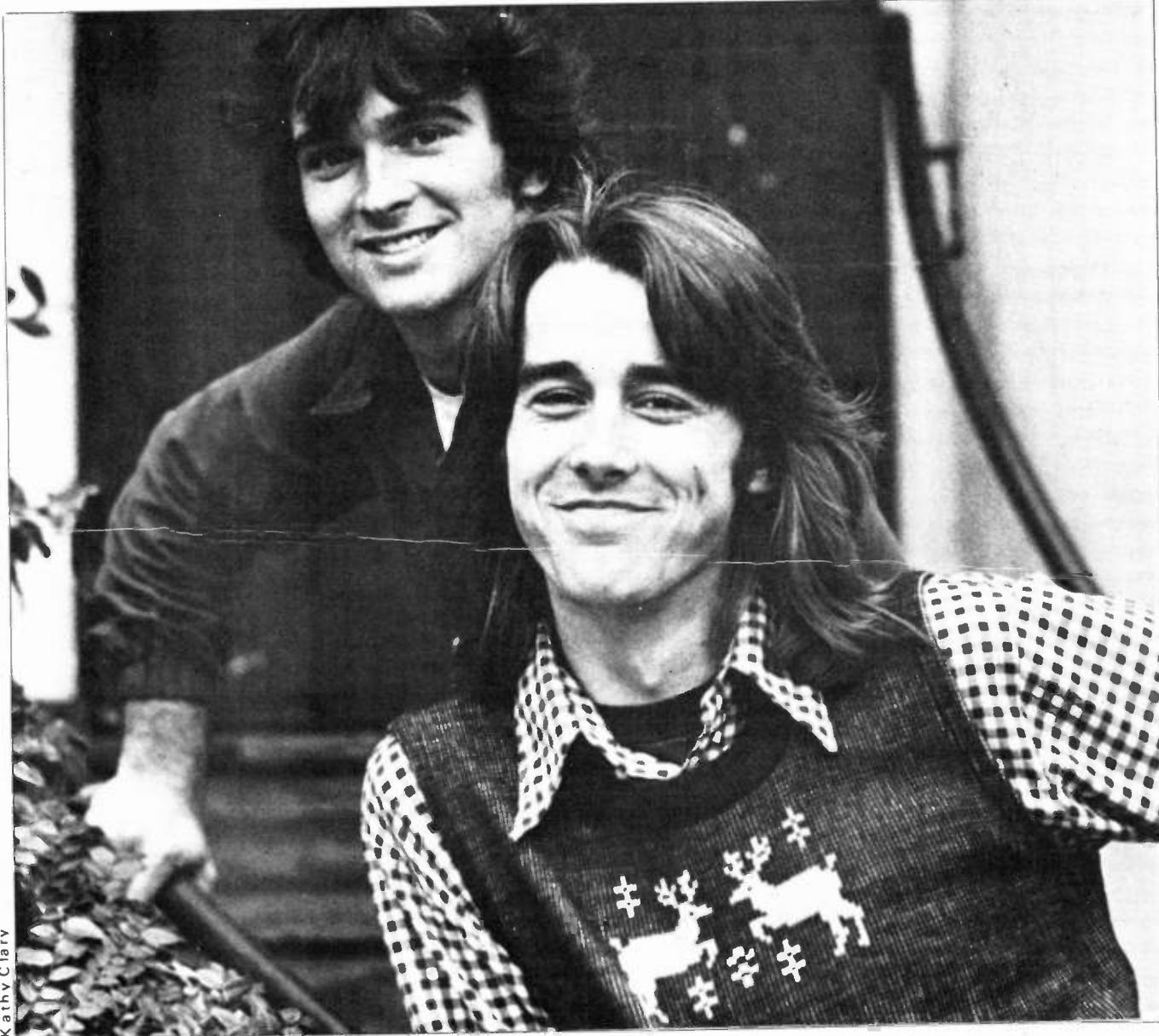
They sound remarkably polished for a debut act. The songwriting is neat and compact (no frills, nothing over 3:16 in time); the playing likewise. Some of the lyrical touches (including the occasional pun) are perceptive and, as an aggregate, quite impressive:

*"In the state I'm in
I would do most anything
To get me outta my mind
Cause I work all day
In a fast food factory
Pushing burgers and fries*

*Well it's another day
And another dollar lost
Never ending the pace
And I'm much too young
To be ground round
Spinning round
In such a crazy race"**

The music alternates between crisp straightforward rockers and tuneful ballads--"City Boy" (fabulous hook!) and "Don't it Getcha" top the upbeat

"Their Youth-Directed Material has an Authenticity No Balding 35 Year Old Superstar Can Hope to Approach"



Glen Vance, Michael Towers: What are you doing for Valentine's Day?

tunes, "Sunday Sky" (a natural for the Hollies to cover) is the standout slower number. Vance and Towers together have an easy, natural harmonic blend, sometimes reminiscent of British pop-rockers like the Sutherland Brothers or Splinter. Occasional solo lead vocals tend to wobble, slightly on the fruity side, but everything else is top-drawer, especially the songs themselves.

The duo takes songwriting seriously. "We aim consciously at things that are understandable," says Vance. "You listen to the lyrics and they don't put you to sleep...I write songs that...have a purpose." (Towers joins for the chorus) "Make you feel good, make you feel bad, make you feel energetic."

Such simultaneous pronouncements aren't uncommon with Vance and Towers. They'll bail each other out of conversational deep water, and they display frequently impenetrable resources of shared humor, the subtly mocking private jokes typical of any young suburban longtime friends. Which might just be important. But back to songwriting.

Vance: "To me the lasting power of a song is the lyrics. If you've got a good strong melody...there have been a lot of pop songs released in the last few years with nice hooky melodies, but their lyrics are shallow. What we're trying to do is use that sort of melody--people like to sing along, they like to sing--but if you have that combination of a strong melody and lyrics that when you listen to them you know some thought went into them...to me that's impressive. That's professional. That's tops."

"We spend time on songs. Sometimes three months--"

Towers: "It's spending that kind of time, using that extra word, that extra turnaround, that extra thing that'll give them something to think about."

Vance reiterates: "Lasting power is to me the most important thing."

All of which implies a more traditional approach to pop music than your normal nascent rock star boasts. It becomes clearer upon summoning up their most admired artists and chief influences. Samples:

"Who do I like? I would say everything." (MT)

That's certainly illuminating. AM or FM-styled acts?

"I would say everything." (MT; helpful type)

"All the way from Bacharach to Neil Young." (GV)

"Henry Mancini." (MT)

"The first music I listened to was TV music. The first rock or pop star that hit me, I think, was Elvis Presley. Then the Beatles came along." (GV)

"When You Wish upon a Star" is one of our favorites." (MT)

Disney's version or Dion's?

"Disney's!"

"Glen Campbell."

"Yeah, Glen Campbell, I had a lot of respect for."

"Jimmy Webb." (Segue into protracted and reasonably animated discussion of the considerable merits of "Galveston," "Wichita Lineman," and "By the Time I Get to Phoenix," opined by

Vance to be "one of the classic alltime songs.")

"I love show tunes--Sammy Cahn..." (MT)

"I love movies. I love the whole idea of entertainment in movies and professionalism as far as putting across a definite feel in a song...There's...that sort of lack in pop music, that older school of writing that had that extra something to it that wasn't evident in rock...Professionalism puts me into the same state of mind as a very magical, mystical thing." (GV)

A definite predilection for the standard brands of songwriting is evident here, more to be expected from a Paul Williams (whom they also admire) than a young pop-rocking duo. Sounds like they want to write the next "Shadow of Your Smile." But that's not the whole picture--the strains of Mercer are leavened with a strong appreciation of hard rock.

Vance in fact waxes a little defensive on the subject: "I got into Jimi Hendrix. I went to all the Cream concerts, if that's what you want to know. Michael Bloomfield was really... 'Mississippi Queen,' for the rock and roll thing, just blew me out the window. And at the same time David Gates just killed me. The Left Banke. 'The Long and Winding Road,' and 'Helter Skelter.'"

It's a juxtaposition, seemingly contradictory, that becomes clearer in the 6-5 pick 'em rocker/ballad lineup on the LP--though future projects may betray more of their traditional pop influences.

Towers: "It's not as strong on the first album as what we originally picked for

the album. We wanted to do a balance of ballads and uptempo without getting too artsy-craftsy."

Vance: "We didn't want to do any production numbers on this album, because there's so many people doing elaborate production now that it seemed we should go ahead straight and not go overboard."

Towers: "I think we may do a production piece, just to do one, which is always fun for an artist."

But studio craftsmanship is not Vance Or Towers' sole goal by any means. They want to play live, and have been rehearsing a band in preparation for an upcoming national concert tour (details of dates, places, and headlining acts are yet to be set). They'll do all originals, though two typically irreconcilable outside songs came up in the discussion--"Moon River" and "Whole Lotta Love" (a dynamite medley). And they want to make it exciting.

"If you go in front of 30,000 people," says Vance, "and have songs they can sing along with, and you still have that kickass entertainment on stage--that is the combination. And I think our longterm goal is to have great songs and a great live show."

That's a commendable if hardly dazzlingly original credo, but he means it. And their show should be worth seeing. Also scheduled shortly are a new single, the raucous "Scream Bloody Robbery," and a new promotion effort on the album, which got a bit buried in the pre-Christmas rush.

That was a cruelly undeserved fate, for there's something different about Vance Or Towers. Their appeal lies in their combination of professional songwriting ideals with a still unaffected, youthful perspective and enthusiasm. They can write a song like "Education Blues":

*"As I look back upon my younger daze
I really was a maniac
Blowing up a john with a cherry bomb
Gave the janitor a cardiac"*

and it rings true, just as nonspecific love ballads like "Love Me Lady" do. They tentatively plan to revive a song they wrote in high school, with the charming title of "I'd Like to Murder My Teacher," and I'm sure they, almost alone among their rock compatriots, can pull it off. Because they still act young, it lends their youth-directed material an authenticity no balding 35-year old superstar can hope to approach.

Towers: "We're definitely teen-oriented because we're young kids, but at the same time we're trying to be like those people were," referring again to the pop and show tune cleffers of yesteryear.

"Most of the songs are real incidents... We both worked in fast food places..." (MT)

"I had some fun times, and I had some bad times in high school, but I definitely had The Education Blues." (GV)

"So that's real. We're not sitting there saying, 'Well, what would the kids on the street like to hear?'" (MT)

Vance and Towers claim their perspectives haven't really changed since their early days--though the songs are getting "more professional." "We're still two young kids from Santa Barbara, just trying to figure out what's going on," says Towers, and if that sounds a trifle too winsome, it's also the source of the duo's special appeal, and of their potential for a long and exciting run at the top.

* "Do Whatever We Want," Irving Music, BMI

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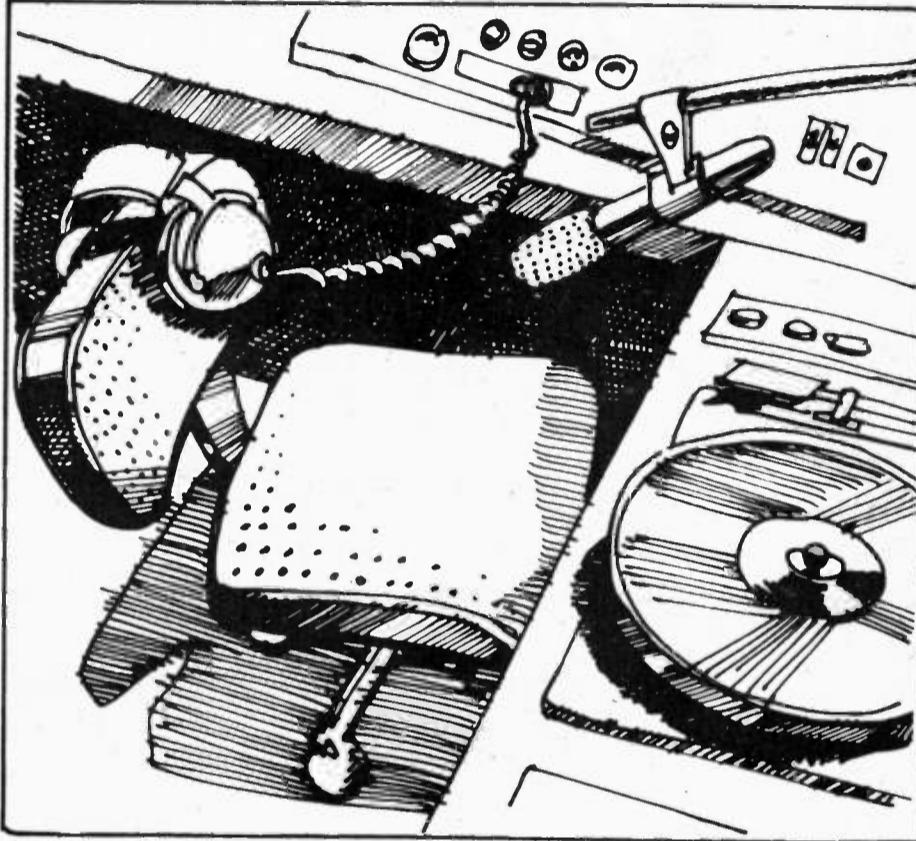
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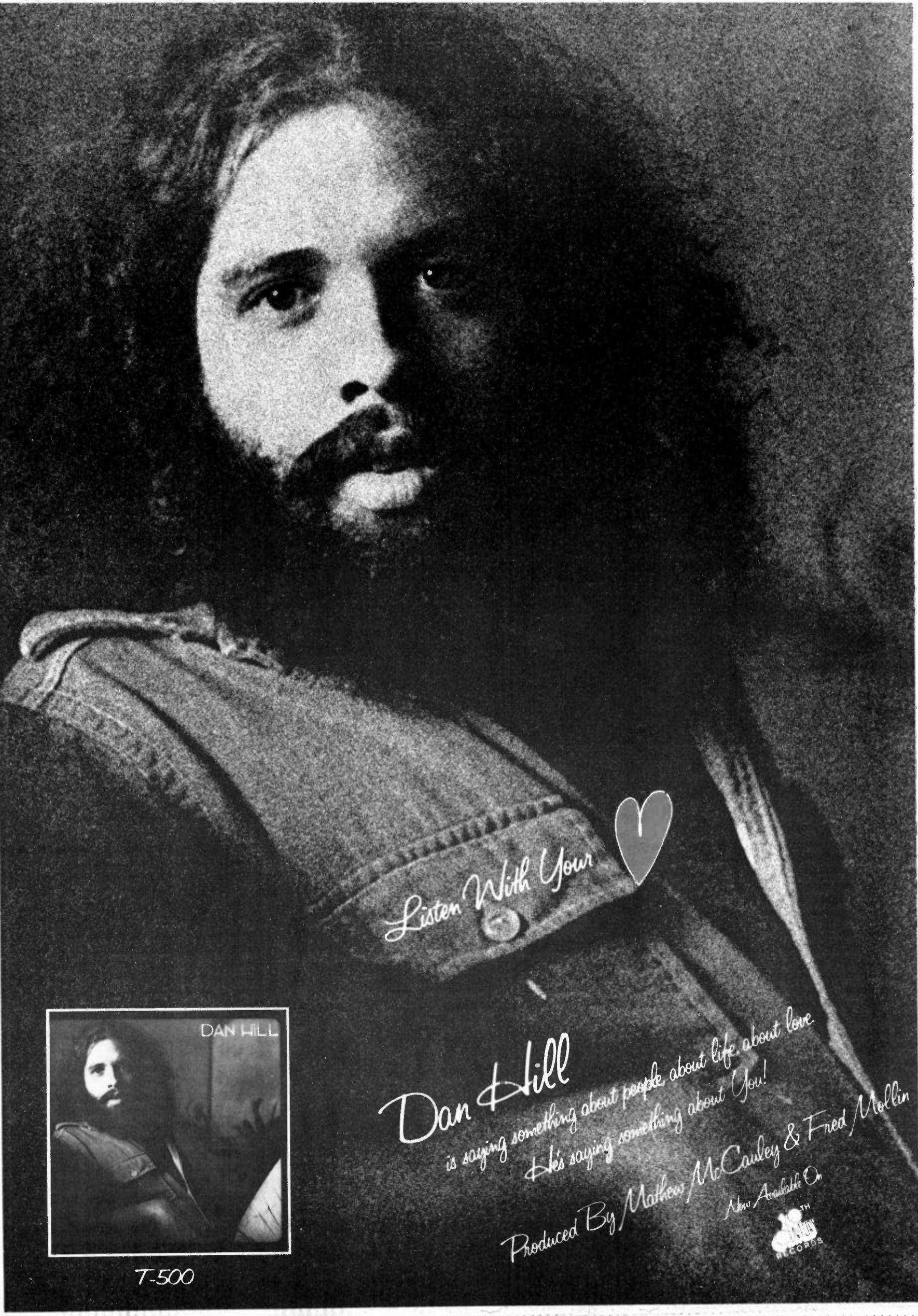
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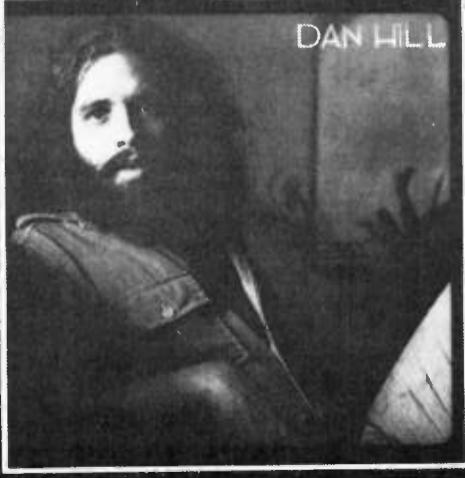
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