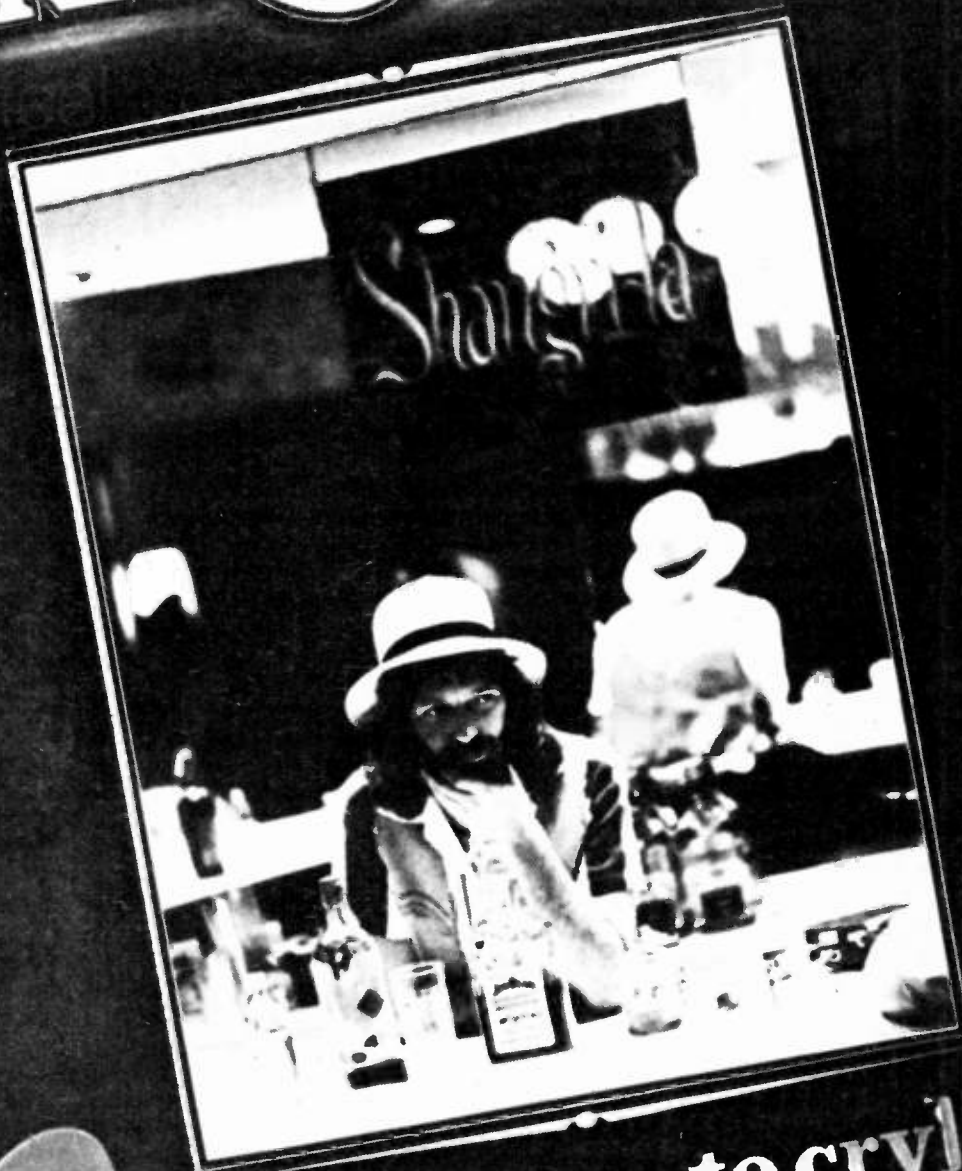


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American FM radio is the most important medium for rock music in the World today. We'd like to acknowledge those stations and

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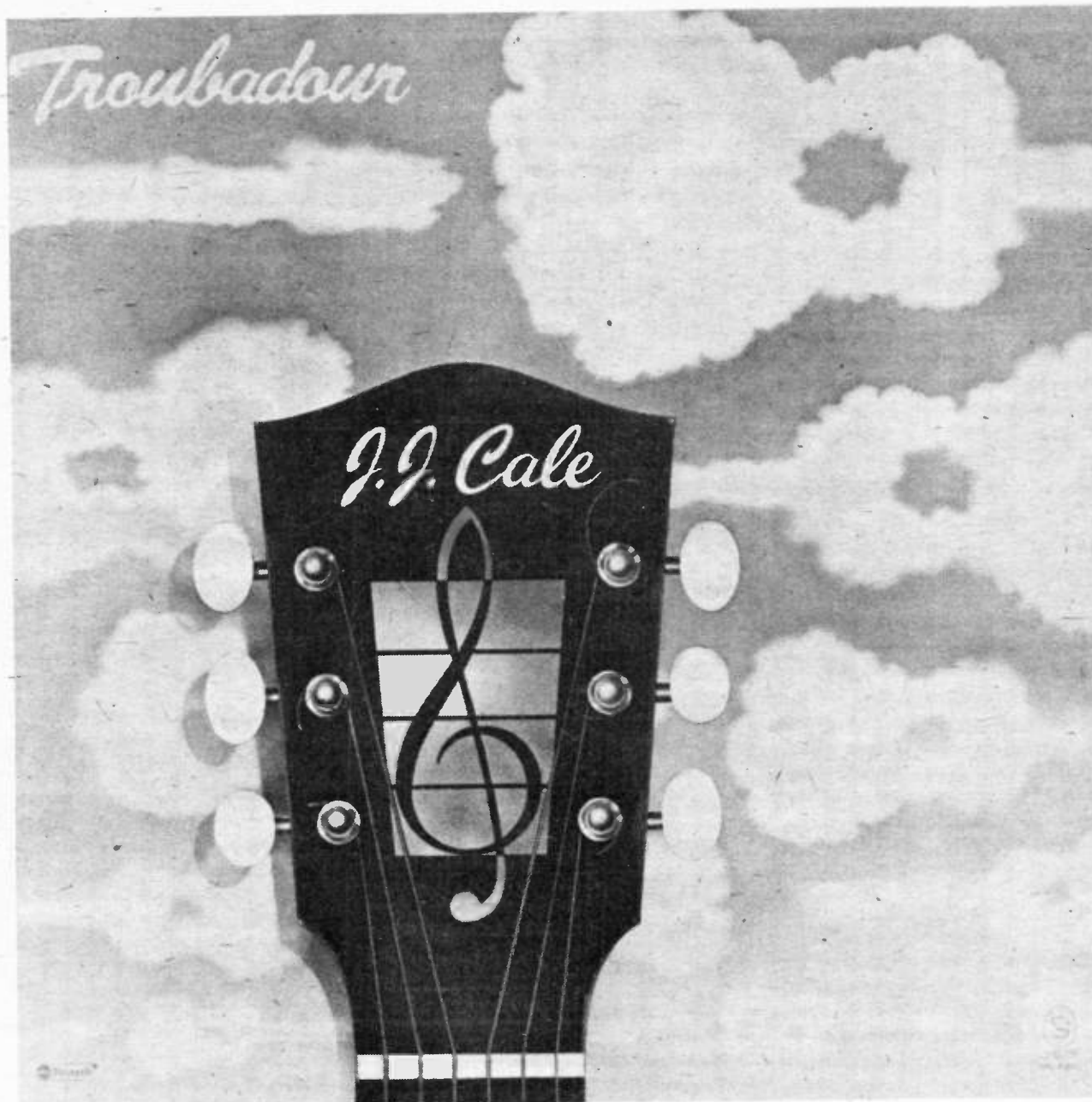
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BEATLES MYTH PERPETUATED: New Film, New LP, Same Beatles

Six years after their break-up, the Beatles are still the hottest rock property on the market. This past summer demonstrated the full extent of the public's uncanny loyalty and genuine thirst for the band as both British and American pop charts listed one Beatles' title after the other among the best sellers of the season. Beatle re-union fires are burning hotter than ever as a result.

Now comes *All This And World War II*, an idiographic documentary film (and LP) of that war by Russ Regan, President of 20th Century Records and a devout fan of the pop music art form. A composite of Movietone news-reel clips and cuts from period-films of the time, *WW II*'s soundtrack is totally the music of the Beatles as performed by Elton John, The Bee Gees, Leo Sayer and others. It's a history lesson with a twist that Beatles fans will most certainly want to know about. "They'll either love it or hate it," Regan anticipates.

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RINGO ON WALL STREET: The Ring-O Records Debut

Donning glasses, stylish slacks and a razor-sharp, new butch hair-do, Ringo Starr is looking quite the executive-type these days. The core of his ambitions, his own record label. "I started Ring-O Records," Starr reveals in a business-like tone, "because in all honesty I think it's really important for an artist to have a piece of plastic with his name on it." In an insightful interview, Ringo reveals his plans for the company while clearing up the question of his own recording status simultaneously.

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RON WOOD: "I'm Totally Committed To The Stones"

After wavering for more than a year, ex-Face and current Stone Ron Wood has finally made up his mind. "I'm putting all my eggs into the Stones' basket," he says. But has he? While relegating the Stones his 'top priority', Wood has recently immersed himself in a flurry of other activities—recording with ex-Face Ronnie Lane the soundtrack LP from the movie *Mahoney's Last Stand*; extensive session work and finalizing material for his upcoming solo LP. Building a reputation as a top individual rock figure, while remaining a member of one of rock's most important, though aging bands, Wood clearly is enjoying the best of both worlds. But as he says, "Mick's still the boss."

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JOHNNY COUGAR: Butch-Rock Discovered In Seymour

Tony DeFries is the man said to have *invented* David Bowie. DeFries' MainMan organization is perhaps one of rock's most 'image-conscience' and 'sensational' management firms—their business is headlines. After a year and a half of "cleaning house", subsequent to DeFries and Bowie parting company back in January of 1975, MainMan is ready to allow Johnny Cougar the chance to fulfill his 'date with destiny'.

Described as a 'teenage answer to Baretta' or 'America's first rock-hustler', Cougar is already a superstar in his home town—Seymour, Indiana. Cougar says he's simply helpless to deal with his recent regional rise to power—"I can't even be seen on Chestnut Street anymore—It's local mania." Johnny Cougar is brash, hasty and striking all at the same time and his story is not for women only.

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Produced by Bob Alcivar

Performances



Phil Ceccola

FLEETWOOD MAC
Universal Amphitheatre
North Hollywood, California

"Sunday Break II"
Austin, Texas

By KEN BARNES

For Fleetwood Mac success is in the bag, and the bag is soft-rock. Progressive MOR, MOR/progressive, whatever your preference, it's the new formula for wide-acceptance 70's superstardom. Your music (and your past credentials, of which Fleetwood have a surfeit) have to be *hip* enough ("Rhian-non," "World Turning") to attract the hard-core, FM-oriented audience, yet *mellow* enough ("Rhian-non," "Over My Head") to secure the Top 40, and "Pop Adult" station listeners. Ever since Fleetwood Mac picked up Stevie Nicks and Lindsay Buckingham on waivers from Polydor, their music has fit the bill. 50 weeks in the Top Ten worth, to be exact.

So on opening night of a glamorous stand in home-base L.A., before a genteel post-teen capacity crowd—including many show-biz personalities and industry types—you'd expect Fleetwood Mac to play it safe and soft. Wrong. Except for an exquisite acoustic "Landslide," the set was uncompromisingly rocking, with a much harder edge than on the recent album.

The secret hard-rock ingredient is Buckingham. Without demeaning Peter Green, Jeremy Spencer or Danny Kirwan, illustrious Mac guitarists of the past, Buckingham is the best guitarist the group has

ever had. He gets a jangly folk-rock sound out of one guitar that some groups can't get with three, and he's got those driving power chords down cold. "Say You Love Me" sounded pure 1965, "Spare Me A Little" had a new coda straight out of "Wasn't Born To Follow" by the Byrds, and the solo on "Rhian-non" screamed and soared like one of that Welsh goddess' magical birds.

Fleetwood's female front-liners were wonderful, too. Stevie Nicks gave "Rhian-non" a raspier, rougher dimension, bordering on greatness; and Christine McVie was in sterling, velvet-voiced form throughout. Mick Fleetwood and John McVie, who comprise the rhythm section, were rock solid. Fleetwood's shattering percussive punctuation on "Rhian-non," in particular, added greatly to the songs' other-worldly edge.

In Austin, before 100,000 sun-stroked and rock-starved concert-goers who'd sat through Lynx (locals), Firefall, England Dan & John Ford Coley, Steve Miller, the Band, and Chicago, Fleetwood Mac did essentially the same set to wild response. It's a strangely structured set. Their three recent hit singles are disposed of within the first half-dozen songs. Old crowd-pleasers come either at the start ("Station Man," "Spare Me A Little") or the middle ("Oh Well" and a ferocious "Green Mannal-ish"). Consequently, the end—the guitar-heavy "World Turning," the lightweight though enjoyably Byrds-like "Blue Letter," and the encores—don't hold up as well. In Austin, the last numbers consisted of the Buckingham/Nicks track "Don't Let Me Down Again" (one of that fine duo's less noteworthy

efforts) and a token bow to their departed idiosyncratic, flat-singing guitarist Bob Welch, "Hypnotized" (whose chief function seemed to be lulling the crowd into a state of torpidity which ensured that no further encores would be demanded).

Anticlimatic and notwithstanding, Fleetwood Mac live display all the passion, instrumental fire, and vocal prowess anyone could want. Even more than on their superbly consistent album, in concert they prove their ascension to superstardom is deserved. The present lineup makes Fleetwood Mac one of the classiest, most versatile groups to hit the big time; their upcoming, crucial album should let us know whether they'll stay there.

Dylan on TV:
*"He violated all
broadcasting basics—
video and audio."*



Mickey Osterreicher

BOB DYLAN
"Hard Rain" TV Special
NBC Television Network

By MARTIN CERF

There may never be a worse television music show than *Hard Rain*.

The NBC special was incredibly disappointing, especially so considering all the advance media hoopla surrounding the event. Preceding the September 14th prime-time broadcast was a Class A promotion job. A cover story Dylan interview in TV Guide (the world's most read

publication, with a weekly circulation of 500,000), teaser ads on nearly every local television and radio station for the TV Guide issue, promo spots on NBC, and obviously the rock press and radio pre-coverage made all those potentially interested (and those not) well aware of the show.

Why then, was this landmark broadcast such a disaster? Simply because it violated all the basic rules of broadcasting; video and audio.

Although there were two cameras onstage, only one was employed during any given segment. Thus, we were never really sure what Joan Baez had going on the left side of that pancaked-face. And Dylan couldn't be tamed. Everytime a cameraman got a fix, Dylan would almost immediately step out of range. Early on, the cameraman played along with Dylan's hide-and-seek game, but later they focused solely on his microphone—leaving lots of blank stage footage.

The sound was an abortion. Given the limitations of television sound receivers, technically, the music was still dreadful, even by TV's low standards. The contrast of sound quality during the performance and the two-minute Craig Tapeplayer commercials was embarrassing.

The actual performance suffered just as dismally. During the particular concert, which was taped in Fort Collins, Colorado, it did in fact rain; a hard and seemingly impossible rain. Dylan's vocals were rushed and scattered. The musicians, who were seldom featured or pictured on the screen, contributed a mere cesspool of improvisation.

Craig sponsored the entire show. In an obvious attempt to capture the "silent hip majority," the low-key, no-hard-sell approach was utilized. You'd never imagine a more confused mess in your worst K-Tel nightmare. The actual product was mentioned rarely, sandwiched in between an ensuing mini-drama. It was simply ineffective, boring gibberish.

The ratings were, not surprisingly, awful. Overnight returns from New York and Los Angeles spelled out the bad news: an enormous turn-out rate. In some markets a documentary (traditionally, the weakest audience grabber), *Return To Entebbe*, beat out the Dylan broadcast by a substantial margin. Whatever ground might have been gained in scoring a prime-time special for a contemporary music *artiste* was forfeited when the ratings came out.

The ultimate irony of the evening was provided by a one-minute promo for the Neil Sedaka special which followed the Dylan broadcast. Sedaka was seen talking, moving, performing and playing to his audiences, delivering more spark in 60 seconds than Dylan did in 60 minutes. Bob Dylan was obviously not prepared to deal with the television art form on its own terms, and as a consequence, everybody lost out.

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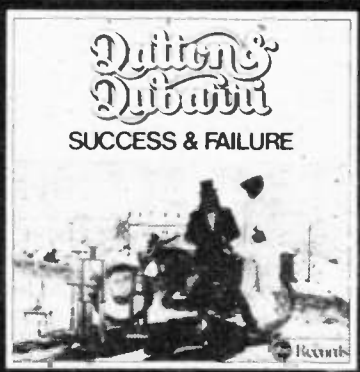
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Produced by Gary Dalton & Kent Dubarri

This album was recorded
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VICIOUS DIRT, RUMORS and SCANDALS from



Kim Fowley has cut a few strings from his Runaways stronghold, although he still maintains a few shares of teenage stock. Always on the move, frantic Fowley is now working on a new project, even younger than the Runaways, called **Venus and the Razorblades**. They are rock and roll and Fowley assures us that **this time**, the act is no hype, rather rock & roll with "Walt Disney charisma." The lead guitarist is a mere 14-years-old and the lead singer,



a Cherie Currie lookalike, is an ex-waitress from a valley teen watering hole, the Sugar Shack. The newer and stronger band will get even heavier Fowley pushes but not far enough to lose the command post over their actions. He'll premier them in top L.A. living rooms, somewhat similar to the way the fabulous **Quick**, another unit Fowley started. Now the **Quick** are out in venues like the Santa Monica Civic. Not bad after six months, eh?

All of the local in-crowd was present for the **Don Kirshner Rock Awards**, including our own Michele Myer who researched for the show. Bet you were all wondering how **Brian Wilson** pried himself out of bed to get there....Alas, your prince ended up last minute without a date again, so I decided to give voluptuous teen-queen **Linda Blair** a call, but it seems that her obviously out of touch mother didn't know **WHO** I was and abruptly ended the conversation before it started by informing me that Linda was on her way out with her **BOYFRIEND**. I have been cut off by the very best in Hollywood, so I was not discouraged. I went to pick up my, are

you ready, black tux and coincidentally ran into none-other than voluptuous teen queen **Linda Blair** with her new beau, ex-Deep Purple **Glenn Hughes** [who mind you, has a few years on young Rodney]. Making my way to the awards, I did end up with teen-model **Tracy** from **Hollywood High** who was overly anxious to walk in on my arm. The sight, the **Hollywood Palladium**, had never been decorated as tacky....not even for **Bowie**. Although **Queen** did get a well-deserved award for **Roy Thomas Baker's** excellent production of **A Night At the Opera**, **Stephen Tyler** and **Joe Perry** were not impressed at **Hall & Oates** winning over **Aerosmith** for the best new act—especially after spending hours on a plane from Boston just to



Featured this month in Rodney's magic gallery are: **Venus & The Razor Blades** [top left]—yet another 'Kim Fowley-LA-hot-band.' Above, **Ritchie Blackmore** gains entrance to the **Rainbow Bar & Grill's** exclusive 'guaranteed to score booth' by way of the Rodney influence. Below, backstage at the **Starwood** [l to r]: **Jackie Fox** [Runaways], **Danny Thompson** [Derringer], **Liz Derringer**, **Rick Derringer**, **Lita Ford** [Runaways] and the Prince of Pop himself, Rodney.



Richard Creamer

attend. Consequently both **Perry** and **Tyler** stormed out with their respective ladies upon announcement of the winner. But of course, they stopped for a minute to chat with guitar idol **Jeff Beck**, who did not present an award as scheduled in the program. Perhaps **Mr. Kirshner** didn't like **Beck's** lack of formal dress. I was in a tux, why didn't he ask me to take **Jeff's** place? Stuffy, stuffy. After the show, **Tracy** and I made our way through the masses to the after party at the **Beverly Hilton** where my **Cadillac** arrived seconds before **Jeff Beck** did in his newest hot rod. And merely seconds after that **Rod Stewart** pulled up with his all new band including drummer-driver **Carmine Appice**. For a real flash, I was also greeted by the delicious **Tatum O'Neil** who is getting daring in her old age, leaving her blouse open and all. Lots of old favorites were also sashaying around, including **Diana Ross** in a non-disco mood, **Mae West** surrounded by, count 'em, five muscle bound body guards. Other attendees were **Earl Slick**, **Pete Frampton** [the only performer on the awards who performed live], **Fleetwood Mac** [big winners], **Boz Scaggs**, **Steve Harley**, **Cher** and the **Hollywood Stars**. With all of those stars floating around, my dreamy-eyed date seemed to sort of lose herself permanently for the rest of the evening and perhaps the rest of her life. So I made my way home in a taxi, and went to sleep dreaming that both **Tatum** and **Linda** were fighting over the prince's favors.

Why was the band **Rainbow** with key leader **Richie Blackmore** having their reception at **Copperfield's Inn** rather than their alma mater, the **Rainbow Bar and Grill**? Although no one gave a substantial answer, my bet is the record company didn't know its cosmic value or that when in town the band goes no where else for fun and nite-time games. Well, it didn't take long before the party was over and the boys made their way to the **Rainbow** to continue a private party down the street. That's loyalty for you.

All house records were broken when the **Runaways** were billed with **Derringer** at the **Starwood** recently. More than a thousand people were turned away during the two-night stint, which had the **Runaways** headlining over **Rick's** new band. **Earl Slick**, **Joe Perry** and **Carmine Appice** were among the sardine packed celeb's in the **Hot 100** club where more than 200 people took an intimate steam bath together while heralding **Derringer** for not one, not two but three encores and the crowd was still pleading for more. It's hard to believe, but the first night **Derringer** and their entire crew—along with tons of equipment—opened for **Jeff Beck** and **Aerosmith** in **San Diego** and still made it back to **L.A.** in time for an entire set. Holding their own, the **Runaways** blew away their home town where they stopped for a few days before dashing off to Europe for their premier world-wide tour. Even **Wolfgang**, the opening act, presented hard core rock stomp which should arouse some interest among record companies since they are still unsigned.

The **Rollers** still keep on surprising us with their touring tactics, which had been keeping us in suspense for the past couple of months, maybe part of it was due to manager **Tam Paton** and his extra-curricular activities. Congratulations to **Tam** who just got married to his 28-year old student lady who is post-Roller pabulum and very pretty. In the meantime we've been told that the **Rollers** will be touring the West coast this March where they will be playing at the **Forum**. It will be, of course, a **Fun Production**.

And speaking of **Fun Productions**, **David Forest** hosted another of his all happening **Anaheim** extravaganza's where **Kiss** were supplied with bodyguards, like they really need them. My date and I were rushed on stage during my favorite heavy metal guitarist, **Ted Nugent**, where we got front line fire action. After the show there was yet another posheree crowded to the gills with lots of Japanese in-crowd flown in from **Music Life** for their all time favorite heavies, **Paul, Ace, Gene** and **Peter**.

And for all you **Sparks** fans, the band has gone to **New York** for their album production to be titled **The Big Beat**. **Ron** liked it so much he's still there, but **Russell** is home and let us know that part of the new improved sound will be the guitar player from that fabulous **New York** band **Tuff Darts** along with hints of our own favorite pop band **Pop** filling in on assorted instruments. November looks like the release for both the album and a tour record turntables warm and get ready for **Sparkomania**.

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Sammy Walker: Phil Ochs' Last Wish

By LEONARD BROWN

At a time when Bob Dylan, Joan Baez, Eric Andersen, and almost every other traditional '60s folk artist have added abundant contemporary edges to their music, one new performer, Sammy Walker, is maintaining the same Woody Guthrie roots the others have forsaken. Over two albums—most recently, *Sammy Walker*, on Warner Bros.—Sammy has presented material, including numerous protest songs, against a simple and bare acoustic guitar backdrop. His belief that folk music started going astray in 1962 may be attributed to the great influence of one important friend: Phil Ochs.

Like Ochs (and Dylan, Seeger, and Guthrie before that), Sammy ventured to one specific place, New York City, to seek recognition—forgetting that all the singer-songwriter success stories he had heard emanated from that city were 15 and 20 years old.

In 1974, Sammy sent some demo tapes to *Broadside Magazine*, a hardy little hand-made publication which was the first to recognize and publish the works of Ochs, Dylan, Janis Ian, and literally dozens of other important artists. *Broadside* was born 15 years ago, and still mans the barricades, so to speak, as the medium of the topical or protest song. Sammy had written several such pieces, although protest was only one side of his complicated muse.

Broadside published his "Song For Patty," about Ms. Hearst, and other songs, including "Ragamuffin Minstrel Boy," which is about Bob Dylan (a quote attributed to Dylan headed the page: "There's still a message. There's always a need for protest songs. You just gotta tap it."). The magazine also sent demo tapes to several radio stations. Bob Fass, who played the original tape of "Alice's Restaurant" on WBAI prior to any album or movie, aired Sammy's songs, and invited him to play on a live broadcast. Sammy was on the air for five hours, singing and talking, completely unaware of a very special listener, Phil Ochs.

Understand that this was during the last year of Ochs' life, when he was sundered into two men. One was a gentle, creative person who probably never thought half as much of himself as did his friends and audience. The other was a furiously energetic madman with the separate name of John Train. Ochs saw himself as a loser and a failure, and he embraced despair beyond comfort and reassurance.



Photo by Jolly Robinson

There was no consolation prize in life large or sweet enough to tempt him from the pull of suicide. His other self, John Train, fought back for him in costly mythic battles against figment foes.

Surely, enough has been said about John Train and his drunken challenge to New York, the Mafia, the backgammon champion of the world—enough about armed-and-possibly-dangerous John, who Phil Ochs killed in the single act of taking his own life.

But months before that happened, during an interval when Phil Ochs was just Phil Ochs and so in touch with things, he heard and taped Sammy Walker off the air, then called in a message to WBAI.

"Bob Fass told me, 'Phil Ochs

would like to get in touch with you,'" Sammy recalled, speaking from his home in Yonkers, N.Y. Sammy was quiet for a moment, as some people tend to get when they are asked to talk about their friend Phil.

"Phil was staying at the Chelsea Hotel, and I waited, oh, two or three days because I didn't know—well, because Phil had always been one of my idols and just the thought of meeting him was awing. He was such an inspiration to me."

They met over at the *Broadside* offices. Sammy remembered that Ochs played and sang a haunting beautiful song which he'd written and recorded in Africa. It was all Ochs would sing. One of his groundless fears was that his voice

was gone, that his vocal chords were damaged as a result of an assault by hoodlums during his African trip. But Ochs would listen, and would do so intently when Sammy sang.

For many, if not most, folk artists, the primary career objective has been to cut an album for Folkways Records. Like *Broadside*, this specialized label has remained unswervingly true to its ideals. Ochs produced and sang back-up on Sammy's first and only Folkways release, *Song For Patty*. Needless to say, it didn't break out in any market. Folkways isn't that kind of operation. But Ochs was able to get Sammy work at Folk City in the Village, where he, Ochs, was putting on a series of what he called his "Farewell Performances."

Even before the first LP came out (in August, '75), Ochs had sent some of Sammy's songs to Warner Bros. While Ochs was pulling the Warners' latchstring, Sammy met artist manager Harold Leventhal, who also manages Arlo Guthrie. In Hollywood, a movie based on the life of Woody Guthrie, *Bound For Glory*, was in pre-production flurry, and there was a search for someone to play Woody. Through Leventhal, Sammy was considered but lost out to David Carradine. However, Leventhal was there to finalize the Warner Bros. deal.

There was a delay while the Burbank A&R people sought the right producer. Finally they settled on a seemingly perfect choice—Nikolas Venet, who'd previously produced Fred Neil, the Stone Poneys, and more recently, Wendy Waldman.

People are going to play 'sounds-alike', 'looks-alike' games with Sammy, and he admits that he is sick of being told that he reminds people of Bob Dylan. It is an inescapable comparison, but Sammy Walker certainly doesn't suffer by it.

As for me, I thought of Woody Guthrie, whose influence lies over both Sammy Walker and Bob Dylan. Mostly, I felt it in Sammy's lyrics, which are made of plain words, smelted and sandcast into rough, disturbing poetry.

There is another strange time warp factor, and that is the way people photograph him. On the cover of the Warners LP, he looks a lot like Phil Ochs; the way Phil dressed and slouched. A press photo captures him with his chin tucked down so he resembles a very young Bob Dylan (This has to have been done on purpose). But on the folkways liner, he's a ringer for James Dean.

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Ron Wood: "I'm totally committed to the Stones"

By TERRY ATKINSON

Ron Wood is perhaps rock music's supreme strategist. Like a good four-star general, he has always watched out for himself, in case the unexpected should occur. As guitarist for the Faces, Wood foresaw that ranging Rod Stewart's days with the band were numbered, and hence managed a proud alternative—lead guitarist for the Rolling Stones—well before the Faces crumbled completely.

"I've thrown all my eggs into the Stone basket," Wood will tell you categorically. He says this with a grin, and a wink. Wood is fully aware that the Stones are an aging band, perhaps on their last legs, and he has consequently kept several options open. He is set to enter the studio shortly to record his third solo LP, is keeping a healthy session work schedule—most notably with Eric Clapton on his new *No Reason To Cry* album, and has just recently completed a soundtrack album for the movie *Mahoney's Last Stand* with another Face alumnus, Ronnie Lane. Wood's involvement with the Stones is more accurately just one step in an overall individual master plan. It is an irony that Wood, the newest Stone, will be the one most prepared to deal with the future when the band finally dies.

Still, for the moment, Wood's top priorities lie with the Stones. At a friend's spacious home in Southern California high above Benedict Canyon, Wood sat by the pool, sipping Polish vodka, and spoke about the actual extent of his involvement.

"Mick was over last night," he began, a ready friendly grin masking his usual reserve. "We went to see Linda Ronstadt at the Universal Amphitheatre after imbibing quite a few margaritas. We got a bit wild. We were sitting there with some other crazies. Jack Nicholson, ah... Nicholson, was there. So was Bonnie Raitt. Mick and me were freaking out; joining in on Linda's songs. But other than us it was like a Sunday morning mass. People were turning around and going, 'Shhhh!' There was this six-foot-wide guy in front of Mick who I expected to come around and let us have it." Wood laughs.

"Mick and I talked about the live Stones' album last night. We've got to start listening to all the tapes and pick from the potential tracks a final sequence. It'll be the next Stones' release.

"I have no idea when it will be released. We don't want to hang onto it too long. Maybe just after Christmas."

Rumors abound that the live tapes represent the last Stones concert on record, and perhaps their

last record entirely. Wood strongly denies such is the case.

"We really do want to do another studio LP, and soon. Everybody's just been involved with a lot of different things, so people might get the impression that we're ending, but, as far as I know, it isn't true."

Wood took the job with the Stones under the condition that he would play an active role. At the time, he said he would not stand for "filling space—like Mick Taylor." He co-wrote "Hey Negrita" on *Black And Blue*, and is now ready to assert much more.

"My big regret," he says, "is that I came into the group well after they'd begun working on the *Black And Blue* album. I was simply too busy to work on it from the start. Plus, I didn't know I was going to be a full-fledged member at the time. I was supposed to be just going on their tours, while remaining with the Faces."

Did it take a while to adjust to being a Rolling Stone? "No, not really, because I've been close to them for years. When I did actually enter the band, it was even better than I thought it would be. I thought there would be a lot more numbers being pulled, more... secrecy than there is. They're a whole lot better to work with than I had expected."

Wood's immersion in activities differs from former counterpart Rod

Stewart's recent musical endeavors. Aside from recording *A Night On The Town*, Stewart has remained in a state of amorous limbo for close to 18 months, and is only now attempting to return to the spotlight. While Wood harbors no ill-feelings against Stewart, he implies that Stewart's career is going downhill and makes it clear that he has no desire to spark a reunion. "About as much chance as Dean Martin and Jerry Lewis getting back together," he snickered.

However, Wood has run into Stewart a few times since returning to Los Angeles from England. "I met him the first night I got into town, in fact, at a Fleetwood Mac party. I went back to his house and stayed the night. It was nice.

"Then we met at the Troubadour, when the Staples were playing. We sat at the same table. Joe Cocker came up to us and was swaying to and fro. He upset all the drinks on the table. We assured all seated nearby that he wasn't with us."

What does Wood think of Stewart's latest solo? "Typical Rod, nice but... I would like to see him open up more. He sounds a bit confined, maybe because he doesn't have his old mates around."

[Cont'd. on pg 31]

Heart: Seattle's Hard Rock Girls

By KEN BARNES

Witnessing a rock band, Heart, genuinely excited about things—they mention how much they love to hear their records on the radio—is not all that uncommon. Peter Frampton will drool a million adjectives describing just how wonderful it all feels, as will his counterpart, Gary Wright. It is the basis of Heart's bubbly enthusiasm which makes them so special. The Seattle-transplanted-to-Vancouver sextet has sold nearly 500,000 copies of their very first album, and has become an instant FM radio staple while placing two singles, "Crazy On You" and "Magic Man" into the upper reaches of the pop charts. Quite a feat for a new group with a brand-new, tiny independent record label, Mushroom Records.

How'd they do it? There's the obvious girls-playing-rock & roll-bit, with Ann Wilson singing lead and occasionally playing flute, and sister Nancy wielding guitars both acoustic and electric. But Fanny and recent all-female conformations haven't been runaway successes, and the whole topic has become pretty hoary by now. Even hoarier is that other chestnut about female vocalists singing hard rock—you know, the "new Janis Joplin" or "new Grace Slick" kick some people get on.

"I get tired of people saying 'Wowwww maaaaaan, yew sound jus' like Jaaaaanis Joplinnnnn,'" says Ann in a archetypical rapturous concertgoer's slurred patois. "And someone else comes up and says, 'God, you sound just like Grace Slick'...Frankly, I never got into Janis that much because all that excess frightened me. And Gracie, we played a few dates with the Starship, and watching her, meeting her...she's nothing like me."

Ann asserts she has even less in common with her sensitive sitdown singer-songwriter sisters. "I've never been that fond of singing girlie songs. I don't mind listening to it, but I don't like to get stuck in a wishy-washy little marshmallow girlie bag. I like to be female, I like to get onstage and be female, but..." She obviously enjoys singing hard rock, used to sing a lot of the most raucous variety up in Seattle, but there is still a sensitive, acoustic side, too, seemingly abetted by Nancy, who does the songwriting with Ann and leans to the acoustic side to the extent that about half their album (*Dreamboat Annie*) is essentially non-rock. Joni Mitchell, Paul Simon, and the Moody Blues are among Ann and Nancy's favorites and it comes out at times. Sometimes their acoustic material is pleasant, rather lush, pretty stuff, like "I'll Be Your



Bruce Osborn

Song" and "Dreamboat Annie;" sometimes it's lush but not so pretty ("How Deep It Goes"); and sometimes it's complex and rather intriguing ("Soul Of The Sea").

But then there's that other side, rock & roll, and that's special. Guitarist Roger Fisher and bassist Steve Fossen "were in rock bands when the Wailers were out," according to Nancy, which is reaching back a ways. The Wailers—not to be confused with that garbled ganja gang from JA—were the original tall cool ones who dominated the Northwest beat scene from 1959 through the 60's, though Roger and Steve's early days probably came during the Wailers' mid-sixties reign, when the frighteningly raw Sonics were the pretenders to the throne but after Paul Revere & the Raiders had split with their hits to Dick Clark land. Northwest bands played perhaps the rawest, roughest, rock & roll anywhere, favoring all these grungy greaser classics like "Big Boy Pete" and "Ooh Poo Pah Doo" and, naturally, "Louie Louie" long after the British Invasion made that stuff the depth of fashion. Roger and Steve were no doubt thoroughly conditioned, and by the time Ann joined up about four years ago they were playing the hard rock of the day in Seattle and, later, Vancouver clubs—Deep Purple, maybe the odd Stones song, and...Led Zeppelin—especially Led Zeppelin.

"We used to be known...as Little Led Zeppelin," admits Ann. "We did two medleys, plus 'Stairway to Heaven,' 'Rock & Roll'...we did a medley of the old stuff including 'Dazed & Confused,' 'Good Times Bad Times,' 'Communication

Breakdown'—"

Roger's eyes light up as he remembers the guitar pyrotechnics a medley of "GTBT," "CB," and "D&C" would necessarily require. "I had Jimmy down," he smiles.

Ann continues, "We did another medley of the *Houses Of The Holy*-type stuff. We did 'The Crunge' for awhile..." This was in Vancouver, where Heart transplanted itself a while back. While living in Seattle Roger and Steve and Ann fronted a band called Hocus Pocus, "Roger's brother Mike was living in Canada at the time," Ann reflects. He snuck down across the border once to visit Roger—"I fell in love with him instantly and had to go up there and join him," she confesses, adding somberly, "You know how love works." Steve and Roger and Ann subsequently all decided to move up to Canada. "The market is so much less exploited. We liked Vancouver right off, it was fresh clean ground to break, so we did it and it worked."

Soon Nancy joined as full-time composer, singer and guitarist and Heart released "How Deep It Goes" as their first Canadian single which proved a stiff. Then came "Magic Man," which made the Canadian Top 10. Next came the album simultaneously with "Crazy On You," as the latter went gold in Canada, becoming an even bigger hit than "Magic," reversing the subsequent results here in the States.

The album was released first in the U.S. and immediately attracted what is thought to be the maximum FM airplay possible. The first

[Cont'd. on pg. 18]



- Nude Pop Stars
- Where The Hot Hotels Are
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Finally a magazine that talks about the rock scene in terms that really count. Important details, like who's hung, who's not hung, who's kinky, who's not kinky...get the picture? It's decadent, it's disgusting, and frankly, it's expensive. There isn't one legit magazine distributor who'll touch us! Regardless, we're completely sold out of the first issue of Rodney's rock filth (May, 1976), which should give you some idea where this nation's youth culture is at these days—and how well we serve same.

Issue #2 is just out, and this one is even sleazier than the first. Obviously another sell-out, inside we've our first annual 'Nude Rock Star Blind Date' contest. Some of rock's tufts have gone in the buff for this one. We've got pictures for days and some of the most intimate gossip and pop gutter talk this side of Fleet Street.

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Former Bowie Manager Uncovers A New Rock Hustle In Indiana

Johnny Cougar: Young, Gifted and Cocky

By MARTIN CERF

SEYMOUR, IND.—"Johnny Cougar—he looks like an uptown male-hustler who has all the right talent in all the right places." An educated observer from Manhattan susses out the most outstanding qualities of what will certainly become one of the most talked-about new acts of 1976.

"Once you've had me, you know you've had the best." Johnny Cougar says, sharply echoing the words of Lou Reed, his life as the Seymour celebrity. "That's the general consensus of opinion around here, it always has been. I can say I look real good 'cause everyday of my life I've been told how good lookin' I am, how damn cute I am. I'm so sick of hearing it, I can't stand it—I get numb from hearing it; it doesn't mean nothing to me." Armed with this attitude and a time capsule crowded with suburban purple-prose, Johnny Cougar is ready to take his good looks and his regional hooks to the masses. "Before I feel like I've done anything in the rock business," he announces, "I'll have to be the best. I want to be on top of the heap...that's just the way it is."

Seymour is a small, backwoods, rural community of about 15,000 situated some forty miles north of Louisville, Kentucky in the lower reaches of Indiana. It's the home of Johnny Cougar, a ruggedly handsome 24-year-old who knows first-hand the persuasive powers of a youthful commitment. "He's quite the business man," says Tony DeFries, Cougar's manager/producer. "I didn't find him—Johnny found me." DeFries, with his New York-based MainMan management company, is the man responsible for David Bowie's initial rise to glory. He negotiated the original RCA contract for Bowie, which is said to have been re-defined or 'increased' four-fold by DeFries before the first option came due. Considered a "notorious person" by his critics and some former associates, nearly everyone in the business concedes DeFries' unique talent for the sensational. Cougar is DeFries' first 'new' act since Bowie parted company with MainMan in a flurry of injunctions and lawsuits in January of 1975—many which remain unsettled.

"Johnny is, frankly, the exact opposite of David," DeFries hastens to point out. "He really hates everything that Bowie stands for—this is precisely why he made such an effort to win me over in the first place. He once told me, 'Anyone that can get headlines for an orange-haired, no-talent, limey-faggot like David Bowie, can do anything'." Cougar first learned of MainMan from one of the Bowie LP

liners and soon made contact with DeFries personally through the mail—that was nearly three years ago.

In contrast to Bowie, Cougar is first and foremost American, middle-American. His image lyrically and physically is decidedly 'het'ro'-sexual. DeFries compares his tight-muscular posture to that of a "teenage Baretta—only not such a large tush." He adds emphatically, "Johnny is all-American M-A-L-E." Where Bowie investigated the possibilities of life on Mars, Cougar is more obliged to contemplate the suburban plight. In an MCA Records' bio, Cougar is said to "chronicle the male experience—

only writes about street life; that's just one aspect of what I do." Cougar suggests there might be the "slightest similarity" but discounts any direct relationship flatly, "besides, he's so much older than me—we don't even dress the same."

In fact, Johnny Cougar plays Peyton Place to Springsteen's Mary Hartman when his lyrics take on libido gratification like those within both parts of "Chestnut Street" (the main drag in Seymour—local cruise central): "You must believe that when I walk down the tracks/The young girls fall back and say/There goes that sleek young silhouette/He don't drive no Cor-

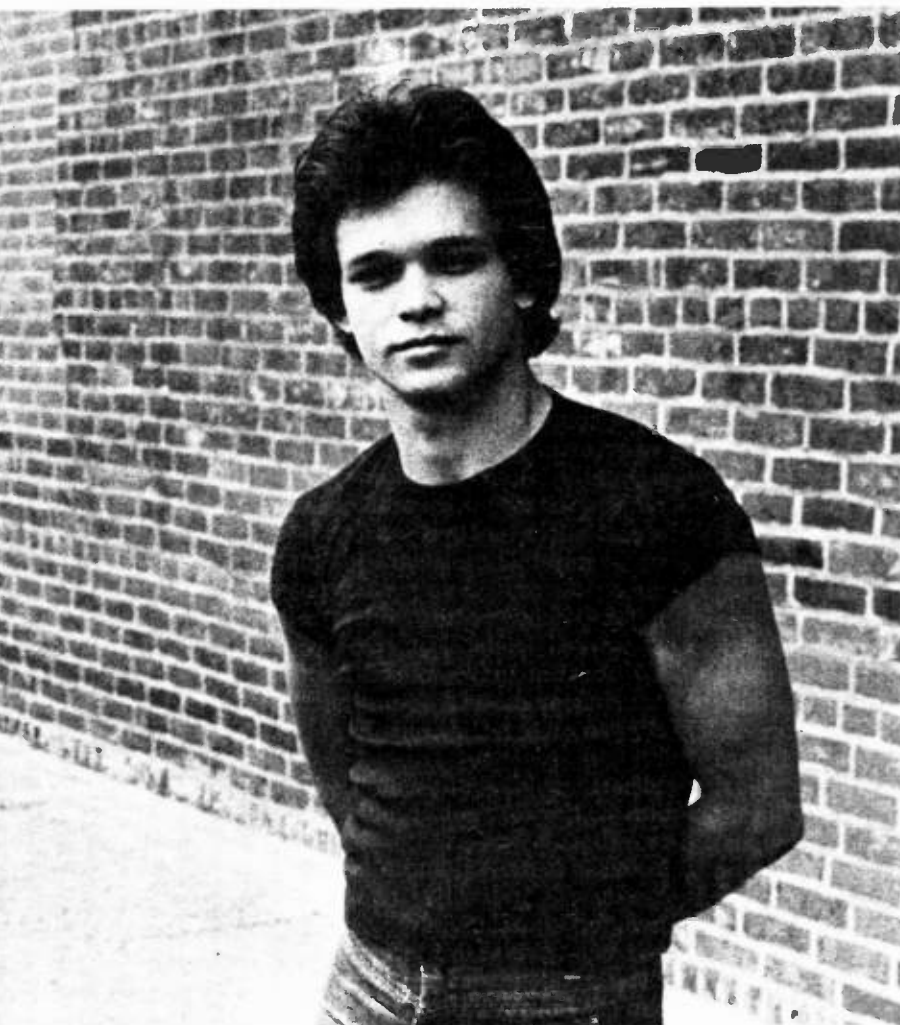
in his teens within the neighborhood—"A lot of parents used to tell their kids not to hang-out with me...that I was a bad kid," he recalled "I wasn't bad, really.... They just didn't understand." It all led up to a song-by-song review/diary of Johnny Cougar music detailing in full his anxiousness and desire to be on top of the top of tin-pan alley, his way. "I don't pretend to be slick," he'd write, "I want people to be able to relate to my music. I write about reality. You will never catch me writing a song about wizards and demons—that stuff's just a bunch of flowery crap."

DeFries recalls receiving literally dozens of letters and pictures. Then, one day a home-demo-tape of the songs arrived. "I looked at all this as a bit of random-fluff until that tape," Tony confesses. "But when I first heard that voice, that range, the control—I was sold straight-away. It hit me as pure rock and roll, a bit rough around the edges but authentic, and sincere as hell."

DeFries subsequently arrived in Seymour after nearly three years of Cougar's self-induced PR, a hardcore believer. Cougar and his band of locals were then taken into a studio in Bloomington, Indiana where several of the early tracks for the first LP were recorded. Soon after, DeFries flew the whole band to New York where the majority of tracks were laid down at The Hit Factory—Tony DeFries as producer. It was his first shot in the official capacity of 'producer' "I know no-one could have brought out what I heard in Johnny without losing the raw vital energy inherent in the act—I had to do it."

The first Johnny Cougar LP is perhaps not the slickest recording. Musicians apparently were gathered from the best of the locals at the last possible moment. "One minute I was trying to land a record contract and two days later I was in the studio—it was that quick," Cougar recounts. Of all those musicians featured on the first LP, only two are part of the 'official' Cougar road band, which has only this past month been solidified. Vocal work on the debut record is its strongest feature, the thin unrefined playing, the weakest. "I'm not really all that happy with the record—In retrospect, I'm sad and disappointed I did so many 'tune-titles' ('Jailhouse Rock,' '20th Century Fox,' 'Do You Believe In Magic,' 'Pretty Woman'); it was a selfish thing for me to do. It doesn't come across the way I wanted it to."

Cougar hopes the first record will serve as merely an introduction to what he does. "I hope the public doesn't think this is all I'm capable of—for obvious reasons this is definitely not my best LP."



he captures through his music and lyrics the essence of what it is like to be a youngster growing up in a small mid-western town."

It's the territory covered on perhaps a more cerebral basis by Springsteen and the Jukes, but the Cougar titles present the white middle-class male youth as a more basic, less complicated soul. In "American Dream", the lead track from *Chestnut Street Incident* (MCA 2225), Cougar boasts: "I had a face so cute made a young girl cry/And I could blow 'em away with just a wink of my eye."

"I'm being compared to Springsteen and I don't like it, Cougar groans. "It's not a fair comparison—Springsteen does nothing but that East-coast West Side Story rock. He

vette/But he stings like a sting-ray" Cougar warns those that link Springsteen's imagery and performance to his own; will discover their proverbial foot in mouth when they hear the next album."

The story behind the pairing of DeFries and Cougar is interesting but for the random events which led up to the eventual agreement. It seems that once Cougar put DeFries together with MainMan—secured the company's address and phone number in New York—semi-regular communication blitzes geared to categorically educate Tony as to the life, times and music of this dark-haired, butch-crooner began.

Cougar's first communications began with personals outlining such as the parental conflicts sustained

Regardless, radio stations in Cleveland and predictably Louisville, have jumped right on the LP—even top forty stations are programming LP tracks generously.

In December, Cougar returns to the studio to begin work on the second LP titled, *Young Genocides*. The record will attempt to grapple with what Cougar terms "the creative execution of youth by parents, the establishment in general." It's Cougar's scenario that long before one has an opportunity to investigate his or her artistic/creative potential (the zenith years of which occur between the ages 16-20), America's sons and daughters are discouraged from experimentation, relegated to the 'get a day job' mentality. "We're out climbin' telephone poles during the most formative years of our lives...the next thing a kid knows he's thirty and locked into an existence he never chose."

It's not by chance that Seymour, Indiana remains home base for Johnny Cougar and band. DeFries offered to move the act wherever we want," explains Cougar. "My first reaction was to up and move to New York, get an apartment—but I've been through all that. I'll get to the city and see Ronson up there; and he's not doin' nothin'. And I'll hang out with Reed—he's not doin' nothin'. All the people there are really bored; going to the same old clubs and doing the same old things. It really takes the spark away. For example, I remember the time I met Ian Hunter. I always admired Ian from afar, as a personality, a musician. Then I met him and discovered Ian Hunter is a creep. Really, I prefer to sit back here in Seymour and be dazzled by it all."

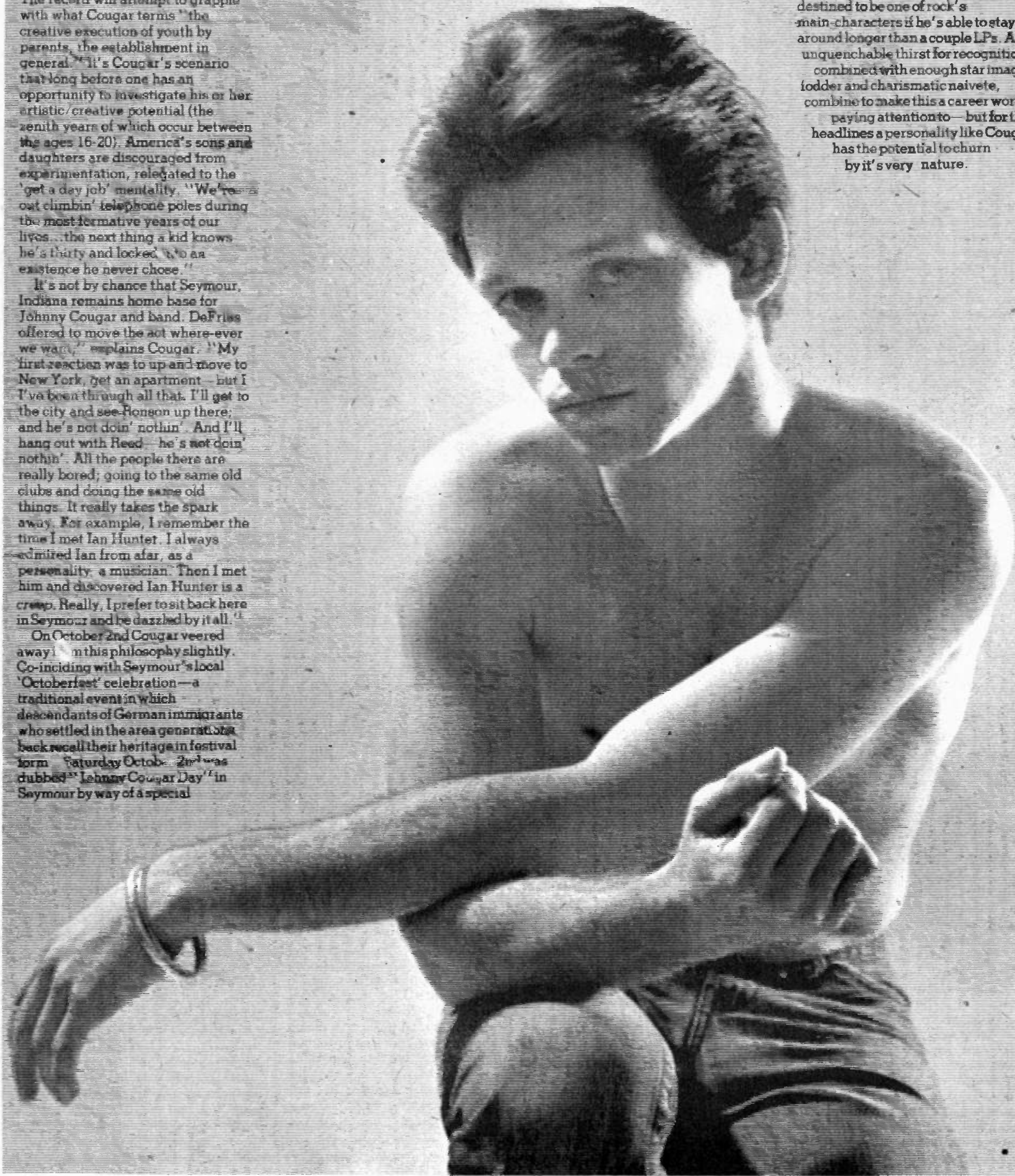
On October 2nd Cougar veered away from this philosophy slightly. Co-inciding with Seymour's local 'Octoberfest' celebration—a traditional event in which descendants of German immigrants who settled in the area generations back recall their heritage in festival form—Saturday October 2nd was dubbed "Johnny Cougar Day" in Seymour by way of a special

proclamation from town mayor, Donald H. Ernest. The day also marked the official launching of the Cougar road show. From the 'Octoberfest' the band embarked on a month-long series of small concert dates, all inside the Indiana state borders. "We've started our

campaign to break Johnny nationally in his homestate," says DeFries. "We'll speak our efforts outward from here, throughout the mid-west, then beyond. Too often," he continues, "local talent is yanked out of a local scene, prematurely dismissing what might have been

literally a fortress of regional sales acceptance as a result." DeFries submits this premise: "If an act can't establish a sales pattern and market in its backyard, it's rather unrealistic to assume New York or LA audiences more tolerant."

Johnny Cougar is certainly destined to be one of rock's main characters if he's able to stay around longer than a couple LPs. An unquenchable thirst for recognition combined with enough star image fodder and charismatic naivete, combine to make this a career worth paying attention to—but for the headlines a personality like Cougar has the potential to churn by its very nature.



Bryan Ferry Alone: Foxy Without Roxy

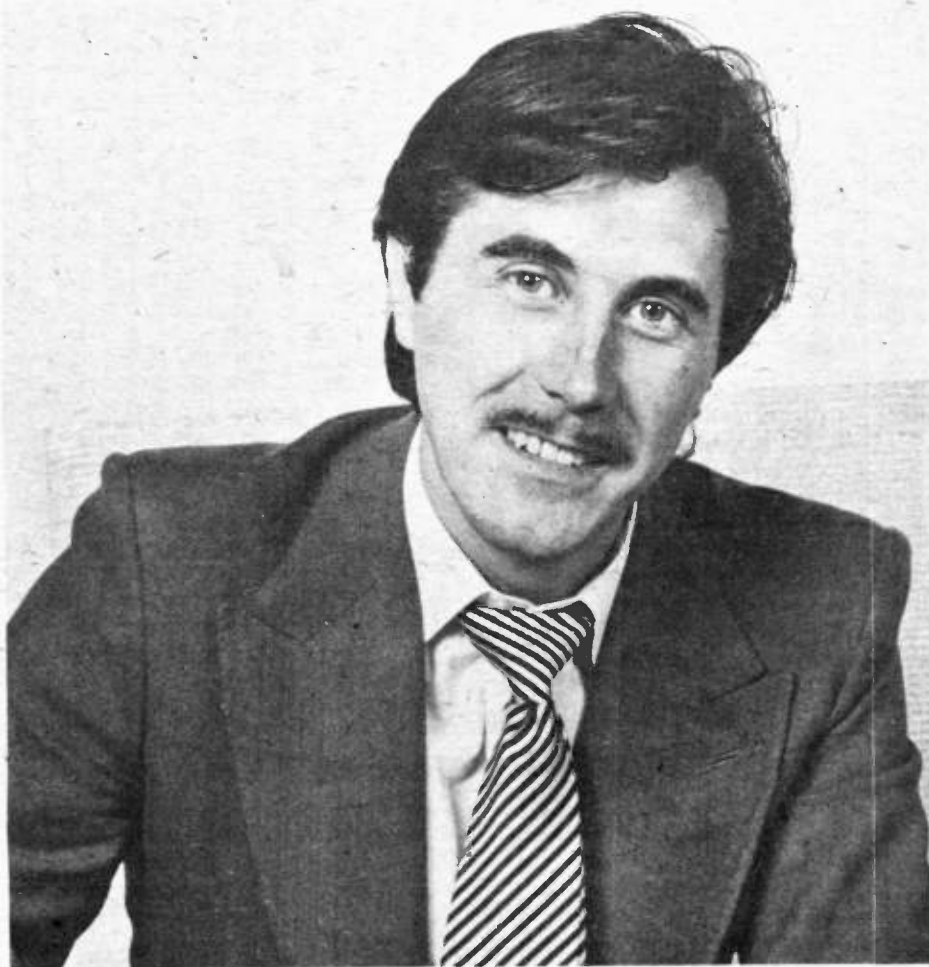
By RON ROSS

While the politics of self-exposure are evident in every album Bryan Ferry has made, with or without Roxy Music, his solo albums have consistently been a case study in pop profit-taking. Not that a calculated aesthetic hasn't informed both sides of Ferry's sensibility. As the leader/writer/vocalist of Roxy Music he has, from scratch, created one of the most original and addictive oeuvres in rock, while as a solo artist let us in on his elegant joke by bringing his distinct vocal style to bear on familiar material from every strain of popular music—covering such diverse sources as Dylan, Carole King, Jimmy Reed, Willie Nelson, and Lennon and McCartney.

But while most stars, including Ferry, claim solo albums fulfill an aspect of their talent their respective groups cannot, Bryan's seem more and more like entertaining excuses to call as much attention to himself as Roxy Music calls to his art. And if a choice is to be made, one must certainly opt for the artist and not the image. So although *Let's Stick Together* is his most diverse solo album of three, it is also his least surprising, and smacks of an opportunism that is all the more unsettling given the dubious future of Roxy itself.

Bryan has been quick to draw the line between the group and himself on a qualitative basis: if his solo sessions result in better music than he can make with Roxy, then Roxy's days are rightfully numbered (this presumes that there can be no Roxy without Ferry, a fair assumption, although it does not necessarily follow that Bryan Ferry is Roxy Music). *Let's Stick Together* is simply no test of this challenge, since too much of it seems to have been prompted by considerations of short-term pragmatism as opposed to long-term career development.

Granted, *Let's Stick Together* is the first Ferry album to balance covers with original material. "Chance Meeting," "Re-make/Re-model," and "Sea Breezes" were all recorded as flip sides to solo singles like "In Crowd," "You Go To My Head," and "Let's Stick Together." Their inclusion on the album is nervous-making testimony to Ferry's have-my-cake-and-eat-it-too self-absorption. If the lure of his own records were to be the novelty of hearing Bryan warble such unlikely classics as "Hard Rain," then in order to promote his solo career consistently and avoid a too obvious clash with Roxy, Ferry had to release outside tunes as singles, singles which, by the way, frequently did every bit as well in the English charts as their Roxy counterparts. Writer royalties, however, are paid equally on both sides of a single, so in order to make



the most money from each hit, Bryan was obliged to record something of his own. Since he could scarcely put an entirely new song on a "B" side of an album without taking time and energy from his demanding responsibilities to Roxy, most of the original material on *Let's Stick Together* is there for no better reason than that Bryan can thus keep on harvesting the fruits of his pen while posing as an artiste who is not only good enough to release unavailable flip sides, but who has allowed us the rare and precious privilege of owning two different versions of several Roxy/Ferry standards.

All this is not by way of criticizing *Let's Stick Together* musically. The LP is generally conventional where Roxy is venturesome, but it certainly is no fit follow-up to last year's sensational *Siren* and more importantly, to Roxy's first Top Forty hit, "Love is the Drug." Nor is my disappointment merely sour grapes at not getting an album of all new material (even if Ferry would perhaps have been better off professionally if he had waited until he had one). It's just that *Let's Stick Together* seems to point up the fact that it will take an album of new songs, performed as Roxy Music can perform them, to put Bryan Ferry over the top—and that should be the sole ambition of both the star and his fans.

Almost three years ago, *These Foolish Things* provided us with a key to a highly advanced rock consciousness which had to many,

especially in America, seemed too obscure and precious to be worthwhile as expressed by Roxy Music. Ferry's soul band roots were bared on heart-grabbers like "Piece of My Heart," his grandeur on "Don't Worry Baby," his humour on "It's My Party," and his nerve on "Sympathy for the Devil." The musicianship was complete and straight-forward, and none of Roxy's dissonant demands for the listener's attention and understanding detracted from Ferry's sheer strength as a vocal stylist.

The second solo album, *Another Time, Another Place*, included the only non-Roxy original ever, but also such noisy bad jokes as "You Are My Sunshine" and "Walk A Mile In My Shoes," filler of the second rank.

If *Let's Stick Together* is considered only in comparison to Ferry's other solo albums, it certainly emerges as the best of the lot. The band is tight and superbly co-produced by Ferry and Roxy producer Chris Thomas. Paul Thompson, Roxy's drummer, is both solid and creative, lending a special drive to the arrangements. Chris Spedding, late of Sharks, may have found the ideal home for his jaggedly precise guitar. Chris Mercer, a former Mayall Blues-breaker, can hold his own with any studio sax-man, and John Wetton, ex-Family and Roxy Music, is the best of all the fine bassists who have worked with Thompson over the years. Guest appearances by Mel Collins, Eddie Jobson, and a female

chorus add further finesse.

Admittedly, *Let's Stick Together* is listenable in the extreme. "Price of Love," compliments the Everly's original version, and rocks harder than anything since "The Thrill of It All." Jerry Hall's yelps on the delightfully dumb title tune are perhaps the first time a girlfriend has been allowed in the studio and actually improved the music. And "It's Only Love" is so romantically swish it almost shames Bowie's "Sorrow" for tangoed-out self-pity.

It's the Ferry originals, ironically, that really make the album an improvement over its predecessors, even as they fall short of the Roxy versions. How refreshing it is to hear Bryan's plaintively psychotic re-rendering of "Chance Meeting" than to endure the monotony of another "Hard Rain." Yet it is typical of Ferry that he meddles least with his own work, and on "1/2 HB," and "Sea Breezes," both timeless and unique love in death ballads from Roxy's first album, the arrangements are too close not to suffer in comparison to the more inspired prototypes. Only on "Casanova" does Ferry apply the same re-make/re-model principles which work wonders on "The Price of Love." With a Tonto-rock disco beat and subtle guitar accents, the new "Casanova" is toned down from its forerunner on *Country Life*, but just as malevolent. Ferry's vocals skip and jump in perfect dynamic tension with the backing track; for an idiosyncratic and musically limited singer, his diction is marvelous, merging sound and sense with an authority unequalled in pop.

Yes, *Let's Stick Together* is impossible to dislike and perhaps essential listening. It's the only Bryan Ferry or Roxy album that can be heard in its entirety while you're having your first cup of coffee and not upset your day. Of the five originals, four are from the first Roxy Music album and are just as worth having today, even in slightly emasculated versions, as they were in 1972. If by some chance you don't own any of Ferry's fashions in music, then in some ways, *Let's Stick Together* is as good a place to start as *These Foolish Things* was in its time. Yet the fate of both Roxy Music and Bryan Ferry remains painfully unresolved, compounded by the simultaneous release of a live Roxy album which does no more to build the myth than most live albums. If Ferry takes the *Let's Stick Together* band on tour and performs some newly written originals with them, he may yet capitalize on the gains so encouragingly made by *Siren*. But one hopes Ferry isn't too bored with the idea of being an even bigger rock star. As matters stand, *Let's Stick Together* is the kind of good but not great album a movie star might make as a side-line.

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"We used to be known as a little Led Zeppelin."

[Cont'd. from pg. 13]

breakout market was, fittingly, Seattle, where the group remains huge.

When the Heart album first began to sell in March, and an edited version of "Crazy On You" (from 4:10 to 2:58) was released as a single the record soon embarked on a tortuous upward climb, hitting in some cities out of the box, others much later (it's still clinging to the charts in Chicago) and missing some entirely—all of which cleared ground for "Magic Man" (edited from 5:35 to 2:45) which is approaching the nation's Top 10 as I write. "Singles are great," observes Ann. "The single is really a neat art form, if it's done with some thought."

AM airplay requirements generally make these edits necessary, and are an artificial imposition on an artistic composition. "I usually don't like it when they do that," says Ann. "When they take it upon themselves to rearrange your composition for the sake of time, inevitably much of the content is sacrificed—the end result is many never hear the full idea." Apparently some radio stations have been chopping and channelling Heart's singles on their own hook, apart from the official Mushroom edits found on DJ copies. "Some stations do it intelligently, but I've heard versions of 'Magic Man' over the air that make my skin crawl. One station chopped it so short it was like a commercial for 'Magic Man.'"

The same conviction shone through a criminally short (less than 30 minutes) set at the Universal Amphitheatre. Heart started off acoustically, with a forcefully-picked Bert Jansch-style solo by Nancy, and an intricate, impressive song from their next LP, *Magazine*, where Ann effectively ranged from

high-pitched Mitchellesque warbling to full-tilt belting. With Heart's "Little Led Zeppelin" past in mind, "Soul Of The Sea" suddenly sounded like "Stairway To Heaven" sideways in spots, with a bit of "Kashmir" thrown in—interesting (viewed in the Zep context, "Sing Child," from the album, which I thought unlistenable at first, now makes a jagged sort of sense, like one of Page's more disjointed pieces).

Then came the rockers—the lyrically vicious "White Lightning & Wine" (possible third single from the album, although the group isn't thrilled with it and would prefer to put out something new), followed by "Magic Man" (featuring a stunning-but-short guitar showcase courtesy of Roger) and an unfortunately flat moog, and finally "Crazy On You," sounding that night like what Linda Ronstadt could aspire to if she really had the inclination to sing hard rock.

Nancy says there will be more rock and roll songs on the next LP but Ann qualifies that—"That element of mellowness and acoustic is still there." From there Roger concludes, "The performance has definitely matured."

In a way I almost hope it hasn't, because I think Heart's not naive, they've been playing too long for that, but freshness, is in large part why they are indeed a special group. Any band who can say "Every minute of our lives is spoken for" and sound like they love it has got a rare enthusiasm going for them. This along with Ann's incomparable vocals (both in the sense of excellence and not being comparable with other female singers), the group's genuinely powerful hard-rock base, and those wonderful singles will determine the total extent of Heart's contribution to rock history.

Take a look into "Private Eyes" By Tommy Bolin.

There are many ways of looking at things. One important way (especially when you're dealing with music) is with your ears.

Look then, at Tommy Bolin. A wizard of a guitarist whose work with Billy Cobham stopped people in their tracks. His blazing guitar has embellished every band he has ever been a member of—from the James Gang to Deep Purple.

Now. Look at "Private Eyes."

Tommy Bolin's debut album with Columbia features Mark Stein (Vanilla Fudge) on keyboards and Norma Jean Bell (Mothers of Invention) on saxophone.

The way they look at music is a synthesis of metal and jazz/soul that is fascinating.

Tommy Bolin. His new album is "Private Eyes." Listen, take a good, long look.

On Columbia Records and Tapes.



Al Stewart:

A sturdy marriage of Art and Craft

By MICHAEL TEARSON

PHILADELPHIA—According to mystical Far Eastern philosophy, last year was supposedly the Year of the Cat, which also serves as the title of Al Stewart's latest album. In this, the Year of the Dragon, Stewart admits that his title is dated. "But hell," he adds with a laugh, "dragon was too many syllables."

Al Stewart is an artist at the very crossroads of mass success or perpetual cult-dom. He is intensely aware of *Year of the Cat*'s importance, which explains why he spent 18 months to complete the project. *Cat* follows Stewart's early-'75 release, *Modern Times*, which reached the Top Thirty in the national album charts without the benefit of a hit single or wide knowledge about the performer. For most artists, that kind of success would set the precedent for a musical pattern, but Stewart has chosen to alter his approach—possibly because, despite the sales, he failed to acquire a real identity.

The bizarre historical perspectives which flourished on *Past, Present, and Future*, his first Janus LP, and *Modern Times*, remain, as



Bruce Osborn

represented in new songs like "Lord Grenville," "On the Border," and "Flying Sorcery" (the latter entwines the complete history of aviation from a romantic point of view). But musically, some of the sounds are startling. "Broadway Hotel" features a fiddle solo by Bobby Bruce, formerly of Merle Haggard's Strangers, and disco-like strings and a Phil Kenzie sax solo permeate the title cut. Respected producer Alan Parsons has shar-

pened the overall sound quality and added numerous hooks to the arrangements.

Does this mean a conscious effort to tailor the album to people's expectations at the expense of the artist's vision?

"I don't feel I've made any compromises artistically," Stewart argues vehemently, strongly defending his approach. "Lyrically and musically, it's a lot better than the last one. Because the songs

jump right out at you, it sounds more commercial, but so what?"

Stewart breathed deeply, then continued his tirade. "*Modern Times* was a learning album. We wanted to experiment with a more uptempo and folk-rock sound. *Cat* is a 1976 record with all the sounds you can muster in the studio. After we finished making it, I took it home and compared it with things that I thought were clean, like the Eagles records, and this is better produced.

"Lord Grenville" and "Flying Sorcery" are purely me. I can't imagine any one else save Sandy Denny who could write a song like "Grenville." "It's not like I suddenly started writing Led Zeppelin riffs or something."

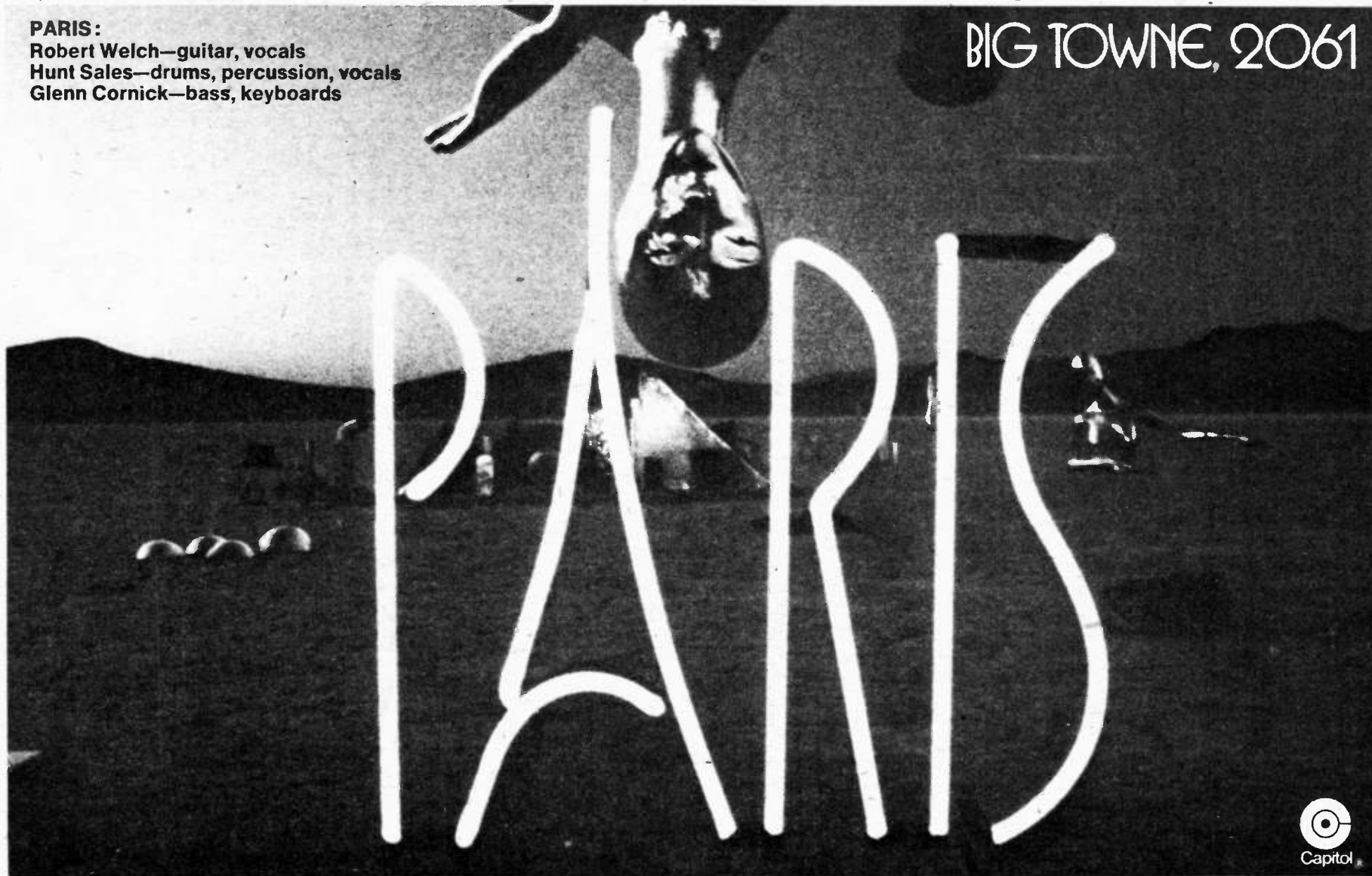
The man makes a good point. While bright and tuneful, *Year of the Cat* is a sturdy marriage of art and craft. Still, his most compelling strength remains his lyrical way with history, most brilliantly manifested on the new LP in "On the Border." The song begins as a Basque separatist song, that, with "Grenville," ties an allegorical noose around the neck of modern England. Says Stewart: "We don't need someone crazy to run the country, but a little eccentricity might help instead of a totally faceless bureaucracy."

Stewart feels all the changes in style will finally establish him in the U.S. Currently, he is assembling a band, and will tour clubs and small halls here prior to December. This may be the year of the Dragon, but the new album, Stewart hopes, will make it his year as well.

PARIS:

Robert Welch—guitar, vocals
Hunt Sales—drums, percussion, vocals
Glenn Cornick—bass, keyboards

BIG TOWNE, 2061



POP SINGLES FOR THE '70s



ABBA
"Fernando"
Atlantic 0200

ABBA's records are very uneven; a pop masterpiece followed by a piece of easy-listening slush, then another masterpiece. But every one of them features some variation of Bjorn & Benny's amazing production style, and the breathy icicle voices of those two hot little cuties, making ABBA an easily acquired taste. This tune, written off by many as another slush item, has been growing on me steadily. When it moves into the chorus, the controlled avalanche of sound proves ABBA the best masters of the sonic hook this side of vintage Spector. The song itself is at least less cliched than "I Do I Do I Do I Do I Do"—and how many hits have there been based on the Mexican rebellions? Also I dig the way the girls affect those Latin accents atop their already cute Swedish inflections.

HEART
"Magic Man"
Mushroom 7011

There are a lot of shucks that need to be exposed. Like Peter Frampton, who's a nice boy and all, but really...And all the phony 'high-energy' groups (with a stack of Marshall amps and a few Les Paul guitars, any five high school dropouts could be the next Starz), and we won't even talk about disco. But as for Heart, I like their sound and I like this record, it's not their fault they're the first of what are sure to be dozens of groups taking advantage of the current popularity of Fleetwood Mac. It's unfortunate for a group's career when they get

caught up in the hype for some current trend, because when the trend dies so do they. There's something about it that just strikes me as wrong.

RICK DEES/IDIOTS
"Disco Duck"
RSO 857

Now here's a record I love. I was wondering who would be the first to satirize disco this openly and still have a hit with it. Although it's hard to tell what's satire and what isn't, I mean "A Fifth of Beethoven" is a great satire only I'm pretty sure it's unconscious. Anyway, "Disco Duck" is as ridiculous as the people who dance to it, and my only regret is that the original "Disco Duck", a much better tune by Earl Mallard & His Webbed Feet of Rhythm (I-Shot 2751) couldn't have been the one to do it. C'mon let's quack again, like we did last summer....

MANFRED MANN
"Blinded By The Light"
WB 8252

This is one of Manfred's best outings in years, and it's a tribute to Springsteen that a record so good can be made from one of his lame songs. Just for kicks I checked out the original version, and as I suspected, he still sounds like an old wino with delusions of being a jazz singer. But leave it to the Manfreds to make a fine pop record out of raw spinach.

FATE
"Sweet Melinda"
Phantom 10743

The Phantom label continues to come up with the interesting and unexpected. Fate is a group whose releases on the Massachusetts label Rocky Coast I've been following for some time. They've got a smooth, catchy, Beach Boys inspired sound, and this record, their first to be picked up for national release, is one of their best. This is a group to watch.

Pretty strange the way "Howzat" by Sherbet (MCA 40610) jumped on the charts out of nowhere, got lots of airplay, then began dropping just as it should've been heading for the

top. It's an enjoyable, hook-filled record, a perfect AM hit, and apparently a victim of radio politics. Too bad.

"It's So Easy" by Hot Tuna (Grunt 10776) reminds me of another recent trend that annoys me. Where do all these people get off bringing back the songs of great artists like Buddy Holly, Sam Cooke, Smokey Robinson (if I see one more group on TV doing the Captain & Tennille version of "Shop Around" I think I'll scream) and not even taking the trouble to try and do the song justice? Linda Ronstadt is the prime offender, she's done far too many Holly songs and they're not such a great vehicle for her that she should keep after it so persistently. This Hot Tuna entry isn't bad except that they felt compelled to "update" the song by stripping it of all the innocent romanticism that was its whole point. Why do people always prefer to hear an inferior version of something merely because it's more recent?



I always liked Christine McVie's version of "I'd Rather Go Blind" (Sire 732) so it's nice to have it on a single. It's such a good song I dig almost any version, just like "First Cut is the Deepest" which is every bit as poignant in Rod Stewart's rendition as it was the first time I heard it, by P.P. Arnold or whoever. A good song doesn't have to be bludgeoned to death with new arrangements to get its point across, boys and girls. And while on the subject of Christine McVie, has anyone else noticed her uncanny vocal resemblance (on the *Legendary* album) to a certain Norma Tanega? It sure fooled me the first few times I heard it on the radio. If only more people, like Norma, had the decency to leave the stage when their fifteen minutes are up....

It's probably redundant at this point to mention that "Hey Bulldog" by Boxer (Virgin 9509) is a completely worthless version of a Beatles song by a group with no apparent reason to exist except having sidemen from formerly famous groups (lotta those around just lately, aren't there? KGB, Widowmaker, American Flyer, the respective groups of Tommy Bolan and Ritchie Blackmore, etc. *ad absurdum*). Who really cares?

Lest I seem to be in an overly cranky mood this month, let me mention a few worthy releases. "You're the One" by Billy Swan (Monument 8706) is a perfect example of how a Buddy Holly song can be adopted to an artist's style without destroying it in the process. Swan just keeps getting better, but because his music is honest, naturally it doesn't get hyped....

Cher's "Long Distance Love Affair" (WB 8263) is the best in years from a singer I'd almost given up on. Replacing Snuff Garrett with Barri and Omartian was a good move for sure. "Could Be Love" by the Dwight Twilley Band (Shelter 62003) is not my favorite from the album, but it's still one of the month's best pop records. Also pop fans, be advised that "I Can't Hide" (Sire 731) has been released as a single from the Flamin' Groovies album.

I actually like "Long May You Run" by the Stills-Young Band (Reprise 1365), much to my surprise, although I know it's because the Stills influence is so negligible. Young still has his moments, and there are a few on this one. "Music Music Music" by California (WB 8253) is the latest by the boys formerly known as California

"If only Christie McVie were more like Norma Tenega, she'd have the decency to leave the stage when her 15 minutes were up."

Music, and it's better than the stuff they did on RCA, though still a far cry from what they're capable of.

A very nice version of "The Sun Ain't Gonna Shine Anymore" by Crackers (WB 8265), I've been wanting to hear a new recording of this for a couple years now. Interesting and unexpected cover of Unit Gloria's "Like A Locomotion" by Left Side (Morningstar 510), a Dutch recording with a good pop-rock feel. Another song from that same influential Unit Gloria LP is "Clap Your Hands and Stomp Your Feet" and a marvelous version has been done by Thundermug in Canada (Axe 33). I sure wish they'd put it out in this country. Bo Kirkland and Ruth Davis turn in "I Feel Love in This Room Tonight" (Claridge 421), a good soulful R&B tune that avoids most of the disco cliches.



Invitation To The Dance

From Fireballet

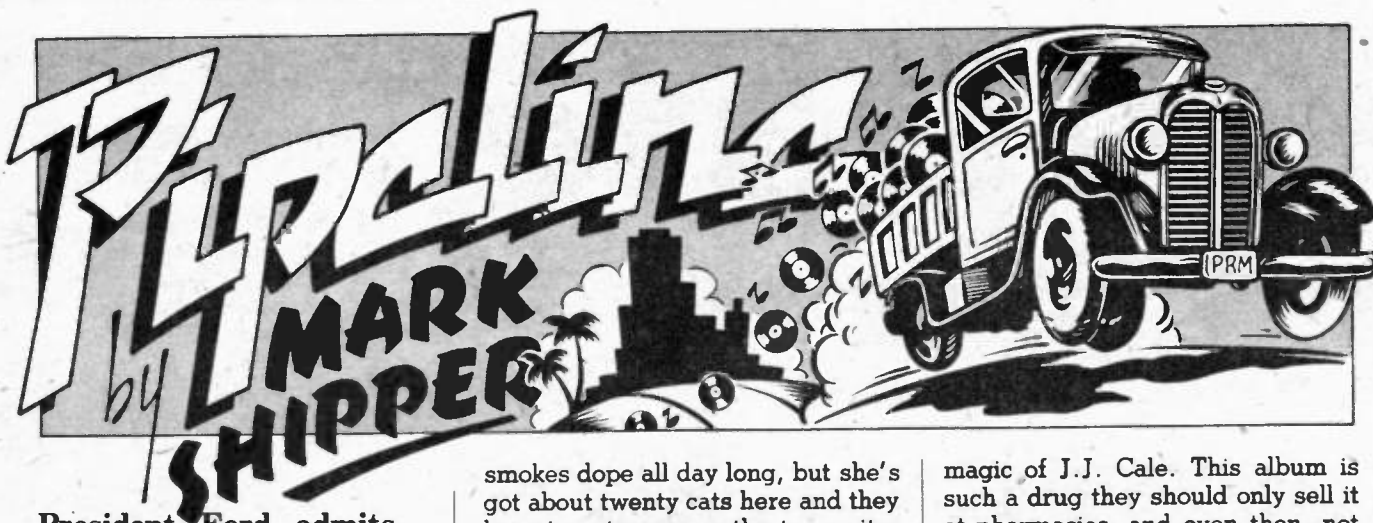
With their first album, "Night On Bald Mountain," the American band Fireballet displayed a full, intricate sound and appreciation for English metaphysics that won them favorable comparison to some of Britain's best.

Now witness the emergence of a new band from those same five men: Fireballet's "Two, Too"—a scintillating and precise command of harmonics, intricate lyrics, orchestrations



added to their already big, 26 instrument, sound, and a more American character distinctly their own.

"Two, Too." Album number two, too good to miss.



President Ford admits Kiss fandom: "I've learned a lot from the lyrics of these great artists of our time."

Had a real surprise in store for me when I returned from vacation at the beach last month. My whole place was ripped off by a gang of angry *Pipeline* readers! All they left me was a note saying that because I put down the Doobie Brothers, they were gathering all my stuff and "taking it to the streets." I was shocked at the time, but with the passing of a couple weeks, I began to put the importance of material possessions into perspective. There's nothing they took that I can't replace. My vintage wines, my rare records, my autographed photo of Donnie Osmond—these things I can get again if I really want them bad enough (Donnie, are you reading this?). I've learned lately that what counts are intangible things like health, security, and friendship.

Speaking of friendship, *Pipeline* reader Judy Davison heard about my predicament, invited me over, and offered me use of her typewriter and record player (mine was stolen) to write this month's column. Judy is that 18-year-old UCLA student with perfect teeth that I mentioned meeting a few issues back. At the moment, I'm sitting in the huge dining room of the house she shares with her boyfriend, a 50-year-old rich guy who plays tennis all the time. I put that in just so you know this is a purely platonic friendship. Which is just as well since Judy is kind of crazy and I'd just as soon not get involved. I don't mind the way she

smokes dope all day long, but she's got about twenty cats here and they keep jumping up on the typewriter and clawing me to death. Not only that, but the poor girl has absolutely no taste in music whatsoever. Her favorite album right now is *Children Of The Future* (RSO) by the Bee Gees. If this is what children of the future are gonna sound like, I think sterilization should be mandatory. I liked their last album just as much as everyone else, but this one has about as much feeling in it as you find in a Bernie Taupin lyric.

I believe we should declare a one-month moratorium on all disco music, just to see if we really need it or miss it. Then if it is determined that we no longer need it, a law could be passed forbidding it as a national nuisance. For humanitarian reasons, all producers of disco music would be guaranteed employment as computer programmers, assembly line workers, or anything else suited to their unique talents...

Judy's boyfriend just came home a little while ago, walked in and asked who I was. She told him I was Mark Shipper from *Phonograph Record Magazine* and that I was honoring both of them by writing my world-famous column in their house. He came over to shake hands, but I could tell he didn't trust me. The way I know this is because after he shook my hand, he pushed me off the chair I was sitting in and lunged for my throat. These tennis players are really jealous in a backhand kind of way.

At this point, I have to give Judy some credit for her quick thinking, which may have saved my life. The minute he went for my throat, she ran over to the record player and put J.J. Cale's *Troubadour* (Shelter) on. He fell asleep before the first song even finished. Such is the

magic of J.J. Cale. This album is such a drug they should only sell it at pharmacies, and even then, not without a prescription. As it stands now, any high school kid with six bucks can walk into a record store and buy it. I think it's wrong. Isn't the drug problem bad enough anyway? Write your congressman...

If this column is getting a little political, blame the season. Election time is just around the corner and I have to admit to being caught up in it. Judy says she likes Jimmy Carter because he's come out publicly as a fan of both Bob Dylan and Led Zeppelin. I'd heard this before and never believed it, but Judy says she has a friend who rode on the campaign bus with Carter for a few months earlier this year. According to him, Carter likes to round up his entire staff during long trips and get together and sing "Black Dog" and "Subterranean Homesick Blues." Maybe it's caused by confusion with his peanut farm, but Carter calls Zeppelin's lead singer "Robert Planter."

By the way, *Pipeline* sources have learned that President Ford is going to counter Carter's ploy of aligning himself with rock groups to gain the youth vote by announcing that he is a long-time fan of Kiss.

Our source claims that he has a cassette of *Destroyer* with him at all times and admits that he "has learned a great deal from the lyrics of these great artists of our time..."

My favorite song at the moment is "Still The One" by Orleans, which is the opening track of their album *Waking And Dreaming* (Asylum). It's a fairly accurate title, since half the time it sounds like they were asleep. But the other half is excellent, and with "Still The One" and last summer's "Dance

With Me," they've shown themselves to be a pretty competent little singles outfit. The only problem with this group and with *Boston* (Epic) is the trend now for lead singers of rock bands to try to sound like whoever that guy is who sings for the Doobie Brothers. I know it's dangerous to say this, but that guy has no voice.

In five years, people will be laughing at that stuff. But in five years they may still be listening to *Boston*, if the group can just inject some kind of individuality into their vocals. This is a hot, well-produced rock band that hits hard the first time you hear them and gets better from there. Their single, "More Than A Feeling", could have been one of the best of the year if the vocals were stronger. As it is, it could be a good record by Styx, but that's about it.

Speaking *Man To Man* (Big Tree), Hot Chocolate sure writes dumb songs, but they execute them so well that they almost always work. There's nothing on this album that rivals "Emma" (a great record, remember?) or "You Sexy Thing," but it does have its moments. Judy said she was offended by the opening cut, "Heaven Is In The Back Seat Of My Cadillac" which, according to her, is "another male chauvinist song that degrades women." She has a point. I suppose, but you don't want to take the opinions of these Crosby/Nash fans too seriously...

LETTERS: Carol Grimsley of Seattle, Wash., was so emphatic in her letter that I was wrong in my opinion of John Denver's *Spirit* (RCA) album (I said it was bad) that I went back and listened to it again. After a second listen, I have to admit that my opinion has changed. Actually it isn't bad at all, it's horrible! We suggest that John spend a little more time in recording in Colorado and a little less time performing in Las Vegas. It may not help his music, but Las Vegas will be a better place to visit...

Sounds like Judy's boyfriend is waking up now, so I'll have to bid farewell. Remember your letters are always appreciated and sometimes even read. Send them to Mark Shipper's *Pipeline*, PHONOGRAPH RECORD MAGAZINE, 6922 Hollywood Boulevard, Hollywood, California 90028.

[Cont'd. from pg. 20]



And Jerry Corbetta of Sugarloaf has a nice one in "You Set My Dreams to Music" (Claridge 415). If he had long hair and came from England, he could be Gary Wright or Peter Frampton...not that that's saying a whole lot.

Kudos to Kim Fowley for producing "Rag Doll" by the Quick

(Mercury 73851). He had some help from Earle Mankey and the result is a more polished pop sound than anything he's done lately. Group will appeal to fans of Sparks and Queen, and a good song of course is always good.

As for local records, we have a few hot ones. A Korean-Indian-American punk band (their own description) called the Slickee Boys has a fine EP featuring "Psycho Daisies" and originals including "Manganese Android Puppies" (Dacot 001). It's not as punky as it could be, but it is primitive, and comes with a great color sleeve.

Send \$2 to Kim Kane, 9306 Bulls Runk PKWY, Bethesda, MD 20034. "John Rock" by the Dogs (Dynamic III) presents an LA group doing the "Free John" political rock of the 1969 MC5. Weird, but if ever the time was right for this sort of thing it's now. The record is properly grungy, easily as good as anything by the Up, and an artifact of undoubted significance. Send a buck to Dynamic, Box 894, Monrovia, CA 91016.

Lastly, a real gem from Wayne County, New York's favorite transsexual rock & roll legend. It's Wayne's first record, also the first

on Max Records, launched by Max's Kansas City and sure to be an important outlet for local talent in the months ahead. The record, "Max's Kansas City '76" features Wayne's excellent heavy punk band the Back Street Boys, and Wayne doing a Lou Reedish takeoff on some of them. It's a classic all the way, and the picture cover is not to be missed. Send only \$2 to Max's, 213 Park Ave S, NY 10003. Could this be the "San Francisco (Wear Some Flowers in Your Hair)" of the '70s? Or is it "Monterey"? Whatever it is, it makes you want to be there.





Blind Date

with
FLO & EDDIE

A monthly blindfold test by those masters of Slander Rock, Mark Volman & Howard Kaylan.

Edited by KEN BARNES

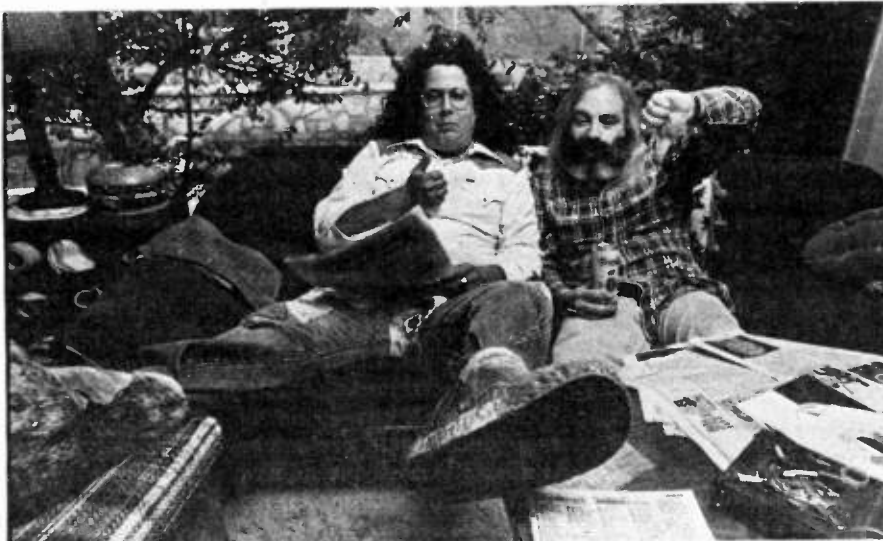
This month was an eventful Blind Date by any standards [except those of literacy and common decency]. Blind Date emeritus Greg Shaw [former co-MC] made an appearance, as did "Cookies by Nancy," delicious confections indeed [Eddie: "This Blind Date was held up by crumbs on the turntable," a statement open to a number of interpretations]. High praise was offered for TV's Supersonic, the fab English rock series, and the Frankie Avalon Show. Flo & Eddie made an open offer to produce the Hello People, and they proposed the formation of Blind Date Magazine, a whole publication full of this stuff, obviously an out-of-the-box smash as far as Mr. & Mrs. American Newstand Browser are concerned...

Excerpts-Motion KGB (MCA)

There has never been a worse television show than "Hard Rain." If you're a friend of Bob Dylan's you wrap your head tightly with herbs and kerchiefs and it's supposed to shrink your hair down. I'm not sorry I didn't pay \$15 to see it...An immediate Flo & Eddie favorite? Chaka Khan. Seals & Crofts. Wild Cherry. Supergroup sort of splintered...Duke & the Drivers. I thought it was Fools Gold. Initial band? J.J. Cale. C.W. McCall. P.P. Arnold. O.J. Simpson. Like the KGB band? I thought they were finished. Mike Bloomfield's not in it anymore. I remember—Carmin Appice didn't have his initials in the name and he was going to form the "A" Band. You'll want to own this just to have a record that dies quicker than the first KGB album. Barry Goldberg is still in it—they have a "G". He's wearing a CAT hat. Ray Kennedy, there's the "K"—but there's no "B." The Kancer Gall Bladder band. The CAT hat is very hip? He bought it at Sav-On for \$1.40. I'm getting Motion sickness. KGB—bye-bye.

"X-Offender" (single) BLONDIE [Private Stock]

From New York? Television. Wayne County. The Mumps. The one with the girl—Blondie, right? Sounds like Springsteen. Is she cute? Great little track. Produced terrible—it sounds fantastic. This won't be the one that breaks Blondie. They have to get these groups together with producers who



can make 'em sound good—Jack Douglas. He's a great producer. He knows how to make groups sell records. He wouldn't know how to do this. A garage sound won't work. A refined garage sound will. The Ramones produced by Bob Ezrin? That would be disastrous. ("I Want To Be Your Boyfriend" would've been the next "Beth"). When a group like Blue Oyster Cult has the best single of the year, then maybe a Bob Ezrin could save the Ramones from instant Drano commercials. All that it takes is one record.



Excerpts-End Of Beginning RICHIE HAVENS[A&M]

Flo & Eddie favorite returned from the dead? Not Bob Weir? Joe Cocker? Richie Havens! All right, Richie, Richie, Richie. He's singing with teeth on this album? Richie's still taking acid. Things move slower for Richie than they do for the rest of the world. "Wild Night"—could be a single. It's in the same key as the last one. Richie open-tunes his guitar so he can't play chords, so probably all the fast songs are in the same key. That one's different—maybe he can afford another guitar—or they sped

up the tape...I don't know how to say this album might work—I hate it but it might really work. Richie has fans waiting to wake up. We like Richie—it has nothing to do with this album.

Excerpts-Men From Earth OZARK DAREDEVILS

Former hit group on A&M? Tim Weisberg? He has another new album? He's racing neck and neck with Shawn. Ozark Mountain Daredevils. They creep through once in a while with a great hit. Let's find it. That ain't it. Keep going. I want to hear "Jackie Blue." Possible...it makes it or breaks it in the next minute—that ain't it. Here we go! "Noah." This is a hit. Might have a hook in it. Teetering on the brink of sucking me in...it didn't do it. Next cut. I like these guys. This is definitely better than the Funky Kings even if it's bad, and it is. That's it? OK, I think we found the single, but it's lacking the hook.

Excerpts-Dedication BAYCITYROLLERS

Lee Michaels. I know this band. Is it a woman? It's not Hall & Oates. Is it a group I saw on Supersonic last week? Hello? That's an Eric Carmen song. This is the group that Carmen's group turned into—Tattoo. Vanda-Young song, too? Big group? How big—Rollers big? Exactly that big...the Rollers doing "Let's Pretend..." Could I hear "Don't Worry Baby?" This will not appeal to Flo & Eddie fans. Good production. I'd rather hear the Bay City Rollers than the KGB band—does that make me sick? After seeing the Dylan show, I said, "Give me Queen, quick! Anything!" These guys need to cut a

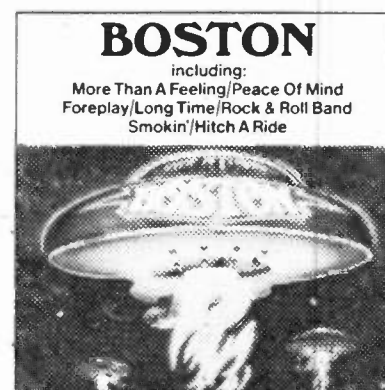
Flo & Eddie song. They look a bit subhuman. Good for the Rollers.

Excerpts-Coming Out MANHATTAN TRANS.

Manhattan Transfer. Awful. Ugly. Play something else. (Reads titles) "Popsicle Toes," "Scotch & Soda," "SOS"—not the ABBA song, "Chanson D'Amour." Richard Perry? They ought to put Richard Perry with Blondie. That'd work, because he's still in the gutter, obviously. Brecker Brothers, Dr. John, Jim Gordon, what do you want, they're all here. Ringo's on this album! This is authentic. I think they over-extend their boundaries constantly; they're the living Peter Principle band. Bryan Ferry would know what to do with this band. He would not record them!

Excerpts-Beauties In Night LADYFLASH[RSO]

Famous girl group singer of the past? Lady Flash. Reparata. We got it! This Reparata is not the Reparata of Reparata & the Delrons. She was a Delron. Is that heavy? We heard that, I don't know if there's any truth in it. Print it anyway—see if we get any feedback from RSO's PR Dept. They're cute (RSO's PR Dept.?) They really don't sound anything like Reparata & the Delrons. They're trying to be the Marvelettes. It's not up Flo & Eddie fans' alley, but it's good. I would like to know directly from Reparata if she really is Reparata or one of the Delrons who acquired the rights to the name.



Excerpts-Boston BOSTON[Epic]

Last one? The worst month in a long time! Brand new hit group? Where are they from? Boston? Is that what they're called? All right! Airplay up the gezing. Sounds OK. This sticks out. Would you put it back and listen to the record? "Telstar"—that was cute. Very good-sounding record. Good voice. I think it's better than Aerosmith. (This could be the next "Dream On"). This is the first good thing Epic's had on a pop level in a long time. Technical information—I don't want to know that! This album was recorded on a CMC-98 lathe with exclusive diamond-cutting edge and a noise-level reduction system equal to that of a small newt. Boston sounds great—everything else that's come out this month is swine flu.

By MICHAEL BARACKMAN

Page 25/Phonograph Record/October, 1976

A military band plays the "Star Spangled Banner" as an accompanying naval unit raises a 48-star Old Glory up the battle ship U.S. Arizona's flagpole, oblivious to the swarm of Japanese bombers closing in overhead. It's Pearl Harbor, alright, but the date is not December 7th, 1941. Instead, it's a vivid recreation of that jolting historic event from the movie, *Tora, Tora, Tora*.

Except in place of the original sound effects and musical score, the Beatles' chaotic "I Am the Walrus" is heard.

Except, it's not the Beatles, but Leo Sayer, who is singing.

And the movie progressing on the screen is not *Tora, Tora, Tora*, but another, entitled, *All This And World War II*.

Confusing? Well, the fusion of incongruities is the major point and prime attraction of this history lesson with a twist. *All This And World War II* is an entertainment-documentary, a la *That's Entertainment*, which factually chronicles the more noteworthy events of that war. Actual war period footage and feature film clips blended with major contemporary rock artists interpreting the music of the Beatles tell the story. The aspects may be on opposite poles, but they are neatly tied together by singular themes: a sequence early-on detailing public and government complacency in America while Germany escalates its war effort is coupled with the Bee Gees apt rendition of "Golden Slumbers." Later, Rod Stewart sings "Get Back" as American troops are shown advancing through Western Europe towards Germany.

Though uneven, the film significantly advances the use of rock music in that medium. Like *Tommy*, *Woodstock*, and *Stardust*, *All This And World War II* brings the musical score far beyond the background role it had been relegated to until just a few years ago. Unlike the afore-mentioned three, the movie makes more than just a musical statement, speaking to more than just the typical rock audience. Also, it is perhaps the first film to have originated from a record industry office instead of a movie studio.

All This And World War II was the brainchild of Russ Regan, President of 20th Century Records, whose past "experiments" have included Elton John and recently, the very successful Alan Parsons Project. Regan, who serves as the movie's executive producer, literally dreamed up the idea at 4:00 AM one morning in 1973. He took the idea to his company's sister corporation, 20th Century Fox, who had

previously backed the movies *Concert For Bangla Desh* and *Phantom of the Paradise*.

"The first time I heard it, I thought it was a stupid idea," recalled Mario Machat, who eventually became the film's associate producer. Evidently, Fox felt similarly, giving Regan a polite pat on the back, then tabling the project.

Meanwhile, Regan brought up the idea with Lou Reizner, who'd previously coordinated the 1972 A&M/Ode *Tommy* adaptation package. With Reizner in as music director, Fox agreed to move ahead under the condition that it remain a low-budget operation. After numerous delays and serious complications, the film is set to open in mid-November.

"What we've tried to do," explained Reizner, "is make the definitive anti-war film. We've done it tongue-in-cheek and with music so it won't be boring."

"We've obviously taken a big risk. The way we've combined the sequences could be totally offensive to different kinds of people. First, older people who participated in the war might say, 'How could you treat the subject so irreverently?' At the same time, younger people might feel the Beatles' music is sacred and shouldn't be tampered with."

With key executives from both the top entertainment fields working together equally, the making of the movie became a battlefield in itself due to the different styles and priorities each industry maintains. The idea of extensively editing an artist's finished work was foreign to Reizner, while Fox expected his accumulated material to undergo the same type of chopping the massive footage underwent. Additionally, according to Reizner, Fox was hesitant to show the more controversial aspects of the war, thus blunting the anti-war statement.

"It's been a total fight," Reizner charged. "At one point, I was about to say, 'forget it, I'm not going to deliver my tapes.' Movie studios lose sight of anything deliberately creative. We've had to cut important scenes, and have had serious problems over alterations in the art work and even the title. Do me a favor, just call it *World War II*."

Reizner spoke inside his bungalow at the Beverly Hills Hotel. It's obvious that as the premiere date draws near, a certain queasiness is setting in. Advanced screenings met with mixed reactions and consequently, the film has gone through more extensive editing than planned. More feature film was added, and Reizner was even considering changing the ending by adding a scene. All this followed the scrapping almost entirely of what original director Tony Palmer had put together. Palmer's explicit, violent version was thought by Fox to be "too somber."

Joe Gallagher, Fox liaison in the feature film division, added, "We tried to stay away from any type of personalized suffering. It would have totally contradicted the joyous, upbeat music."

About the conflicts with the music principals, Gallagher said, "It was normal. It was never a question of someone destroying someone else's creativity."

In contrast, the actual soundtrack came together with relatively few complications. Regan had originally envisioned using the original Beatles' music because, as he put it,

[Cont'd. on next page]

WORLD WAR II

brought to you by

The Beatles

A Film by Russ Regan

Music of The Beatles

As performed by
Elton John · The Bee Gees
Electric Light Orchestra
Leo Sayer · Four Seasons
Helen Reddy · Tina Turner
Henry Gross · David Essex

LP cover for the sound track from "All This And World War II"—due for release in Nov.



"Well, hell, if I had made a World War II documentary with Glenn Miller and Tommy Dorsey music, it wouldn't have been worth a shit."

He continued, "I had met Lou, who had tapes of the Bee Gees doing Beatles' songs accompanied by the London Symphony Orchestra. That project was stalled, and those recordings were available. The Bee Gees weren't very hot at the time. I said, 'let's use that as the nucleus of our soundtrack.'"

"It wasn't impossible to get clearance to use the Beatles' music. To be perfectly honest, when I heard the Bee Gees, I thought, well, if we could get enough heavy artists interested in the project, I could have my own soundtrack that would be a mind-boggler. The other way,

"Some people are going to hate it—others will love it" —Russ Regan

the original soundtrack would be on Capitol."

Reizner got a fascinating array of rock stars to participate, despite the fact that, "in their wildest dreams, they hadn't the slightest idea of what we were up to." He also contacted two Beatles, Ringo Starr and John Lennon, who, said Reizner, expressed support but declined personal involvement because of a "lack of time." Instead, he selected the likes of Peter Gabriel for "Strawberry Fields Forever," David Essex for "Yesterday," Jeff Lynne and ELO, "Nowhere Man," Keith Moon, "When I'm 64," etc. Three renditions had previously been released: Tina Turner's "Come Together," Leo Sayer's "Let It Be," and Elton John's "Lucy In The Sky With Diamonds."

Since Elton owes a great deal of his success in America to Regan, it seems odd that his only contribution was an old song. "I didn't want to bother him," Regan said defensively. Elton also insisted that the additions Reizner made to his track (the full orchestra and other special effects) be taken out. Reizner does not like to talk about the incident.

"Lucy In The Sky" and 23 other numbers appear on the double album soundtrack. Also included is a 32-page booklet containing illus-

trations of the participating artists in period dress: Tina Turner as a nurse and Franki Valli as a soldier and so on. Musically, the high points are Leo Sayer's gripping versions of "Let It Be" and "The Long And Winding Road," the Bee Gees quavering "Golden Slumbers," and a very emotional "Michelle," done brilliantly by the relatively unknown artist Richard Coccainte. Some of the music, however, suffers from the same type of problems which troubled the two non-original Tommy soundtracks. Some artists were ill-chosen to begin with (Franki Valli for "A Day In The Life?"), some failed to capture a song's original essence and/or add anything to it (Henry Gross on "Help"), and many had difficulties battling the auspicious London Symphony, which augments most tracks.

Within the context of the film, the music fares better. When the thematic couplings work, the auditory-visual effects are admirable, if not awesome. "Fool On the Hill" may be too obvious a depiction of the raging Hitler, but the more surreal sequences—"Strawberry Fields Forever" paired with a peaceful England before Germany's attack—have great impact.

The film proceeds smoothly, with

Director Susan Windslow adding drama to the documentary by way of construction and the use of poignant clips. The film, however, basically follows the high school textbook approach to the war, and at time, borders dangerously on a mere American propaganda film—not the type to attract a Beatles/Vietnam raised audience. Which brings us to the final question. Who is going to go see this film? Though there is plenty of music, entertainment, and drama, this is, by and large, a serious, sophisticated documentary. And documentaries traditionally have very select audiences.

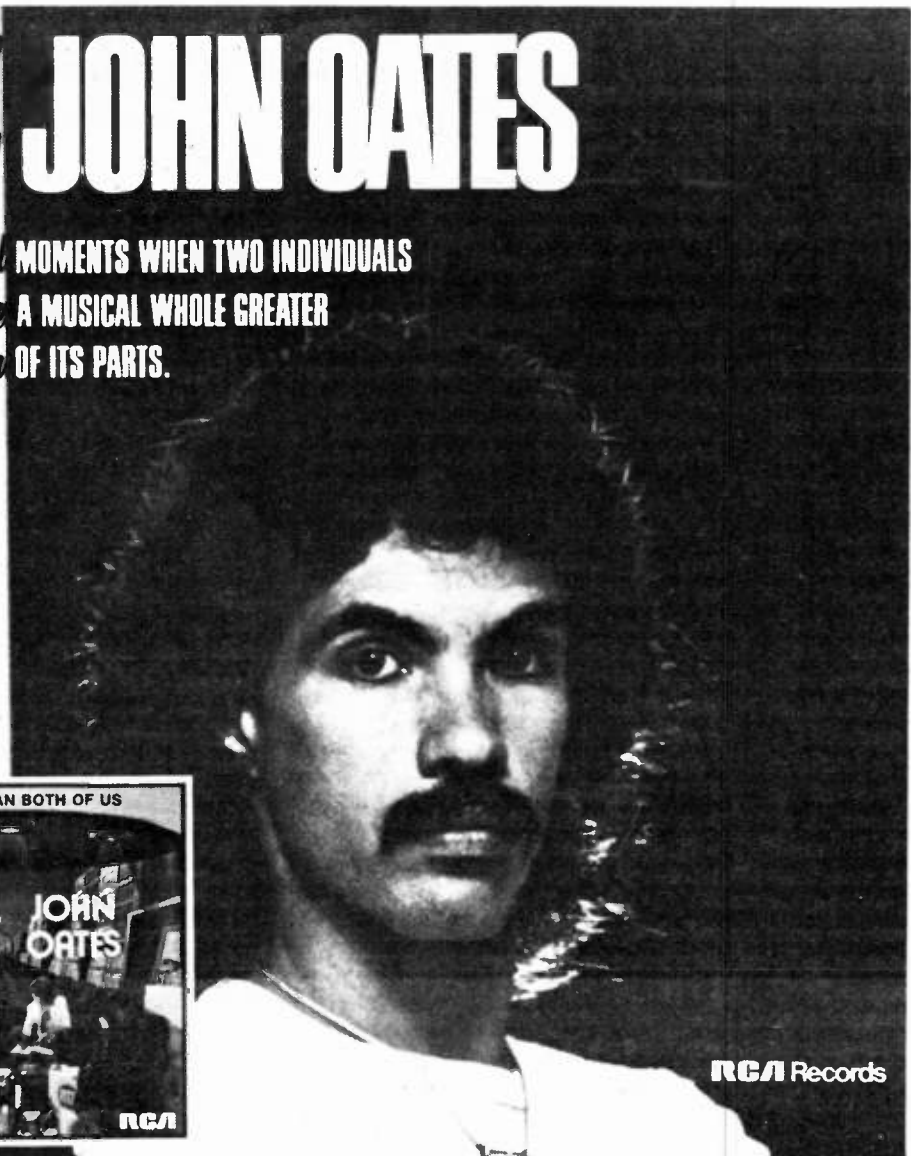
"I just don't know," Regan said, "Some people are going to hate it, and others are going to love it. I'm hoping that this will turn into one of those left-field properties which becomes a blockbuster mainly just by word-of-mouth."

But Regan isn't taking anything for granted. "You know, there have been times when I've been down in the music business," he stated reflectively. "And sometimes, it's very aggravating when you feel you have something great and the public doesn't feel the same way you do."

"But," he closed, "one thing is for sure. The Music is the star of this picture."

Daryl Hall JOHN OATES

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Capitol

On Capitol Records and Tapes!

Beatle's Tapes Unleashed in U.K.



By MICHAEL BARACKMAN

Arriving one year after the official release of Bob Dylan's *The Basement Tapes*, a new Beatles' double album, appropriately entitled, *The Beatles Tapes*, has been issued in Great Britain. Not a bootleg, the LP contains never-before-heard material culled from the 1968-73 time period. Packaged in a simple

designed black cover with white lettering and pictures inside, the LP looks very similar to the Beatles' 1968 White album. But unlike that offering, the four musicians' contributions are separate, each comprising a single side.

Originally recorded on a simple cassette, the sound quality surprisingly rivals that of *The Basement Tapes*, which came from a reel-to-

reel unit. The only real drawback to the album is that there is no Beatles' music. *The Beatles Tapes* is instead made up of interviews with each group member, recorded by journalist David Wigg, who currently writes for the London Daily Express.

Two furious former Beatles, Ringo Starr and George Harrison, took Wigg and Polydor Records to

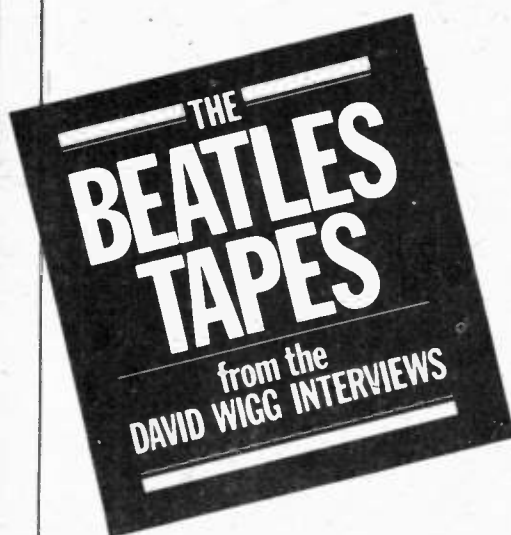
England's High Court in an effort to block the LP's release. John Eastman, Paul McCartney's attorney, also expressed strong resentment. In court, Ledlin Price, counsel for Harrison and Starr, charged that the LP could easily be mistaken for an actual Beatles' record.

In turn, Polydor, which had invested \$44,500 in the project, argued that the LP was not misleading. "To withdraw the record would not only be an extremely expensive and onerous task, but will also cause damage to the vital relationship between Polydor and its associated retailers," said Polydor representative Andrew Bateson.

Polydor won, and the album is available there, and in several U.S. import stores. Because of the strong unfair competition laws that exist in the U.S., chances of Polydor officially releasing it here are slim. A legal spokesman for Capitol Records said that the company—which owns rights to all Beatles' recordings—is keeping a watchful eye on the situation and is "prepared to take action, if necessary."

As for the interviews, they are mildly appealing. In the presence of each Beatle, Wigg is a sympathetic reporter, asking the obvious, and dwelling on the chances of a Beatles' reunion. McCartney and Lennon string the journalist along with a stream of indulgent, whimsical answers, but Starr and Harrison are serious and insightful. In each case, however, it is interesting to note the origins of the behavior which manifests itself in each Beatle today.

The following excerpts are from "The Beatles Tapes"—they're headed by each Beatles' 'By-Line' and date[s] recorded, for the purposes of continuity.



By JOHN LENNON

I don't regret a thing I've done in my life. Especially since meeting Yoko. She's made everything worthwhile. Yoko is me in drag. She's brought out the real me. I don't regret going through meditation or taking drugs.

They helped me. I don't advocate drugs, but for me it was a good experience. I don't bother with them too much these days. I don't drink either. I'm high on love.

Part of Yoko's and my own policy is not to be taken seriously. We are humorists. We are Laurel & Hardy. All the serious people, like Kennedy, King, and Gandhi, got shot. We're willing to be the world's clowns.

Performing as a Beatle is a bigger problem than performing as John Lennon because you have that big aura around you. If we did decide to do another live performance, I know we'd get knocked. Everybody thinks we're God. It's not out of the question, but maybe Elvis did the right thing by waiting so long. That way, they are pleased to just see you on, and don't care how you do.

Whatever happens, happens, we'll always be good friends. So all I want for the Beatles is individual happiness.

There is really no reason



why we should get back together. Listen, to George, could he have flourished like that if we had carried on as a group? There was no room.

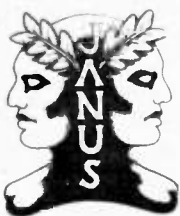
If people need the Beatles so much, all they have to do is buy each solo album and combine the tracks onto one tape. The music is just the same, only on separate LPs. In fact, it's far better music, because we're not suppressed. At the Beatles' peak, we were limiting each other. There was just too much to condense into one format.

For me, the Rolling Stones' music just isn't happening, 'cause the same old stuff goes on forever. They haven't done anything different for a long time. It'd be a good idea if they broke up.

People think the Beatles' splitting is a great disaster. My God, it's only a rock group. It's not that important.

AL STEWART
YEAR OF THE
Cat

on **Janus Records** and **GRT Music Tapes**



Janus Records, A Division of GRT Corporation, 8776 Sunset Blvd., Los Angeles, CA 90069



By GEORGE HARRISON, 69

Ali I'm doing is acting out the part of Beatle George. We're all just acting out our own parts. The world is a stage and the people are the players. Shakespeare said that, and he's right.

I expect to play many more parts in the future. Being a Beatle is only a temporary thing.

It's been the same as any job. It's up and down all the time. Maybe for us, it goes up higher, but it comes down lower as well. If we have a bad time, it's really bad. People see showbiz, and think automatically: lots of money, a big car, and a nice house. But the problems that come with that are incredible. Every material thing that we've gotten has brought problems.

No matter how much money you have, it doesn't guarantee happiness. You have to find your happiness with the problems you have and not worry too much about them. So, Hari Krishna, Hari Hari.

Chanting is a method of becoming one with God. It's the same as meditation, but I think it works quicker and has a more powerful effect. The more you do it, the nicer it is, and you don't want to stop. You can't just stand there and say "Give peace a chance" or "All you need is love" and expect to get it. You have to have a direct process of attaining it.

The Hari Krishna movement does disapprove of illicit sex. But all that means is not raving around knocking up everybody. It's disciplining your emotions; lust and greed have got to be curbed.

I believe in being a vegetarian because meat is one of

the worst things you can eat. I don't drink alcohol either. That's one reason why I started smoking pot. The only reason I drank was to get high, and I did so a lot quicker with pot, without any of the sickness. But to have a clear state of mind, you have to have a pure system. So I haven't done anything like that for a long time.

I'm writing better as a consequence. I've been writing for a number of years now, but have just recently come up with things I'm happy with.

John gave me a handy tip: once you start writing a song, try to finish it straight off while you're still in the mood. I've learned from experience.

In all, I'd have to say that the Beatles has been a headache. All the business things we've had to go through has been awful.

I wouldn't mind playing guitar and singing together again, but I don't know about performing together.

The Beatles is an ingrained mental concept. To spiritually split is impossible. You can't ever split. 'Cause if you're listening, I'm the walrus, too.



By PAUL McCARTNEY, 70

The main trapping of being a Beatle has been the total lack of privacy. It really bothers me. When we're working, I enjoy it. I expect to do autographs and put on a performance—you have to switch on. But, like anyone, I also love to switch off. There's people who just stay outside our house. I have to say, 'Hey, give us a break.'

We just had a baby, so it's especially hard. She's the best looking baby I've ever seen. We just started her on cereal, and she took every

drop.

I love kids. I'd like to have as many as possible. It can't help but make you feel different. Still, I don't feel any steadier. I'm still waiting to settle down.

You grow up, though. Everyone grows up. It's always a great pity to see a baby turn into an adult, 'cause they're always nicer as a baby. They do everything you want.

The Beatles once had that all-around appeal. At a certain period in our career, we were sort of particularly nice. But as we've grown up, we've become more individualized. We're more true to ourselves these days. It obviously doesn't please some people.

In the old days, we used to wear leather jackets. Brian (Epstein) told us we should smarten up a bit, so we went out and bought suits. When we did that, we gained a whole new audience, but we lost the people who wanted us in leather. That's just the way it is, you can't avoid it. It's like what happened to us with all the business. We were once just a band. But when money comes in, you have to pay taxes, so you can't help becoming businessmen.

When we played the Cavem club, I never dreamed that one day, we would give a Royal Command performance. After we did that, I said, "What's left?" Then we went to America, and after that, I asked, "What's left?" Then we got into making better albums. You never know what will happen. It will be alright, though.



By RINGO STARR, 68, 70

There's a famous old saying, "You always hurt the one

you love." Well, we all love each other, but there are times when we hate each other, too. It builds into a feud greater than it ever was, and just has to be released.

We'll never—I can't say never—but we won't ever go our separate ways entirely. We'll always be tied up to each other in some way.

When we first started, we were the nice, clean mop-tops. You know, every mother's son, and everyone loved us. Then suddenly, we started doing things that some people didn't like, or didn't get, and it turned them off a bit. But some people have to understand that we're grown men now. You can't live all your life just giving people what they want. You can't go on forever.

If it comes down to getting the group back together, I won't be the one to do it. Paul is the one who would get everything organized. That's the way it always was; we'd be sitting in the garden and Paul would get things moving. I wouldn't like to go out on the road together again. The thing we could do is record again. That's about it. It's like one of those old vaudeville stars coming back. They'd never make it.

Looking back, it was the worst time and best time of my life. The best because we played a lot of good music and had a lot of good times. The bad part was just everything that went on around us; tours, press, people fighting to get into your hotel room climbing 25 stories up a drainpipe. And it never stopped. If it had carried on like that, I would have gone insane.

Plus, we only played 12 numbers for our tour shows and after awhile, it got very stale, and that didn't feel good either. No one ever complained about our shows. Here we were playing the biggest load of shit, and people would stand there cheering. It isn't good for you.

I wouldn't change any of it though, if I had a chance to. I always enjoyed entertaining people. I still do. I'm Mr. Show Business. But it is a little strange to have to be out front singing and dancing after spending all that time in the back with my drums. I'll have to get used to that.

"Rod Stewart said so much musically, in the early days—Frankly I don't know what he wants to do with these new albums." —Ron Wood



RON WOOD

[Cont'd. from pg. 12]

Substituting for the Faces, Stewart has employed a new vocalist, Britt Eklund; she serves as part of the back-up accompaniment in "Tonight's the Night." The song provided Wood with a good chuckle. "The last time I was in L.A., he played it for me, slyly looking for my reaction. I thought it was quite sweet, really—and told him so—because I knew it's not really in him to do that kind of thing. I suppose it worked for what he wanted to do. But then again, I haven't seen him in such a long time, not on a working basis, and I can't keep up with what he wants anymore." Wood takes a drag from his Camel, looks into the pool, pauses momentarily— "He said so much in the early stuff. Frankly, I don't know what he wants to do with these albums.

"He (Stewart) has got a bunch of guys with him now—Jim, Gary, Carmine Appice, the guitar player who was with Chuck Berry...It looks as though he's got a bunch of good-time friends again. But not with quite so much impetus."

Woody keeps in touch with most of the other ex-Faces. He'd just talked to Ian McLagan on the phone the night before. Mac, who's involved with Kenny Jones and Steve Marriot's reformation of the original Small Faces, said, they'd finally decided on a title for the album they'd just finished—*Playmates*. "I was invited to join them," Wood says, "But I was too busy. Ronnie Lane went down with them in the beginning, but he wasn't on the same wave length. I think they've got Peter Frampton's old bassplayer with them." As for Tetsu, "he's got his own group in Japan—just took 'em into the studio."

Lane and Wood, instead, devoted their time this past summer creating the soundtrack for "Mahoney's

Last Stand."

The film is an Alexis Korner project—he produced, directed, and stars in it. The movie is about a young man who retreats into the wilds to become one with nature until his old buddies disrupt his organic lifestyle.

Wood and Lane's score for "Last Stand" was recorded in England and Toronto. Neither of them actually appear in the film, however. With the exception of Jim Price and Bobby Keyes, they enlisted English musicians, including Ian McLagan, Kenny Jones, Rich Grech...and Pete Townshend.

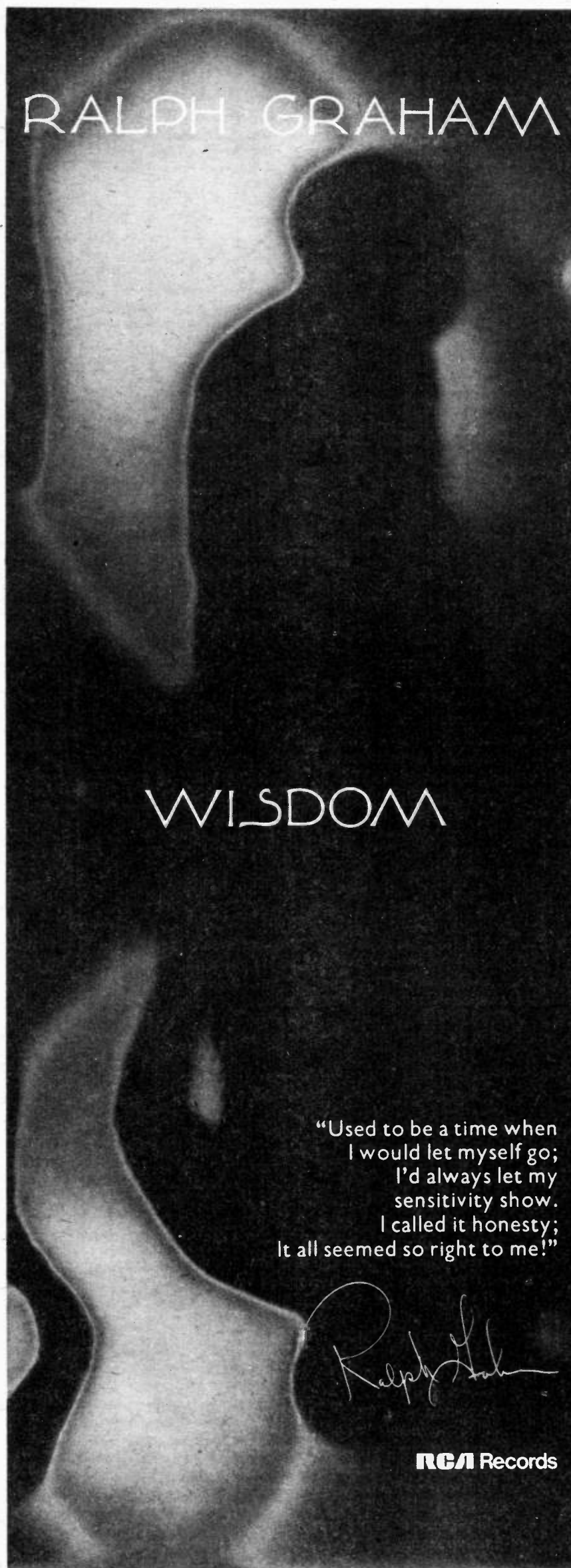
"Pete plays guitar on one track ('Tonight's Number') and thumpstick on another ('Car Radio'). That's a great big stick with old bottle tops connected to the top, and when you hit it on the floor it creates a most impressive *thump*—thus the name thumpstick. That cut should probably be the single."

While working on the score, Wood came up with several concepts for his next solo LP. "I'll have to keep my eye out for a spare month to do it," he sighs. "I hope to just walk into a studio and do it. I've got a lot of songs, but I don't know what the titles will be. Mick's going to New York in a couple weeks...I may finish the solo project as soon as that."

"I'm going to use different people on different cuts. There are so many good musicians in this town—that's one of the reasons I moved to L.A. Some of the people I've used before, but also, I want to work with Billy Preston and Ollie Brown on this (It's been rumored that Wood and Preston might tour on their own this Fall. 'Nothing to it,' comments Wood's management).

For the next solo album, Woody wants tighter production; not so much of that hazy, drunken-feeling of the previous two. He'd like to get Bill Szymczyk, producer for the Eagles and Joe Walsh, to help him add a more polished sound.

[Cont'd. on pg. 36]



"Used to be a time when
I would let myself go;
I'd always let my
sensitivity show.
I called it honesty;
It all seemed so right to me!"

RCA Records

Ringo Sets Up Shop: Ring-o Records

By MARK SHIPPER

The long and winding road led to a modest house at the top of Sunset Plaza Drive for an audience with the man who put the beat in the Beatles. Ringo Starr, his hair and beard still extremely short (he'd shaved them both completely on the spur of the moment one day while in Monte Carlo), extended a friendly welcome and led the way to the pool. I couldn't help but feel a sense of awe. It's a tribute to the Beatles' legend that even the least musically substantial member of the group still holds a powerful kind of charisma in person merely by virtue of association.

I found Ringo to be as genuine and down-to-earth as I'd heard he would be. He gives the aura of a man who got lucky, knows it, and isn't about to complain. He was anxious to talk about his solo career, especially his new Arif Mardin-produced *Rotogravure* album, but showed no reluctance or weariness when it came to answering questions about the Beatles.

The most obvious question was why had the man who was one-fourth of the reason that most of us have long hair in the first place, shaved it all off?

"I wanted to do it for a while," he replied casually, "and originally I tried to get other people to do it, you know, to get other people to go bald for me just so I could see close up what somebody would look like if they'd suddenly go bald. You don't know if you've got footprints or boils under there, you know what I mean? So finally I was just in the right mood in Monte Carlo. We were on the beach, having a glass of—no make that a bottle of—wine, sitting in the sun. It was really hot, and I thought to myself, 'this is the time to do it.' So I just got up off the beach, walked straight to the barber's and said 'take it off.' He was a Frenchman and didn't speak a word of English, but he was fine and it only cost me 20 francs, which was well worth it.

"I'm glad I did it. I think it helped straighten me out. I was going through a lot of turmoil at the time, and it was just the switch I needed. It marked the end of a little craziness for me, and now I'm all right again."

What about the new album? Would it differ in any way from the previous two smashes, *Ringo* and *Goodnight Vienna*?

"No, this is still a very 'up,' commercial production," he said, "cause I'm a very commercial person. I go in to make a record as commercial as I can. I'm not there to tell stories. I want to make as many hit singles as I can, and a hit album. I like being popular. I want to be popular all over the place, not



"I just got up off the beach in Monte Carlo one very hot afternoon, walked straight to the barber's and said 'take it off'"

just with ten people."

The album, as with *Goodnight Vienna*, features contributions from each of the three former Beatles. It would seem, what with all the current pining for a Beatles reunion, that Ringo would be a little wary of using them again.

"No," he shook his head. "I went through that on the last album. Then, I thought, 'Oh, God, I'm still hanging on to that whole situation.' And then I thought, well, they're fine players, the best songwriters around, so what am I kidding myself for, you know? I'm going out as me now, not as the Fab Four, that's all over, but it would be silly to stand right off from it, to ignore it and pretend it didn't happen. To use it would be wrong. I mean if John had been a crappy writer, to use him just because it was John, would be wrong. But it's John Lennon, a fine writer, a fine guitarist. So there are valid reasons for using those people."

The new album is probably the best thing Ringo has done thus far in his solo career. Where producer Richard Perry was virtually the star on the previous two albums, Ringo himself finally emerges on *Rotogravure*. The Arif Mardin production is full, yet allows space for Ringo's distinctive nasal voice (of which Ringo says "I rate it about 5 on a scale of 10 as far as voices go. But I used to give it only a 3..."). The whole album has a kind of "party" feel to it, with the best tracks being a re-make of Bruce Channel's "Hey Baby," and a new song called "A Dose of Rock &

Roll."

Although Ringo's film career has stalled somewhat recently, it's mostly because he's becoming increasingly selective about the kind of roles he's choosing.

"I've turned a lot down this year," he revealed, "because I'm sick of doing silly movies, the same characters. But if things go right next year I'll be doing three films. But with movies you never know. You say 'yes' and then they can't get the money, or can't get it together for some other reason. So we'll see..."

Although Ringo is not concerned about the current interest in Beatle product forcing him to compete with himself on his solo records, he is somewhat less-than-delighted with Capitol's *Rock & Roll Music* re-issue.

"I hated the cover," he said, his voice tinged with disgust. "It was so old-fashioned, so tacky, I just hated it. Also, they (Capitol) never once contacted us to ask us about it. They didn't bother. You see, our contracts ran out so they can do what they like. But you'd think as a courtesy thing after so many years, they could have. That's probably why three of us didn't re-sign with the label. It was always a bit like that."

I'd heard that several of the tracks were remixed for the album. Had he noticed this?

"I don't know. I've never played it. I have the originals, so I don't need to play theirs. It was mainly John and I who fought the album, because we were both in the States

at the time, and were both sort of pissed off at what they were doing. John even offered to do a cover. But they refused. I mean John has more imagination than all those people at Capitol put together, but they turned him down. I wouldn't turn him down. He could do my covers any time he wanted to. People don't know we had nothing to do with the album. It's got our names on it, they should have given us some sort of consideration. They're not dealing with some one-hit group here, yet they always treated us as if we only had one hit. Even no-hit groups were treated better than we were, and I could never understand it. No matter how much I moaned and shouted and screamed, it didn't mean anything. It was like knocking your head against a brick wall."

Perhaps it was an outgrowth of this frustration that prompted Ringo to begin his own label, Ring-o Records. Said he: "I started Ring-o Records because in all honesty I think it's really important for an artist to have a piece of plastic with his name on it. I remember 'Love Me Do' as being the biggest time of my life, just having my name on a record, which you might hear on the radio, so I thought, well, I'll form Ring-o Records. I won't sign anybody up. Artists could record for it, and if they want to they could stay or leave. I wanted it to be a fun thing."

It wasn't that easy.

"But then the lawyers came in and said 'No, you've got to sign them up.' So that took a bit of that fun out of it. And then I gave it to Capitol here in America and Polydor in Europe, and I ended up doing too much on an executive sort of level. Going to all these meetings all the time, took the fun away. I just wanted to talk to the artists and get that together. But you wind up having to be concerned with the promotion and all this business. It was exactly like Apple. I think every record company starts out as a fun thing, but then you have to stop it. So we've stopped that now and have turned it into a business. It's being turned into a real record company. I've learned you can't start a company just to have fun."

Before Marc Bolan and T. Rex faded completely from sight, I wanted to find out what interested him in Bolan enough to make it a film, *Born To Boogie*, a couple years back which documented the whole T. Rex phenomenon. It was a successful film in England but was only briefly seen in America.

"He (Bolan) was a friend of mine, and he started the whole glitter thing in England, which David Bowie went on to make famous. But Bolan actually started it, and I like people who start things. He was a good little bopper, and I liked him.



Shown at Peter Frampton's recent birthday party, Ringo is captured in perhaps the last picture prior to hair loss. [Buddy Miles, far left]

He was great. Such an arrogant little bugger, I just loved him coming in with such a positive attitude on life. I never met anyone like that. It's a pity he didn't get off over here (America). He had a great line. He used to say 'I'm the best selling poet in Britain.' Which he was, actually, at the time. He was writing all these poems, you know, 'clouded thighs and grey skies, saw an elephant in your eyes,' all this stuff. I loved it. It was refreshing for me. Sort of a teenage Dylan."

As we sat and talked, I couldn't help thinking that it must be strange to be relatively young (Ringo's in his early 30's) and have already pretty much done it all. What is there left to strive for? Where does he get his incentive?

"Someone really told me where it was at recently. He said 'the only way you can go now is down.' Which is fine, as long as I don't go too far down, I don't mind. I'm never going to be as big as the Beatles. None of us will. So you have to strive for your own thing. I remember when I got a gold record for 'It Don't Come Easy.' It was the first thing I put on the wall in the last seven years. I got sick of putting our (the Beatles) gold

records on the wall. I just sort of stashed them in some cupboard. But I was very proud of that particular gold record. So you sort of strive for yourself, and that's what I do now. But I'll never be as big as the Beatles. I mean that was just too big, that was crazy. It was getting out of hand.

"But now it's kind of back to normal. A lot of kids think I'm a new artist. They did a great survey in England, asking kids what they knew about the Beatles. The answers were great. Sort of like 'They're all dead, aren't they?' Or 'Wasn't that Paul's backing band?'"

Had he ever wondered what he might be doing had the Beatles never taken off? Where would he be today?

"I'd still think I'd be playing drums with some band, in some nightclub somewhere, because I decided that playing drums was my job. I'm not a milkman anymore, this is it, and I'd make a living the best I could doing it. But you can never tell. I know I've felt I'd be successful since I was born. I always knew things would happen nicely for me. But no one ever suspected it would go so far."



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He's the prime manipulator of high energy rock 'n' roll. He's a bristling bundle of electrified nerve ends plugged into gut-rending guitartechnics. His sell-out concerts leave audiences blissfully drained and amazed. And now he's unleashed a blistering new album, "Free-For-All," that unequivocally answers the question, "Just how far can Ted Nugent go?" Grab ahold of a live wire.

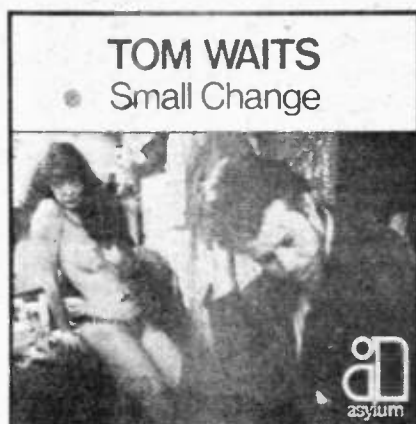
"Free-For-All"
Ted Nugent. Raw.
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“Tom Waits’ strikingly original persona is convincing because it’s real, if calculating”

—Richard Cromelin



SMALL CHANGE

Tom Waits
Asylum

By RICHARD CROMELIN

Characters, real honest-to-goodness characters, are hard to come by these days, so right off the bat Tom Waits, with his wino outfits and broken-soul slouch, with that gravel-filled bassoon of a voice and bleary but perspective eye, has a lot going for him. He's eccentric, extreme, and uncompromising—a take-it-or-leave-it proposition from his newsboy cap down to his thrift shop shoes. But with today's audience apparently liking its music squeaky-clean and not too unpredictable, Waits is as liable to be disliked as revered. Still, as long as the guy on the next stool at the Ski Room by the St. Moritz Hotel appreciates him, and Andre the piano player understands, I suspect Waits will be happy.

Andre plays in a dive behind the Ivar Burlesque Theatre. He spent a whole day back in '43 waiting to audition for *Casablanca*, but Andre wasn't the Sam they were looking for and, as Waits observes on his new album, "Now he's spillin' whisky and learnin' songs/About the one that got away." Elsewhere in the Waits night gallery, we find the Jitterbug Boy, a drunken piano, waitresses both hostile and alluring, Chesty Morgan (73'!) and the other girls down at the Ivar (a great show, apparently—"And what was the girl with the snakeskin's name?"), miracle products, Revloned whores ("They all look like Jayne Meadows"), all scarred street denizens scurrying past the corpse of one Small Change...

By and large, solid, familiar stock characters. The important thing, though, is that Waits, hitting his stride as a record-maker after two studio albums and a live set, makes it all so real, vivid, and involving. The looseness and spontaneity of



Phil Ceccola

his performance animates and colors his narratives, but this is no idle, stream-of-consciousness smokescreen of images. Beneath the improvisatory feel is a very disciplined and focused perception, and it's the meeting of these two qualities that lend *Small Change* its uncommon authority and conviction.

Waits' material falls into two primary styles: the deliberate, piano-and-strings ballad and the be-bop, finger-pop, scat-talk jazz poetry that forms the thrust of his live show. In both genres (and in the one crossbreed, "The One That Got Away"), Waits' theatricality and gritty authenticity merge into an engrossing and commanding style.

Of the ballads (whose strategic strings are one manifestation of Waits' theatrical bent), the first winner is the lead cut, "Tom Traubert's Blues." It's the "wasted and wounded" Waits' own "Desolation Row," a long and difficult cut with some Leonard Cohen-like images ("I begged you to stab me/You tore my shirt open") and a haunting "Waltzing Matilda" refrain.

Another ace track is "Jitterbug Boy," blessed with a melody as simple, expansive and resonant as a Stephen Foster one, and, in contemporary terms, connected with the Randy Newman sensibility. Waits comes up with a playful Satchmo intonation as he reels through a skein of American myths: "I've seen the Brooklyn Dodgers play in Ebbetts Field...Seen the Wabash Cannonball...I fought Rocky Marciano...Got drunk with

Louis Armstrong...I taught Mickey Mantle everything he knows." Eventually, Waits' timeless narrator partakes in that elevated status himself before cakewalking off with a soulful, scatting outro that goes something like, "Doobazee zgobooi..."

"Invitation to the Blues," leading off side two, joins "Traubert" and "Jitterbug" to form an imposing triumvirate. Its classic piano-bar/blues structure and absorbing story line comprise typical Waits mood and players: the drifter in the diner and the enticing waitress, described as "A moving violation from her conk down to her shoes." Waits' flavorful delineation of their emotional encounter is a remarkable bit of characterization (especially the neatly-turned dive into her past) and, ultimately, the song's assertion that that "crazy sensation" can surface in the most dire circumstances—and that it's worth giving into despite the inevitable pain—is gently reassuring. It's nice to know that he's really just a sentimental fool.

The selections Waits recites rather than sings and which sport a jazz combo backing instead of pop accompaniment showcase his extraordinary linguistic and rhythmic gifts. On "Step Right Up," it sounds as if Gene Krupa has come back as Tom Waits' mouth and his dazzling phrasing reflects the Lord Buckley/Lenny Bruce influence as, in the guise of the ultimate surreal pitchman, he romps through a litany of his wonder-product's infinite capabilities. It's only the second cut on the album, but,

following the strong "Traubert," it immediately establishes the complete and inescapable Waits presence, and introduces his sly, aggressive humor: "Change your life/Change into a nine-year-old Hindu boy...Christ, you don't know the meaning of heartbreak, buddy...The large print giveth and the small print taketh away." Waits' delivery here is unburdened by the ghosts of extensive rehearsal, and the spontaneity is palpable (though he makes no pretenses—at points on the album you can hear the rustle of his lyric sheets). "Step Right Up" is how the commercials on channel 13 wish they could sound.

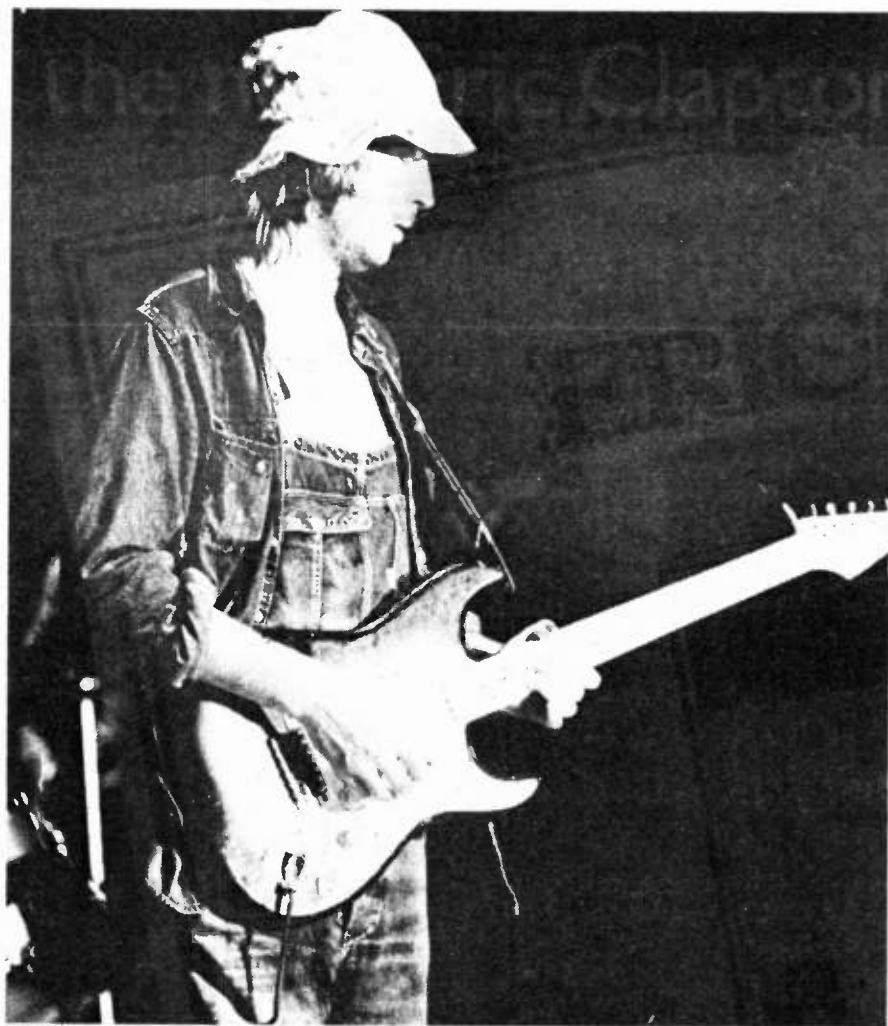
In the title track and in "The One That Got Away," more serious pieces, Waits' distinctive patois really flowers. *Small Change*—a cooling corpse when we meet him—"got rained on with his own .38," and the track's somber kaleidoscope of street images, set to a choking, jazz-dirge sax and revolving around the body, is breathtaking, as are the song's broader statements ("Cause the dreams ain't broken down here, no, they're walkin' with a limp").

"The One That Got Away" holds its own: "He's got a snakeskin sport shirt and he looks like Vincent Price...She'll be doin' a Houdini now any day/She shook his hustle, the Greyhound bus'll take/The one that got away...The shroud tailor measures him for a deep six holiday..." The jazzy, semi-melodic chant is a ritualization of the loser's classic complaints and promises: "Coulda been on easy street, coulda been a wheel/All them irons in the fire and all them business deals...I'll be right back as soon as I crack/The one that got away." Waits' buzzsaw reading slices to the soul.

In "Jitterbug Boy," he sings:

So you'll ask me what I'm
doin' here
Holdin' up the lamppost
Flippin' this quarter tryin'
to make up my mind.
If it's heads I'll go to
Tennessee
Tails I'll buy a drink
If it lands on the edge
I'll keep talkin' to you.*

Tom Waits' strikingly original persona is convincing because it's real, if calculated. The terms of his deal with himself are tough and demanding, but he hasn't hedged on it yet and shows no sign of weakening. Tom Waits' quarter has landed on its edge, and he's not about to let this one get away.



Neil Preston



ERIC CLAPTON
"No Reason to Cry"
 RSO 2479 179

By BUDSCOPPA

When Clapton's good, he's as good as they get—*Layla* stays in the "play" pile in every collection I have access to. *Disraeli Gears* sounds better to me now than it did when "Sunshine of Your Love"/"SWLABR" was on every greasy spoon's jukebox, and *461 Ocean Boulevard* has the shadowy seductiveness of a rock nocturne. When Clapton holds back, on the other hand, he makes those albums with titles and music nobody remembers. The man is an extraordinary guitarist, an earnestly gutsy singer, and a gifted inventor of irresistible hooks and sledgehammer lyric lines, but—more than other pantheon rock & rollers—he's so self-effacing in his virtuosity that he's all but transparent, and he requires both rich settings and high-level collaborators through which to focus his abilities. Clapton got both when he hooked up with

"The more Clapton gives in—the more he puts out"

—Bud Scoppa

Duane Allman and the three Dominos on the *Layla* sessions, and he got it again through the hand-picked musicians and songs that fueled *461 O.B.* In each case, he joined the feeling he'd brought with him to an apt malleable form.

In putting together *No Reason to Cry*, Clapton fortunately traveled to the Band's Shangri La studios in the hills above the Pacific, where he commingled profitably with Bandsmen Rick Danko, Richard Manuel, Garth Hudson, and Robbie Robertson, as well as naturalized Californians like Bob Dylan and Ronnie Wood. From the sound of this fruit of his labor, it's quite evident that Clapton brought his heart as well as his regular musicians to the proceedings. If *No Reason to Cry* has a pervasive feel reminiscent of the Band (even on tracks that have none of the Band members on hand) and tracks that showcase others (Dylan on "Sign Language," backing singer Marcy Levy on "Innocent Times"), there's still proportionately more Clapton on the album than on anything he's released since *461 O.B.* Clapton continues to work most effectively in the midst of an ensemble of players rather than in the foreground, giving a humanistic wrinkle to the assumption that

less is more. If the collective tone of this record recalls Delaney & Bonnie's *Motel Shot*—as well as the live D&B album Eric added his licks to—it simultaneously reveals Clapton at his most intensely personal. And if it sounds austere in its unabashed reverence for rustic Americana, the album still rocks 'n' blues hotter and with more spontaneity than any post-Dominos Clapton record.

Dylan's "Sign Language" contains a lyric as ridiculous/sublime as the best of *The Basement Tapes*—"You speak to me in sign language/As I'm eating a sandwich/in a small cafe/At a quarter to three..."—and the Dylan/Clapton vocal duet obscures the Dylan/Cash duet on "Girl From the North Country" in its mismatched relentlessness. Along the way, Clapton's and Robertson's guitars confront each other in a similar way. One of the Band's songs—"Beautiful Thing" (Manuel/Danko)—sets the album's tone via its placement as the opening track. The other—Danko's "All Our Past Times"—sets up two of its highest moments: first, when, after Clapton has sung the first verse in his most Danko-ish voice, the real Danko takes over on verse two, making it clear whose turf this is; and later, in the instrumental bridge, when Clapton evens the score by incorporating Robertson's hot-staccato guitar style into his high-romantic over-the-clouds solo. The last track, Clapton's own "Black Summer Rain," is the clincher: here, E.C. works a song that nearly equals Robertson's recent "It Makes no Difference" in its taproots flavor into a poetic guitar section during which Clapton brings Layla to Shangri La with a solo that flashes over the track like heat lightning. The more Clapton gives in, it seems, the more he puts out.

A pair of vintage blues tracks, "County Jail Blues" (on which Eric attempts—rather successfully—to find the baritone-bottom of his vocal range, and "Double Trouble," almost melodramatic in its hotness, keep the record churning, and two appealing variations on the classic-Clapton guitar riff, "Carnival" and "Hungry," ring with amped authority. Through these numbers, the multiple guitars are matched, intensity-wise, by the churning barroom B-3 of Clapton group member Dick Simms, who seems especially at home among these old woodshedders (that's not Simms, however, but woodshedder Georgie Fame whose organ pushes "County Jail Blues" to its azimuth).

A change of producers and venues—from old reliable Tom Dowd and Miami's Criteria to L.A. and Dylan/Band recorder Rob Fraboni—accounts for part of the heightened intensity (Fraboni likes to record live and get it down while it's hot)—but chameleon Clapton has discovered a voice of his own among the wails of these weathered romantics.

GULF WINDS

Joan Baez
 A&M SP-4603

By BOBBY ABRAMS

It's been a very hectic and action-packed year-and-a-half for Joan Baez since *Diamonds and Rust* was released to universal praise and acclaim. A hesitant tour, the first in years, likewise resulted in favorable notices, encouraging the obvious live album. Again, the midas touch and A&M had managed to reclaim Joan Baez from the limbo she had resided in after switching labels from Vanguard four or five years earlier. There is something warm, even a sense of justice, in how a record label had so deeply committed to an artist and believed in her talent, knowing that it was only a matter of time before she was back on top. Joan, however, kept growing. A tour with Rolling Thunder, with her star status, brought to mind those times ten years earlier when she and Dylan were a regular thing and you knew that he'd be brought onstage for a number or two at one of her concerts. As Baez's career was revitalized by her paeon to Dylan and their past love affair, it is a gentle irony that much of her superstar status is due to her prominence in the revue and anxious rumors of additional joint projects with Dylan.

Coincident with the Baez success story, the Larry Harris success story as the top negotiator in the CBS legal department was marching on. One day at Black Rock (the Eero Saarinen structure which houses America's top entertainment complex) it was decided to start a new record label for the sole purpose of luring already established stars on other labels into the protective shelter of the CBS corporate structure. That is why, after a lawyer was appointed head of the label, some suggested it be called Pirate instead of Portrait. Surprisingly Joan Baez was the first acquisition. Surprising since it's doubtful that an artist could ever ask more from a record company than Joan Baez received. But then this is a business after all, and isn't the motto of the day and age, "Take the money and run," Purportedly an amicable divorce, Portrait has guaranteed upwards of half a million dollars for the next Joan Baez album. It's difficult to credit such a hard bargainer as Larry Harris with purely aesthetic motives for spending that kind of dough, so one speculates what it's all about. Though *Diamonds and Rust*, and its follow-up, *From Every Stage* generated sales of several hundred thousands, could it be from this alone that she is worth that much money? Or is it the possibility that she and Dylan may finally complete their long-discussed and much-anticipated duet album? Only time will tell, but a fair indication of what we might expect can be garnered from Joan Baez's latest album, *Gulf Winds*. [Cont'd. on pg. 36]

Final albums for a label are often interesting affairs. Generally groups try and end record commitments with pallid repackagings of greatest hits or live material, so as not to interfere with their impending projects. Or it may be a collection of outtakes from previous sessions, intended to be discarded but resurrected to comply with legal obligations. This opus fits into neither category, but, nonetheless, it is a strange album. For one thing, all the selections were written by Ms. Baez. This is something she has never done before. One must conclude therefore that she is doing

a little market research to insure those fat paydays. If her future is to be as a singer-songwriter, based primarily on the strength of "Diamonds & Rust," then it's time for her to feel her oats, spread her wings and get out there, in the public eye, expressing her vulnerabilities in a more musical but less intense manner than Dory Previn. Were the decision to be left to me, I'd say more Dory Previn, more Patti Dahlstrom, but most definitely less Joan Baez. That is not to say that she isn't quite talented as a writer. Far from it. At her best, she is capable of trading phrases and images with the best of our contemporary craftsmen. Yet unfortunately, her material tends to run thin after awhile; her themes somewhat superficial and repetitive. In summary, not enough for a complete album. Besides, or maybe even more importantly, she has an unfailingly good ear for discovering new talent and producing classic covers, versions so well-done that the originals are nearly forgotten.

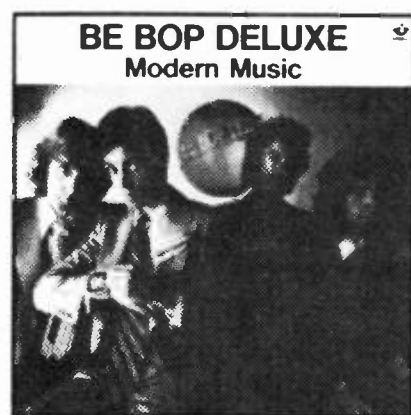
This album is certainly pleasant, and while time has taken its toll on Joan's voice, it's still a pleasure to hear her sing anything. Yet one wonders why it will ever make an appearance on a turntable, for the overall impressions is one of great vapidness. The title tune, "Gulf Winds," exhibits much of the flawed nature of this project. For starters, at 10 minutes, it's excessive. Moreover, while this somewhat self-serving autobiographical song might provide hours of listening pleasure at a gathering of the Baez clan, it serves only to bore the listener.

Opening side two is a rollicking number, "O Brother!" which derives a lot of energy from the recent Rolling Thunder interactions. It's jam-packed with the gentle, biting sardonic humor that Ms. Baez exhibits in person. Closing out this side is "Time is Passing Us By." This may be the single so it merits some attention. It is in the style of "Diamonds and Rust," though not nearly as strong musically or lyrically. In many ways, it is the sequel; it is what happens when we are sometimes allowed to be reunited with our memories, our dreams, our fantasies. In its gentleness it seems to be overly sentimental, bordering on the trite, but

that seems a facile and perhaps harsh judgement. Only repeated listenings on your local AM station will determine its staying power. Or maybe the single will be "Sweeter for Me" a carbon-copy of "Diamonds and Rust," only this time about Kris Kristofferson. And in the ways and manner that Kristofferson and Dylan differ, so too do the songs. But it's really not as bad as all that and this may be the one to break out. "Caruso" too is a song to bring the gossip-mongers to the fore: "Who is this one about?" The more jaded might shout, "not yet another one about a past affair with Someone," but it does have a lilting melody.

The metaphors are far too mixed for me to make any sense out of "Still Waters at Night," but it does sound like "With God on My Side" and Joan was magnificent at that point in her career, so it can't be too traumatic to sit through a similar song ten years hence. And speaking of mixed metaphors, "Kingdom Come" has more than its fair share.

Still, we've been talking about these songs and the album on an almost exclusively verbal basis. Her musicians are excellent, as always, the arrangements are quite tight, and her voice, well, it's still simply exquisite. So, while this does not look like a monster, it could be quite a sleeper for a generation of fans who have only recently discovered Ms. Baez's dulcet tones.



MODERN MUSIC
Be Bop Deluxe
Harvest ST-11575

By SAM SUTHERLAND

Although guitarist/vocalist/exterior decorator Bill Nelson likes to dress up his songs with crafty futurism, don't be fooled by all those images of airships, video foreplay and voyages into various voids: what makes the best records by Nelson's band, Be Bop Deluxe, so arresting is their foundation in classic late 60's English rock, not their pretensions to sci-fi surrealism.

Be Bop's last album, *Sunburst Finish*, showed a gift for concise melodies, bravado guitar and arch melodrama. The songs were mostly brilliant, blood-chilling nonsense; thinly plotted but as irresistible as the Hammer horror movies that show up on late night television (which humble would-be intellec-

tuals with a brisk, handsome, and self-consciously British style that transcends the slightness of content). The only real distinction between those cinematic melodramas and Nelson's aural ones was the band's gothic moderne, rather than Victorian, framework.

On *Modern Music*, there are signs that Bill Nelson may be placing more emphasis on his scenarios than ever, a development that creates problems for those of us who try to maintain a safe distance from his lyric sheets. Playing and composing both yield to Nelson's verbal excesses at crucial moments. Side two's "Dancing in the Moonlight (All Alone)" is a propulsive, syncopated lament cushioned by lush guitars and powered by surging organ and percussion, yet the wordy lyric—taken at an auctioneer's pace where Nelson needs to cram too many syllables into a line—only adds engine knock. That song is followed by "Honey-moon on Mars," a predictable but still evocative aural playground carved by Nelson's broad, reverberant guitar sweeps and defaced by more lyric graffiti, this time a string of outer space ruminations.

Both songs are included in a second side suite that's paced by the title song, a stately electric anthem that opens the side following a disjointed spin across the radio dial. There are loose thematic connections between the songs, but Nelson's "suite" is really just a neatly chopped and channeled set of nine songs that form a fast-paced if not entirely clear-headed medley. Although Nelson's guitar-playing has been somewhat overstressed for its originality—even a cursory run through the work of his 60's forbears can point up his stylistic debts—there's little argument about his power. Soaring, liquid leads, diamond-hard rhythm work, and a shrewd editorial distance that enables him to keep solos pointed and consistently exciting are his chief strengths, and on *Modern Music* those skills enable him to slip deftly from mood to mood. "Dance of the Uncle Sam Humanoids" even features an angular, vibrato-less line that would have fit seamlessly into Steely Dan's records.

If Be Bop's music doesn't suffer from its similarity to its predecessors (in fact, that lineage is part of the band's power), Nelson's singing once seemed in danger of such shortcomings. His earlier vocals blatantly absorbed mannerisms from other arch Englishmen, notably Bowie, Ian Hunter and John Cale. Now, he appears intent on burnishing away those inflections and turning in more literal melodic performances. The choice may be admirable for the implied conscience, but the results are mixed. One of the advantages gained through his extra-musical flourishes had been a sense of drama his rather drab voice simply couldn't produce, and there are moments on the new set when I wish he'd resorted to a few of his old tricks.

RON WOOD

[Cont'd. from pg. 31]

Wood has been criticized in some quarters for his singing. Has he ever gotten a reaction from Rod on it?

"To him, basically I'm just a guitarist," Wood says coupling a grimace with a grin. "I can see why someone like Rod wouldn't exactly appreciate my singing, because he's been battling at singing for so many years himself. For someone who's basically a guitarist, to sing must seem a bit of cheek to him. But I'm all for having a go. I just want to improve all the time. I will say I had a long way to go on the first album—some of the vocals were short of my best, I know. Mick and Keith have been helping me a lot with them."

Just before leaving England, Ron and the other Stones played a rather controversial concert at Knebworth Festival. According to Wood, the gig meant a lot to the Stones—they did ten days of "really hard" rehearsing for it. At these rehearsals, Wood asserted himself, suggesting the group dig back into the past for some of the material.

"I wanted them to play some things like 'Little Red Rooster,' 'Route 66,' 'Stray Cat Blues,' and I was really pleased, cos, rather than, 'Oh no, we can't play that,' they said, 'Okay, let's do it.' At the rehearsals we even did 'Not Fade Away,' 'Come On,' 'I Wanna Be Your Man'....The rehearsals were the best part of the show."

"People made a big thing of us supposedly going on late. In actual fact it was no longer than the usual setup time—40 minutes or so had passed since 10cc went off. The problem was the whole show that ran four hours behind, not us."

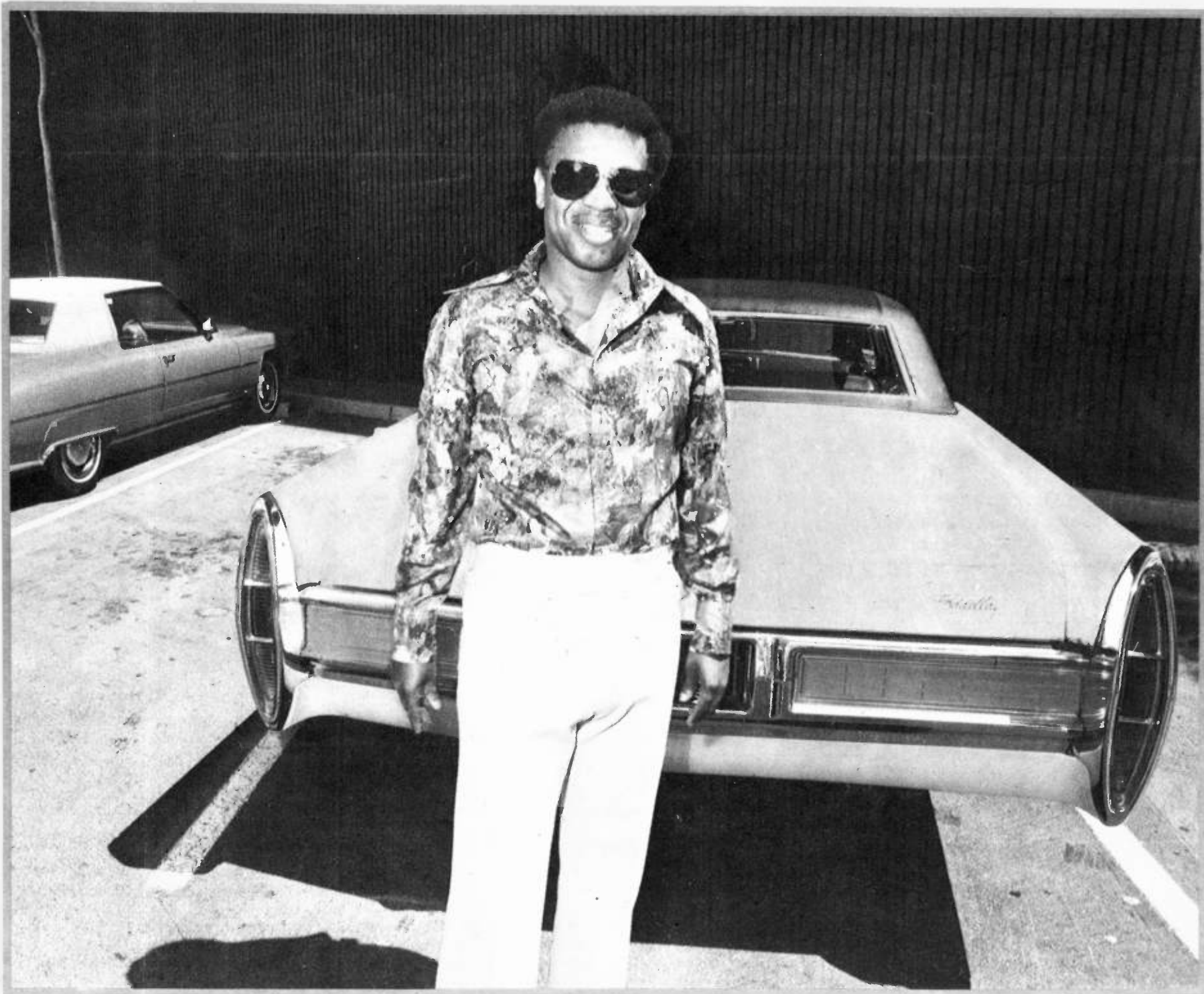
Wood leans back in his chair, letting the sun's rays soak his rugged face. Wood realizes that he has the best of both worlds. He's quickly become an integral part of the Stones, yet maintains a degree of independence. All the Stones have voiced their support for Wood, but in his own way Jagger has let it be known who's boss.

"At the end of the '75 Stones tour," Wood said, "Mick had a lot of stage gear he said he hadn't worn. I said, 'Well, I've got to go straight on tour with the Faces. Since we fit into the same clothes, give me some of your stuff. But only things you haven't worn.' He said, 'Sure, take this and this and this—I haven't worn it.' I said, 'Are you sure you haven't worn it, cos I don't want to get a reputation for wearing your hand-me-downs.' He promised. So I wore this blue suit from that all through the Faces tour. Then at the end of the tour I see a photograph in a magazine of Mick in the same suit. He only did it so he could say, 'Woody copies my clothes.'"

America's Only Black Music Monthly: A review of the latest soul & jazz LPs, 45s & performances

Wah Wah Watson Solo!

SOUL & JAZZ



Jr. Walker: Father of Disco-Jazz

RECORD

MAGAZINE
Oct 76/Vol 3

6

Jr. Walker: "Good honest soul music played from the heart to the feet."



Bruce Osborn

"Everybody's just ready for me to blow."

By COLMAN ANDREWS

Jr. Walker is the man who, it might be said, invented disco-jazz. Ten years ago or more, he was creating a kind of music Ramsey Lewis, Freddie Hubbard, Donald Byrd, et al., are playing today—music based on a relentlessly strong, repetitious rhythmic base, gilded with bright lines of jazz-influenced melody and melodic improvisation.

Of his music, Walker says modestly, "I guess what I play is just a combination of jazz and rhythm and blues." But in fact it is much more—a kind of music closely related to both jazz and R&B, certainly but with different imperatives and from a different sensibility. Walker, almost single-handedly in the popular arena, led the way for a return of that most agreeable pre-bop phenomenon, Jazz You Can Dance To.

Jr. Walker also once played with Rahsaan Roland Kirk. A startling revelation in the history of contemporary music? Unfortunately, no. An amusing sideline at best. Because the kind of playing they used to do wasn't the musical kind, and neither man recalls it. "But my mother tells me I did," says Walker. "She says we were kids together in Arkansas and used to

play out in the yard. But I can't remember it."

In fact, Walker didn't live in Arkansas very long. Born Autry Dewalt Walker into a musically aware family (his uncle is blues pianist T-Bone Walker—incorrectly described in an official Motown bio as a "sax man"), Walker grew up in Indiana and Michigan. He first decided that he wanted to be a professional musician during his high school days in South Bend. There were free-style, all-star jam sessions in town on Sundays, and Walker fell under the spell of the music he heard.

One of the locals, so the story goes, left town for Chicago, and gave Jr. his saxophone when he went. In 1959, Walker has told interviewers, his mother bought him another one; the one that he grew famous with and still plays.

Walker worked long and hard perfecting his music, performing in jazz clubs and bars, and for dances and parties. Finally, the right person heard him—on a street-corner in Detroit, it has been said—and took him to a local record company. In that city, for the Harvey and Tri-Fi labels, Walker recorded R&B singles like "Willie's Blues," "Brainwasher," and "Twist Lackawanna." Then he cut a slinky blues called "Cleo's Mood" and found himself with a hit record.

Soon thereafter, Motown signed him to their Soul label. His first single for Soul, "Monkey Jump," was only moderately successful, but the next one, "Shotgun," was a double-barrelled smash—and has become a genuine R&B standard.

"Shotgun" is also significant because it was the first record on which Walker sang in addition to playing tenor. Critics have been lavish in their praise of some of his later vocal recordings, but Walker himself is extremely casual about the subject:

"We had another fellow with the group," he says, "who used to do all the singing. Fred Patton. He also played piano and organ. But then he left the group, and we needed somebody to sing 'Shotgun.' Our guitar player, Willie Woods, was a good singer, but he did blues things, and didn't want to sing something like 'Shotgun.' So everybody said, 'Well, you sing it, Jr.' I was kind of shy about doing it, but Willie said 'You're nominated. You wrote it.' So I did, and I guess it worked out all right."

He adds, "Willie helped me a lot with my singing after that, but I still like to play my horn better than I like to sing."

"Shotgun," says Walker, was based on a step he had seen kids doing at one of the dances he'd played.

Now, it is well known that people can dance to the music of nothing but a drum—and even that isn't always necessary. What Walker, and the better jazz musicians who have lately taken to playing against disco rhythms, can do so well is invent entertaining, stimulating music above the beat. Thus, listeners not only have a more-or-less mechanical rhythmic impulse to keep time with but also an emotional desire to dance. A review of a Walker performance in England several years ago said that his forte was "good, honest soul music played from the heart to the feet." The whole point of what Walker has been able to do, I think, is create music which speaks to the feet and the heart.

On the other hand, Walker readily admits that he's not always going to be playing exactly the same kind of music. "Right now, I can pretty much do whatever I want to musically. Everybody is just ready for me to blow. I just get up there and play like I'm playing."

"But I'm also experimenting with different kinds of songs and different ways of blowing. I'm going to expand what I'm doing. I'm producing myself now, and I'm doing a lot more writing. The idea of working with strings—which is something I did for a while a long time ago—is starting to come back to me, for instance. Another example of new things I'm doing is that I decided to play alto instead of tenor on one track on my new album."

That new album, called *Whopper Bopper Show-Stopper*, is a strong and joyful piece of work—at least based on the portions of it I've heard. It's not quite as smooth and homogeneous as his previous two, *Hot Shot* and *Sax Appeal*, and is thus more interesting and provocatively dance-inducing. The title track is securely in the Walker mode; danceable as all hell, with enough different things going on at first to make it (in edited form) a good radio single, and also with enough nagging riffing at the end to make it a fine disco record. The other tracks I've heard, while no less danceable, are more interesting musically.

The alto track is particularly intriguing. "I used to play alto real pretty and sweet," Walker says, "just like Earl Bostic. But I put it down about seven or eight years ago, and hadn't touched the horn since. Then, I was listening to this song we were going to do, and I said 'That would sound good on alto,' so I just went out of the studio, bought an alto, and came back and started playing it. I was a little rough and rusty, I know, but everybody seemed to like the sound."

[Cont'd. on pg. 40]

Hammer & Braxton Define The State of The Art

By LITA ELISCU

The time has come for Western music, even pop, to look to other sources for inspiration. Our own R&B, even its proud cousin, jazz, have worn down, not out: they are all too often rococo versions of the originals or self-conscious and studied parodies.

In true dripulator fashion, musicians have been aware of this for a long time, and their discoveries are just now beginning to come down to the public in agreeable and comprehensible forms. In the name of this search, various labels have been attached to the music—'fusion' or 'jazz-rock' or 'contemporary'—all designed to show the grafting jobs being tried, but all equally uncomfortable. The music will eventually name itself, as it always does.

For all that some people make their living by telling the world what is art and what is not, the truth remains: it is always a horse race. Still, I think Jan Hammer & Anthony Braxton are two of the more interesting musicians around, and certainly their music best reflects the current situation.

Hammer's first album, *Lookout Farm*, with Jerry Goodman, received good critical notices but little public attention. For his next work, he signed with Nemperor, and produced *The First Seven Days*, the story of Genesis. A little like putting a large chip on his shoulder, he gambled that once people's attention had been caught by the very enormity and brashness of the undertaking, they would stick around to hear the music, which combines classical melodies, synthesizers, and some beautifully rhythmic compositions.

Hammer does most of his work at his own studio in upstate New York, where he has a resident electronic genius helping to keep his stable of synthesizers, etcetera, fit and able. He produced his latest album there, *Oh Yeah!* "Producers, with very few exceptions, are just useless drones. They are needed mainly, to tell people when to stop." Hammer is given to such total statements in making a point, but he is never really overly arrogant. His is the voice of one who has thought and planned a long time.

Oh Yeah! features Hammer's group playing some really funky rhythms, even a few vocals, blended in with a rare and heady mixture of classical-spacy violin work and Afro-Indian drumming (Hammer is one of the first to turn to African/Indian traditions as a source for new concepts of rhythm, melody, and time).

Hammer is from Poland, where he was conservatory trained. He studied piano and later, drums, while travelling through Europe.



Shown backstage at Jan Hammer's recent concert date at Burbank Starlight Bowl in California are, left to right: Jeff Beck, Eric Clapton, and Jan Hammer.

Eventually, he came to America, met up with John McLaughlin and helped found and establish the Mahavishnu Orchestra as one of the pioneer groups breaking new ground.

"Yes, oh yes, it was a complete breakthrough for all of us," he says, recalling the Orchestra. "The music I'm doing now, which is an extension of the sum total of my musical and life experiences, is somewhere between the album I made on my own (*The First Seven Days*), which is quite heavily into, quote, 'classical roots' and my experiences with Mahavishnu Orchestra."

Hammer's interest in music overcame his initial desire to be a doctor, but he brings much of the same passionate love of a discipline and a body of knowledge to this art. He has the classical scholar's rather intolerant attitude towards those who have not studied deeply. "I really despise all the jazz-rock-funk formula music that's coming out! I am constantly being associated with it because many of these groups coming out now are influenced by Mahavishnu Orchestra. I do play music that is sometimes cerebral and quite fast, technically proficient, yet I consciously try to stay away from..." He searches for his thought... "I think on my melodic and rhythmic material, the language is different. It is not based exclusively on blues or jazz-derived scales. All these formula groups substitute a funky beat, 4/4 time, and put jazz licks on top of it. I don't hear that in my music at all. 90-95% of it, of the rock music too, is all derived cliches. If you intersperse that vocabulary, those 5 or 6 notes, with something else, it is all right. But to rely on it exclusively, that's not good."

So you think the whole jazz idiom is creatively used up?

"Well, it really...is not my cup of tea, I've heard it all before. I feel...I don't want this to sound wrong—

but I feel I have done all of it in the late 60's myself. All I hear in the 'avant-garde' of jazz—I don't think it's anything other than a cross between Coltrane, Ornette Coleman, Eric Dolphy, Archie Shepp, Don Cherry. I mean, they did it all in the early 60's."

Talking about Indian music and possible synthesis, he explains, "The tonal center of the raga is the drone note which stays the same, and whatever you do is superimposed over this. You refer to this point throughout. That's what the beauty of Indian music is based on. But Western ears, which is what we all have, need something else. Detours. A few alternate sections, I think." After talking about his early musical associations, he says, "Now I am much closer to rhythm and blues. I am looking for new avenues for R&B to go, and for rock music. I want people to hear, to pick up on something that appeals to them. It's a very sneaky attitude; what hits first is the funk quality of the rhythm, than almost before one is aware of it, the listening aura is invaded by all this harmony and very off-the-wall melodies. That is really my philosophy; the Trojan horse approach—totally surprise the listener!"



Anthony Braxton has been making a lot of people sit up lately, even argue; Does he have it? And a good argument augurs well for creat-

ivity's existence, more so than a lot of people nodding in complacent agreement or all turning thumbs down at the same time. So it goes on. Is this the salvation of jazz or just another smartass slicker who has wedded a pipe, an afro and a gift for clever composition into a bright public moment...

I don't know and neither does Braxton. On the other hand, he does have a real sense of humor, which is more than can be allowed for most musicians. Braxton's latest album, *Creative Orchestra Music* (Arista), has convinced more people that he may be on the right track.

On the back cover, Braxton makes a statement about the music, explaining that he has "never felt that words are meaningful when applied to creativity—and yet something has to be written..." Surrounding his few paragraphs are some pretty diagrams which look like modules from a physics class or the doodlings of a cerebral mathematician, yet represent the compositions. Listening to the deeply textured, complex and powerful music played by a large ensemble—a 'jazz' orchestra—and looking at the diagrams makes one...laugh. Cut Two, Side Two, for example, features what looks like a section of the George Washington Bridge, and has accompanying text: "Composition was inspired from Duke Ellington...This piece also uses intervalic shifts as a distinguishing functional factor—and the traditional vamp is a propellion device."

Now, the music on this record is not only good or brilliant; it is a high point for jazz or contemporary music as a whole. Braxton has indeed comprehended what the past masters have laid down and has gone ahead and found new perspectives and statements: he has achieved a synthesis immediately arresting and attractive, no easy task. At the same time, sentences such as those just quoted can have meaning to very few listener/buyers other than the few highly-trained junior composers who have enough money to buy other people's albums. So why are these diagrams, etc., there? True, they are as sensible as the usual liner notes/pictures of sexy chicks. But no, the answer must lie in Mr. Braxton's sense of humor. He wrote all this stuff out, and knows very well it is high incomprehensible. But it is scientific, and our technology-dominated culture will probably love compositions which are non-electronic but highly-electrified on an album which purports to be in cahoots with both Art and Science, as though the music of the spheres has finally found its connection with our ears.

Why, the whole thing looks like an IBM printout. But the music inside the sleeve, on the vinyl, is so alive, so warm, I must forgive Mr. Braxton for his pseudo-intellectualism. For by substituting emotion for cheap romanticism and discipline for random improvisation, Braxton has breathed theatre back into jazz.

Jr. Walker Experiment?: "I'd love to do something with Stevie."

His alto tone does sound "rough and rusty," but his playing also sounds somehow more agile on the smaller horn. A fine but unknown reedman once told me that he felt his personality changed when he went from alto to tenor or vice versa. "It's like you feel different when you're driving a Buick than when you're driving an MG. You're still the same driver, but you don't feel the same inside." I don't know if Walker experiences a similar thing picking up an alto after so many years on tenor exclusively, but it sounds as if he does. He plays faster, slightly more brashly. He does occasional fast little back flips that I've never heard him do on tenor (though it might also be pointed out that he can get such purity in the higher register from his tenor, that there seems little reason for him to play alto in the first place).

On the tenor tracks, Walker sounds extremely good. Maybe his financial success is agreeing with him; maybe he was just in a good mood when he made the recordings; maybe he just keeps getting better. But there are moments when even a longtime Walker fan like myself has to sit up and say to himself, "I didn't know he could do *that*!"



Bruce Osborn

Walker has a continuity of breath that is really quite remarkable. His soft-edged attack, burnished rather than burred, scrapes into a hot, fiery burn almost without warning. His tone sounds have become just slightly thicker, reedier, deeper—though Walker denies it. He sounds sometimes like he could have stood proudly on a stage next to, say, Illinois Jacquet in his heyday—and maybe even have blown him off the

stage. (If only, on *Woppor Bopper*, Walker wasn't playing over that typical Motown disco rhythm section sound. There's no crispness there, no integrity of timbre...It sounds like a pile-driver in thick mud. But, then, who am I to argue with millions?).

Walker was a jazz player, of course, and he grew up listening to jazz players and learning from them. "I studied after Illinois

Jacquet," he says, "and after Lester Young and all those guys. I used to sound like Parker on alto, too, but I gave that up, because it was just too complicated. You practically had to know as much about music as Parker did in order to understand what he was doing."

"Today there isn't too much happening that I listen to. I liked the Average White Band's tenor player on that one big hit of theirs, and I learned to play that song (The reference is to "Cut the Cake" and tenor player Malcolm Duncan). And I like Stanley Turrentine...But there isn't really anybody out there opening up new territory as a saxophonist—unless maybe it's Grover Washington, Jr. I like him a lot, too."

Are there any other artists—instrumental or vocal—that he'd particularly like to work with, now that he is starting to "experiment?" Walker smiles and replies, "Oh, there are a few people I'd like to get with...I'd love to do something with Stevie..." He stops and reconsiders. "I'd better not say any more. People won't leave me alone. I've probably already said more than I should, saying I'd like to work with Stevie...I'm gonna have problems now."

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WAH WAH WAT SON SOLO



By SAM GRAHAM



Bruce Osborn

Melvin Ragin, aka Wah Wah Watson, would be a good candidate for one of these American Express card ads on the idiot box. You probably couldn't pick him out of a crowd of four people—you might not even recognize his name. But unless you haven't turned on an AM radio for at least the last five years, you've heard Wah Wah Watson play guitar. Watson has more recording sessions under his Fender super slinky's than Los Angeles has car washes. Barry White, Marvin Gaye, the Pointer Sisters, the Jackson Five, even Cheech and Chong—he's played with them all. And now he's got a five year solo contract with Columbia and his own record, *Elementary*, which should

help make him a much more familiar name.

The Wah Wah Watson guitar style doesn't depend on flash virtuosity. All soloing is kept to a minimum in favor of what the man himself calls "very strong figures, like repeated fills and chord ideas that aren't what a regular lead guitarist plays." It hasn't always been this way; in fact he used to be just one of a legion of Wes Montgomery addicts and imitators.

"People would say I sounded like Wes," Watson said. "I asked myself if I wanted to be just like him, and the answer came back, 'No!' That's when I started concentrating more on colors and sound patterns than on lots of individual

notes and solers."

Color. It's a good word to describe the way Watson uses his instrument. Armed with a palette including echoplex, fuzz boxes, phasing devices and, of course, the pedal that gave him his nickname, he paints and fills in the canvas of any music he plays. It's part of what makes him such a sought-after session player. "I try," he explained, "to lock into something at a session, get the feel, and add color to it. Take the wah wah pedal—it's just another coloration. I play it like I'm talking to another person." With his colors, Watson works the magic of "turning a plain cupcake into a German chocolate cake; you know, a three-layered one."

Another reason Watson feels he has logged so many studio credits is that he plays "very consistent stuff. I always go back and try to make whatever I play sound better, figuring out where the gaps are that need filling. A lot of musicians don't do that. They just play, and try to get off." He puts himself into each session separately, approaching it "not like a job but like a communication with the particular artist and producer." It's an attitude that negates any suggestion of duplicity, demonstrated by the fact that he can back up Bill Cosby caricaturing Barry White ("Rat Own, Rat Own, Rat Own") as well as big Barry himself.

One of Wah Wah's most fruitful

[Cont'd on pg. 44]

The songs in Sun's album **Wanna Make Love (Come Flick My BIC*)** blaze with sizzling guitar work, dazzling horns, wailing synthesizers and cocky, strutting vocals.

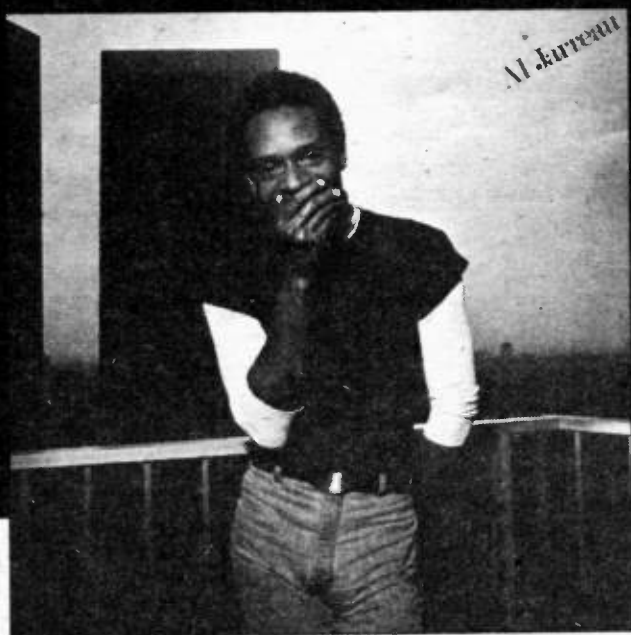
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David Sanborn's *Sanborn* and Al Jarreau's *Glow*,
on Warner Bros. and Warner/Reprise records & tapes.

"There's no reason you can't burn every night you play"—Wah Wah Watson

[Cont'd. from pg. 42]

associations has been with Herbie Hancock. They met during Marvin Gaye's *Let's Get It On* sessions. Hancock then called him for his "Death Wish" soundtrack, and later for the *Man Child* album. Watson figures heavily in Herbie's latest, *Secrets*; he shares producing and arranging credits and co-authored five of the seven tunes. He's also part of the pianist's band, which just finished a European tour and will travel the States this fall. Watson has good things to say about Hancock: "With *Head Hunters*, Herbie added a beat to jazz, a groove where you can space along and dance too. *Secrets* is the full flowering of the *Head Hunters* sound."

Years of studio work have obviously provided a fairly comfortable living. Watson's two-floor condo in Hollywood is completely wired for sound—he's just gotten one of those fancy combination TV-video tape consoles—and he himself manages to get wired with Marlboros that he half empties of tobacco and refills with a healthy supply of a certain nose candy. But even \$500 for each session couldn't keep him from thinking that "I had to start keeping some for me, and not give so much of myself to

everybody else." The chance came with his first album, *Elementary*.

Elementary has some of the identity problems so many studio musicians face when going solo, but Watson's strengths—that distinctive guitar, his flair for writing "pretty stuff, along the lines of what Curtis Mayfield did with the *Impressions*," and some decent vocal chops—are there for the hearing. "I had to record the album to show people that while this is the same cat they heard with the

Temps and Diana Ross, this is the way he feels about what he plays. My colors are really in their right perspective on *Elementary*."

Just as he considers himself a "commercial" guitarist, he's shooting for a sellable album with across-the-board appeal. "The album is a concept," he explained. It's about experiences I've had that people can relate to, relationships and thoughts that I'm dealing with through music. A tune is a tune, no matter who writes it. Everybody has a different

interpretation—it's just a matter of how you feel about it and can adapt to it."

Wah Wah expects to take his own band on the road sometime next year. Naturally it's an important project for him—"It's just like a baby, needing a lot of attention and nursing." He aims for the same consistency in a band as in his own playing. "There's no reason you can't burn every night you play. For one hour, man, one hour, you can do it. The hardest thing for a musician is to be able to play a line over and over again with the same authority and momentum. I'm going to hand pick cats who want to listen, learn, and play consistently. "The entertainment element is also important: "At \$6 or \$7 a shot, people don't want to just hear music, they want to see something. That's why groups like Earth, Wind and Fire are so successful."

Wah Wah Watson's philosophy has a dose of Dale Carnegie in it. He's so voluble, and believes so strongly in himself, that one can't help but go along with him "My music can show a person how to think, as far as being positive. If you want to do something, do it. Who's gonna stop you? I hope people can take something I play and apply it positively to themselves and the way they feel."



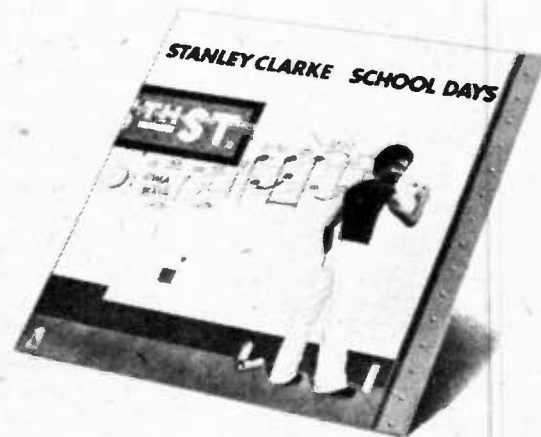
Bruce Osborn



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SOUL & JAZZ SINGLES



BY JOE McEWEN

Slim pickings this month despite (or because of) nominal contributions from big timers like the O'Jays, Aretha, the Isleys, Commodores and Marvin Gaye. Best of the rest:



1) Dobie Gray - "Find 'em, Fool 'em, Forget 'em" (Capricorn 0259). A delightful remake of the old George Jackson, Muscle Shoals classic. The original was a bit sexist and one-sided (Jackson also included references to the 4 F's), so Gray and producer Rick Hall have cleaned the song up by including both sides of the story. It's a bouncy Muscle Shoals track with some disco flourishes. The title says it all.

2) Ruby Andrews - "I've Got a Bone To Pick With You" (ABC 12215). Back after a long absence, Ruby's comeback single is my current favorite. The 45 has a lot of the flavor of those old Barbara Acklin hits: a charging, Chicago soul band, a hook that keeps you thirsty for more and some nice vocal belting. Highly recommended.

3) Instant Funk - "Philly Jump" is the kind of driving instrumental one would expect from Sigler's aggregation. A combination of old MFSB and Brothers Johnson. Can't wait to see what the dance is like.

4) Dramatics - "Finger Fever" (ABC 12220). I've been a little disappointed in this group's output since their Stax departure. However, this new single from a forthcoming album is very promising. It includes lots of charged up vocal interplay, a nasty lyric and a funky vamp not unlike some of the old Parliaments' records. In fact, "Finger Fever" almost sounds like an updated "Testify," which should be ample recommendation.

Mirage's "I Had a Fight With Love" (Warners 8242) is the type of blue-eyed soul the Magnificent Men used to churn out for the Uptown audience. Rocking bass lines and Hall and Oates-style vocals attest to the knockout power of love. A record that's been out for awhile is Brian and Brenda's "Gonna Do My Best To Love You" (Rocket 40602), combining a soft disco track with some tough vocals. I like the more understated album cut better than the special disco released single. Brian and Brenda carry on in the tradition of Billy Vera and Judy Clay (whatever happened to *HER?*).

Margie Alexander's "Take My Body" (ChiSound 849) has an upfront story line ("If you need somebody to love/C'mon and take my body"), but is a shade disappointing. Perhaps it's that annoying harpsichord which gets in the way of an otherwise propulsive Major Lance/Otis Leavill production. This is one of the inaugural discs for Carl Davis' ChiSound label and good things are expected in the Okeh/Dakar tradition. The roster includes Walter Jackson, the Artistics, Windy City and hopefully even Lance and Leavill.

O.V. Wright's "Rhymes" (HI 2315) is a bit too slavish an Al Green imitation for such a distinctive singer. Still, it's good to have him recording again. Sylvia produced the Moments' "With You" (Stang 5068), a return to the creamy, falsetto soul ballads that are the group's trademark. This isn't quite up to the Moments standards—it sounds as if only one of the guys (Harry Ray) did all the vocal parts. In much the same mold from Philly: Blue Magic's "Teach Me" (Atco 7061) and First Choice, with what may be their first slow-drag 45 (WB 8251). Honey and the Bees would be proud.

Also recommended: Four Tops' "Catfish" (ABC 12223); Ruben Bell's King Floyd-like "I Still Have To Say Goodbye" (Alarm 111); Dee Dee Bridgewater's "Goin' Through the Motions" (Atlantic 3357); a surprising Betty Wright-sound-alike from Jenny Jackson "Shoora Shoora" (Farr 008), and "Salty Tears" by Thelma Jones (Columbia 10403), written by Randazzo and produced by Shapiro.

SOUL & JAZZ
REVIEWSWALTER JACKSON
Feeling Good

Including: Love is Lovelier
Too Shy To Say/Pardon Me
Someone Saved My Life



WALTER JACKSON
Feeling Good
Chi-Sound 656

TYRONE DAVIS
LOVE AND TOUCH

including:
Give It Up (Turn It Loose)/Close To You
Put Your Trust In Me/Wrong Doers
Beware, Beware



TYRONE DAVIS
Love and Touch
Columbia 34268

By JOE McEWEN

Carl Davis is one of those haze figures in the music industry whose name inevitably pops up year after year, yet the precise nature of his contributions are never defined. Such lack of recognition is misleading. The career of Carl Davis has spanned 17 years of modern Chicago soul (the exact entry date can be neatly traced to the release of Gene Chandler's "Duke of Earl"—his first discovery) and as entrepreneur, talent scout and producer, it is Davis, along with Curtis Mayfield, who has been almost singularly responsible for the Windy City's soul music prominence.

He rejuvenated Okeh Records in the early '60s, hiring Mayfield and arranger Johnny Pate to produce a roster that included Major Lance, Billy Butler, Walter Jackson and the Artistics. When Carl fell out with Epic/Okeh president Len Levy, he worked as an independent producer with Mary Wells and Jackie Wilson ("Higher and Higher" was a result of their collaboration). In 1968 his midas-like touch landed a scuffling mill worker and part-time singer named Tyrone Davis. "Can I Change My Mind" was their first

union and Carl Davis parlayed the smash into his own label (Dakar) and soon, with the emergence of Barbara Acklin, the Chi-Lites and Young-Holt Unlimited on Brunswick, Davis sparked yet a second renaissance period in Chicago soul.

Davis' commitment to Chicago music is commendable. On the heels of the Newark grand jury inquiries (Brunswick, which distributed Dakar, was the only label to be convicted), Carl Davis has left the tarnished New York outfit to start yet another company, Chi-Sound, and what he hopes will be another revitalization.

Discovered singing from a wheelchair in a Detroit club (he was stricken with polio as a youngster), Walter Jackson was a member of Davis' formidable Okeh roster and *Feeling Good*, along with an album by Ebony Rhythm Funk Campaign and a single from Margie Alexander are Chi-Sounds' initial releases. Unfortunately the company's debut is not as auspicious as many had hoped. *Feeling Good* is the best of the bunch as well as the biggest disappointment. Jackson's moody baritone lends itself to the type of soul ballads he was famous for a decade ago. But arranger Riley Hampton's wooden charts provide little inspiration for this string of 10 such songs. Occasionally, however, the strength of Jackson's voice breaks through. A remake of his own Okeh classic, "Welcome Home," is particularly stirring and gives ample evidence of what could have been. With a roster that includes several of the old Okeh acts (Major Lance produced the Alexander disc), Davis is headed in the right direction. We can only hope he finds the groove in the next set of releases.

Carl Davis protege Tyrone Davis has done just fine since the unexpected success of "Can I Change My Mind." Tyrone has put together a long string of soul hits, all in a narrowly defined groove. Fashioned in the late '60s by arranger Willie Henderson (where is HE?), the raft of Tyrone Davis hits virtually defined the Chicago Sound: brassy horn flourishes, a relaxed rhythmic lope and vocals that owed considerable debts to big-band blues singers Little Milton and Bobby Bland. Tyrone's Columbia debut continues in the vein, with a touch more sophistication (a light wash of strings, prominent female chorus and muted horns) and a classier album cover. Within his somewhat limited range, Tyrone Davis is an amazingly consistent singer and *Love and Touch* a most worthy extension of a most impressive career.

JACK DeJOHNETTE
 Untitled
 ECM 1-1074

By **SAM GRAHAM**

Those of us who aren't addicted to Albert Ayler suppositories and don't have a ritual of drinking Romilar and submerging ourselves in a little Anthony Braxton have always had trouble with some of the so-called "avant-garde" jazz. Suppose something sounds plain raucous and unpleasant; does that mean you're coarse and unwilling to open yourself to the cathartic outpouring of a man's soul? If it seems contrived and obscure, are you just dumb and incapable of "understanding?" If you share this dilemma, take heart. Here we have a record that could be considered avant-garde—it's adventurous and essentially devoid of conventional constraints—but is also clearly accessible within its challenges.

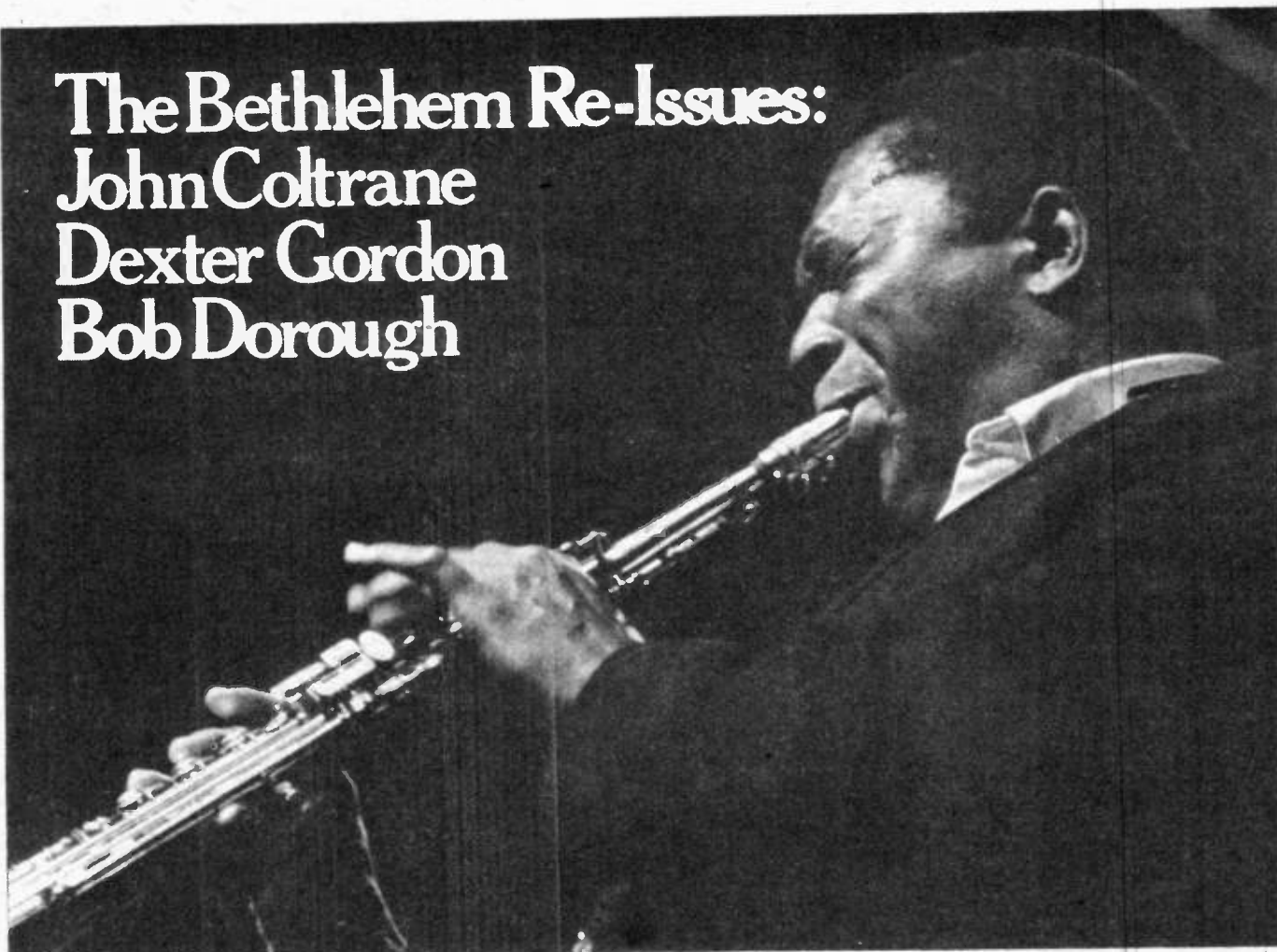
I first became aware of Jack DeJohnette through the brilliant *Forest Flower* recording with Charles Lloyd. His many projects since have included gigs with Freddie Hubbard, Miles, and a couple of his own groups. This is the second record for "Jack DeJohnette's Directions," the first for ECM. Holdovers John Abercrombie (guitar) and 21-year-old Alex Foster (saxes) are joined here by Mike Richmond (bass) and keyboardist Warren Bernhardt (who counts Jeremy Steig and the Satyrs as one of his more arcane credits). Jack himself plays a little sax as well as the usual drums; piano is actually his original instrument (check out Compost's *Life is Round* on Columbia), so the guy is no dilettante.

The song titles pretty much reflect the music. "Flying Spirits" floats nicely but swings; the players free-associating but making sense. "The Vikings are Coming" is calm and spacey, with DeJohnette and Foster's ethereal saxes echoing those giant horns straight out of the Kirk Douglas/Tony Curtis flick. Only "Struttin'" and "Fantastic" approach aimless noodling, and even then not dangerously so.

Abercrombie takes things outside most consistently with his laser-beam riffs and stretchings, or by scratching the strings above the nut or below the bridge. On the record's most off-the-wall cut, "Pansori Visions," either a pick is stuck in his strings or they're tuned so low strangely as to render them virtually atonal. DeJohnette's technique of holding his sticks firmly in his fists rather than the standard balancing between thumb and forefinger gives him a solid touch without becoming heavy. The whole band is a fortuitous combination of youth and veteran, farsightedness and tradition, chops and taste.



The Bethlehem Re-Issues: John Coltrane Dexter Gordon Bob Dorough



TURNING POINT
 John Coltrane
Bethlehem CBP 6024

BETHLEHEM YEARS
 Dexter Gordon
Bethlehem BCP 6008

YARDBIRD SUITE
 Bob Dorough
Bethlehem BCP 6023

By **PETE WELDING**

Since the most recent of these recordings is 19 years old, the basic question to be asked is: just how valid is the music today? Let's start with the best known performer and work back to the least.

While he had been performing and recording with Miles Davis for almost two years, 1957 was an important year for John Coltrane. He started recording as a leader, spent several productive months with Thelonious Monk and, stimulated by that experience, approached with renewed purpose the long, tortuous journey to complete self-expression that was to dominate the remainder of his life. By combining performances from two long out-of-print albums, Bethlehem has managed to assemble a full LP of the saxophonist's more enjoyable yet not very significant work from this crucial period.

The most consistently interesting music stems from a performance led by drummer Art Blakey, with trumpeter Donald Byrd, pianist Walter Bishop (who plays like Horace Silver most of the time), and

bassist Wendell Marshall. The quintet's offerings sound more or less like the Jazz Messengers in two lengthy tracks, Coltrane's "Pristine" and Byrd's "Tippin'." Nice but not outstanding.

Still, it's Coltrane who ostensibly is the focus of this LP. He solos on every included selection, though sadly, his contributions are not very compelling. All the elements of the mature Coltrane style—the cry-filled sound, increasing harmonic and rhythmic density, the celebrated "sheets of sound" approach—are present, but hadn't yet cohered into a gripping whole. The set is valuable almost wholly for its glimpses of that style in its formative stage, but is hardly essential Coltrane.

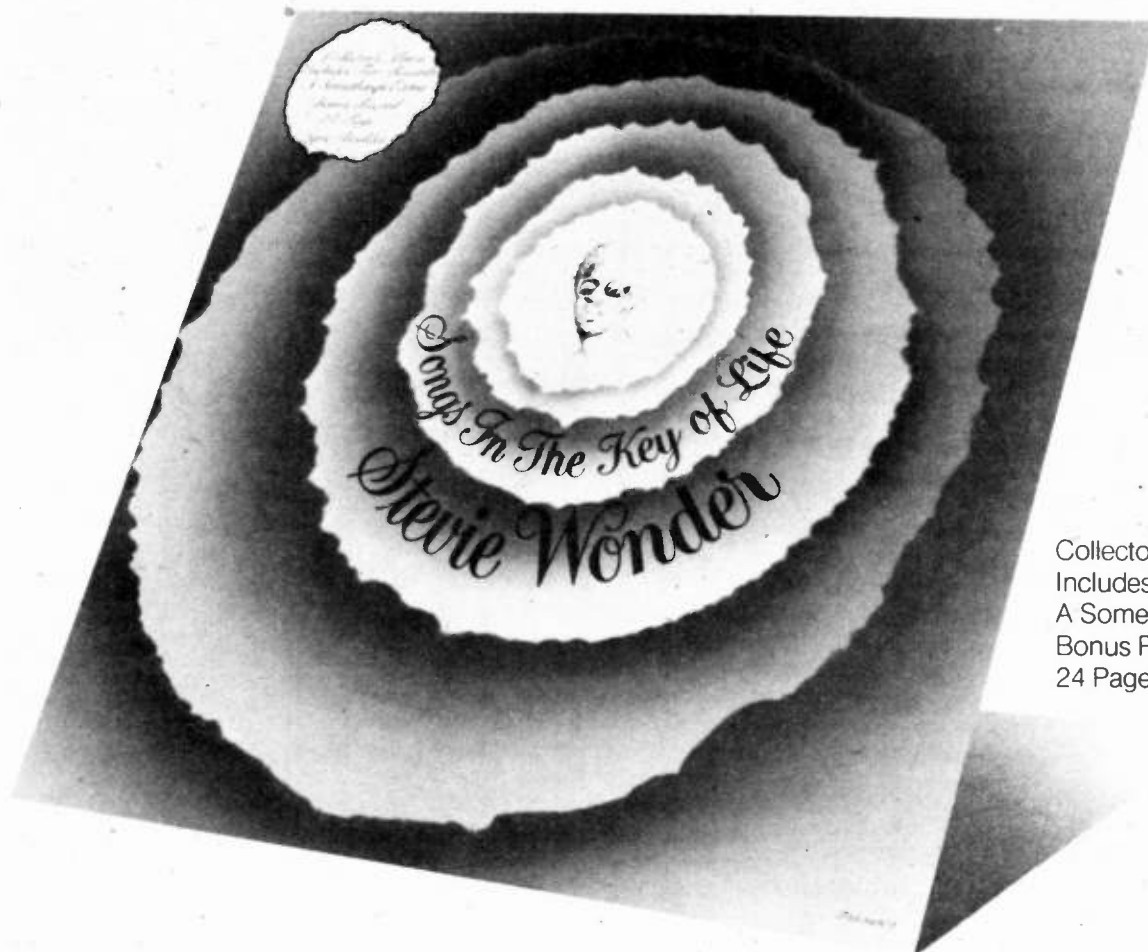
Maturity, intelligence, authority, imagination, humor and a strong yet relaxed handling of rhythm distinguish the direct, forceful music of Dexter Gordon, a tenorist slightly Coltrane's elder. His approach anneals bebop's broadened harmonic bases onto the solid foundation of Swing. While more conservative in character than Coltrane or Sonny Rollins style (both of whom Gordon influenced greatly), it is no less satisfying. When inspiration burns brightly, as it does here, stylistic channels don't matter nearly so much as the force and excitement generated, and that Gordon could do extremely well. "You Can Depend on Me" is a particularly fine example.

Gordon's tone is big and brusque-sounding, his swing as constant as it is effortless, and the flow of his ideas quick and stimulating. These are the performances of a master who has everything in perfect

balance and is performing at the top of his game. Much the same is true of his co-workers, particularly the under-appreciated Kenny Drew, a pianist of taste and intelligence who impresses in every solo, bassist Leroy Vinnegar and drummer Lawrence Marable. A well-nigh perfect group, and the music they made in September of 1955 still compels our attention; not on historical grounds but simply because it throws off sparks.

Singer-pianist-composer Bob Dorough is, let us say, an acquired taste but one well worth acquiring. He sings in a wispy, almost boyish voice that many people find hard to take, yet is a master stylist with an unerring command of rhythmic and harmonic subtlety. He phrases and shades his voice like an improvising jazz instrumentalist, giving his performances momentum and a constantly shifting set of textures. Dorough chooses well-crafted but hardly overly familiar song material, and writes songs of wit and musicality. This is a reissue of his long unavailable 1956 Bethlehem set, one of only two LP recitals he has made. On the strength of his warm, witty and completely personal musicianship, he was invited to record with Miles Davis, the only vocalist so honored. Davis also has recorded his "Devil May Care," a song included in this album. Also noteworthy is Dorough's imaginative paean to Charlie Parker, a set of imaginative lyrics he has set to the altoist's theme and variations on "Yardbird Suite." Fans of Lambert, Hendricks, Ross, King Pleasure and other exponents of vocal expertise, will enjoy this set greatly.

"...give me the key
in which I am to sing,
and, if it is a key
that you too feel, may you
join and sing with me."



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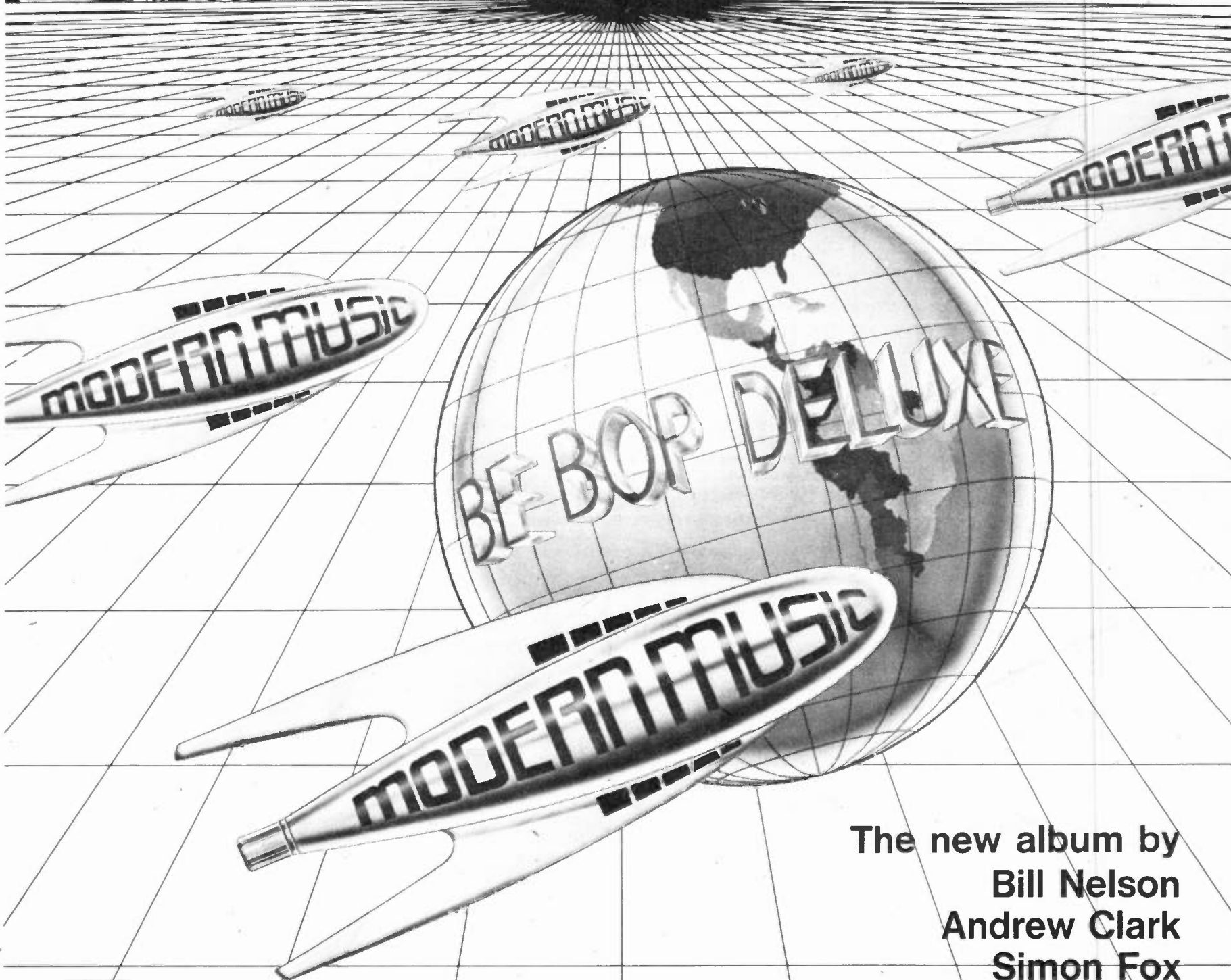
STEVIE WONDER

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