

THE ST. LOUIS

PHONOGRAPH

RECORD
MAGAZINE

- ALICE HITS
- BOWIE LOW
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ISSUE # 76

FEBRUARY, 1977

"All The

EAGLES EXTRA

By MICHAEL
BARACKMAN



LOS ANGELES—The Eagles began 1976 with their future very much in doubt. *One Of These Nights*, issued in 1975, clearly established them as the most popular American rock group active in contemporary music. But the album's slickness and commercial tone met with resentment in some circles, particularly on the East Coast, and the group still couldn't seem to shake the complacent "L.A. country-rock" tag that had plagued them since their inception in 1972.

To complicate matters, Bernie Leadon, the group's guitarist through four albums, decided to leave. Leadon had given the band much of its personality, and had somewhat dulled criticism that the Eagles were aloof hardasses. Though Leadon's replacement, Joe Walsh, actually played a more melodic brand of rock than popularly pictured, the new teaming still seemed incongruous. As a "Greatest Hits" package enjoyed a stay at the top of the charts longer than any other single album of the year, the Eagles struggled agonizingly to come up with a worthy follow-up.

"We've faced no greater challenge in our career than surviving the departure of Bernie Leadon and following a 'Greatest Hits' album with something better," said Glenn Frey, guitarist and co-leader of the Eagles. "It made me feel like my ass was on the line. It made me feel that everything I did had to count. But it also made

me feel alive!

"I personally thought that adding Joe Walsh was a dangerous move. 90% of the people who heard about it couldn't figure out how it was ever going to work."

Don Henley, the band's drummer and alternating lead vocalist, echoed Frey's feelings. "We were scared," he said simply. "We had to go out and prove we were still happening."

The Eagles have proved just that with *Hotel California*, an inspiring showcase of totally "American" popular music. Just as the actual playing is gutsier, so are the lyrics: many examine

disillusionment and distraughtness that come with meeting one's goals—exactly the predicament the unit found itself in throughout 1976. A more traditional, acoustic-based Eagles' number, "New Kid In Town," has shot quickly up the charts, and will likely surpass "Take It To the Limit" as the best-selling Eagles' single ever.

And yet, though they are proud to have reasserted themselves back to the top, the pressures and business hassles have grown just as monumentally. Unlike last year, the Eagles enter 1977 from a position of strength, but as they point out in their latest album, it could turn out to be their most fatal disadvantage.

"It gets harder every time," Henley said softly. "So far, Glenn and I have always decided to kill ourselves for another year. We sit down and say, 'Are we going crazy for another year?' and end up saying, 'Yeah, I'll kill myself one more time.'"

(See Story - Pg. 13)

1976 IN REVIEW

— The Artists, Hits, Trends, Successes, Failures & Highlights of Rock '76 —

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The Dirt Band's 10th Anniversary on United Artists Records! The new album, "Dirt, Silver and Gold" (UA-LA670) is a three record set anthology including the best of the old and a strong, bright step into the future. It features their greatest hits, some previously unavailable material and eleven new songs.

Also by the Dirt Band, the classic "Will The Circle Be Unbroken" and "Uncle Charlie and His Dog Teddy."

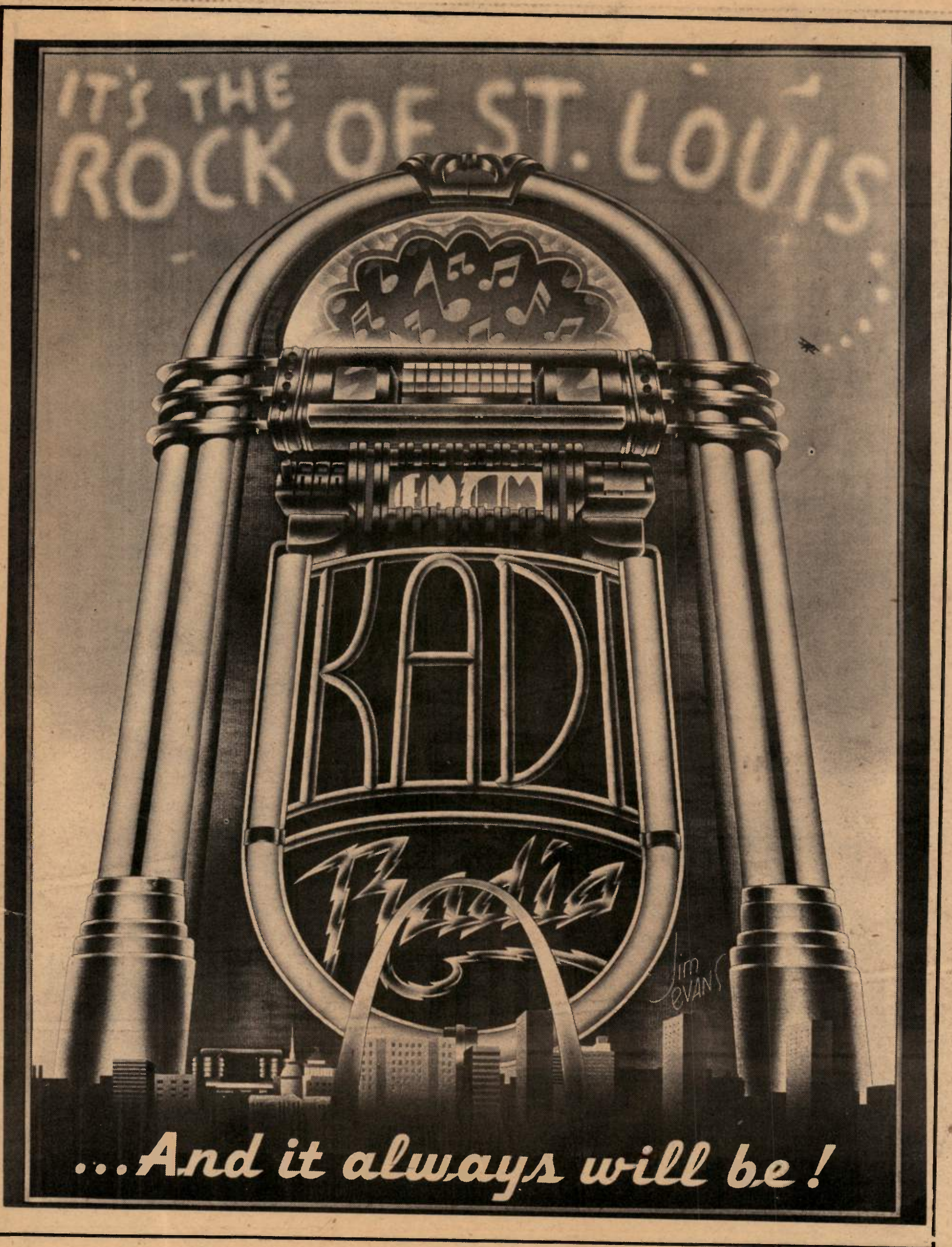
Ten Years Strong. The Dirt Band lives on United Artists Records & Tapes. CIRCLE OF SOUND

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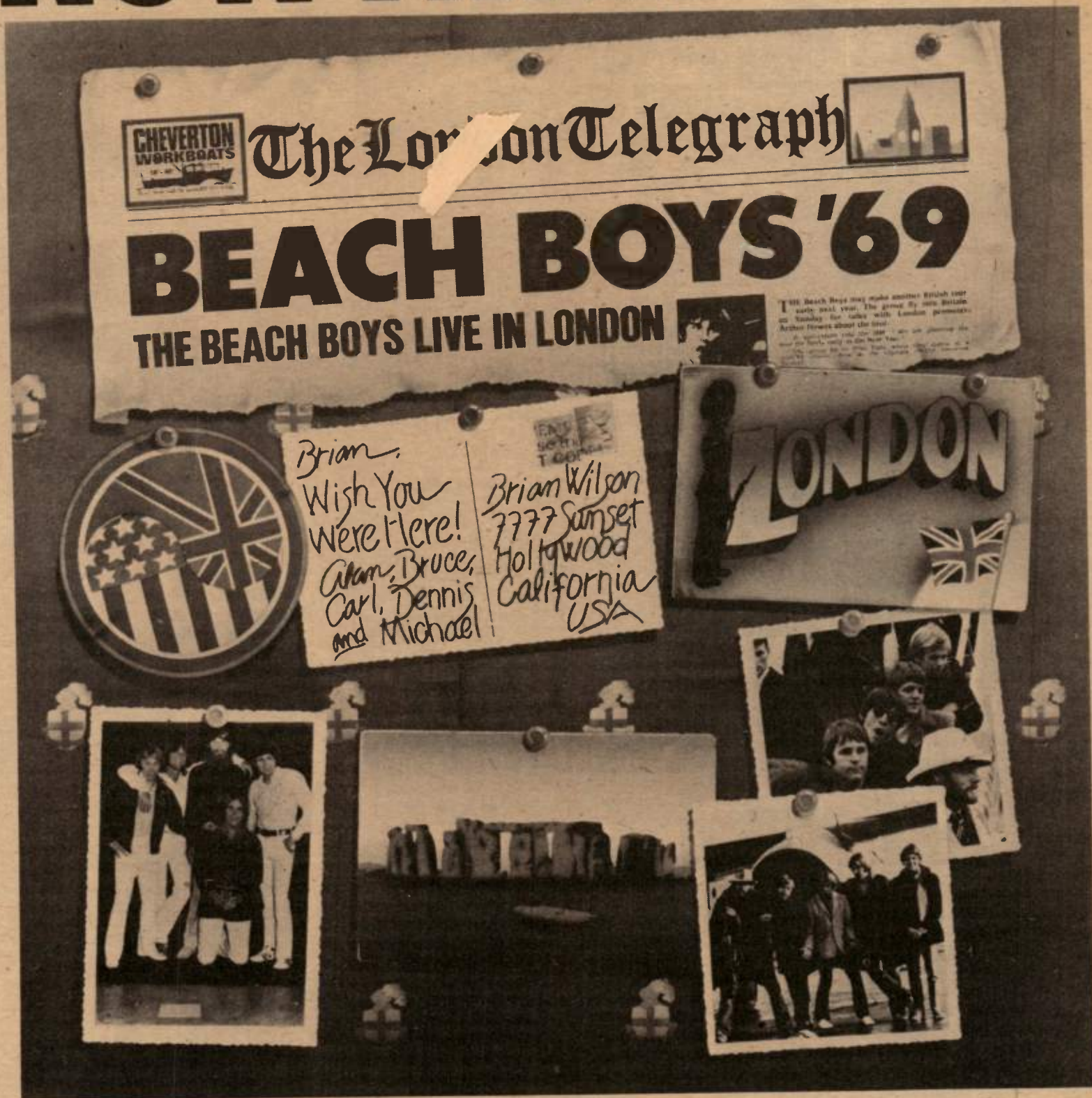


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GOOD VIBRATIONS
GOD ONLY KNOWS
BARBARA ANN

On Capitol Records and Tapes



February, 1977

EAGLES: A Turbulent '70s Flight

In the title song from their #1 selling album *Hotel California*, the Eagles sing about the optimism and excitement that come with nearing one's goals—the same kind of outlook the group had just prior to releasing 75's *One of These Nights*, the LP that indeed established them as the premier American popular music group. But just as the victim in "Hotel California" winds up wanting to leave his supposed citadel, the Eagles are currently also entertaining such thoughts. Inter-group squabbles already led one member, Bernie Leadon, to leave and despite the addition of friend Joe Walsh, other tensions persist. The Eagles begin 1977 looking for ways to endure in one piece. "We have to really beat ourselves," Don Henley allows.

By Michael Barackman.....12

1976 IN REVIEW: The Year Of The Quack, Brat, & Cat

All the quacking ducks and C.B. radio jive combined couldn't disguise the fact that 1976 produced some of the best pop music ever. In our annual review, *Phonograph Record Magazine* takes a comprehensive look at both the major and minute musical events of the year. You might disagree with our future prognosis, and the superstars might cry out at our listing of the real new stars, but we feel everyone has been put in their rightful place.

By Ken Barnes, Mitch Cohen, Greg Shaw & Michael Barackman.....25
[Introduction by Mark Shipper]

ALICE COOPER: Welcome To His Tightshow

Alice doesn't remember anymore. Once the raging stage performer who regularly cut up chickens and baby dolls, Alice Cooper today gets his kicks playing TV show host and gushing Top 40 ballads like "I Never Cry." Still, Alice hasn't forsaken warped wonderland fantasies. To prove he's still got some meanness left in him, he's loaded a new LP, *Lace And Whiskey*, with raucous rock, and designed a "Best Of" tour which will incorporate several past "nightmarish" effects. This time out, Alice will surely encounter many other bands in white face and black dress while out on the road. But go ask Alice, and he will tell you, "Shock Rock doesn't hold a candle to what I've done."

By Marc Shapiro.....22

PABLO CRUISE: Music From Brazil And The Bay

Pablo Cruise is not an ad for a Caribbean-bound luxury liner. It instead, is a four-man band from—of all places—San Francisco. The group—centered mainly around former members of Stoneground and It's A Beautiful Day—has visited the tropics in their songs, though. One such number, "Island Woman," almost became a hit, until Elton John put out "Island Girl." Pablo Cruise, needless to say, remained cult heroes. But now that so many Bay Area bands are finding popular acceptance, Pablo Cruise might just have better luck with their third album, *A Place In The Sun*. And despite the lack of response to "Island Woman," the boys are more "natural" as ever. "We have a tropical groove happening," explained guitarist Dave Jenkins. "The water thing is sexual. We're all real sex-crazed."

By Jack McDonough.....19

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MANGIONE AND BARBIERI ARE CHANGING THE FACE OF MUSIC.



People who like jazz buy his albums. People who say they don't like jazz buy his albums. Obviously, Chuck Mangione is doing something that's helping to change the face of music. A *Rolling Stone* reviewer recently wrote, "For the second time I've been asked to explain the Mangione phenomenon...it's all very simple really. Mangione's approach is unpretentiously wholly musical, at a high level of pop." Whatever the reason, the music of Chuck Mangione communicates.

Blazing. Intense. And at the same time deeply personal. The music of Gato Barbieri reflects a man and musician who is totally committed to his art and changing people's preconceived ideas about music. He once said, "Where I want to arrive musically is the point at which I will be able to express what is in me through the horn as naturally as the act of walking and breathing." You can experience what Gato is talking about on his new album, "Caliente!"

Two new albums that face up to the challenge of creating new experiences in music.



CHUCK MANGIONE
"MAIN SQUEEZE"

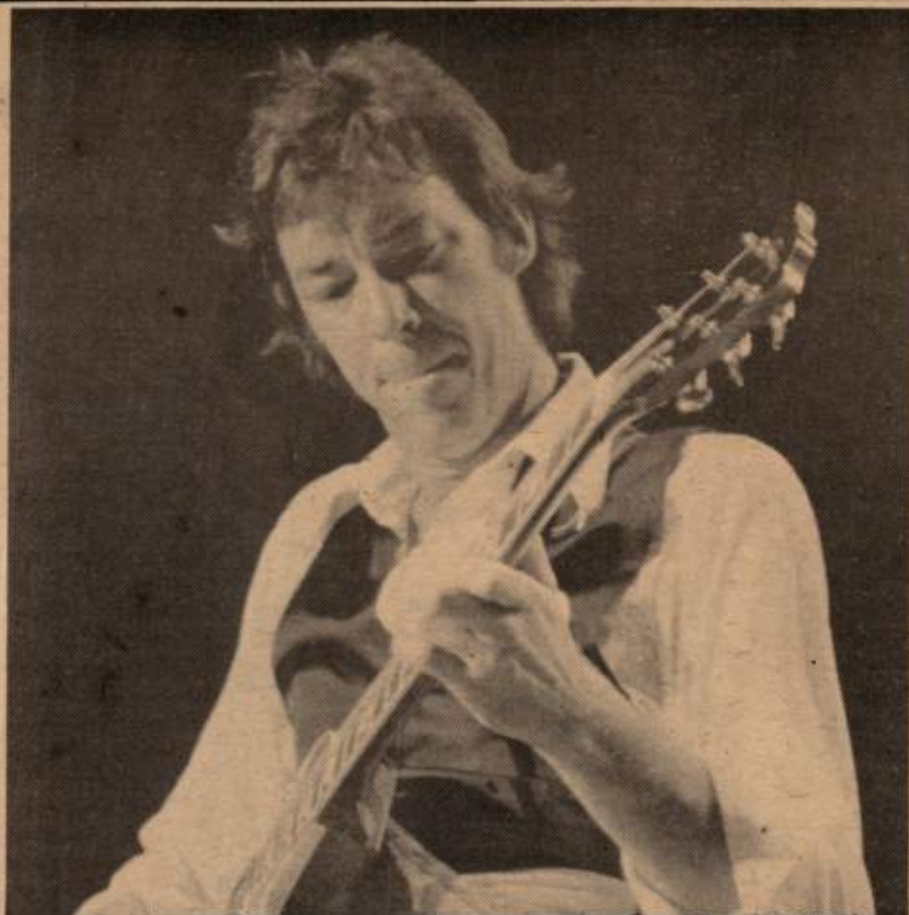
Produced by Chuck Mangione

GATO BARBIERI
"CALIENTE!"

Produced by Herb Alpert

ON A&M RECORDS AND TAPES





Performances

BOZ SCAGGS
Paramount Theatre
Oakland, Ca.

By JACK McDONOUGH

A brilliant sense of dynamics was a principal ingredient in the massive success of Boz Scaggs' *Silk Degrees* album, and this same flair for dynamics contributed greatly to the masterful five-night series of concerts (culminating on New Year's Eve) that Scaggs produced himself for the third holiday season in a row at the stunning 3,000-seat Paramount Theatre in Oakland.

This praise for dynamics is meant to encompass all elements: the structure and pacing of the shows; the visual appeal of the staging and the players; the crispness of the lighting; the gracious-host personality projected by Scaggs; and, of course, the twin basic elements of the sound—Scaggs' famous soulful voice in tandem with the massive array of 45 instruments coalesced behind the voice.

However, the praise must be qualified by exclusion of the embarrassingly bad opening night, when the horn and string sections seemed ill-rehearsed and the sound—cheesy, poorly mixed and plagued by feedback—discomforted the perfectionist Scaggs to a visible degree and resulted in a show far below the usual sterling standards his productions achieve.

Opening night was marred in other minor respects which, like the sound, were cleared up in the succeeding shows. The curtain rose on the 27th to 25 minutes worth of big-band styled arrangements from

a 13-piece horn section and a four-man rhythm section stacked at stage right. The length of this opening segment plus the foreignness of the material puzzled and alienated many in the crowd, who started screaming for their man halfway through the warmup. On succeeding evenings this opening play was shortened and preceded by a well-phrased announcement that the music was being presented as a tribute to the spirit of the art-deco Paramount, which in its Thirties heyday played host to the big bands.

After the horns warmed things up, Scaggs, dressed in dark slacks and blazer, appeared with his core band—which included longtime associate Les Dudek on lead guitar—and started off with "Running Blue," marked by a screaming trumpet solo from John Madrid. On opening night Scaggs followed this with just three more tunes—"Let It Happen," "Might Have To Cry" and "Dinah Flo"—and then broke for intermission. New Year's Eve he did six tunes before intermission, adding in "Downright Women" (accented by a fine flute solo) and "Full Lock Power Slide," charged by an Allmanesque Dudek solo.

A re-wardrobed all-white Boz came back to open part two with "Lowdown"; halfway through the tune a sparkling sheer curtain parted to reveal twenty strings (contracted by Nathan Rubin of the San Francisco Symphony) and the relocated horns on risers across the back of the stage. This segment—already dazzling because of the multitude of formally-dressed players—was made even more visually delightful by the pastel day-and-night sky scenes projected by lightman Bill McManus.

In this post-intermission segment Scaggs did a dozen tunes, seven from *Silk Degrees*. Three of the non *Silk* songs ("Slow Dancer," "Angel Lady," and "You Make It So Hard") came from the previous album; Dudek got a chance to showcase "Old Judge Jones," a tune from his forthcoming second LP; and Scaggs wisely included the gorgeous instrumental "Can I Make It Last," wherein the strings earned their keep. The encore each night was a rousing "I Got Your Number."

If there is a general danger to note it is that with these full-blown affairs Scaggs may be getting too close to the quicksand of vacuity and fatness. At its best rock is a lean music and at times the weight of orchestration behind Boz was too conspicuous in adding nothing. It is also worth wondering for how many years he can continue this glamorous New Year's tradition before, like all traditions, it becomes a drag.

There is on the other side of this card a general virtue to be noted as well, and that is that with these shows Scaggs is experimenting with and expanding the rock idiom in a manner that few others would dare try and would lack the mental resources for if they did try.



Chicago's Cheap Trick: "A brash young hybrid of American punk sass and British inventiveness."

CHEAP TRICK
Harlem Field House
Rockford, Illinois

By CYNTHIA DAGNAL

Despite the standing ovation at the mere mention of their name, not everyone at the Harlem Field House knew what the hoopla was all about. But Cheap Trick is big news, the biggest news out of the Midwest for some time.

For instance, there's their dizzy

logo; a few smudged, run together typewritten lines obviously typed by a secretary after an extended "liquid" lunch break. T-shirts bearing the logo are going for big bucks as far away as the south of France, the very place two of the founders of the band met and flourished for years before returning to the tamer environment of Rockford, Illinois. Here, they've consistently packed the Midwestern suburban rock clubs, were discovered by producer Jack 'Miracles' Douglas, recorded by Epic, and lauded by local critics and club owners who have already proclaimed them paydirt of the richest variety.

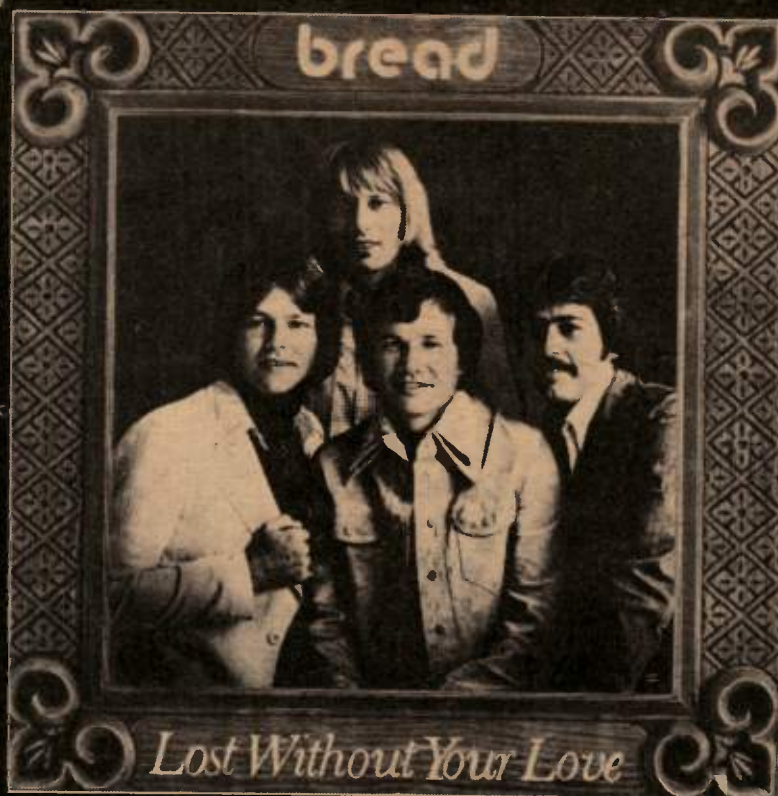
Douglas, in fact, recently stepped on a few famous toes proclaiming their lead guitarist the best songwriter with whom he has ever worked. And an intrigued Queen is allowing them to open two dates for them.

The strangest midwestern bar band ever to survive the disco drought, they are an eccentric bunch, not at all the usual Midwest heavy metal menagerie. But the kids as usual adored them, standing, stomping, and shouting, throughout. And the excitement was warranted. They hit them with song after song, steamrolling without breaks at times on the rock steady drum rhythms of the inscrutable Bun E. Carlos. Pouting and posing in his well-tailored suit, group heartthrob Robin Zander displayed a showcase of styles from Lennonish sighs to his rendition of the controversial "Ballad of Richard Speck," complete with the piercing, primal sociopathic screams of a mind unhinged. Bug-eyed, pogo-hopping guitarist Rick Nielsen is a chord slammer; but when he riffed, it was clean and sharp. Bassist Tom Petersson, the image of the bouncy British-style rocker of yesteryear, was pounding like mad, a frenzied Entwistle, a contradiction in terms if there ever was one.

They are a brash young hybrid of American punk sass and British inventiveness. They can be "Beatles with balls," or knife right into revved up guitar boogies with ease. Their lyrics are clever, sometimes "in-jokish," but unusually bright, evoking strange nightmare worlds, following the bizarre turns of each tune from melodic to menacing to melodic again.

Their problems are typical for naive bar bands moving from clubs to concert halls. The simply constructed songs, if sustained too long, reveal "dead" spots that could be filled quite colorfully by Nielsen's badly buried riffs. And they can be overly impressionistic, preferring to almost parody certain rock stars and their sounds, a tactic which only critics and the more sophisticated audiences will appreciate fully.

But they are the surprise of the season. The Midwest is pulling a Cheap Trick on the rest of the country early this year, and the result may be a refreshing spurt of creativity for us all.



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VICIOUS DIRT, RUMORS and SCANDALS from



Hi, hi teens of America. Thank you soooo much for the tons of fan mail correctly identifying me as pop's number one hero. While it is simply impossible for me to answer each of you individually, be assured that I drool 13 cents worth of saliva over each letter. Some are so hot that they could qualify for Special Delivery status.

Remember those buffalo burgers your humble Prince told you about last time? Well, my luscious, voluptuous date and I just happened to attend the entirely sold-out show of Mr. Buffalo himself, Ted Nugent. My date, who wound up spending a goodly portion of, shall we say, intimate time with Mr. T., tells me she has gained tremendous insight as to how the old buffalo acquired his nickname. Me, I was left to munch lustily on the overly cooked hamburger meat and canned beans at the cheaply catered Forum Club party after the show. The one redeeming part was the music; provided by Sam's Heavy Metal Disco—just imagine no crap like "Disco Duck" inhibiting you as you try to score with the shapely brunettes at the bar sipping sexily from a club soda with a cherry oozing out of the glass. The sounds of "Dog Eat Dog" certainly worked for me!

Speaking of hunks of burning love, the irresistible Bay City Rollers knocked millions of 16-year-old girls off their feet during their first live performance at the Santa Monica Civic. It's rumored that pay laundries around the area doubled their business the next day. Cherie Currie, lead singer of the Runaways and leading contender for the "Jail Bait Of the Year" award, escorted me backstage at the Rollers' show. There were no girls, no

liquor, but lots of diet soda, nuts and chewing gum. But don't let that fool you. The boys are quite sexually inclined. For the real scoop about this group, just read Suzy Thunder's explicit experiences with them in the upcoming and long overdue edition of Groupie News.

It was your Prince who had the actual honor of escorting the Rollers onstage at their show. Instead of attacking the band, however, the hysterical crowd attacked me! They pulled out my freshly toothed hair, ripped off my Paul McCartney button, and even attempted to undo my pants. Unfortunately, the security pin was fastened a bit too tight. Cherie and I finally escaped to safety and, lo and behold, found none other than the Kinks' Ray Davies lurking in the backstage area. Ray seemed more impressed with my companion than with me. He definitely has warped "star" values.

Turning to the booming L.A. punk scene, Hollywood clubs are spreading like diaper rash. The best place to hang out and meet rock's future superstars is called the Cabaret, which has recently played host to the Berlin Brats, Quick, Quiet Riot, and Orange. If there ever was a God, it would have to be Phil Spector, and the man they named Philadelphia after has shown extensive interest in the punk scene. He came down to the Cabaret to check things out and asked me to select some groups for him to produce. Now it appears that Berlin Brats, Dogs, and Motels will all have the special "Wall Of Sound" touch applied to their records.

As I am on a first name basis with Phil, he invited me to one of his notorious parties. I made my way past his bodyguards over to the piano, where Phil and I sang John Lennon's "So This Is Christmas," which, of course, Phil co-produced. The biggest surprise came when Phil premiered his latest Darlene Love single, "Lord If You're A Woman." It had "And Then He Kissed Me" riffs running rampant throughout.

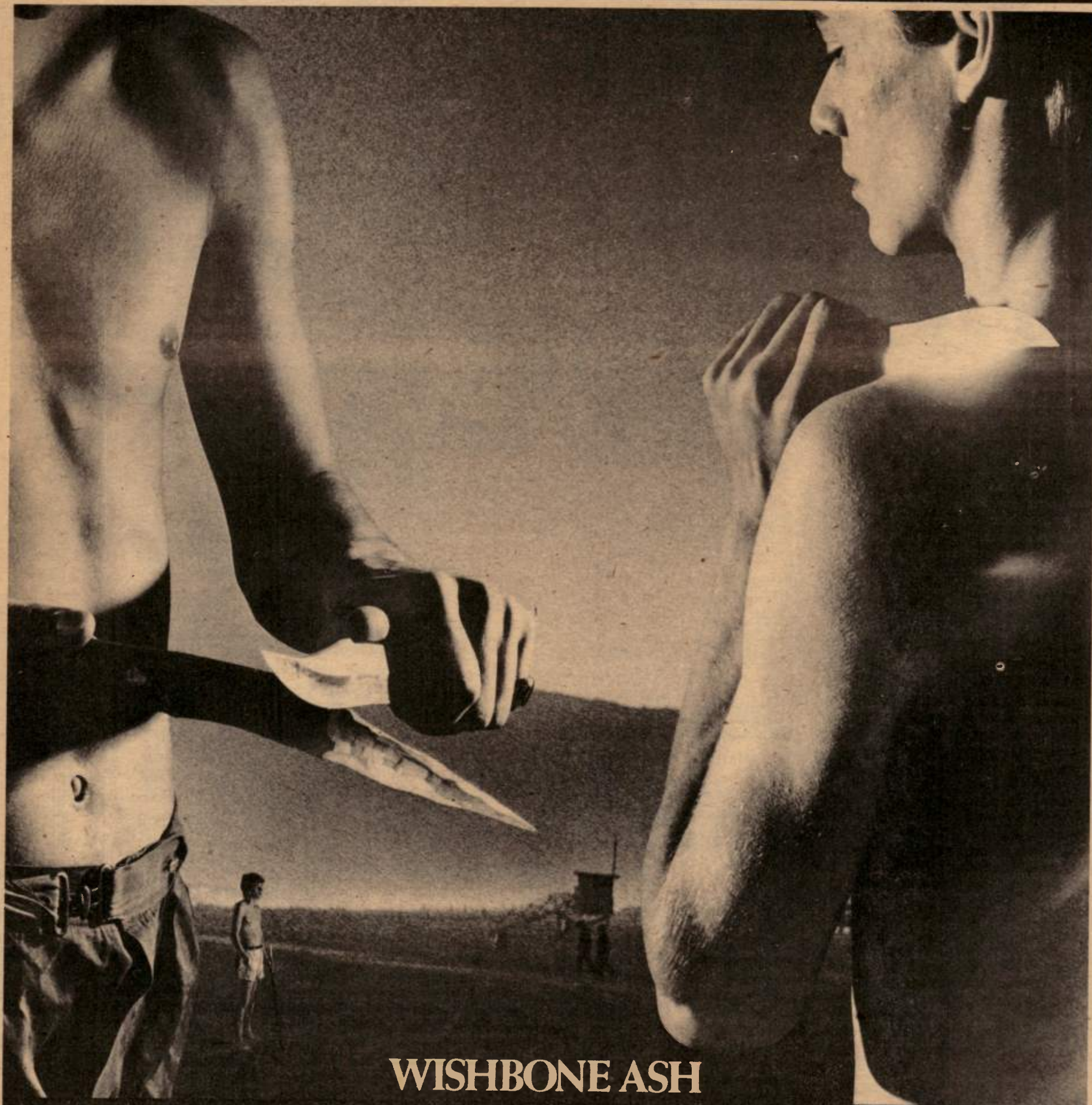
Even Kim Fowley, L.A.'s Ambassador of Good Hope, is into the punks, showcasing several acts, including his own Runaways, at the renovated Whiskey A Go-Go. The Whiskey is regaining its stature as the breeding ground for future stars. The Berlin Brats and Dogs, says Fowley, will be the Beatles of tomorrow.

Movie Rap: Cherie Currie, ever-present in my life, also escorted me to the posh Roxy nitery for the opening of Steve March, whose main claim to fame is that he's Desi Arnaz Jr.'s best friend. Every movie star in the world came up to shake my hand, and afterward, there was a party up the street at Liza Minnelli's house. Cherie and I were greeted by none other than Harry O himself, David Jansen. Olivia Newton-John, Ryan O'Neal, Sparks, and Alice Cooper also attended and all intermingled with yours truly. But the biggest moment of the party occurred when two drunks wandered in and started making off with Liza's furniture. It was your Prince who saved the day by calling the police and having them put in the slammer.

Rodney was two places at the same time on New Year's Eve. First, I caught Sparks' opening songs at the Santa Monica Civic, then hightailed it over to the Forum to catch the Beach Boys in encore action. I stayed for the bash following the show after being assured that no beans would be served. As Beatles' music ran through a jukebox, seen dancing were David Cassidy, Al Stewart, and Davey Jones, who confides that all of the original Monkees will be getting back for at least one album. And if you're ready for this one, a tall, slender blonde that I spent quite a bit of time talking to turned out to be Mike Love's daughter, Melinda, who is now Teenage! Oh, what a night!

1—Rockin' Rodney entertains Ted Nugent and three Runaways, pictured with their Bloody Marys.
2—Fugitive love; the young, star-struck actor David Jansen meets suave Rodney, who has his arm strategically positioned around the Runaways' Cherie Currie.
3—Harvey Kubernick, Phil Spector, and Rodney smile for camera as Spector's bodyguards disapprove accordingly.





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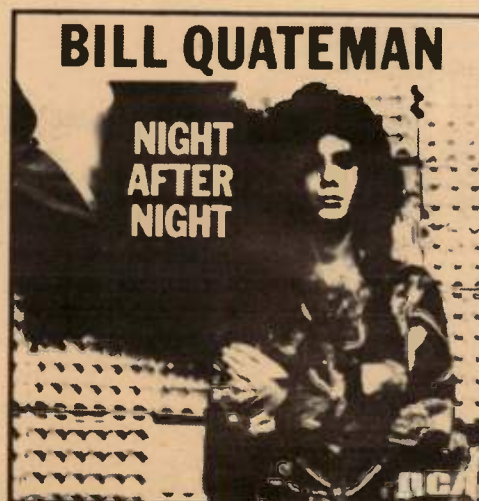
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Now it's your turn to feel what they've already felt. Bill Quateman's just-released album "Night After Night" is available now. And it's one of the most attractive recording propositions of the year.



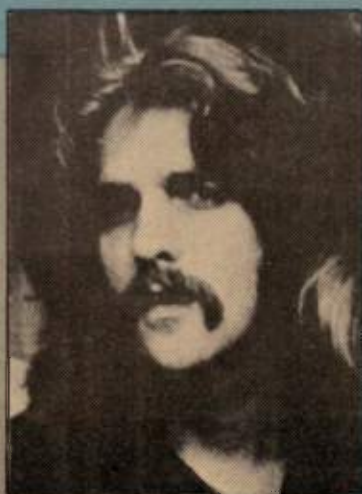
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RCA Records

SCENES

At the very heart of West Hollywood's fabled Sunset Strip, where mammoth record company-bought billboards advertise an endless series of new kids in town, sundry rock clubs, record stores, and teenagers with bulging wallets continue to give the most convincing evidence that popular music has replaced movies as the top form of entertainment in America.

It is here that Glenn Frey, guitarist and co-leader of the Eagles, begins a mad dash across the wide street, seemingly oblivious to the rush hour traffic bearing down hard and fast at him. Settled safely in the corner booth of a chic french restaurant, Frey's first order of business is to make a friendly but suggestive pass at the waitress, suggestively dressed in a skimpy, low-cut Parisian outfit.



More than any other of the Eagles' ongoing cast of characters who will later join him at this table; Don Henley, Joe Walsh, Irving Azoff and John David Souther, Frey exemplifies the reckless, rebellious, and break-neck attitude found in lyrics to such Eagles' songs as "James Dean," "Outlaw Man," and "Life In the Fast Lane." A cross between an easy-going playboy and an arrogant punk, Frey legitimizes his cockiness with a Horatio Alger-like drive that knows no failure. The biggest test came in 1976.

"We've faced no greater challenge in our career than surviving the departure of Bernie Leadon and following a 'Greatest Hits' album with something better," said Frey, speaking in a slow, deliberate drawl almost straight out of Jack Nicholson's character in "Five Easy Pieces." "It made me feel like my ass was on the line. It made me feel that everything I did had to count. But it also made me feel f-king alive!"

"I personally thought that adding Joe Walsh was a dangerous f-king move. 90% of the people who heard about it scratched their heads like they couldn't figure out how it was ever going to work."



Clockwise: Don Henley; Joe Walsh; Randy Meisner; Glenn Frey; & Don Felder.

Don Henley, the group's drummer and alternating lead vocalist, slid into the booth and echoed Frey's feelings. "We were scared," he said simply.

*"Johnny-come-lately, the new kid in town
Will she still love you when
you're not around?"*

Ever since releasing their first single, "Take It Easy," which preceded their first album in 1972, the Eagles—Frey, Henley, bassist Randy Meisner, and guitarist Bernie Leadon—had ranked among America's more popular music groups. In the early days, they sang simple country-tinged songs of the desert, but without the banality of America's "A Horse Without No Name." They spiced up those tunes with recurring crystal-clear waves of lush harmonies; without complexities the Beach Boys had previously found to be over most people's heads.

With the addition of Don Felder came a shift from the lightweight to more challenging, rock-oriented material. Following the release of *One of These Nights* and its two top ten singles (title track, "Lyin' Eyes") in late '75, the Eagles finally were at the zenith of pop acceptance—#1 on the singles & LP charts, simultaneously. Frey had realized his life long ambition.

"Shit, it's always been on our minds to get to the top," Frey commented candidly, sipping from a glass of imported red wine. "To excel is something that motivates—or should motivate—every working man in America. It's something we're born with."

However, despite the enormity of the Eagles' success, there remained some disbelievers. Many rock critics—particularly east coast writers—thought the Eagles' music shallow, the band's artistic vision contrived, their personalities pretentious. *One of These Nights*, the Eagles most blatantly commercial, most excessively indulgent album, provided ample ammunition for already-doubting critics. "Everybody turned against us," Henley recalled, a scowl crossing his face. "They said we were boring."

Bernie Leadon's decision to leave the Eagles in early '76, further clouded the band's future. Leadon gave the group much of its personality onstage, and his accessible attitude coupled with a personal demeanor helped dispel criticism which spoke of the Eagles as "aloof hardasses." Joe Walsh, though much more a melodic guitarist than popularly portrayed, still seemed an incongruous replacement. Rumors circulated that Dan Fogelberg, a more likely choice, turned down an offer to join the Eagles because it appeared the group was on the verge of breaking up. Band manager Irving Azoff's decision to





Bill Graham, Eagles and Azoff settle out of court.

allow no interviews following Leadon's departure, further alienated the press. Charges of "over-protectiveness" became commonplace and unabashed hostility towards the group quickly developed in many media circles.

"My philosophy is real simple," Azoff said, explaining his decision. "Do press when you have something to say. We didn't have anything to say for awhile."

"A lot of people got really mad at us," Henley said. "A lot of people got to thinking we were assholes."

Frey added, "I think at the time when Bernie was leaving and Joe was joining, if anybody was the manager of the Eagles, they would have shut off the press and said this is a personal thing that we've got to work out, and we don't have any reason to let this go public, no matter how obliged somebody might feel they may be owed the information."

"I happen to think it's a great press to have people writing about how the Eagles won't speak to the press," said Azoff. "I think kids like to read that."

At one of the first concerts featuring the realigned unit, Joe Walsh wore a flannel shirt, and replaced his blinking construction helmet with a cowboy hat, but he still seemed out of place. Meanwhile, the group was having serious trouble finishing their first album together; in the fall, the Eagles began an extensive national tour originally designed to promote *Hotel California*, but the album remained incomplete.

"We just couldn't stay out of the American Eye for seven months," Frey said adamantly. "Once you have somebody leave your band, you just don't put out a press release saying Joe Walsh is joining and leave it at that, and let the people who've bought your records wonder what the f--k you're doing."

"It would have broken the momentum," Henley said, speaking as intensely as Frey. "We felt obliged to tour and let everybody know that Walsh was in the band. People had started rumors that we were breaking up. Lisa Robinson or somebody started them. I'll break her face if I ever see her..."

"We had to go out and prove that we were still happening."

The Eagles proved just that with *Hotel California*. An inspiring showcase of totally "American" popular music, the LP is without the slick, perfectly refined edges which detracted from *One of These Nights*, or the tentative experimentations that flawed *On the Border*. For the first time, the Eagles sound confident and comfortable working in the rock idiom. Joe Walsh still comes off as a guest, but his exhilarating interplay with Don Felder during the end segment of the title song indicates that he may have a place in this band after all.

Just as the actual playing is gutsier, so are the lyrics: many examine the disillusionment and distraughtness that come with reaching one's goals—exactly the predicament the group found itself in throughout 1976. A more traditional, acoustic-based Eagles' num-

ber, "New Kid In Town," has bulletted quickly up the charts, and will likely surpass "Take It to the Limit" as the best-selling Eagles' single ever. After an extremely turbulent year in what has been an extremely turbulent five-year career, the Eagles are, if anything, soaring again as a group.

Frey: "Well, we had steak last night, Don."

Henley: "Lobster tonight, huh?"

Frey: "I got the upper middle class blues. Gee, life's a bummer."

Waitress: "Do you want a couple of minutes?"

Henley (after she leaves): "I'll give you a couple of hours."

Frey: "I'll give you a couple of weeks."

Frey: "I need a new masseuse."

Frey: "I need a new stewardess."

"I won't talk about the Eagles," says Bernie Leadon. He is standing against the very back wall of L.A.'s Roxy nightclub, awaiting the arrival of the Nitty Gritty Dirt Band onstage. It is late summer, and Leadon is appropriately dressed in his seemingly ironed on blue jeans and white T-shirt. Since leaving the Eagles, he says, he's been on an extended "vacation," going to the beach a lot, just hanging out, living in Neil Young's old house in Topanga Canyon. He expresses interest in getting back into record-

ing, but isn't sure if he wants "to do a solo thing." Instead, maybe a collaborative thing with someone like Chris Hillman, with Glyn Johns, the Eagles' former producer, at the helm. When asked whether he left the Eagles more out of musical differences than personal ones, he replies, "Yep. That was it." Though attempts at an actual interview proved futile, an executive at Asylum Records, the Eagles' label, at least sounded optimistic: "Frankly, Bernie was always easier to deal with than any of the others."

"Our own policy regarding Bernie's situation is that we really don't have anything to say about it," said Frey. "Once I asked Bernie why he left the Flying Burrito Brothers, and he said, 'None of your god-damn business, and don't you forget it.'" Still, the Leadon matter is a subject Frey can't resist returning to time and time again. It becomes obvious that their relationship ended on a strained note.

"It's healthy to have diverse musical influences, but with Bernie, we just couldn't work it out," Henley, the more serious, least emotional of the two, explained. "If we had done it his way, we wouldn't have had any hit records, frankly."

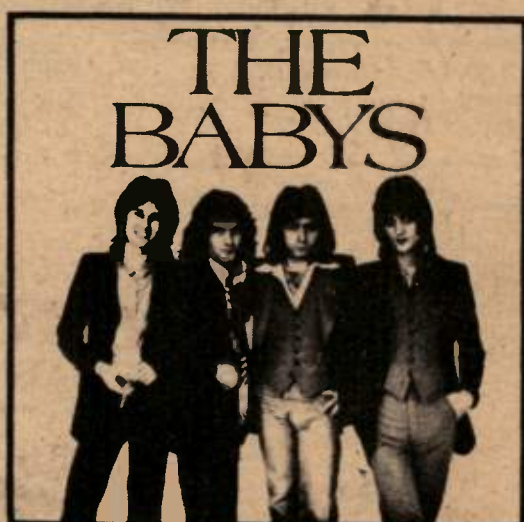
"The cat didn't want to write lyrics with Henley and me," said Frey, irritated. "Bernie, coming from an acoustic background, never seemed to relate to electric music. We had to work very hard to play the music as well as we did. Stuff like 'On the Border,' we had the right idea, but just didn't quite nail it."

[Cont'd. on next page]

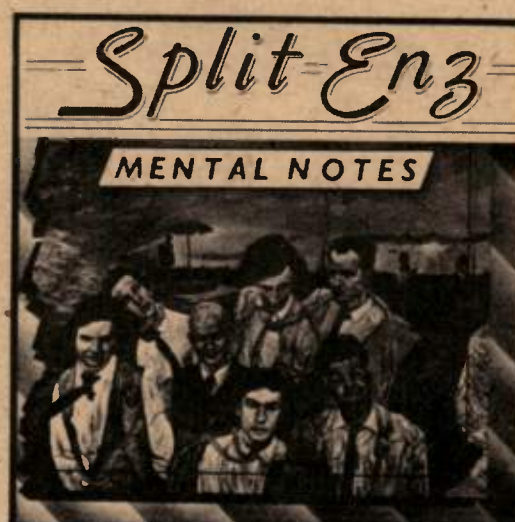
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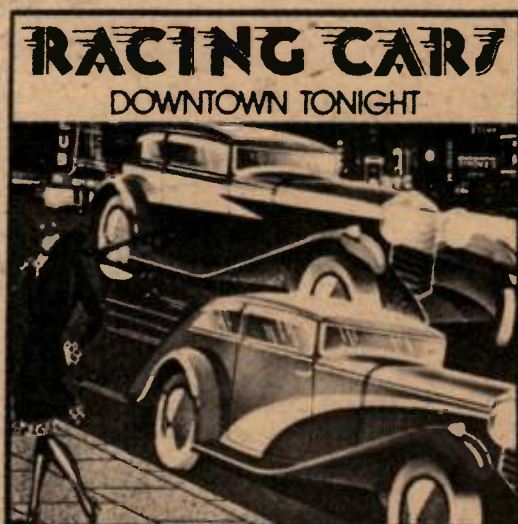
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EAGLES

"From the day Don Felder joined the band, Bernie felt like he was being threatened or edged out. Felder wanted to have somebody he could play toe to toe with, and he and Bernie never got that off. Hell, I'm not the greatest guitar player in the world, but if I was Bernie Leadon and we got a guy like Felder so we could do some double shit, I'd be ecstatic. But Bernie wasn't."

If any good has come of Leadon's leaving, it is that the Eagles are finally transcending the "L.A. country-rock" tag. With his laid-back, soft songs, casual attire, and relaxed attitude, Leadon most reflected the band's L.A. character. Though the Eagles began moving away from music that fit compactly into one locational genre into more mainstream rock as early as 74's *On The Border*, only now are many realizing that the Eagles play something more than strictly California music.

"I don't think we ever tried to make California music," Frey declared. "Our music is definitely American. I don't think it's only California. If more people would only start thinking of the Eagles' music more as Americana than the L.A. myth, I'd be glad."

"All the East Coast critics have been accusing us for a long time of trying to sell and market the California Myth," Henley said bitterly. "Hell, the Beach Boys are a California band, we're not. I've only been here six years."

"California is American, anyway. It's a melting pot. It's the last frontier. It's where everybody comes to..."

"It pisses me off. When you first appear on the scene the press tends to pigeonhole you right then, and that image stays with you. You have to do something radical to break out of it. People are still calling us 'country-rock and mellow sounds.' We'd have to wear women's clothes to change that."

"Joe Walsh was also very much a victim of typecasting," adds Glenn. "When we were listening to the first Barnstorm album, and actually watching him make some of *So What*, we often commented to each other that there was much more to this than we'd heard about. Joe has been very underrated."

Joe Walsh and his companion for the day, John David Souther, are greeted warmly by Henley and Frey as they arrive for dinner. Both have been part of the Eagles complex for several years. Souther and Frey roomed together and made an album as the duo, Longbranch and Pennywhistle. Later, Souther collaborated with Frey and Henley on the award winning ballad, "Best of My Love," and he shares composer credit for the current hit, "New Kid In Town." "We write out of pain, but it's a lot of fun," says Souther.

After leaving the rocking James Gang, Walsh built a moderately successful solo career. His three

studio albums show an artist more concerned with songwriting form and instrumental tastefulness than hard-on attacks. But you could tell he missed playing in a band. He'd show up playing solos for the Beach Boys, and on occasion, with the Eagles, while his own stage shows deteriorated. By joining the Eagles, Walsh regained the spotlight he was losing, and also gained the perfect excuse for playing pretty.

"There's a kind of rowdy side of me," Walsh said in a slightly drunken slur, "but I feel a lot more comfortable this way. At first, everybody was thinking how they could hear 'One of These Nights' and 'Rocky Mountain Way' together. But it works!"

"I used to get crazy a lot, but that was part of that James Gang image. Everybody said I represented rock & roll with big amps, and that was kind of unfair. There's a much more melodic side."

"I don't like to smash up hotels anymore. It makes everybody uncomfortable. Henley doesn't like for me to do it."

Of Walsh, Henley says, "Joe's real versatile. He doesn't do the fast kind of crap. He can, but he doesn't."

Frey adds, "Henley and I, being songwriters, like guitar solos that are songwritten. As much as I like Hendrix, I liked Clapton better during the late-'60s because he played more melody."

The tension between guitarists Leadon and Felder has been public knowledge for sometime. Now, it is Walsh and Felder who are competing for creative space. Felder contributed one full song, "Visions," on *One of These Nights*. On *Hotel California*, Walsh got the solo spot. Was the Leadon-Felder syndrome resurfacing with a different character?

"You can feel that there might be a threat," Frey had speculated earlier. "There might be a little tension. But it's exciting to see those guys go out there and see who in fact is gonna have the hot solos tonight."

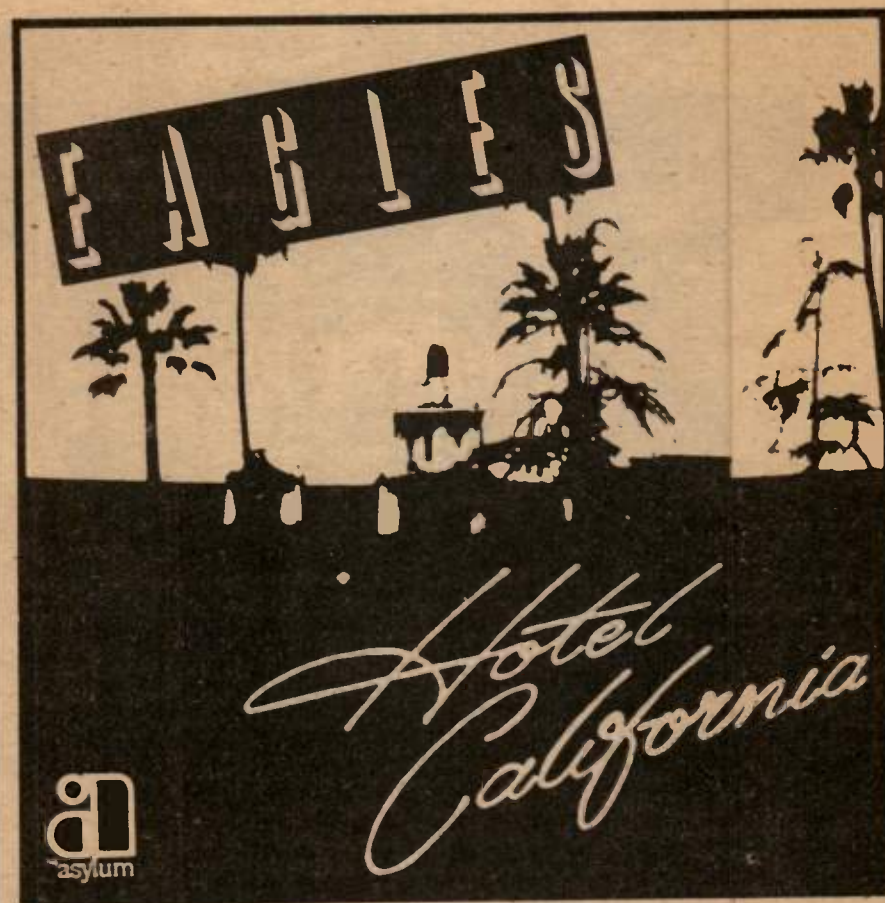
Like Stills and Young on a good night?

"Technically, Joe and Don could bury Stills and Young. But that's the essence of what we want to see happen emotionally onstage. To see Stephen and Neil going toe to toe, with Neil kind of doing the spastic and Stephen pulling the way he does on the neck of the guitar...it's great. I really love that."

"Felder can play circles around me," Walsh admits, "but I've taught him a lot of stuff, like the talk box on 'Rocky Mountain Way.' There is a tension there. We see who can kick each other in the pants."

"But Felder and me can communicate. I'll goof up a solo and he'll come over and whisper in my ear, 'You really blew that one.' We've been able to do that so far without coming out swinging."

(Cont'd. on next page)



Bud Scoppa: "The Eagles have it both ways: They make their points but get a suntan while they're at it."

HOTEL CALIFORNIA
Eagles
Asylum 7E-1084

By BUD SCOPPA

To many rock connoisseurs, Eagles records are about as appetizing as a Jumbo Jack: heavy on the packaging, standardized for mass-consumption, with nothing but goo between the buns. To these purists, the entire California school of rock is suspect, but none more so than these arrogant, cornball narcissists. Maybe the Eagles' fatal flaw is that their pretty melodies, peerless harmonies, and precise playing make them too easy to like. That's tough luck—not for the Eagles, who are doing fine, thanks—but for the cautious folks who insist on listening with their noggins instead of their ears. The Eagles aren't cut-rate Jackson Brownes, they're expert pop-recordists, as valuable to the pop music of this decade as the Beach Boys, Bee Gees, and Turtles were to the last. Their records are fun, and that ain't bad.

Hotel California strengthens the claim the band staked with last year's milestone *One of These Nights*: The Eagles are in the same major league with cross-town rivals Steely Dan when it comes to making sophisticated, witty, endlessly irresistible records that sound equally good through the Philco and the 4311s. In Don Henley, they own a voice as rangy and identifiable as Elton's or Steely's Donald Fagen. The production of Bill Scymczyk has the refined dynamic strength of the work of Gary Katz (Steely) or Gus Dudgeon (E.J.). The Frey-Henley writing team is endlessly inventive within strictly defined

limits and getting sharper with each batch; "Victim of Love," "Wasted Time," "New Kid in Town," and the title song catch hold fast and keep holding indefinitely. It's fitting that *Hotel California*, the Eagles' biggest and most solid album, should mark the reunion of Scymczyk and new member Joe Walsh (as leader of the James Gang, Walsh was the producer's first claim to fame).

Like the less appealing *Desperado* (album number two), the new fifth album assumes a serious stance; but this album's seriousness is without romantic posturing, and its rich melodrama comes without excuses. If their spontaneous California hedonism has shifted to a self-conscious California cynicism, the power-hitting arrangements—overflowing with hard, greasy guitars, choirboy harmonies, and swelling strings—keep the atmosphere as bright and balmy as that of the Beach Boys' *Sunflower*. They're singing about what colleague J.D. Souther termed "Trouble in Paradise," but there's enough emphasis on the lush setting to prevent their pessimism from turning heavy. The Eagles have it both ways: They make their points but they get a suntan while they're at it. Why get out of the pool when the phone's right by the shallow end and the Thai restaurant delivers?

Hotel California is pretty and punchy, listenable and memorable, as the best albums of fellow troubled hedonists Steely Dan, Elton John, and the Beach Boys are. It captures the Eagles so strikingly, that it actually makes the band's other albums (particularly...*Nights* and *Greatest Hits*) sound better in retrospect. If you've got a pool, jump in.

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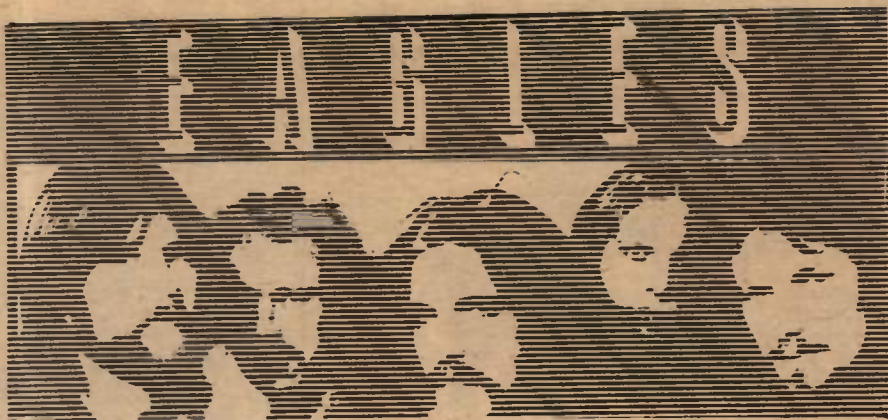
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Eagles, circa 1975: [L-R] Randy Meisner, Bernie Leadon, Glenn Frey, Don Felder, Don Henley.

"I'll tell you why you don't hear of most groups' trouble," Don Henley says. "It's because they just break up. I think every group has trouble. I think ours has been publicized more because maybe we've had more trouble."

Inter-group problems have plagued the Eagles since their inception. The conflicts finally led one member to leave, and other tensions persist. But in all reports of the group's endless squabbles, it is Don Henley and Glenn Frey who emerge as comrades, and whatever conflicts arise supposedly come as a result of their interactions with others.

But what of their relationship with one another? Though Henley and Frey have much in common—both went to college, speak intelligently, are intense and outspoken—there are some differences just on the surface that could conceivably create problems. For instance, in some recent group photos, Henley has taken to smiling while Frey maintains his mean "don't mess with me" look. Could such a simple difference as that actually symbolize much more?

"Our relationship is as turbulent as anyone else's," Frey answers with a laugh. "We just happen to be more in love with each other."

"We happen to get over it quicker," Henley continues. "To us, this thing is bigger than both of us, and it's really silly to let petty jealousies get in the way, like with what happened to Crosby, Stills, Nash & Young. He and I are pretty much able to swallow any kind of stupid ego, or whatever we got."

"This is something which is, by nature, not easy to do."

"If you're an artist, automatically, you've got a big ego to start with."

"I like what Don says about male-female relationships, that it's hard enough to see two people, a man and a woman supposedly seeking only companionship, love and support, stay together for nine months."

"He and I...there's just certain people that you meet that this thing...you see things the same way. We can write songs together, like with John David and Jackson. I don't know if it's due to astrology or what, but you don't find that many people that have that certain creative spark with the same world

view. We have a comradeship with the other guys in the band, I mean, we're close, and we can sit around and talk and philosophize about things, but when it comes right down to putting it down on paper and writing about it, there's just a certain amount of innate understanding that he and I have that we don't have with the others."

"We've worked hard to keep this band together. We've almost broken up a lot of times. But we looked at everybody around us, and looked at people who were later sorry they did, and we thought we'd really be stupid and be depriving ourselves of a lot of bucks...And there'd be lots of people who'd actually be sorry if we broke up."

In "Hotel California," the Eagles speak of the optimism and excitement a person feels when he is nearing his goals, about to achieve his dreams. Indeed, in interviews the band did just prior to the release of *One of These Nights*, the reader could sense this same optimistic outlook. But the victim in "Hotel California" winds up wanting to leave his supposed citadel, while a similar person in "New Kid In Town" remains reluctant to give up the benefit's he has won.

For the Eagles, this confusion is currently very real. Proud to have reasserted themselves back to the top, the pressures and business hassles have also grown just as monumental. For starters, how do you follow *Hotel California*, a musical statement which, Don Henley says, brings the band full circle? Unlike last year, the Eagles enter 1977 from a position of strength, but as they say in their latest album, it could turn out to be their most fatal disadvantage.

"It gets harder every time," Henley said softly. "We have to really beat ourselves. It takes more and more time to get it better. We still change the lyrics right down to the last f--king day of the mix. A lot of *Hotel California* was written in the studio. We really didn't have that much going in. We had ideas and concepts, but not one complete song."

"So far, Glenn and I have always decided to kill ourselves for another year. We sit down and say, 'Are we going crazy for another year?' and end up saying, 'Yeah, I can do it for another year.' I'll kill myself one more time... I don't know, we're too old to start over."

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Alice Cleans Up With Hits

By MARC SHAPIRO

"Bad taste? Me? Man, you've got to be kidding! Bad taste is an old Italian guy farting in church."

Alice Cooper's mocking defense echoes through the highly establishment Hollywood Hills digs. In front of him a television with its sound turned down is grinding out "Bewitched." A coors' can rests on a nearby table. The only things missing are the pipe and slippers.

All affectations seem to support the rumors that Alice has gone literally soft in his old age. His appearance as a respectable show business personality on Don Kirshner's "Rock Awards" TV special, and his musical move to appealing Top 40 balladry has added even more credence to this view. Alice Cooper, seemingly, has gone legitimate. Does he feel he's sold out?

"I don't even understand what selling out means," Alice gnarls. "Sure, I've heard all those stories about how I've supposedly given up rock and roll for the glitter of Hollywood. That's bullshit! Hell, all I've done over the last couple of years is to create an entirely different persona of Alice. Does that mean I've sold out? People want me to wear that same makeup forever. They don't want me to change. Bullshit! I was the one that created Alice and I can take him in or out when I want to."

Over the years, Alice Cooper has proven most adept at reeling in a new personality or kicking out the old one as his psyche dictated. The early model Alice sprang full-blown upon a mid-sixties mentality with images of distorted sex and violence over classic British Invasion bar chords.

A hit single, "I'm Eighteen," made the madness legit, and the ensuing years saw Alice and company go on a non-stop rock collage of punk attitudes, questionable taste, and a theatrical sense of violence that more often than not bordered on the ridiculous. But deep inside the chicken dismembering and electric chair Alice was yet another Alice; one yearning to be musically and theatrically respected.

This latter Alice emerged Phoenix-like in a full blown, beyond three chords, conceptual piece called *Welcome To My Nightmare*. This was followed by the equally theatrical opus *Alice Cooper Goes To Hell*.

Alice's sudden flying in the face of successful formula took many by surprise. But for Alice it was part of a growing up process. The decision to change, according to Alice, was not made overnight.

"It just got to the point where I was feeling uncomfortable with the old Alice. In the beginning I had the vengeance and punk sort of thing



Alice to girlfriend: "I don't even understand what selling out means."

that the old Alice was. It finally got to a point where I didn't want to change Alice but I did want to broaden the concept of what Alice was.

"Now when I go on stage I've got the choice of going on and doing three killers and two ballads. Before I had to go on stage and do all killers or somebody would say 'hey man, you're getting soft.' All I've proven with *Nightmare* and the *Hell* albums is that Alice can be more versatile than most people expected."

But for all of his recent forward leanings, Alice has not completely forsaken the warmed over Yardbirds/Creature Features magma from which he came. Early last year Alice was in preparation for a twenty city greatest hits tour when a bad case of anemia laid him low. Presently in the works is Alice's latest lp; an album, according to Alice, that will silence those who think he's forgotten his rock and roll roots.

Entitled *Lace And Whiskey*, the album again features Bob Ezrin at the production helm and the assorted musical talents of the Hollywood Vampires instrumental ensemble. Early recording out of Toronto indicates more than a fair share of greasy kid's stuff.

"It's sort of a throwback to the old

kind of rock and roll we used to do," said Alice. "There's a bit more move to it. And it's not a concept album this time around so whether or not the album works will depend on the strength of the individual songs."

"It'll be a lot more human than a good portion of the albums being put out today. I told the musicians to just play it rough and that we'll leave the mistakes in unless they just totally screw up the songs. I love the mistakes on records. I hate the slick, clinical stuff that's being put out today. Sometimes it's just too perfect and I'll think to myself 'blah!'"

"When I go back on the road it's going to be a similar concept to what we were planning before I got sick. I want it to be a totally 'best of' thing, both musically and theatrically. I've thought of bringing back the best of the special effects like the electric chair and the hangman's noose. And of course we'd have to bring back the snake. You know that damned snake got more publicity than I did in the beginning."

Alice took exception to the dismissal of mock beheadings and hangings as being a blatant left field ploy. His explanation took on the form of a history of the shock/rock genre; an area in which he is literally the father of us all.

"We were doing that kind of thing back in 1966 but nobody got around to recognizing it for what it was until 1969. We used to do that trip in front of 60,000 people and they didn't know what to do with it. They just sat back and said 'is this where rock is going?' But even I tended to grow beyond the really bizarre stuff after awhile. The pre-'I'm Eighteen' things were really shock-rock. And that was just a matter of attitude. My attitude used to be if you don't like me, f--- you! What could they do to us? We didn't even have a record out at that time."

"What they call shock-rock today couldn't hold a candle to what I was doing then. That was total insanity. And the beauty of it was that it didn't have to make a point or even make sense."

"My whole theory about entertaining has a kind of Barnum and Bailey attitude about it. I'm giving people what they want but in a slightly off-center way. You might call it a positive kind of manipulation. But it's really nothing new. Old vaudeville and burlesque comics were using the same kind of technique years ago. I've just updated their ideas a bit."

Alice continues. "I really believe in playing with an audience. When I'm playing a large arena I'll usually play to five or six people in the first few rows. Since it's impossible to set up that kind of intimacy with an entire arena, you have all these other people taking on the role of voyeur."

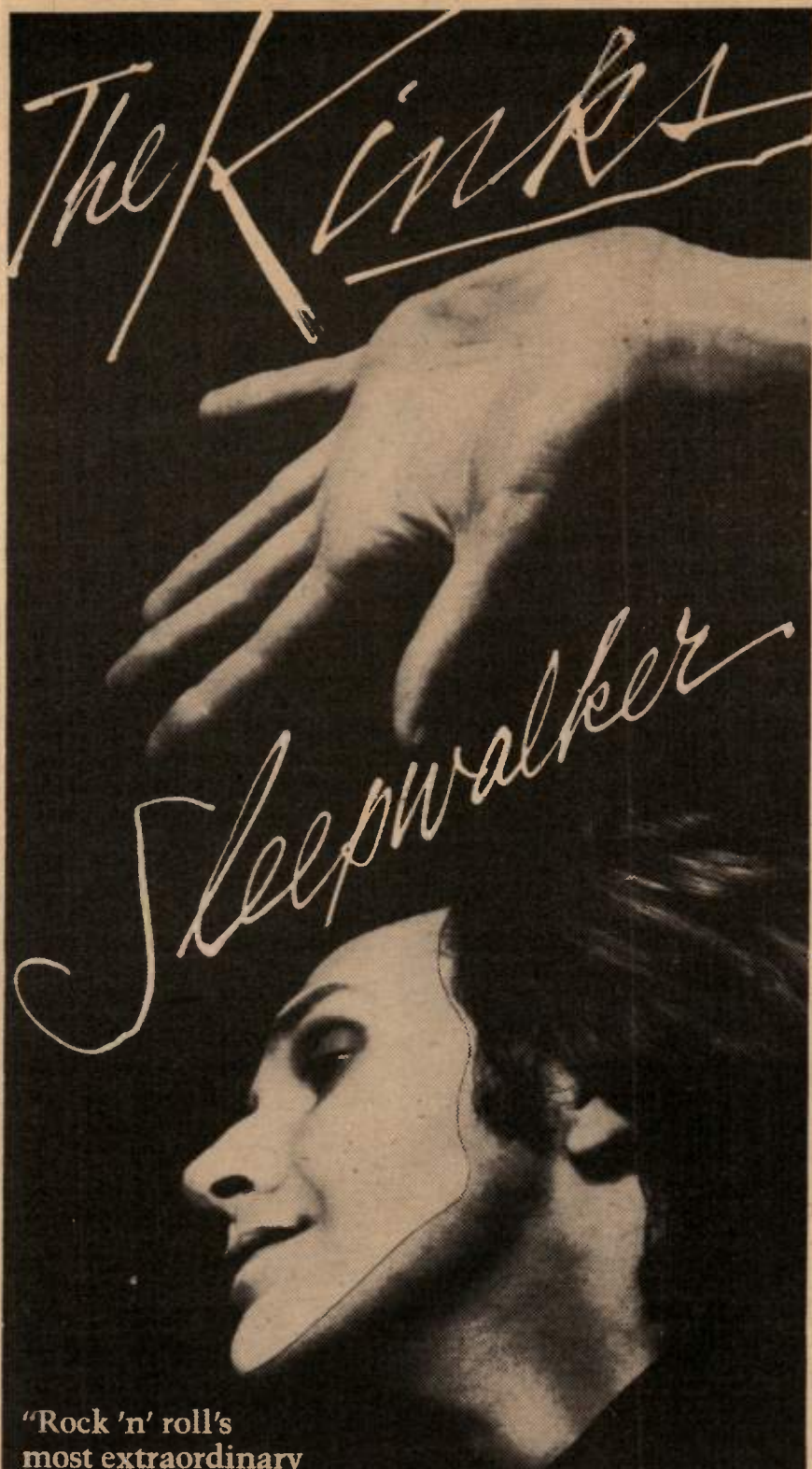
"I like to set an audience up. I'll let an audience think that I'm going to do something terribly vicious on stage and suddenly turn around and do something totally unexpected. It's like something a psychotic would do. The audience thinks they're relaxed but they're not because they know something else is going to happen. What I do is a very confusing form of entertainment but it's an organized type of confusion. But I know the concept works because if you ask ten people what they saw at an Alice Cooper show you'll always get ten different answers."

Alice broke the conversation away to a mini-tour of his living room. Authentic frontier knickknacks and a maltese falcon brought up once more that Alice Cooper was a man of means. Anyway, it sure beat getting roused in the bible belt. Alice claimed that the image of landed gentleman was just as real as that which cavorts performing stages.

"I'm just a character named Alice. I'm never Alice off stage. That Alice is someone I have to psyche myself up to be. But I know better than to bring that Alice off stage."

"The stage is where that Alice belongs."

Chuck Krall



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Bill Quateman: Chicago's Answer To Bruce Springsteen



By TED JOSEPH

It's February of 1973. Columbia Records has just released three Clive Davis special signees. The bulk of the publicity budget gets put behind some New Jersey kid named Bruce Springsteen, a secondary sum burns a slow fire under a fast growing Boston cult hero, Andy Pratt, and despite critical acclaim a shining star from Chicago named Bill Quateman gets buried in the hoopla. Quateman's 1977 reaction?

"It'd make a nice band," he deadpans, a growing smile creeping across his face. Under sculpted dark curls and angelic facial features that would make Peter Frampton jealous, there's a confidence simmering: Springsteen is an international star, Pratt has cultured a national following, and now it's Quateman's turn.

"Chicago is, and always has been free form, which might account for my style...or lack of it," Quateman explains. "You don't have the kind of punk rock trip that's going on in New York, or the laid back, 'I'll meetcha when I meetcha, I'll get a bitch to live on the ranch with me' country rock scene present in Los Angeles."

"When this thing first started evolving it was myself, Johnny Prine, Stevie Goodman and Bonnie Koloc. People were calling it the 'urban folk renaissance,'" Quateman chuckled at the classification. "Chicago has a lot of clubs where you can work every week, get your stuff out and mold it, and there's no places like that in L.A. or New York."

Quateman's taken all he can glean from Chicago: a relaxed, intimate and humorous stage polish; opening credits for the Eagles, Joe Walsh, Loggins & Messina and Frank Zappa; and two distinct, though somewhat overlapping mid-western followings—the old school acoustic Quateman fans, and the funk and rock zealots from the last

couple years. His writing has been showcased by Biff Rose ("Just Like a Bird") and Dr. John ("Back by the River").

"If I was as established in Los Angeles as I am in Chicago, I'd be a major act right now," Quateman mused as he explained his scheduled spring transplanting to the West Coast.

What might ordinarily be a dangerous move of abandoning a loyal following is really much more in Quateman's case. It's more like he's embracing the challenge of the unknown, the audiences yet to be indoctrinated into a free form stage communication that's winsome, but full of personality, melodic and lyrical hooks, and AM/FM top 40 material. The 1973 reviews of *Bill Quateman* were encouraging, and if there's now a barrier to success, it seems to be the lack of an all important transitional LP from the sparse, acoustic-oriented first to the full electric sound that's showcased on *Night After Night*, his new album.

Ties That Bind was that logical transitional record, but it never got released. Ready for the shelves in June, 1974, it somehow got buried after Davis was fired from C.B.S. It took from then until March, 1975 to release his contract from C.B.S. and begin the long journey upwards again. Though C.B.S. owns the tapes, and Quateman remains convinced they'll release the LP at a future date, the immediate future rests on *Night After Night*.

"This is a particular time period I'm very excited about, because there's a lot of discovery to go," Quateman explained, sitting forward with a glint in his eyes that revealed not the slightest trace of defeatism. "I really relish the opportunity of playing where people come totally unknowing and I have the chance to blast 'em."

"Maybe I'm right, and maybe the time is right, but there's a swell going on around me—behind the record, behind the band, and there's a whole lot of people I used to look up to coming in and saying 'Jesus Christ! Who's that?', and it's me and my band." The Approachers, according to Quateman, included recording luminaries like Dave Mason taking time to sit and listen during the L.A. Record Plant sessions.

Aside from the studio flattery, Quateman continues to act as a magnet for outstanding musicianship. Studio elves included Ian Underwood and Terry Reid, but the real strength lies in the 'Q' band, consisting of former Wings drummer Denny Seiwell, lead guitarist Caleb Quayle (most notably of Elton John fame), and Chicagoans Ira Kart on keyboards and John Marsh on 'slap' bass. It's 'Q' who act as the true catalysts for Quateman's sound.

"To me, that's the whole idea of it, to come together to make a joyful noise, and that means you've got to take your ego and put it aside. You've got to take the whole majority of your shit and put it aside, to make great music. You can play a hundred notes in one minute, or one note in five minutes, but unless you want to be playing the right notes you might as well be jaggging off."

"At the core of everything there's will and intent," Quateman leaned back pensively evaluating the gravity of the statement. "It's a hard hoe to maintain a good relationship... with yourself, as well as the people you're playing with. If there's no war to fight, people will generally find one. I'll talk to you about a guy like Denny, or a guy like Caleb, who are real special people to me, special individuals who, for their own luck, play great music. We get together and we get off. We work so hard off the stage for those few minutes on stage that it's stupid to get up there and blow it. When you get it so all the things are going to the same place at the same time, it's a very special moment."

Sitting back and listening to Quateman, you have the feeling there are a lot of special moments in store. But special moments, the most special ones, come only with

patience and usually after considerable frustration. The Columbia shaft alone would have buried most, but after it all Quateman still projects the confidence of eternal hope.

"I think part of the tariff (of being a musician) is being screwed over. Part of what happens when you live a public life is tragedy, however great or insignificant. In the life of a juggler you've got to understand that sometimes you drop the ball. The moments you don't drop the ball are the only ones I remember."

"There are a lot of people in the world who have lost heart, but I haven't. I want to live. People are always starting over. That's what's at the crux of creation. When you get set in a mold, that's when things turn sour. When you bring in new life or break the mold, that's when things grow. I have other ideas of what I want to do besides write songs and make records for the rest of my life. Most people don't understand that one of these days they're going to die, so that about brings you right up to the minute as far as I'm concerned," he closed with that gleam in his eye again, that overflowing wealth of warmth and personality that cannot be denied. With a little luck, they'll shine from the national spotlight soon.



Pablo Cruise: Adventures In The Urban Jungle

By JACK McDONOUGH

SAUSALITO—Despite the very large number of musicians who live in Marin County, the fabled land across the Golden Gate Bridge from San Francisco, almost all the new acts to have been signed to majors or to have received some share of national attention over the past couple years have been from elsewhere in the Bay Area—the Tubes from San Francisco, the Shakers, Earth Quake, and the Don Harrison Band from Berkeley, Yesterday & Today from Hayward.

Except for Pablo Cruise. Three of the four Pablo players live in and around Sausalito (with one even further north in Sonoma).

Pablo Cruise is one of the more refreshing and truly musical bands to have emerged on the scene in the past two years, and many who have listened to the band and watched what they do to crowds are convinced that their third A&M record, *A Place In The Sun*, will earn them exactly that.

Pablo can drive as hard as most four piece bands, and the presence of the Yamaha baby grand piano of Cory Lerios where the other guitar would normally be gives them an almost infinite range of space into which to expand as well as a degree of sophistication most young bands cannot approach.

(Cont'd. on next page)



More Than A Name

Mr. Big is a gutsy new band from England well on its way to a major breakthrough. Led by Dicken, a remarkably unique individual who writes, arranges, plays guitar and sings most of Mr. Big's material, the group also features Eddie Carter on guitar and lead vocals, Peter Crowther on bass, and the potent duo of John Burnip and Vince Chaulk on drums.

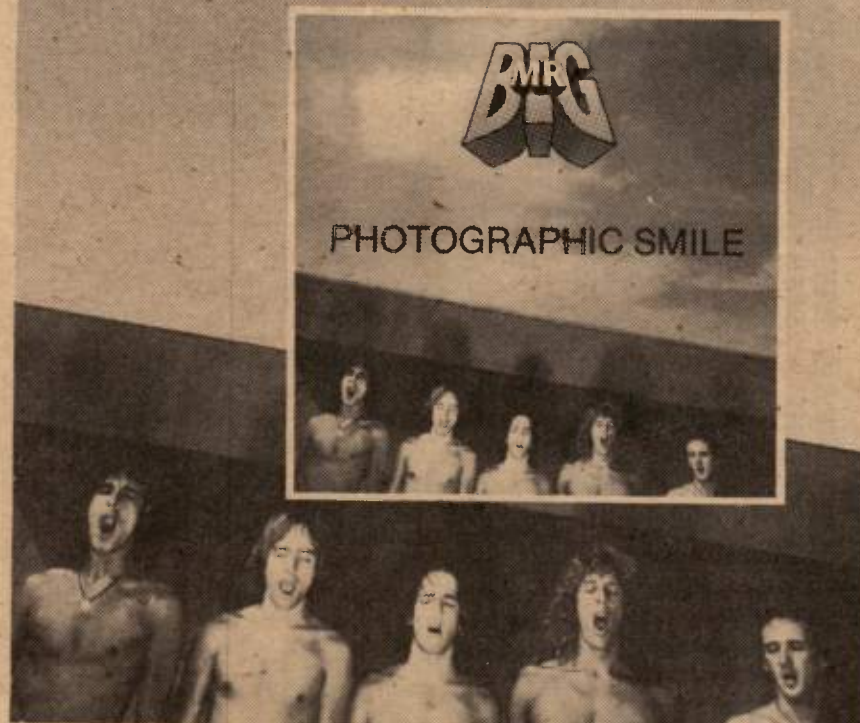
Their first album "Sweet Silence," released only in England won unanimous raves in the British press while becoming a hot import item here in the States. This, together with the band's well-deserved reputation for electrifying live performances, won Mr. Big acclaim as the hottest new British band of the year.

In preparation for their introduction to the U.S., Mr. Big acquired a second lead guitar and flew to Los Angeles to work with renowned producer, Val Garay. The resulting album, "Photographic Smile" surpassed all expectations. It unified every facet of Mr. Big's incredible energy into their own powerful style. Great new songs and blazing guitar pyrotechnics make Mr. Big's American album debut an absolute tour de force.

One noted critic put it this way: "I'm beginning to lose count as to which number British invasion this is, but Mr. Big stands a great chance of riding the crest of it. Points of reference would have Queen's musical dexterity fronted by splashes of intricate Hollies harmonies...."

'77 has to be big for this Mr.!"

On Arista Records
produced by Val Garay





(Cont'd. from previous page)

Place In The Sun continues the tropical image the band established with its first two records, *Pablo Cruise* and *Lifeline*. The first record had a South Seas, Rousseau-like cover, and two of the songs, "Island Woman" and "Ocean Breeze," established the watery domain of the band. *Lifeline's* cover had a Norman Seeff closeup of the boys all wet and naked and the sea imagery of the title track complemented the album's closing tune, "Good Ship Pablo Cruise," an overt signature song that they often use to sign off their concerts. The cover of the new LP is a duplicate of the new logo which now graces the stage at all concerts—a simple and tasteful lettering of the band's name set off by warm colors and palm trees, and the instrumental segue on the opening side of the record was referred to by the band as their "Water Music."

The image wasn't preconceived says Dave Jenkins, the group's guitarist. "The cover of the first album came out more jungle than

we thought it would, but after the release of 'Island Woman' as a single we realized we had a tropical groove happening—the record was a Top Ten hit in Hawaii—and we decided to build on it. And the water thing is sexual. We're all real sex-crazed."

At this the other Cruisers hoot at Jenkins and advise him to speak for himself. Nonetheless, the cover of *Lifeline* does have an abundance of male flesh displayed. "That was crazy," says drummer Steve Price. "We all ran out of the showers and then stood around this room naked while Seeff took pictures."

"Island Woman" was released simultaneously with the first LP in May, 1975 and is the closest Pablo has come to breaking a single nationally. However, two months after "Island Woman" came out, Elton John put out "Island Girl." Says the band's manager, Bob Brown: "Our record was dying already so it's hard to tell if it hurt. But anyone who heard our song recognized the similarity with Elton's and I think most people who

heard both thought ours was better."

The 12-minute "Ocean Breeze" was released in a disc-jockey-only 8-minute radio edit because the song was getting good FM play, but most stations kept playing the LP version anyway because the edit chopped off the classical piano intro to the song, which was what had attracted the programmers to begin with. "That was the controversial cut from the first album," says Larios. "It didn't fit the rock and roll image. But if Pablo Cruise has a classic cut now, that's it."

"Ocean Breeze" was used by ABC-TV for a ski sequence on "Wide World of Sports" and has also been used by BASF in radio ads heralding the quality of their tape. ABC also used the band's "Zero to Sixty in Five" for a slow-motion tug-of-war sequence on another show. "Theme music was one of the biggest things last year," notes Brown, "and Cory is very capable of writing that sort of thing. So we may explore this more."

Brown feels Pablo Cruise's new album, produced by Bill Schnee, is their best effort yet. "It's more spontaneous. It has more consistency than the other two. The band hasn't really been coming across on the records. We weren't getting out there what we wanted to get out there. People were always saying we were better than the records. Usually it's the opposite. Usually bands have a hard time sounding as polished and dynamic as their

records."

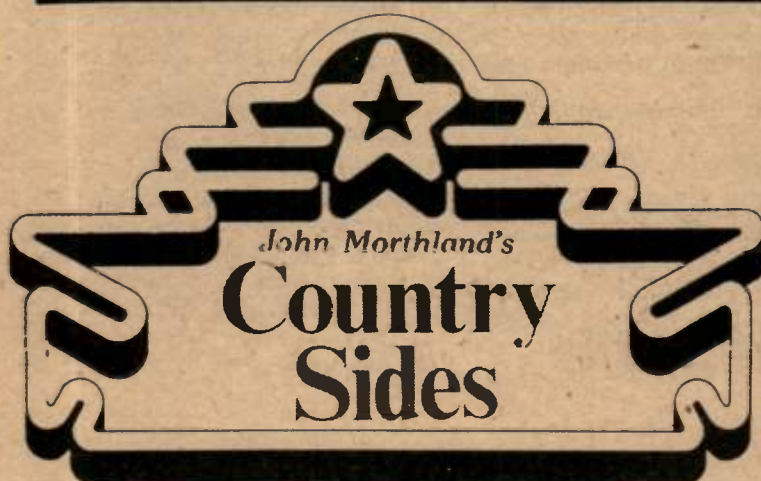
The band first came together in August, 1973 although the collective history of the band goes back beyond that. Larios, Jenkins and Nelson had played in a South Bay band called Together; afterward Cory and Steve joined the semi-popular band Stoneground.

"We had said among ourselves," says Cory, "that we had to set that band in a direction. They had no organized way of going about things and no record deal. So we decided to try it ourselves, and Bud was loose because his band, It's A Beautiful Day, had just lost their name because of some legal problem." During the last four months of their two year-plus stay with Stoneground, Jenkins joined the band as well.

Though Pablo Cruise's two albums have been met positively by critics, the public has, by and large ignored them. They remain confident, however, that *A Place In The Sun* will establish them nationally. They cite their musical uniqueness as the key.

Says Jenkins, "I've never heard another band that sounds like ours."

And manager Brown concludes: "When I took the tape around more people said Steely Dan than any other name in comparing us. A few said Loggins & Messina. But in the reviews journalists constantly use the word unique is talking about us. We don't have any record reviews that aren't good."



Female country vocalists are known as "girl singers," and that phrase pretty much defines their place. Nearly every male singer has to include one in his show. Even those women who go out on their own are expected to look and act cute and sing either bright, mindless, uptempo ditties about the joy of life, or hymns to their men. Tammy Wynette's "Stand By Your Man" is, of course, the penultimate girl-singer song.

Even the newer wave of

female singers hasn't resisted that tradition too much. Linda Hargrove, though she is terribly erratic, has written a few songs in which the situation is typically male but the protagonist is female. Jessi Colter has infused the traditional role with a spirituality that almost convinces you she's saying something different, but she's usually not. Among more mainstream performers, Loretta Lynn has done some songs that met approval from feminists, but her attitude seems

to be more Appalachian hillbilly contrariness than anything else. Dolly Parton has also written some incredibly acute songs with unique twists; she will be going pop with her next album, and definitely bears watching.

All of which makes Marshall Chapman's debut album, "Me, I'm Feelin' Free" (Epic KE-34422), such a landmark. Though many of her best songs ["Know My Needs," "A Woman's Heart [Is a Handy Place to be]," "Next Time," "Crystal Clear," "Five O'Clock in the Morning"] are about love lost and love gained, they are not your typical Nashville platitudes and laments. They are clear and direct, but the attitudes they express are more complex, and sound like they were hard-earned. She's an unabashed romantic, but there's a tough edge to her that reminds me of the best female blues singers: down sometimes, maybe, but

never out.

Then, there's "Somewhere South of Macon," a touching song about what's lost and what's gained from leaving home, and "Rode Hard and Put Away Wet," a hilarious, breakneck rocker sung from the depths of a destructo hangover. The singer tells of roaring all night, then going home and visiting her neighbors [three men] in her underwear. There she is treated to a jug of moonshine, and proceeds to finish herself off. I shudder to think what might happen if she tried that song on a typical Opry audience.

The music is equally strong. She favors a modified Waylon Jennings beat [which itself ain't nothin' but a modified Johnny Cash beat], and there's some particularly sweet dobro picking. But what really distinguishes "Feelin' Free" is its use of strings. They are somehow both lush and funky, like on the great soul records of the

mid-sixties. Nashville producers tend to add strings for sweetening as an afterthought, and it always sounds like it, but here they are seamlessly integrated into the songs, and they set off her deep, husky voice just right. [In fact, they are so crucial that I wonder if she can put some of these songs across live without them.]

Sometimes the backup singers distract more than they complement, and a couple motifs get used once too often. But most of the shortcomings here are the sort that result when you try to put everything you've got into one ambitious, debut LP. This one is very ambitious, and very successful.

[Slim post-Christmas pickings this month, folks, but hang in there: the next couple months will see new albums from Billy Swan, Lonnie Mack, Tompall Glaser, Delbert McClinton, Dolly Parton, Hank Williams, Jr., and more.]



Blind Date

with
FLO & EDDIE

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

Edited by KEN BARNES

AN IMPORTANT MESSAGE FROM FLO & EDDIE:

Flo & Eddie were upset, and with good reason. Someone had been spreading scurrilous rumors about them, and they wanted to set the record straight. "We're here to squelch the rumor that someone started that you write this column, Ken," said Eddie in a calm voice that belied his obvious emotionally upset state. "We're here to say that every month Flo & Eddie in person sit in my living room, rain or shine, leak or no leak, turntable or no turntable, and listen to the finest music month after month. We're responsible for everything we say here."

Then, as if to underscore that last claim, Flo & Eddie proceeded to unleash a fearless and libellous verbal attack against some of the most respected musicians and industry figures in the business. However, on transcribing the tape, I decided that reputations might be blemished and feelings might be hurt, so I cut that section out. As editor of Flo & Eddie's Blind Date from the beginning [1973], however, I would like to express my support against those unfounded rumors and state that Flo & Eddie are indeed present at each and every Blind Date session [unless they're on tour, too bored, or otherwise engaged] and that they are fully responsible for everything in the column, whether they said it or not. I hope that clears the matter up.

EXCERPTS—L Steve Hillage (Atlantic)

This is the dry period, folks, just after Christmas. No record company will release anything around Christmas because it's their contention that all the FM progressive stations will be playing nothing but Brenda Lee and Bobby Helms until January 2nd. This sounds like Wonderwall. Indian drone music. This could be Ariel Bender. "Hurdu Gurdu Man"?? Todd produced this new progressive sensation who used to be in Gong... Long time Gong? What is this, the Gong Show? Steve Hillage, eh? Why does he look like that? Usually wears a headband, too? What can he do that Todd can't? Maybe keep a melody? "The Hurdu Gurdu Glissando..." Pink Floyd fans could segue over into it.

This is Utopia again, and I don't mean Frank Gari. Who? This could be Judy Collins' "Whale Noises." Sitar and tambouras. Hey Mr. Tamboura Man '77. I like the idea of somebody searching for God at my expense, for \$6.98.

DONNY MOST

Including: One of These Days
Blue Finger Lou/Rock Is Dead



EXCERPTS—Donny Most (UA)

Teen idol time? Supporting actor on a top teenage show? Donny Most! We got that one! "Hey Baby" with a Maxine Nightingale beat. Somebody cut all the tracks and then called in Donny and they put on the vocals in one afternoon. Why'd they take so long? Give Donny a break. Did he write any of the songs? None? He's obviously an interpreter, I can tell by his voice. What market does this appeal to? K-Mart's budget bin. He resembles, in looks and approach to music, Eddie Hodges. What a voice! There's not even an Archies/Andy Kim quality to it. Andy Kim could sing this material. The tracks are light, too—it's too light for bubblegum. I don't know what you could call it then... Certainly not the Most for your money! Is Donny Most Promising? Promising what?

EXCERPTS—Milk & Cookies (Island import)

American group who went to England and recorded an album that they wouldn't release, but now that punk rock is big, they finally put it out? Nice concise clue, Ken. It's better than Donny Most already. Snack-oriented name? Like Nibbles? Fritos? Potato Chip. Vienna Sausage. Cheez-It. Lollipops. Sucker. Two words? Sugar Daddy. Ham & Eggs. Milk & Cookies? Wonderful. It doesn't offend me. Kind of a pansy vocal, though. I think they're cool. Music Explosion bass riff there. It's just wimpy punk

but I love 'em. It's better than Z.Z. Top. Lots of people won't know what I mean when I say that.



EXCERPTS—Hopkorv Hot Tuna (Grunt)

Steppenwolf's "Monster." Black Oak Arkansas. A power duo? General Electric and Con Ed. Who said that? We're not responsible for that. Budgie. Hot Tuna! They're the only group that writes their songs on the spot. They do 12-hour sets. All these oldies! Why? They want to get played on the radio. This is one band that hasn't stopped taking acid. You have to remember that Jorma is Finnish. Don't give me straight lines like that! They go there every year to write this music. I think they're skating on thin ice. They write it in Finland and then they go across the border to Sweden it. San Francisco 1966—this has that Big Brother roughness. They have a cult following in this country that's unbelievable. The only way they can escape the cult is to go to Finland every year. Otherwise they never get a moment's peace. This is better than Steve Hillage.

EXCERPTS—In The Realm Of The Summer Stars—The Enid (Buk)

(PRM: We don't have much time left, so I'll pass on the Enid...) What?? The Enid??? Don't pass on the Enid! Sounds like a follow-up for Blue Oyster Cult. What are you trying to do to us? Let's hear it. We could have guessed it—we know a porno actress by that name. (Reads cuts) "The Reaper." We predicted this "Reaper" trend in '66, you'll recall (with the far-ahead-of-its time Turtles single "Grim Reaper Of Love," which with its sitar-and-tamboura-style instrumental break sounded much like Steve Hillage ten years too early). It's still raining out

there. The Enid so far has got my vote! Music to watch your house wash away by. This could be Carmen if a guy came in dancing on my table. The Enid! Is it like the Iliad? Better than Z.Z. Top. Is there any singing? No? No vocals at all? What?? I love this! So much for the Enid. Let's get something to eat. What do you mean you can't have your cake and Enid too? You're really reaching for them today. I don't quite understand what the Enid are trying to do. Maybe London could send us a bio on the Enid.



EXCERPTS—A Day At The Races Queen (Elektra)

Superstar group? How big are they? Bigger than Queen? Not really...but not smaller than Queen either...Little Status Quo there. Bigger than Foghat? Getting bigger? Queen??? We already guessed it. That's cheating! I hate that song on the radio, "Somebody To Love." They can't do that Bohemian chorus for a whole song and expect it to work! But I bet they've made the film already and it's great. Play one with lots of guitars, not the Bohemian stuff. Too mercurial. That sounds like the Lettermen. The Tokens, "Wind Chimes." The Manhattan Transfer. Transfer to the next cut. Borders on overdone—lots of Freddy singing plaintively into a mirror. They're going to sing in Japanese? They're big in Japan. They're going to be big on the Don Ho show if they go on the way they're going. Not as good as Hot Tuna. What a grim month!

FLO & EDDIE PICK HIT OF THE MONTH: Arrival by Abba—No one progressive will go for it, even though it's better than the Beach Boys!

DISAPPOINTMENT OF THE MONTH: Queen—It's time they woodshedded for awhile.

SLEEPER OF THE MONTH: Milk & Cookies. The Enid. And Ratcity in Blue by the Good Rats on Ratcity Records. We're going to produce them!

ENIGMATIC MESSAGE OF THE MONTH: To Burton Cummings—any time you want to make that record abomination we've talked about, we're ready...

1976 IN REVIEW





**THE ARTISTS, HITS, TRENDS,
SUCCESES, FAILURES & HIGHLIGHTS**

ROCK HISTORY 1976

**BY THE EDITORS OF PHONOGRAPH RECORD
ANNUAL REPORT**

I had this dream the other night that it was the mid-1980's and I was watching a K-TEL commercial for their latest oldies package, "BICENTENNIAL MEMORIES." The announcer was a balding Englishman in his late-30's. It went something like this: "Hi, kids. Remember me? That's right. I'm Peter Frampton, here to tell you about a great new album from K-TEL, BICENTENNIAL MEMORIES. We've gathered together all the big hits from that golden year, 1976, in one unbelievable package that's gonna send you right back to those good old days of the mid-70's. Remember those hot summer days you spent on the beach listening to this one? (music—"More More More") that's right, The Andrea True Connection. And where were you when you first heard this next song, all about a Welsh witch? (music—"Rhiannon") yes, another smash from a great old group, Fleetwood Mac. But that's only the beginning of the memories contained on Bicentennial Blast. (music—"Let Your Love Flow") Did you fall in love to the Bellamy Brothers? And do you remember cruising in your first car with this great song (music—"Rock 'N Me") blasting out of your radio? Yes, who could forget Steve Miller? And, hey...remember discos? 1976 was the big year for disco music and we've got the best of it right here on Bicentennial Blast! (music—"Shake Your Booty") That's right, you can 'bump' again with K.C. & The Sunshine Band, The Sylvers and Wild Cherry! And 1976 was a great year for me, too. It was the year that I finally came alive! (music—"Show Me The Way"). Yes, it was a year that none of us will ever forget, thanks to K-TEL's BICENTENNIAL MEMORIES. Thirty great songs on two records for only \$14.98! [Video-Discs, \$24.95]. Here's how to order..."

1976 had everything you could ask for, musically. There was great rock & roll (Steve Miller's two hits, Blue Oyster Cult's "Don't Fear The Reaper," Heart's "Magic Man," Thin Lizzy's "The Boys Are Back," and much more). It also had first-rate mainstream pop (Four Seasons' "December, 1963," Maxine Nightingale's "Right Back Where We Started From," Orleans' "Still The One," Cliff Richard's "Devil Woman," Bay City Rollers' "I Only Want To Be With You," all of Fleetwood Mac's and the Bee Gees' hits, to name but a few).

There were fine ballads (Nazareth's "Love Hurts" and Henry Gross' brilliant Beach Boys' tribute, "Shannon"). Speaking of the Beach Boys, how can you

— Introduction by Mark Shippen —



[Continued
from previous page]

complain about a year that Brian Wilson finally got out of bed and brought the group back to AM radio with "Rock & Roll Music" and "It's OK"? Both were fully-realized returns to the classic sound that they invented. The spectacle of Mike Love—balding and pushing 40—sounding younger on these records than the Bay City Rollers do on theirs was one that will leave a lasting impression of 1976 in my mind for sure.

Even disco music, that scourge of previous seasons, finally progressed and matured into a legitimate genre, with the Sylvers' "Boogie Fever," Diana Ross' incredibly erotic "Love Hangover" (and this from an artist that most of us had written off long ago) and Vicki Sue Robinson's "Turn The Beat Around" leading the way. Special mention should be made of K.C. & The Sunshine Band's thoroughly enjoyable "Shake Your Booty" and Andrea True's "More More More," both of which combined amazingly stupid lyrics and terrifically hot backing tracks to come up with the two top disco records of the year.

Another way to tell that we've had a hot year on our hands is when an insufferably boring act like Seals & Crofts can come up with a pop masterpiece like "Get Closer." 1976 was full of surprises like that. How about Chicago (if ever there was a group that has outlived its usefulness, it surely must be this one) and "If You Leave

Me Now"? If the performance was lacking, the same cannot be said of the material itself—it's an excellent ballad that's waiting for the right artist to come along and do it justice.

There was a lot of fun to be had in listening to the hits of '76, too. Rick Dees' "Disco Duck," admittedly only worthy of a couple of plays, showed that today's pop audience certainly isn't taking itself too seriously (always a good sign). And there were plenty of unintentionally-hilarious records, too. John Travolta's futile attempt at singing in "Let Her In" provided loads of comic relief every time it came on the radio, as did Boz Scaggs' overly-affected blackface vocals in "Lowdown."

Lest you begin to think that all critical standards have been dropped in this euphoric summary, let me assure you that 1976, like any year, wasn't without its share of

turkeys. Many of the most commercially successful records didn't match the musical standards set by the also-rans. Prime offenders were the Captain & Tennille, who never lived up to the promise of their first hit, one of the top records of '75, "Love Will Keep Us Together." In '76, they scored with a glossy, emotionally-vacant version of "Shop Around," and a limp, precious reading of "Muskrat Love," which was a dumb record to begin with. Other overrated successes included Peter Frampton, whose "Show Me The Way" was catchy and pleasant, but certainly far too slight a record to rightfully launch his astronomical career on. (Another '76 radio memory: Frampton's fey English voice shouting "Thank You" over those screaming crowd noises incessantly throughout the year). Late in the year, an out-of-nowhere group, Boston, released an album notable more for its technical perfection than for any original ideas, and watched it sell in excess of two million copies.

These low points could be easily overlooked, however, when contrasted with the abundance of high-quality (and occasionally brilliant) pop music that was available. One record deserves special mention. Only a mid-chart, with no album or tour to follow it up, it remains the supreme example of just how strong '76 got: Billy Ocean's "Love Really Hurts Without You" on Ariola America. Sounding like a cross between the Foundations and peak-Motown, it was performed with such gusto and conviction that the only adjective that comes to mind is "ferocious." Easily my choice for single of the year.

That the best record of the year should belong to a previously-unheard of artist who quickly returned to the obscurity that he came out of, somehow seems fitting for 1976. It was a year that old prejudices were dropped and the charts were wide open to welcome anything, so long as the required quality was there. Those dismal days of the early 70's—when every record by Helen Reddy, the Carpenters, or John Denver became an automatic hit—are clearly over. This fact, combined with the still-developing scene of young, local talent in virtually every city, gives us all reason to believe that the second half of the 70's is going to exceed everyone's expectations. I can't wait.

—Mark Shipper

ROCK HISTORY 1976

By KEN BARNES

1976 was above all the Year of the Superstar, as a glance at the nation's Top Ten albums on any given week would tell you. The fact that superstars also dominated 1975, 1974 and 1973 indicates that the music scene has a permanent "superstructure." Certainly the radio and record industries have geared themselves to a superstar-dominated state of affairs. It's a much more efficient and profitable practice for a record company to concentrate on maximizing the sales potential of an overwhelming best-seller by a superstar than to try to bring home a dozen albums by marginally successful acts.

Radio maintained tight playlists on Top 40 stations and increasingly restrictive lists on what used to be called "progressive" FM outlets, but are not more realistically called "AOR" (album-oriented radio). Both formats are committed to attracting the widest possible audience appeal, and well-known names are a surefire ticket to a rise in ratings. And the record-buying audience itself, with reduced opportunities for exposure to new records and a tighter economic situation in general, seem much more inclined to play it safe by buying a peer group-approved superstar album rather than taking a flyer on a less prominent artist.

It's appropriate when considering the past year, then, to begin with the superstars. Here's how it went for the biggest of the big.



Stevie Wonder

Over two years in the fermenting, Wonder's grandiose double LP finally released in the fall and reaffirmed his status as the most popular across-the-board (pop,

R&B, disco, MOR, AOR) star today. That the album sounded largely bland, embarrassingly sappy at times, and at best a consolidation rather than an advancement made little if any impression in radio or retail sectors, and not much to the press either, where as usual Wonder was rhapsodized over in a sycophantic suffusion of superlatives. His single "I Wish" also looked like a #1 contender at year's end.



Paul McCartney & Wings

McCartney and company made the biggest splash of the year with their wildly successful inaugural tour, the live event of the year in terms of mass excitement. Their studio album *At The Speed Of Sound* was very spotty and a disappointment compared to *Band On The Run* or even *Venus And Mars*, but it did spawn two incessantly-aired single hits, the gooey "Silly Love Songs," after which you'd think the world would've had enough, but not so, as "Let 'Em In" was also a smash (give Paul credit for plugging the Everly Bros., though). At the end of the year, the three-record live set (both live albums and multi-record sets were very trendy in '76) turned out to contain a lot of solid, melodious rock & roll, and stormed into the Top Five.



Elton John

The decade's reigning superstar slipped a little in '76. He did have a blockbuster hit in his sprightly duet with Kiki Dee, but his first single of the year, a neat rocker called "Grow Some Funk Of Your Own,"

was his least successful since 1972, and his second live album, *Here & There*, was a non-event all the way, including in the sales column. Late in the year, *Blue Moves*, an experimental double album full of filler and failures (as well as the usual complement of catchy numbers which Elton seems thankfully incapable of omitting), went up against stiff album chart competition (Eagles, Led Zep, Frampton, Wonder, Wings, and new sensation Boston) and for once did not overcome. The LP's first single, the inexpressibly doleful "Sorry Seems To Be The Hardest Word," was also not nearly so unanimous a favorite as most past releases. Elton retired (temporarily) from the stage, spilled his sexual preferences to the world at large, and in general seemed to be preparing himself for a long, comfortable coast downhill.



Eagles

The Eagles, as smooth, clean and clever a group as anyone could imagine, had an album in the Top Ten for almost the entire year. It was a greatest hits package (also very trendy—both the hits sets and the specially-priced doubles and triples were structured to look like the greatest possible bargain for the dollars-conscious consumer). Then just before Christmas the Eagles courageously laid bare the hypocrisies of plastic L.A. on the scathing *Hotel California* album. No points for originality of target, but the album did contain the subtle, craftsmanlike "New Kid In Town," which became a single hit just as the album was knocking on the door to #1.



Led Zeppelin

The Zep's first album of 1976, *Presence*, was a dense and diffuse

affair far removed from their "Whole Lotta Love"-era brontosaurus stomps; it was often difficult listening but at times ("Achilles Last Stand") as good as they've gotten. The album went #1 with no trouble. Then they released their live soundtrack double affair, a safe and solid collection of favorite songs remaining the same, to coincide with their film debut, and the record didn't score nearly so well. You figure it out. Still, the group's status as hard-rock monarchs of all the surveys remained indisputable, though a number of newer rockers more willing to tour threatened.



Rod Stewart

Rod the modern-day balladeer had a great year and regained all the ground lost by the lackluster *Atlantic Crossing* and *Smiler* albums with *A Night On The Town*. Actually much of the material, particularly the stale-sounding rockers, lacked just as much lustre, but the smoothly-crooned "Tonight's The Night," aided by its sexy ambience (and a foolish banning scandal) became the year's biggest hit. Still a great singer (as "First Cut Is The Deepest" exquisitely demonstrated), Stewart may come up with a revitalized killer in '77.



Chicago

Just when it seemed as if they were finally slipping and could be safely forgotten about, Chicago pulled a rabbit out of the hat. The band everyone loves to hate (except for Top 40 radio and the public enjoyed their usual major success with *Chicago X* (not to mention *Chicago's Greatest Hits*, a natural for the leisure suit set if there ever was one), but the first single, "Another Rainy Day In New York City," was their least successful in ages. Then the flaccid ballad "If

You Leave Me Now" was singled out in desperation and wouldn't you know it, became their biggest hit ever. In 1976 these former radical counterculture vanguards made up with Mayor Daley just before he died, and they now look set for a long and comfortable post-revolutionary existence.



Linda Ronstadt

Linda continued to dominate the female vocalist faction in '76, failing to score an overwhelming pop hit like 1975's great "You're No Good" and "When Will I Be Loved," but selling vast quantities of albums (both her *Hasten Down The Wind* and, of course, a greatest hits package). *Hasten* was the usual unsatisfying and uneven collection, but the high points ("Lose Again" for one) were strong enough to be scary. The highest point of all, the shiver-inducing "Someone To Lay Beside Me," was annoyingly enough experiencing rough going in its attempt to become her first non-dies reconstitution smash since "Different Drum."



Rolling Stones

The Rolling Stones' single, "Fool To Cry," didn't make it, *Black And Blue* was clearly their spottiest album, and they didn't tour, adding up to a sub-par year all around. The Who elected to coast on *By Numbers*, which wasn't all that big in the first place, and Bowie had a couple of stiff singles plucked from *Station To Station* in the wake of the superb "Golden Years." Bruce Springsteen, hampered by legalities, didn't record, but his live shows were a revelation. Those indestructible San Francisco re-treads the Jefferson Starship dropped only slightly from their *Red Octopus*/"Miracles" peak of 1975, as the golden voiced Marty Balin condescended to supply the group with another big hit, "With Your

Love." And the Captain & Tennille consolidated their 1975 ascension by ruling the AM waves with three huge hits (including the odious "Muskrat Love").



Alice Cooper

Other established superstars sustaining their appeal included the Doobie Brothers (undergoing a lot of trouble in the singles market—at last—but selling lots of a...greatest hits album) and Alice Cooper, who surprised a lot of people by getting another smash



Bee Gees

ballad hit ("I Never Cry"), even if his album was something of a ho-hum. The Bee Gees continued to exploit their newfound disco popularity with "Fanny," the clever disco call to arms, "You Should Be Dancing," and a cringe-inducing Stylistics-styled falsetto ballad, "Love So Right," all scoring.



Cat Stevens

ROCK HISTORY 1976

Disappearances

By MITCH COHEN

Time was when we could expect albums from our favorite artists at approximately six month intervals, when the liner notes of *Turn, Turn, Turn* were apologetic for making the Byrds fan wait from June to December for an LP, when the Stones would release three albums in a calendar year (1967, for one). Nowadays, it's not uncommon for a recording artist to skip a year completely for one reason or another, take a voluntary sabbatical or have it imposed on him by external forces. Among the performers unaccounted for in our 1976 year-end inventory include: one New Jersey rock and roll flash, a popular model of the year before; one ex-Beatle, slightly damaged by import-export handling, but reportedly in fine shape otherwise; assorted English bands, mostly of mid-to-late '60s vintage; and a handful of idiosyncratic singer-songwriters, to cite just the most prominent.

One thing to keep in mind is that just because someone may go from January to December without bringing forth a shrink-wrapped package of brand new, in-studio tunes, that doesn't necessarily make him/her/them an Artist in Exile; touring is a time-consuming, increasingly lucrative line of work, live and compilation LPs are safe sources of revenue, and success itself, in some cases, may impede the progress of the new disk. For our purposes, though,—since this is, after all, nominally a record magazine—disappearance is defined primarily as an absence of a '76 album made up of unrecycled studio merchandise.

Some artists who sat out 1976 insofar as a spanking new collection was concerned were nonetheless very much in the public eye and on the charts, so classifying them as disappearing acts sounds kind of ridiculous: for Fleetwood Mac, the long delay of *Rumours* (finally in the stores after the new year turned over) has been directly attributable to the astounding sustained chart success of *Fleetwood Mac*, released some eighteen months ago. A similar situation exists with '76's sudden sensation, Peter Dinklage. A&M has patiently

waited for his breakthrough album, which came out at the very start of '76, to slow down before cutting loose Frampton's first studio effort in two years. Both are unusual cases of huge fame stalling the next record move, of a company not wanting to squelch hot product. Other acts who took their time in making that all-important Next Album after a smash, or filled the space with greatest hits sets, included Gary Wright, ZZ Top, Dan Fogelberg, the Four Seasons, Cat Stevens and BTO, all of whom have few worries about public response to the next LP, whenever it comes.



Bruce Springsteen

The case of Bruce Springsteen is somewhat different, and considerably more precarious. His lack of fresh product, through no fault of his own, has had the unfortunate effect of slowing down his momentum, and given fuel to detractors who were quick to call him an invention of the media and publicity when his face made the cover of both newsweeklies. Ideally, there would have been a long-playing successor to *Born To Run* ready to roll with his tour of this past autumn; instead, his career is currently in litigation, which is no place for rock and roll to be. The Springsteen-Appel legal battle has hindered progress, but hardly ground it to a halt. His live appearances have been electrifying as ever, featuring versions of "It's My Life" (Animals), "Fine Fine Boy" (Darlène Love), new songs like "Rendezvous" and "Something In the Night" as well as songs from his three albums. As the year drew to a close, Bruce had an east coast FM airplay hit (not for commercial distribution) of "Santa Claus Is Coming To Town" and was plan-

ning a Spring '77 tour. Hopefully by then the way will be cleared to get him out of the courts and back making records.



John Lennon

John Lennon has had his own share of red tape troubles, but with his immigration situation settled in his favor, there's no reason why he can't now concentrate on the music business. In a year that's been filled with an extraordinary amount of Beatle-related activity, Lennon has been absolutely, uncharacteristically silent, eclipsed in the media by the other members of his former group. The dissolution of Apple has even made a question mark of his present label affiliation. By some coincidence, Lennon was by no means alone among first and second generation British rockers in taking a year-long leave



The Who

of absence. The Who, and the individual members thereof, did limited touring and went the year without a follow-up to *By Numbers*; The Kinks were only represented by a dubious "hits" package on RCA, a label they left for Arista, for whom they have yet to issue a new album; there was no '76 successor to Pink Floyd's platinum *Wish You Were Here*; Procol Harum, Argent and Emerson, Lake and Palmer also left their fans without an LP. Maybe the Britons were boycotting our Bicentennial celebration. Notorious sore losers, the English.



Van Morrison

Self-imposed temporary retirement is also a common reason for long period absences, as singer-songwriters wait for the muse to strike, group leaders whose groups have scattered look for alternative outlets, free-lance musicians try to find the right format for re-emergence. It has been a very long two years since the release of albums by Van Morrison and Randy Newman. Paul Simon, never the most prolific of writers, let the considerable momentum of *Still Crazy After All These Years* carry him through the year while he bided his time with outside projects (acting, hosting *Saturday Night*). His former partner, Art Garfunkel, although not dependent on his own composing, still chose to sit out '76, as did Bonnie Raitt, John Fogerty, Little



John Fogerty

Feat, Roberta Flack and Leon Redbone. The loss of Rick Derringer might be one factor contributing to Edgar Winter's silence, and we waited in vain for records by Mick Taylor (now on Columbia), Jack Bruce and Steve Winwood (who did cameo roles), all formerly key elements in English supergroups. And the elder statesman of the New York avant-garde, John Cale, was shopping for a record label at the end of the year.

Possibly these pauses for reassessment, for a more positive sense of direction, are healthy. If the result is worth the wait, what's a mere twelve months or so without an LP of new material? And isn't a hiatus of some duration preferable to the kind of clockwork spewing out of product that results

in a disaster like *Blue Moves*? Still, in a mostly disappointing year for rock and roll, one can't help but speculate on how the overall picture might have been brightened by a new Who, Van Morrison or Bruce Springsteen album. Let's hope we don't have to wait another year to hear from them.



The Hollies

For a number of acts, domestic and imported, the no-shows during 1976 is the result of a commercial decline. The Hollies had two albums out in England on Polydor, but their American record company didn't choose to release either one as yet; there just doesn't seem to be more than a minimal market for Hollies LPs here, a pitiable fate for a group that's been making splendid pop music for at least thirteen years. They've had down periods before, only to have a well-timed hit pull them up, so possibly the slump is temporary. Other acts may not be as lucky as the Hollies have been. Slade, for example, never made more than a slight impact in the U.S., and haven't had an LP out in this country since *Slade In Flame* went down in flames in '75. Alvin Lee, once a formidable seller of records as a member of Ten Years After and briefly as a solo artist, now has no record company here and, hence, no new album.



Johnny Rivers

Britishers aren't the only sufferers of the no-sales-freeze-out. Jackie DeShannon had one good single, "All Night Desire," on Columbia during the year, but no follow-up to *New Arrangement*, and not a word was heard from Johnny Rivers, or Ronee Blakely, picked for stardom after her oscar-nominated performance in *Nashville*. Despite a fair WB album, and a spot on Dylan's *Rolling Thunder Revue*, her recording career is stalled in neutral.

Comebacks

"Come back baby
Rock and roll never forgets"
—Bob Seger

Maybe not. But artists do go into commercial or artistic decline, or into short-term retirement, and audiences have been known to seek out more up-to-the minute idols, leaving former favorites behind. In rock's transient environment, with its ever-shifting hierarchy, there are few sights as grand as seeing a performer snap back into top form, break a hibernation with a work of indisputable merit, and seeing the people clasp him to their collective bosom once more. Sometime the returning prodigal, no matter how fine the quality of the music being offered, still cannot return to the public's graces, and that story is not quite as gratifying. There were examples of both kinds of comeback in 1976, plus a few that don't fall neatly into either category. A lot of the news was good.

Bob Seger



At the Grammy Awards this past year, Paul Simon, in accepting his trophy for best album, thanked Stevie Wonder for not making an LP and leaving the competition open. In 1976, Wonder finally released his long-awaited, two years-in-the-making album, and immediately shot to the top of the charts, an automatic #1. Considering his reputation and popularity, that was no surprise, but the slight shock is that the record deserves all the acclaim and sales. Stevie Wonder never does anything by partial measures anymore. The syndrome is familiar: if enough people call you a genius you begin to believe them, and treat each album as a masterpiece, an instant masterpiece. *Songs In The Key Of Life*—the intent is summed up in the title—is typically over-indulgent: two long-playing records, an EP, a booklet (in which are set down in type his less than profound lyrics). It's less a record than a

self-made monument. Wonder sings, writes, produces, plays most of the instruments. Well, as a vocalist, melodist and musician he's rarely been better. Cohesive and consistent it isn't, triumphant it is, and the academy won't have to apologize for giving him this year's Grammy.



Beach Boys

Can we say again that The Beach Boys have made a comeback? It seems that for the last few years they've been doing nothing else. 1976, however, saw the release of their first studio LP since *Holland*, their own network television special was funny and fun, and Brian, turning up in places as diverse as *Saturday Night* and *The Mike Douglas Show*, seemed ready to do it again. Another borderline comeback case was Bob Seger. His none-too-soon national breakthrough with *Live Bullet* and *Night Moves* after a decade of sporadic success outside of Detroit might properly be considered more a gradual progression than a return. Either way, it's a kick to see him making it.

There's no question that John Sebastian was welcomed back, with a little help from a television show with exceptional teenage demographics. So far it looks as though the ex-leader of the Lovin' Spoonful won't find it easy clicking again as big as "Welcome Back," but at least he's no longer a forgotten relic of the '60s. Steve Barri and Michael Omartian, Sebastian's producers, became the Warner-Reprise team assigned to overhaul jobs on declining stars. They tried to work their pop gloss style on Cher (*I'd Rather Believe In You*) and Dion (*Street-Heart*), failing to scrape the best-selling charts with either. Cher is probably a lost cause (Snuff Garrett's back in the studio with her), but Dion should eventually make it. Despite the lack of a hit record to legitimize the fact, he made some crucial steps

forward in '76. His *Born To Be With You* LP was made available as an import, *Streetheart* broke through Barri and Omartian's attempts to turn him into Barry Manilow and came up with moments of real splendor (particularly the title cut and "The Way You Do The Things You Do"), and, best of all, his live appearances showed Dion to be in excellent voice and clearly happy to be rocking on stage again. It'll happen.



Burton Cummings

Other sixties-identified acts turned their careers around in 1976, some with more tangible results than others. The Guess Who hit a hard streak of luck after the departure of Randy Bachman, and the steamroller effect of BTO left the group's lead singer Burton Cummings in the dust. This past year, Cummings put out his debut solo album on Portrait, the new CBS associated label, and it landed him back in the money with a Top Ten single, "Stand Tall" (Richard Perry, Cummings' producer, also handled Leo Sayer's re-entry to the top of the pops). Marilyn McCoo & Billy Davis, Jr., separated from the Fifth Dimension, had an immense single at year's end. Richie Havens, Laura Nyro and Melanie, three of the late '60s most popular solo artists in an era dominated by groups, each released an album that was a conscious attempt at rebuilding his or her career, and the results were mixed critically and commercially. By contrast Cliff Richard, who barely made a dent



Cliff Richard

on the U.S. charts in all his years as England's top male singer, received his first Stateside gold record on Elton John's Rocket label.

As usual, the list of artists who made reappearances turns up a number of unexpected names. Engelbert Humperdinck and Lou Rawls, two MOR singers who most

people thought would never have significant chart success again, both leaped back into prominence with hit singles that crossed over from easy listening stations. Spurred on by the renewed interest in the Monkees due to syndication of the television series, Micky Dolenz, Davy Jones, Tommy Boyce and Bobby Hart put together an act that wowed teenagers at state fairs over the summer. Their album, however, went nowhere. Michael Brown, the musical core of the Left Banke, formed the Beckies and released a likeable, if modest, LP. Bread reformed, the Flamin' Groovies had an energetic album on Sire, Tommy James made his bid for re-acceptance on Fantasy, and Twiggy, of all people, proved on her album that aside from being a desirable mannequin, she's a rather sweet-sounding vocalist.

Then there are the performers who never really slipped out of public favor or into obscurity, but made some sort of dramatic resurgence in 1976. Two New York singer-composer-superstars, Carole King and Neil Diamond, hit the road after rest periods of up to three years and released major LPs



Jackson Browne

to coincide with their tours. *Beautiful Noise* was Diamond's tribute to the Brill Building school of songwriting, and *Thoroughbred* reunited King with Gerry Goffin, landing her a gold record following the slump of *Really Rosie*. Jackson Browne's *The Pretender*, many months in preparation, was his best sounding, best sung album to date; and compared to it's immediate predecessor, *The Hissing of the Summer Lawns*, Joni Mitchell's *Hejira* was nothing less than a complete and brilliant revitalization. Roger McGuinn had his career boosted by his playing in Bob Dylan's folkie vaudeville caravan; Ry Cooder and Bonnie Bramlett returned with personal, spirited LPs, fascinating variations on ethnic sources and r'n'b that ranked among the year's unanticipated pleasures. And, of course, Paul McCartney and Wings made their North American stage debut, McCartney's first U.S. trek in a decade, and Rod Stewart scored the longest-running number one single in eight years.



Roger McGuinn

New Talent

ROCK HISTORY 1976

Certainly it's always encouraging to get good music from established artists, to hear them refine, explore, develop their styles; without that kind of growth, rock would have no stability. But an even clearer sign of rock's vitality and its continued force is in the new talent, the brash young kids coming along to challenge the enshrined heroes with their own weapons. So no matter how badly some of the older stars have let us down in 1976, how awful could a year be that saw the release of maiden LPs by Graham Parker and the Rumor, Southside Johnny and the Asbury Jukes, The Ramones, The Dwight Twilley Band, Jonathan Richman and the Modern Lovers, Boston, Heart, David Forman, Warren Zevon (we'll be charitable and ignore his Imperial debut), the Alpha Band, the Funky Kings, The Runaways...the list could go on, and could be expanded by solid sophomore efforts by bands that haven't yet broken through (Artful Dodger, Patti Smith's). If just a small percentage of these artists realize their potential we could be in for some exciting rock and roll for years to come.

It's difficult to make broad generalizations based on any crop of rookies, but looking over the names, there are some tendencies that these newcomers have in common. They have excellent taste

Finally, a prognostication for 1977: watch for the belated return of Ronnie Spector. She turned up on the Asbury Jukes' LP in '76, and recently went into the studio with producer Miami Steve Van Zandt and members of Springsteen's E Street Band to begin a solo project.

As a guest performer at a recent Jukes concert she was trimmed down to fighting weight, singing and kicking up a storm. The album should be ready by mid-year and should, if existing evidence of the collaboration can be trusted, be terrific.

in influences, they borrow liberally and wisely, injecting their music with humor and respect for all sorts of cultural predecessors. The best of them assert their personality: there's no mistaking what they're about. The Jukes, Ramones, Modern Lovers, Rumour, Twilley are more than just good bands,



Alpha Band

they're good band concepts with a strong shaping identity at the core. Boston and Heart have that kind of integral nucleus also, and it's part of what separates them from the merely promising debuts, and from those who are much more idea than substance (The Runaways).

The initial documents of what has usually been called the "punk movement"—represented so far on record by the *Live At CBGB's* album, The Ramones and Blondie, soon to be joined by Talking Heads and Television—are like declarations of a "less is more" principle meant to topple the existing rock structure and return to more basic rock values. Judging by the sales of *Ramones*, a record made in two weeks at a cost of under \$10,000 (equivalent to a '50's American-International movie) and the CBGB's sampler, the task will be greater than might have been anticipated. Phase one of the



Blondie

assault fizzled out when the New York Dolls' two LPs went ignored by the public despite critical appreciation, and Ramones, the band that has inherited the Dolls' local mantle at the front lines, seem to be courting a similar fate. Nevertheless, their posturing, brutal



Ramones

edge and unmodulated attack make them worthy, despite severe limitations, of their position on the punk totem pole. *Ramones Leave Home* continues their monolithic approach with no lack of panache or toughness. The trouble is that they, like most of their contenders, earn more praise for intent than achievement, so far.



Graham Parker

Not so for the bands leading the back-to-r 'n' b movement. Graham Parker is a commanding presence as a singer, writer and performer, and his guitar-based band of pub-rock veterans supports him dynamically. His pair of albums, *Howlin' Wind* and *Heat Treatment*, are superb, punchy rock and roll records that earn him the title, against formidable competition, of rookie of the year. Fellow Britishers Dr. Feelgood, mining a similar musical lode, also put out a driving debut LP in '76, as did Southside Johnny and the Asbury Jukes,



Dwight Twilley Band

another band of rhythm and blues renegades with a connoisseur's ear for fine material, a powerhouse horn section and the rough-hewn voice of Johnny Lyons. Their association with Jerseyite Springsteen sparked many comparisons, but they're really working another side of the street, and *I Don't Want To Go Home* is only a piece of what they're capable of live. Their second album, now in preparation, should make their reputation as party band supreme.



Funky Kings

Except for Parker's band, the r 'n' b groups rely as much on outside material as on in-house songs. There were also impressive '76 debuts by performers whose personae are created by their own words and music. *Sincerely* by the Dwight Twilley Band showed Twilley to be a singer-writer capable of assimilating a number of '60 styles into a group identity, but his accomplishment was overshadowed by Richman, Forman and Zevon, three peculiarly intriguing talents. All have a keen intelligence and an ear for the transformed musical and lyrical cliché, and each applies himself within and without a particular genre. Richman's *Modern Lovers* released two albums in the past year, the first produced mostly by John Cale five years ago and just now getting out of the can, and the second a recent recording. The older is the more interesting, with (naturally) undertones of the Velvet Underground's mystery beneath Richman's penetratingly mundane visions, but both reveal him as a unique voice. His speciality is understated plainspeak in a minimal setting (his current group is



David Forman

low-volume, near-acoustic), and he is as likely to write a song about the neighborhood ice cream man or the new bank teller as about invading martians: it's all the same to him (his only concern is what flavor to bake the martian's cake). He's also an unreformed romantic, naively direct about his emotions and enthusiasms. He makes a lot of people nervous. David Forman is it's been said accurately, a cross between Randy Newman and Smokey Robinson, creating observant vignettes within a melodious r 'n' b framework, while Warren Zevon has staked out Los Angeles as the geographical and psychological placement of his songs, making irony out of the outlaw myth-making, safe decadence and self-pity of some of his contemporaries.

To the above outpouring of new talent the record buyer was absolutely indifferent. There were some extraordinary freshman success stories, however, and it was brightening to see that although the charts were dominated by artists with long tenure in the business it was still possible for acts to have



Jonathan Richman & Modern Lovers

debut sleeper hits. One might complain that a lot of quality (in the form of bands who preserved and advanced the cause of rock and roll) was overlooked while clever competence was abundantly rewarded, but why start trouble? Some of the year's biggest new acts were spawned by disco, and most will mercifully be gone when this whole thing makes its overdue departure. This year's Barry White



Sex Pistols

is next year's Chubby Checker. Dr. Buzzard's Original Savannah Band may last, but don't look for Wild Cherry by the end of the decade. Aside from disco duckery, '76's big debuts were Boston, a band that fused electronics, harmonies and hard rock components into an unprecedented debut platinum LP, and Heart, a journeyman (journey-person?) progressive rock outfit distinguished only by the two females out front (and one better-than-average single, "Crazy On You"), who came out of nowhere and on a small independent label, Mushroom, to see over a million LPs. The other female rockers—not counting Blondie, who was just poised to break in January '77—the strident, nubile Runaways, for all their publicity didn't sell one-hundredth of that number.

In 1977, a first LP to keep an eye on in addition to those of the New York contingent is the debut of the Rubinoos, one of Beserkley's small but mighty roster of talent (including Richman, Greg Kihn—still another quality '76 premiere—and Earth Quake). Their live performances, current single (a cover of "I Think We're Alone Now") and their track on the *Chartbusters* album make them eminently worthy of attention.



Warren Zevon

ROCK HISTORY 1976

Disco

Disco was supposed to roll over and do the Rigor Mortis in 1976, but myriad successes of KC & the Sunshine Band, Andrea True, Johnnie Taylor (with the year's best-selling single, "Disco Lady"), the Miracles, the reprehensible Walter Murphy, Silver Convention, Donna Summer, Brass Construction, Dr. Buzzard, Vicki Sue Robinson, and the perpetrators of the year's most seditious single, "Play That Funky Music," Wild Cherry, stifled that notion. Discos continued to be the nation's top hot-to-trot spots, and disco music was gobbled up by a seemingly insatiable public. Vicki Sue Robinson clearly had the most inventive and exciting hit, "Turn The Beat Around," sounding like a discofied Patti Smith (as Gene Sculatti pointed out); and KC & the Sunshine Band continued to apply distinctive musical textures to their dance beats. But with few exceptions disco sounded as dreary and irritating as popular music ever has. It's interesting, by the way, that when dance crazes came back, this time they weren't, unlike Trix, aimed for kids, but for mature swingers and would-be collsters. This mirrors the country's demographic swing to an older dominant population group (teen influence is declining, which is one reason why your AM radio sounds as slushy as it does), and also possibly accounts for disco's lifelessness stacked against, say, "The Locomotion" or "Twisting The Night Away."

Aside from disco, 1976 saw the ascension of two important new black styles—the sophisticated exploratory music of Earth, Wind &

Fire and the spectacular post-psychedelic macrocosmic funk of Parliament and their many new compatriots. And soul bubblegum returned with the Sylvers' irresistible "Boogie Fever." Black artists in general still had trouble making Top 40 playlists (unless they were disco), and even more landing spots on AOR stations, a condition likely to persist.

Critics Faves

1976 heard a lot of sound and fury from the press on various pet causes, but there were no Springsteens this year to feel smug about. Nobody got press coverage like Patti Smith did, but neither of her albums exactly depleted the gold supply. Nils Lofgren got closer to a breakthrough than ever before, but frustratingly missed out again. The Ramones and Runaways generated tons of publicity and neither made the Record World (generally regarded as the most reliable trade chart) album Top 150. Dwight Twilley? Flo & Eddie? Jonathan Richman? Don't bother asking. Graham Parker...maybe he's got a shot. And how many people do you know who bought Andy Pratt or David Forman albums?

The main problem these critical favorites and others had was the same old story, lack of radio airplay. Patti was too "Weird" for either Top 40 or AOR, and the Ramones and Runaways were too crude. Nils couldn't get close to a hit single. And Dwight Twilley and a number of other bands (Flamin'



Top 40

Many of 1976's stars appealed primarily to pop-oriented listeners. Barry Manilow stayed hot, though not so dramatically as in 1975, and his big-ballads sound stale. Abba was fairly successful, but did not nearly match their phenomenal worldwide success, and it remains to be seen whether the delightful, hypnotic "Dancing Queen" will become the Top Five smash they desperately need. The biggest hit by a new act was "Afternoon Delight" by the Starland Vocal Band, going away, but two follow-ups weren't exactly skyrockets in flight; same for Starbuck, who haven't followed the irksome "Moonlight Feels Right." Orleans



Groovies, Sutherland Bros. & Quiver) were caught in a strange limbo—too pop-oriented and "commercial" for AOR/FM, too energetic and rock-oriented (and unfamiliar) for Top 40/AM. Drastic attitude changes in radio (more likely to occur in the more open AOR field) are necessary before most of these artists can get their chance at mass recognition, and I'm afraid rock writers (including myself) are going to be gnashing their teeth in frustration for a long time to come.

Folkies



Bob Dylan rolled thunderously across the country, inspiring reams of press and a run on babyshkas,

with the overblown *Desire* album hitting #1 and the occasionally amusing but generally pointless *Hard Rain* set also scoring. His best work is well behind him now, a contention also frequently advanced in regard to Joni Mitchell, but I'm not entirely convinced—some of *Hejira* sounds better than anything she's done in a while (none quite as good as "Dreamland," which she wrote for Roger McGuinn earlier in the year), although all those mournful laments do get monotonous. Jackson Browne grabbed the gold ring, as previously cited, and the patriarchal James Taylor hit with a somnolent greatest hits package. Seals & Crofts got slightly less insipid with "Get Closer" and had a comeback hit, while Gordon Lightfoot had his first hit in two years with 1976's oddest Top 40 pheno menon, a six-minute sea chantey about a shipwreck.



and Firefall both sounded like groups with inherent album appeal rather than singles acts, but paradoxically their hit singles, "Still The One" and "You Are The Woman," had greater impact. And Burton Cummings left the Guess Who and immediately established himself as an AM presence to watch, as "Stand Tall" hit Top Ten.

Singles stardom is nothing if not

ephemeral, and 1976 had its share of sureshot one-shots whom you're not likely to hear from again. Many had novelty hits—the CB fad is looking like so much dead air on the radio now, and C.W. "Convoy" McCall will suffer the consequences. Similarly, Rick Dees will be hard-pressed to come up with another perfectly timed (if intensely irritating) novelty like "Disco

Duck" (and I don't think his current "Dis-Gorilla" is the one). Trivia question for the 80's: Who sang "Right Back Where We Started From," "More More More," and "Making Our Dreams Come True?" Maxine Nightingale, Andrea True, and Cundi Grecco may become the new Marcie Blanes and Merrilee Rushes of their generation. The various TV theme hits (the year's

major novelty trend) seem unlikely to sustain successful hitmaking careers for Pratt & McClain, Rhythm Heritage, and John Travolta (not so sure on this one), and even John Sebastian looks as though he'll go the way of all flash-in-the-pans after his cordial welcome back. And it's easy to assume we've heard the last from Keith Carradine.

Progressive Rock

ROCK HISTORY 1976

This form, which dominated AOR airwaves and LP charts in the early 70's, could be on its way out. Both main schools, the ponderous technoflashers in Britain and the laid-back meanderings of the San Francisco set, seemed surprisingly moribund. Emerson Lake & Palmer were idle again, Yes frittered the year away with relatively unsuccessful solo records while Rick Wakeman ran into the law of diminishing returns (increasing returns, probably, in one sense). King Crimson was only a memory and Jethro Tull seemed irrelevant, while groups like Queen, though every bit as pretentious, were smart enough to keep it concise. Only Genesis, blessed with a saving sense of humor, seemed to be carrying the torch. Since the Jefferson Starship went commercial, the calcified Grateful Dead and the rather desperate-sounding

Santana weren't enough to hold up the Bay Area's end.

But related musical stylists still prospered—Jeff Beck on the energetic side of jazz-rock, George Benson on the mellow end—while Marshall Tucker inherited the mantles of both the Dead and the shattered Allman Bros. and became the second biggest Southern band (next to Skynyrd). Kansas



Genesis

and Starcastle looked to become homegrown American equivalents of the British progressives. So never fear, the 10-minute synthesizer workout and the endless jam are not ready for extinction yet. Maybe next year...

So far radio has been a prime concern here, because it's still the most important factor in determining who's going to go all the way and who's going to have to settle for "cult favorite" status or total neglect. The artists in this section are generally exceptions to the rule—they made it without significant help from radio, usually, and only grudging support afterwards. They're the stadium rockers, the bands you were likely to see billed second or third at giant outdoor baseball park concerts at the start of their careers, and headlining the same affairs after they hit the big time. They're on the road constantly, it seems, and to a sizeable young audience, they are what constitutes rock & roll.

Aerosmith and Kiss were the two kingpins of the field, selling more records than all but the biggest across-the-board stars. Aerosmith have been constantly on the rise for four years, and have become such an imposing presence that AOR stations are forced to

play their albums now. In 1976, they scored two big AM hits, one their first uncompromising hard-rock hit, "Walk This Way" (also an older cut). Though their fourth album *Rocks* sounded less interesting than their second or third (and continued no hits), the LP and their tours were all-out blockbusters.



Aerosmith

Kiss were supposed to fade out in 1976 after apparently peaking with their crushing *Kiss Alive* double LP in '75. But they stayed on top with two albums—*Destroyer*, which was rather overproduced but contained many of their best songs ("Shout It Out Loud," "Detroit Rock City"), and *Rock And Roll Over*, which went back to the basics. *Destroyer* also spawned an unlikely hit, "Beth," Kiss' first real ballad, a real syrupy one that interestingly enough became one of the year's top MOR hits. As both Aerosmith and Kiss finally

achieved singles success with softer records more suitable for broad airplay, other hard-rock bands took note, and although BTO, Montrose, and Widowmaker all failed in similar attempts, 1977 should see more of the same, starting with Kiss' new probable hit, "Hard Luck Woman," as blatant (and enjoyable) a Rod Stewart cop as you could imagine.



ZZ Top

Z.Z. Top staged a grandiose tour, but had no new album until early 1977, which should put them right up there with the biggest. Lynyrd Skynyrd arrived in the top Ten aristocracy in '76 with a double live album which conveyed an idea of the assurance and high voltage guitar power they generate in concert. Foghat continued to tour all over and made increasingly better records, more punchy hard-rock and less boogie/blues (and their singles started to hit the charts). The big new stars here were both from Detroit, though. Ted Nugent's colorfully carnivorous image and earsplitting guitar heroics broke through to the country at large after almost 10 years of slogging. And Bob Seger, creator of great singles since 1966, finally reached star status with his *Live Bullet* (a double set, naturally) and consolidated his success with a tough, sensitive album delight called *Night Moves*, whose wistful, celebratory title cut became his first big hit in eight years, with the year's best spirit-of-the-music anthem, "Rock & Roll Never Forgets," ready to follow.



Queen



Marshall Tucker



David Bowie

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LOW
David Bowie
RCA CPLI-2030

By BUD SCOPPA

The new Bowie album doesn't make much sense. While practically everybody else in rock is striving for cleaner and more accurately recorded sound, Bowie's *Low* has drums that thump nastily like cherry bombs exploding under tin cans, hazy vocals that slide in and out of the predominating beeps and crackles, guitars that seem to be blasting not out of the speakers but from the garage down the street, and syn-

thesizers that sound as if they're a bit rusty and held together by twisted paper clips.

With all the kids waiting for a clever follow-up to his hit, "Golden Years"—something sleek and danceable, maybe—Bowie scrambles expectations, enlisting the services of iconoclast Brian Eno and assembling an album in which six out of the 11 tracks are either instrumentals or instrumentals-with-chanting, none of them likely to get play in your local disco. The remaining five have eerily claustrophobic lyrics about "always crashing in the same car," breaking glass in his lover's room, using the promise of love to lure the lady out from "deep within" her room, and waiting for "the gift of sound and vision" in yet another room, this one "blue, blue, electric blue."

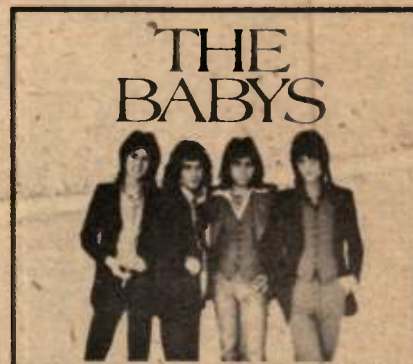
Low seems to be the inner document of someone either on the edge of psychosis or obsessed right down to the bone. Nothing fits or holds firm, nothing makes rational sense, nothing follows the formal or practical rules of the game. But for Bowie, who never follows the rules,

none of this disorientation is negative; on the contrary, *Low* is the most intimate and free recording this extraordinary artist has yet made. This haunting, oddly beautiful music, strewn with recesses to be delved into gradually and a few at a time, is affecting in a strikingly subtle and powerful way.

Bowie's instincts are uncanny: he seems to stay on-course by continually veering off-course and he has a knack for making music that (as a friend says) "feels exactly the way I feel right now." There's something about *Low*'s textures, moods, and energies that gets under the skin and keeps working deeper, but I couldn't begin to explain how or why it works. I don't want to try—there are times when it's better to acknowledge than attempt to analyze, and this music is governed by a mystery that exists not to be penetrated but to be accepted as mystery.

The music of *Low* opens so unpredictably you may find that what seemed at first to be icy and remote has imperceptibly become lush, pulsing, maybe danceable,

even. Then again you may not. There's no telling what the album will do to you, or when it will do it. Bowie offers a simple but challenging choice: either be baffled or give in. I made my choice—you'll make yours.



THE BABYS
The Babys
Chrysalis CHR-1129

By SAM SUTHERLAND

On the strength of their debut album and the 16-minute color video demo that snared them a recording contract, The Babys dis-

(Cont'd. on next page)

REVIEWS-REVIEWS-REVIEWS-REVIEWS-REVIEWS

Nearly all the songs have something of interest about them. The themes, at least, are not overworked: "A Shark in Jets Clothing," "Rifle Range," "Kung Fu Girls," and "The Attack of the Giant Ants" all have originality. The latter song would be great as an instrumental soundtrack to any hot adventure flick; only the irksome intervention of Blondie's unusually poor vocal precludes real enjoyment.

I think my favorite track is "Rip Her to Shreds," which reminds me inexplicably of the Stooges' "Gimme Danger." Its actual derivation is closer to the Whyte Boots' "Nightmare" and some of the Shangri-Las' more extreme moments. The point is that Blondie, who has a perfectly adequate voice for coffee-house folk music or pristine pure pop, doesn't (for once) try to employ it in an incongruous hard-rock content. She's a class singer trying to do trash material. But on her "Rip Her to Shreds," she hardly sings at all—instead she snarls, spits, talks sass and generally acts out the song, and it works. Maybe with more such material she could survive in rock & roll, but on the evidence of this album, it seems that even with the formidable assistance of Gottehrer, Leon, and even Ellie Greenwich (who was brought in to strengthen the vocals), Blondie comes off better in front of a camera than in front of a microphone.

Producers Brian Christian and Bob Exrin have framed The Babys' mix of stripped-down guitar rock and more ethereal ballads with a thundering, Sensurround bottom, deep-dish echo and other studio accents that seek to maximize the band's energy. That emphasis results in some loss of the subtlety that might have provided more contrast to the bone-shaking force of the record's fast songs, but the overall power and coherence of the band's best performances more than compensate for any lost refinements. At this stage of their career, The Babys already offer a balance of youthful energy and venerable hard rock moves that could easily establish them as one of 1977's first major successes.

play a classic rock stance that belies their cute moniker. They're certainly young by the calendar, a factor underscored by the raw energy of the playing, but the muscular electric style they've chosen borrows freely from bands that were themselves young and energetic a decade ago, especially Free.

That comparison begins with John Waite's urgent, exuberant lead vocals, which capture the rasp and feverish phrasing of a younger Paul Rodgers; less immediate, but ultimately more telling, the band's arranging style aspires to the same spare architecture of rhythm section and guitars that was the blueprint for both Free and later Bad Company. The Babys handle that debt—which emerges most

pointedly on side one's "I Believe In Love" and "Wild Man," both dark ballads that could have held their ground on *Highway or Fire* and *Water*, and on the rockers "Read My Stars" and "If You've Got The Time," the latter slated for single release—with a directness and conviction that save the album from unintentional parody.

To those elements of another band's style, The Babys graft their own canny revisions. Mike Corby's keyboards and synthesizer provide a broader instrumental base, augmented by lead guitarist Walt Stocker's flexibility in shifting from an extroverted hard rock attack to a more ornamental delicacy on keyboard-based arrangements like "Laura" and the extended instrumental bridges on "Over and Over" and "Dying Man." Waite's powerful solo vocals are similarly balanced against backing harmonies that reinforce the band's more melodic songs.

Of those, "If You've Got The Time" is clearly the most exciting. A perfect single, the song churns through a dizzying wealth of hooks: jangling guitar intro, sassy vocal, pounding backbeat and a breakthrough chorus punched up with brash rhythm guitar chords would seem more than ample recommendations, but The Babys play it as safe as possible, adding a sexy lyric that roots the song's energy below the belt. "Oh, I've got love that grows, Oh, I've got love that shows," Waite sings, and when he hits the punchline there's little doubt as to how that time will be spent. It's a straightforward show of sexual tunescence, as hardy a hard rock motif as there is.



BLONDIE
Blondie
Private Stock

By GREG SHAW

The first time I saw Blondie she was incredible. It was with a group called the Stilletos—three girls who transformed the old teen-schmaltz of the Ronettes and Shangri-Las into a sort of 1975 New York, Dolls-derived street jive, acting out the psycho-dramatic qualities of each song with a perfect balance of seriousness and camp. It was crude but it was real, and I loved it.

That was the Stilletos. Blondie on her own seemed destined for stardom, with that Marilyn Monroe

REVIEWS-REVIEWS-REVIEWS-REVIEWS-REVIEWS

vulnerability, trend-conscious attire, and sweet personality that made her the darling of underground New York. She had a fine band and good songs, soon became one of the hottest attractions on the scene. There was only one problem: she didn't, never had and never would, have a rock & roll voice.

With the Stilletos it never became painfully obvious, since her voice was blended with those of the other 2 girls. And on her debut 45, "X Offender," producer Craig Leon created such an awesome Spector/Springsteen-esque torrent of sound that no one cared; the record, in fact, became an instant underground classic.

"X Offender" holds up well on the LP, as does its B-side, "In the Sun." The rest of the album was produced by Richard Gottehrer, whose impressive background includes "My Boyfriend's Back" by the Angels, although the sound here better reflects his more recent work with the Climax Blues Band. On only one song, "Look Good in Blue," does the music transcend the often trite lyrics ("I could give you some head & shoulders to lie on") to become pure magic, as it does briefly in the bridge.

REDDY TEDDY
Reddy Teddy
Spoonfed SP-3301

By KEN BARNES

Still a novel phenomenon in the process of acceleration, the new-wave hard-rock movement has produced its first landmark album. Fittingly, it's on an independent local (Boston) label, by a group whose constituency is strictly localized. Reddy Teddy have been together for a few years, were signed to Mercury at one point, cut an album with ex-Left Banker Michael Brown, and saw it shelved for economic reasons. So they finally did it themselves, with devastatingly brilliant results.

The simple term "punk-rock" is a non-descriptive handle for much of the new locally-generated rock & roll sprouting up everywhere from England to L.A., and it's particularly inadequate to describe Reddy Teddy, who despite a raw power-chorded basic attack are far too sophisticated musically and lyrically to be cavalierly categorized in such a drastically limited fashion.

Reddy Teddy are closer in spirit to the Who of 1966-67, from, say, "Substitute" to "I Can See For Miles," (when they were past that first raw primal period when they revolutionized rock & roll approaches, but at a time when they were refining their hard rock with a melodic delicacy). But Reddy Teddy have that rare knack of grafting subtle melodies onto rock-solid high-powered bases, and at their peak (the album's first three songs), the overall impact is stunning.

"Boys And Girls," for instance, starts off like an outtake from the

My Generation album, moves into a dense guitar mass mutated from the Stones' "Mercy Mercy," to a blithe Bert Berns "La Bamba" beat chorus into a brief flash of Who-style out-of-control guitar kinetics to a 70's metal guitar sequence melting into an "Eight Miles High" sonic rumble, emerging into a lovely melodic interlude and back out again to simple hard rock—and that's just the first 3:11 of the album. "The Shark In The Dark" is equally inventive and exhilarating, with "Ooh Wow" not far behind and a host of other contenders (Notably the mystic marching anthem "Magic Magic") hot on the tails of the first Big Three. The only (minor) disappointments are "Romance," a meandering ballad, and "A Child Of The Nuclear Age," whose atomic-disaster setting seems a bit forced. I've always suspected that rock & rollers wrote about life-under-the-nuclear-shadow more because they felt the older generation expected it of them rather than from any real concern, and since Bowie these hollow caustic post-nuclear apocalypses are a diamond dog's end anyway.

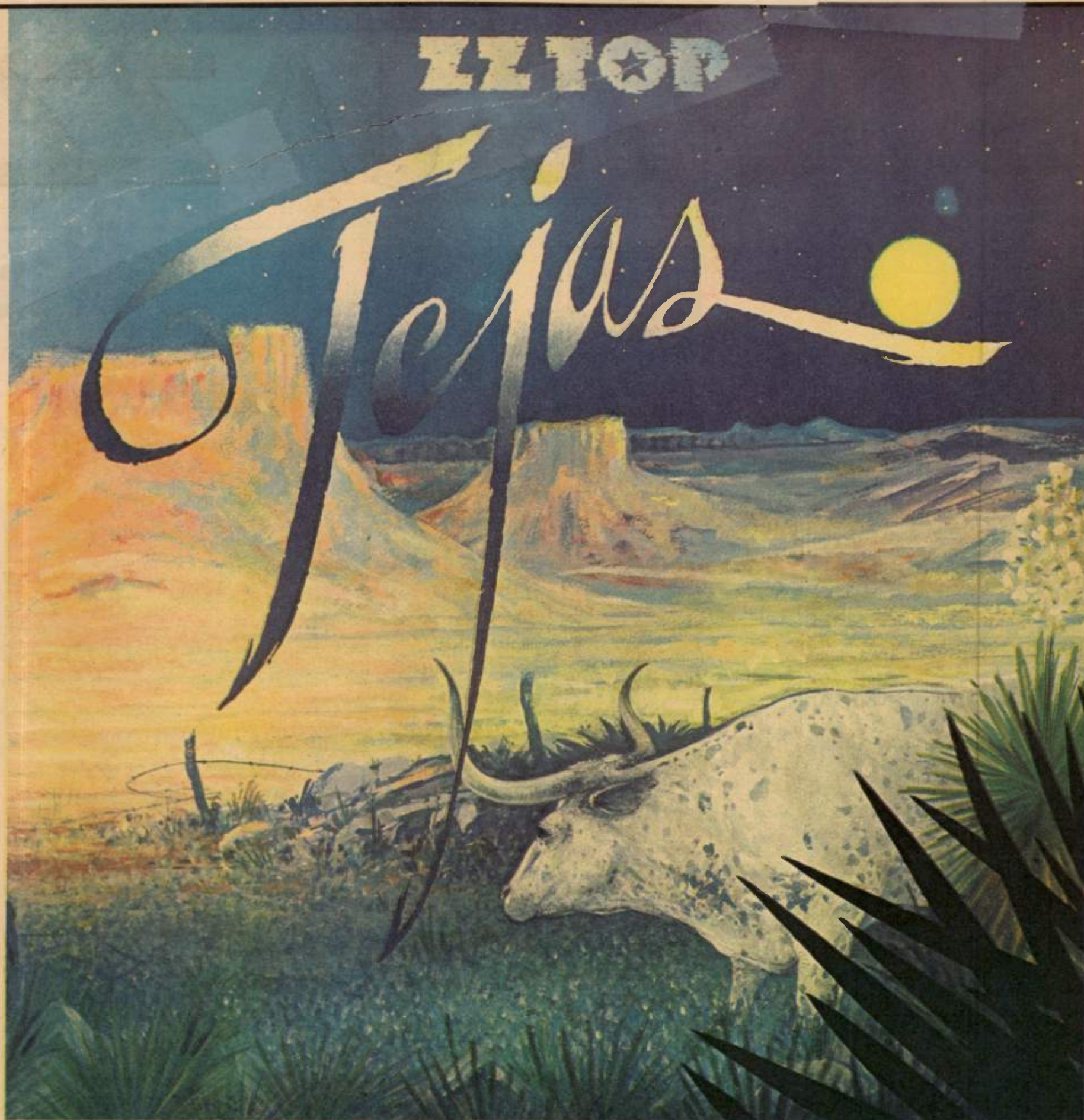
In "Moron Rock" Reddy Teddy forever estrange themselves from the determinedly dimwitted division of the punk pantheon, pointedly puncturing cherished pretensions:

"Despite all the cheering
howls
And all the jeering scowls
You can't stop the hands on
the clock
You're really something
wild, little problem child
Playing that moron rock"

Reddy Teddy's declaration of independence from the punk legions is probably a wise move, as their sophistication and perception give them the potential to attract a far wider audience than the noisy but non-influential (in terms of stimulating record sales) claque that rally round the punkers. There's enough going on within this album to occupy listeners for countless playings, and the deliberately dense production (by Mackenzie, local Boston hero Willie Alexander, who also contributes vitally to "Moron Rock," and WBCN DJ Maxann Sartori) enhances the record's tantalizing attributes. *Reddy Teddy* is a debut of staggering force and raw-but-refined rock power. "Just like Robin Hood, we get excited if we make it good," they sing. "We're just hoping that our mission ain't misunderstood." It's a mission that merits the understanding and support of the multitudes, and with any luck will get it.

(Reddy Teddy's album is available from Spoonfed Records, 19 Brown St., Cambridge, Mass. 02138; inquire for price structures)

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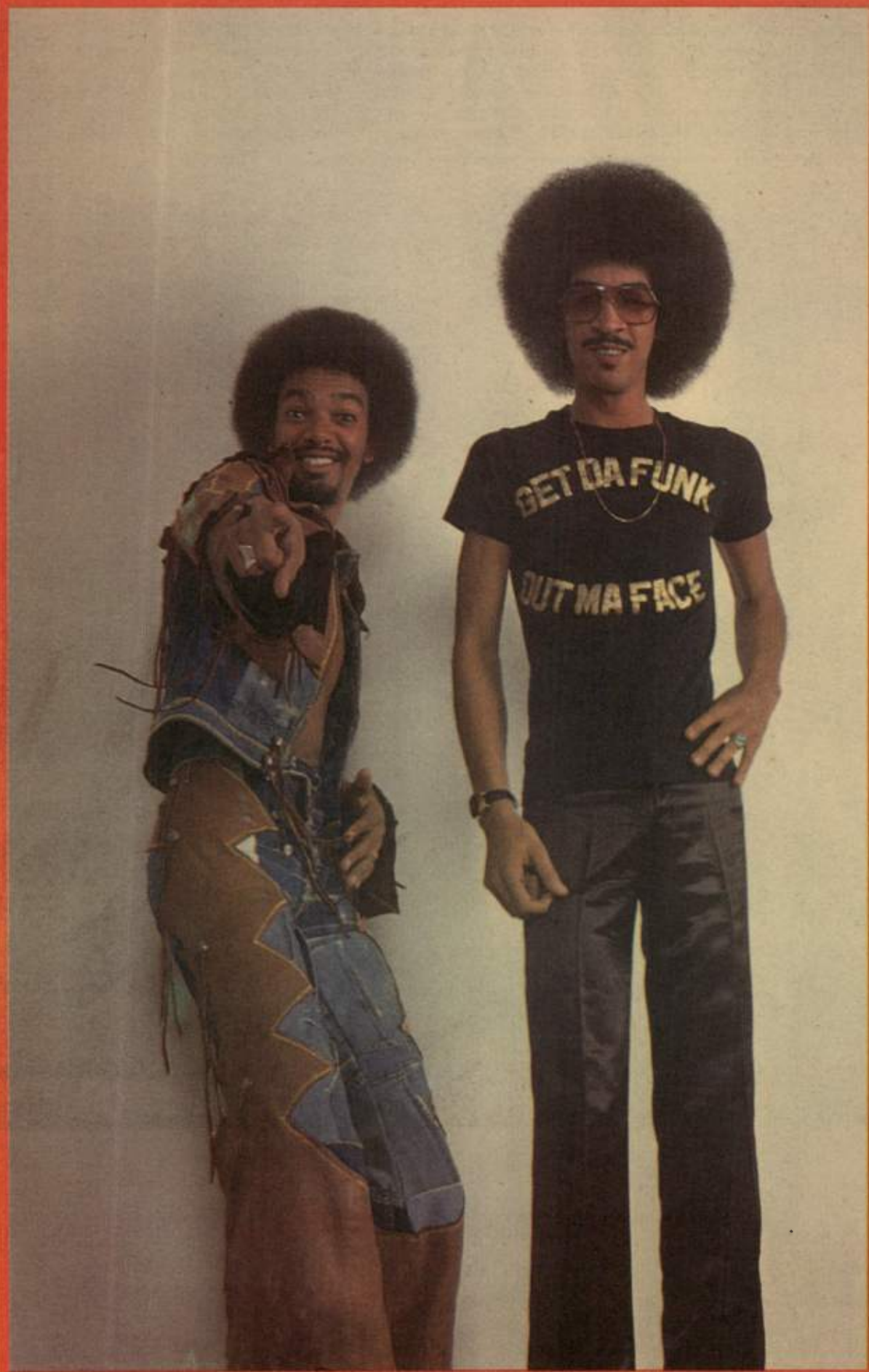
By TOM VICKERS

Black music has undergone a lot of changes in the past few years. First it was R&B, then Soul, and now the black sound dominating the airwaves is referred to as Funk. A lot of groups are hitting with this bass-popping, rhythmic dance sound, but none have had the immediate success of the Brothers Johnson.

Under the tutelage of Quincy Jones, the Brothers have made the transition from back-up musicians to leaders of their own group. The Jones produced and directed first album by the Brothers, *Look Out For Number One*, has sold platinum with two singles becoming Top Ten hits, the pop-funk of "I'll Be Good To You" and the Johnson's contribution to chant-grooves, "Get Da Funk Out Ma Face."

Brothers Johnson

Louis and George Johnson are still young in years [both in their early twenties], but old in experience. As teenagers they started out as the Brothers Three Plus One in their native Los Angeles. Along with their older brother Tommy [who now acts as the group's road manager] on drums, and keyboard cousin Alex Weir, the group gained popularity as a hot young dance band covering the hits of the day. —→



RECORD

Brothers Johnson: The Q's Futuristic Funk

Relaxing in the headquarters of Quincy Jones Productions on the A&M Records lot, George Johnson explained the Brother's early training. "We picked up the different feels of different tunes. We used to have to go from something like the Temptations to the Carpenters, which is all together different. But we always played everything we could, including blues and jazz."

The young band eventually broke-up, but not before Louis and George were discovered by Billy Preston and enlisted in his God Squad band. From there it was tours, sessions, and more tours before the Johnson name got around and outside ears started perking up.

One of these sets of outside ears belonged to Quincy Jones, who was impressed by Louis' "thunder thumbs" bass style and George's "lightning licks" on guitar. Introduced to the Brothers through Joe Greene (a mutual friend who had also worked with Preston), Quincy wanted to explore the new style of funk the Brothers had hit on.

"When we first met him," George remembers as he rests his lean frame on a desk, "he didn't really know what kind of music we played. He had an idea, but before he'd seen or heard us, he asked Joe what type of music we were into. Joe told him we were into like Sly/Graham/Earth, Wind & Fire, and it was like he pre-studied. We walked in and he had *Fresh*, Sly's album cover, sitting on top of the piano. He had gotten into it, so that when we sat down to play our tunes he automatically knew where we wanted to go."

The Johnsons came to "Q" with over 200 tunes they had written, and a process of picking, arranging, and restructuring was started. Quincy helped the Brothers hone in on a direction that combined the musical styles of jazz, rock, and pop with a funk base, but also gave the young team some lessons in tune weaving.

"He's gotten my head together as far as how to structure tunes," George says about their musical Godfather. "Right now I write all together different from the way I used to. I used to write in one groove and just hang there. Sometimes I write tunes like that now, and if it's hot enough I just keep it, but basically he showed me how to pull a song together."

Through Quincy's direction the Brothers hit on a sound that has

been labelled "Futuristic funk," an amalgam that melds different musical styles, but is most of all commercial. Though this has helped the Johnsons' "get over," they are both heavy funk fans, and like the

think it will last as long as funk will. I think the Philly thing is a fad too. All of it sounds alike. I heard Archie Bell and the Drells new album and it sounds like a lot of tracks they cut and then called in different artists to

started it out. George Clinton and the Parliament do it, and Earth, Wind & Fire do it. But a lot of people, and I'm not tryin' to knock anybody, but Average White Band and Wild Cherry, it's imitation to

me. They can play what they hear, but I don't always know if they feel it. There's a lot of groups that play it, but all they do is play it. It's not funk to me. I might like it, but I won't love it, the way I love something nasty."

Louis, the up-until-now silent partner of this funky Brotherhood chimes in. "With everybody doin' it, the people don't really know and they're confused now 'cause there's so much simulated funk out that they don't know what's real."

The boogie-funk competition may sometimes make the Brothers a wee bit uptight, but they feel they have created something unique in their music. Now at work on their second album, they hope that it will prove a clear sign that they are different from the rest. With such a backlog of material, the Johnsons have broken down their tune choices from 100 to 40, and plan to release the album in March. Using primarily their road band, they have also enlisted some outside help. Stevie Wonder has expressed an interest in having the Brothers hear and possibly record a couple of his tunes, and Deniece Williams is interested in singing back-up harmonies on a number of tracks.

The Johnsons' recording methods are different from most groups who work closely with a producer. They own a basement four-track where they record their various jams, lyrical ideas, and riffs and hammer them into tunes. Next they take the tapes to Quincy where they are criticized, strengthened, and then re-recorded. If Q thinks a tune is strong, he'll let it be, but he probably plays his most important role near the end, when the basic tracks are sweetened with over dubs and arrangements.

Is the new album a continuation of their first? "Some parts of it, maybe two or three tunes," George nods. "You could listen to it and relate it back to the last album, but there's also some things in it that are going forward. I was just into funk, like I said, never listened to anything else. But when I met Q, he opened my head to get all of it in."

By TOM VICKERS



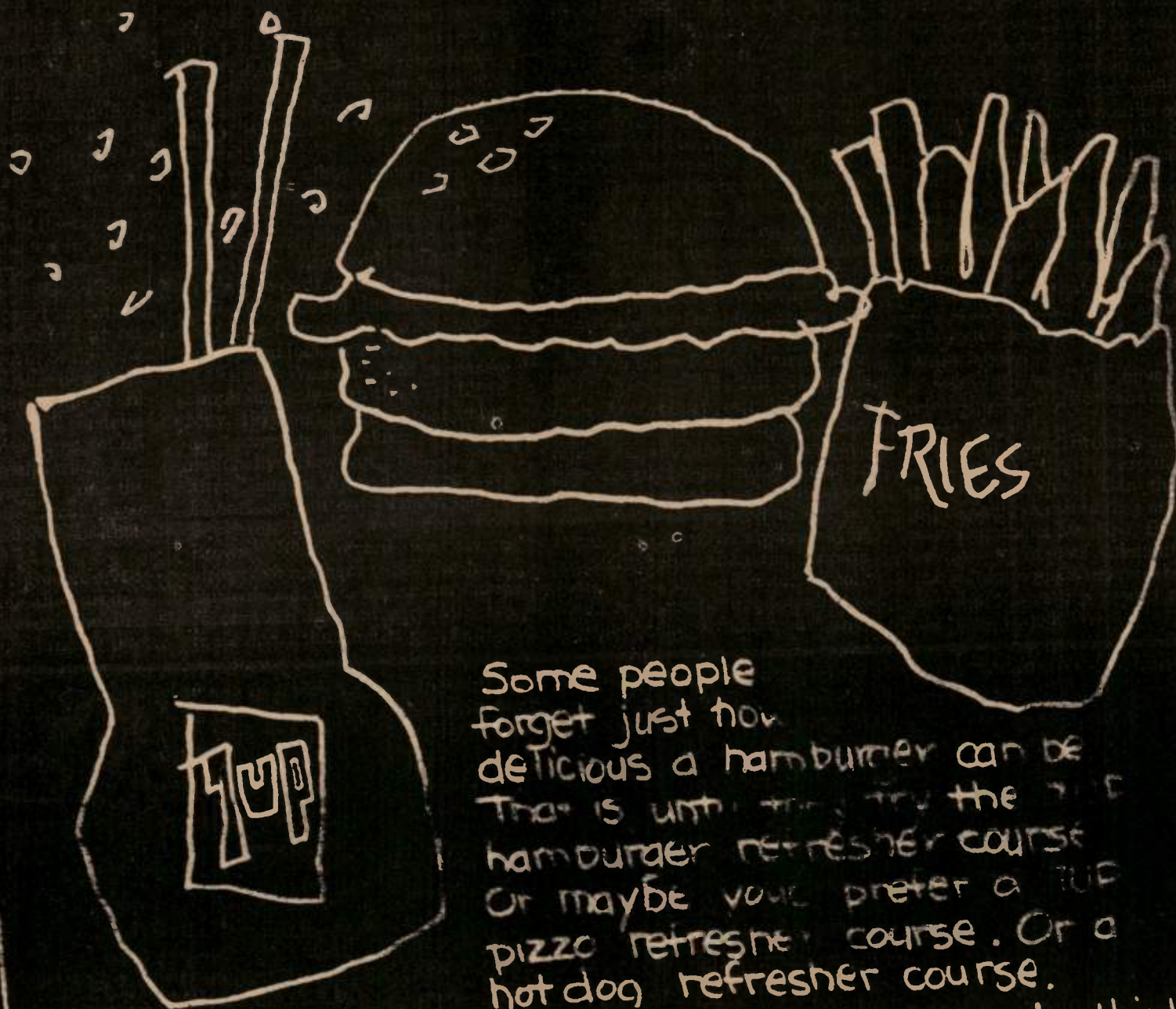
repetition the sound offers. George explains, "I dig the repetition personally, but we can't use it all the time. Ultimately, I feel that's what funk is, and for the Ohio Players or whatever group is into it, it's good for them. It gives me something I can listen to in it, whether we do it or not."

To the Brothers, disco is a separate entity from funk. "I like it," George continues, "but I don't

sing them. A lot of their tunes sound like something the Dramatics would do, or the Spinners, or Stylistics."

And the Brothers seem a bit miffed at all the groups who have jumped on the funk bandwagon. "I feel we've got to keep funk in the family," George declares strongly as the more silent brother Louis nods in agreement. "A lot of people don't really funk right. There's certain people that really play it. Sly

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The Miracles: Black Opera For The '70s



In many quarters, the departure of Smokey Robinson was considered the death knell for the remaining Miracles. With Robinson, the group was among the leading exponents of the classic 60's Motown soul sound—and certainly the most durable. Their string of hits, including "Shop Around," "Tears of a Clown," and "The Tracks of my Tears," spanned more than a decade.

Indeed, post-Smokey gigs proved disastrous; the group played at clubs for as few as eight people. An early musical grave seemed likely.

However, persistence and a string of minor hits (not the least of which was "Do It") brought the group back up to the subsistence level, and 1976 was quite productive. The group's *City Of Angels* LP and single "Love Machine" went gold, while early returns on "Spy For Brotherhood" (from the new *Love Crazy* album indicate a receptive thumbs up for 1977.

Amidst good tidings for the new

year, Pete Moore—one of the Miracles' original vocalists—explained how the group had survived.

"I think the Miracles have probably grown closer over the last four years than at any other time in our career. After Smokey left in '72, we acquired Bill (lead singer Bill Griffin). It was a very trying period for us. We weren't getting as many gigs and our records weren't selling. But, by that time, we had matured to the point where we knew we had to band together in order to weather the storm."

The "storm" blew out in late-'75 as the Miracles took a dramatic step in a different direction. Experimentation was in the air. Black groups, tired of being well-choreographed machines, moved into an era of deeper rhythms and harsher rocking sounds. On the other hand, white musicians were beginning to flex their muscles in the area of black music.

Adding to this state of what is now popularly termed as "crossing over," was *City Of Angels*; a

contrary-to-soul-norms concept disc about emotions gone wild in Los Angeles. *Love Crazy* continues the progressive bent of the group. This time out the sleazier side of the big city has been replaced by various shades of the human condition as the creative base.

"What you've seen with *City Of Angels* and now *Love Crazy* is a return by the group to the realm of innovators," said Moore. "We were that way in the beginning. The Miracles set the trends and others followed. But for a lot of years we lost that reputation. We're trying to regain it by doing new things and setting new trends for others to follow."

"Let's face it, you mention a black group to most people and they conjure up a picture of four dudes singing three part harmonies, wearing slick uniforms and doing choreographed 180-degree turns. A few years ago we were guilty of that exact same stereotype. But we decided that the concept was outdated and that, in order to get

back on top, we'd have to chance trying something that hadn't been done before. So we came up with a more advanced concept. People have been calling it black opera and we feel it's a fair description of what we're doing."

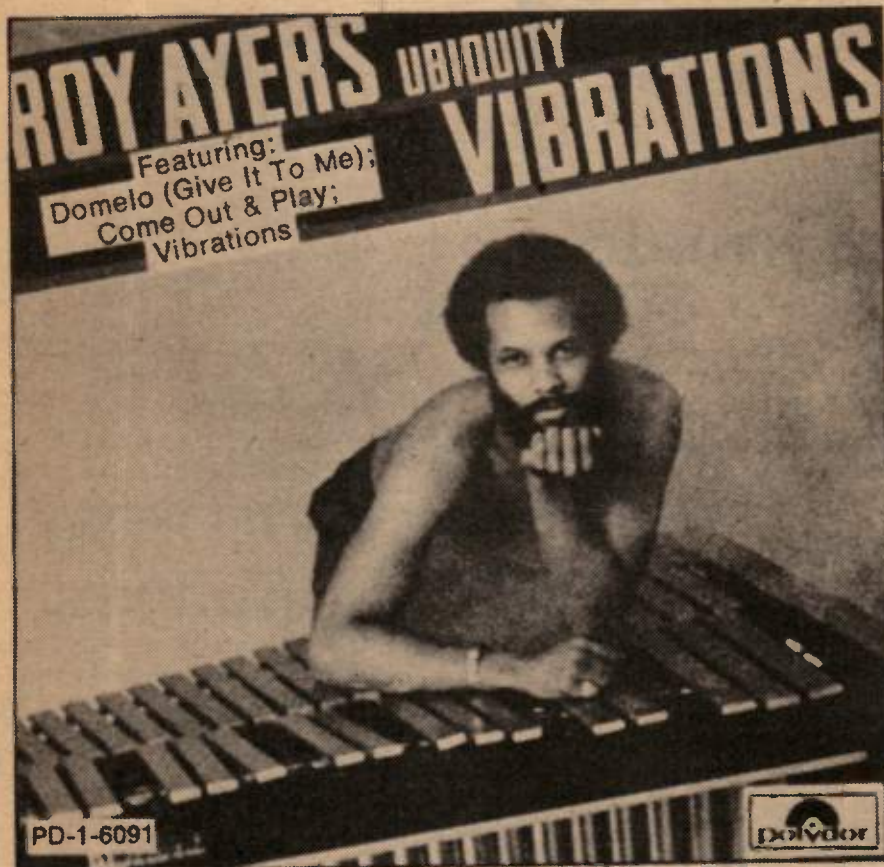
Moore's mention of forces contrary to traditionalist soul is evident in The Miracles' recent works. Instrumental and lyrical passages have taken on near classical qualities while bits of disco and jazz elements move to magnify the progressive in all compositions. These changes have likewise manifested themselves in the individual members and their influences. Nowadays, Moore moves equally to the beat of time honored ideas and the more progressive ways of Alice Cooper and Earth, Wind and Fire. But Moore is quick to point out that this musical step forward will not be at the expense of comprehension.

"To a certain degree our influences have gotten more progressive. But, by the same token, we have no intention of leaving behind the things that have brought the Miracles to this point. What we've done is mix both traditional and progressive forms into one creative format. We don't want to go off into a thing where we won't be recognized as the Miracles any longer. We want to use the progressiveness that's around us and inject it into our music."

This meeting of the past and present in the Miracles' music is plunging headlong towards a non-comprising future. Rather than opt for the neuter state of disco, the group has decided on a freer musical state. Though the topics of their songs remain rooted in the classic themes, they've gone out of their way to add sum and substance to them. *Love Crazy*, by Moore's own admittance, is less the mindless streetcorner seduction and more a fairy tale laid down in real life terms. Still, their ideals remain the same: to maintain and teach.

"*Love Crazy* talks about love and brotherhood," Moore closed. "But not just the 'I love you, boy meets girl' situation that most groups have pretty much worked to death. *Love Crazy* is about all the elements of love taken a step further. We're talking about love in all its wondrous facets. Now somebody is going to listen to that album and say 'Yeah, the Miracles. Great music.' But a minute later they'll think about what they just heard and they'll think to themselves 'Yeah. love. I can dig it.'"

Reviews



VIBRATIONS
Roy Ayers
Polydor PD 1-6091

By RUSSELL SHAW

Although listeners are spared the clichéd chic Afrique of *Mystic Voyage*, much of the material here still grates. Over the years, we have witnessed the decline of one of the most melodic vibes players into just another marching float on the parade of disco-funk.

Not that endlessly repeated boogie riffs and rump bump lyrics are necessarily a bane to art, but in this case they signify the failings of an artist who is quite content to rob us of exposure to his vast abilities, leaving tiresome rehashes in its wake. In no case is the indictment more graphic than on "Higher," with its slightly Latinized Ohio Players vamp of four-four thumps and routine cymbal work from a bored Steve Cobb on the traps. And where is Ayers? A good distance from the vibraphone singing the self-scribed banal lyrics.

The puzzling factor in all of this is the fact that while Ayers prefers to project an image of effete laziness, some of the other musicians in the Ubiquity really work. There's the supertight, inventive bass of William Allen backing up a conga section on "Kerral," the get-down harmonica of David Woo on "Come Out and Play," and his melodic ivory fill on "The Memory."

And what of *the star*? On record, as well as in person, Ayers prefers to act like a stud, utter invocations to the joy of the sex act and beauty of the cosmos, while giving us only the most rudimentary evidence of his chops on vibes. Indeed, on this whole record, there are but two Ayers solos; a brief, upbeat ride on "Searching," and a pretty, lyrical excursion on "Vibrations," where some lines parallel to a competent horn chart threaten to actually get things moving.

The music falters, however, in a pool of hackneyed sweat. There's lots of pounding and blowing, but in the end, the total lack of originality breeds nothing but jaded cynicism. Wasted motion, they call it.

"Beguine" started softly, with Procope limning the bass part on clarinet, as Kerr and Greer skipped from a sly tango into a firm stride into a 4/4 prance, and back and forth from there. "Song of India" was a short, reedy riff. On "Caravan," drums and piano kept up a modified Twist beat behind Procope's sinuous meanderings. On "I Wished On the Moon," which Procope also sang, the saxophonist presented a textbook example of how to use vibrato as a legitimate embellishment pretending to be Lawrence Welk on an old Steve Allen show, once introduced as "Take a Train"—Procope's presence of sound was positively commanding, and Kerr and Greer made their music sound as natural

as breath. Ellington would have been proud.



FESTIVAL
Santana
Columbia PC-34423

By SAM GRAHAM

Carlos Santana's current state is typical of the many pop musicians who after the first flush of creativity, find themselves so mired in their innate limitations that they spend years jumping on and off various bandwagons in search of a "meaningful" contribution.

Santana is still vainly trying to rekindle the fires of Woodstock and "Black Magic Woman," but he hasn't done anything remotely inspired since the incredible "Song of the Wind" from *Caravanserai*. These days he doesn't seem to know who he is or what music he wants to play. Should he opt for lighting up the heavens with love, devotion and surrender, or should he say "Sri ya later" to the spiritual rebop and get down to some funky disco like everyone else? Then again, there's always the mantle of latin jazz-rock to uphold, all those timbales to pound and "ay yi yi's" to shout, which after all was his trademark to begin with.

Festival has some of each, and most of it is mighty ordinary. The most (only) satisfying music comes when Carlos stretches out on guitar, where there are a few remaining vestiges of the old Third World passion to be ignited. Even then he wastes a lot of time seemingly auditioning to be the next wah-wahed cosmic string-bender; a depressing tendency since the McLaughlin collaboration album. But the occasional subtle moments ("Revelations," "Vernao Vermelho") are enough indication that if you put him together with other sympathetic soloists (Gato Barbieri comes to mind—now *that* would be a pairing) playing flavorful *instrumental* music, Santana might still be able to move you.

Lack of identity in the vocal work has been the glaring problem of every Santana line-up, and *Festival* isn't about to break with tradition. The songs (with predictable titles like "Let the Music Set You Free" and "Try a Little Harder") are either soulful Earth, Wind and Fire cops or imitations of Trini Lopez doing salsa. Changing singers every album hasn't helped, because Santana himself can't figure out what

sort of band it is he's running. His richly romantic guitar work has become the last redoubt of his fading integrity. Now if he'll only realize that, and stop doing what comes unnaturally.

ART LANDE
"Rubisa Patrol"
With Mark Isham,
Bill Douglass,
Glenn Cronkhite



RUBISA PATROL
Art Lande
ECM-1081

By COLMAN ANDREWS

Probably more than any other jazz label of the mid 70's (even Pablo), ECM has a coherent musical philosophy—and that implies predictability and repetitiousness. There is, in other words, an ECM style—jazz that is almost scrupulously lyrical, usually acoustic, and frequently European (or at least recorded in Europe). As was the case with Blue Note in the early 60's, one can often tell the label a piece of ECM jazz is on before one can identify the people playing it.

This doesn't mean that some typical ECM music isn't worthwhile, because it most certainly is. One very good and very typical ECM release is this one, by pianist Art Lande. It's a peaceful, articulate LP; well put together and played by an ensemble which sounds at ease. The other musicians are Mark Isham on trumpet, flugelhorn, and soprano saxophone; Bill Douglass on bass, flute, and bamboo flute; and Glenn Cronkhite on drums and percussion.

Lande is an able, if not brilliantly original pianist, who plays with a lot of the same evenhandedness, and the same deliberate tentativeness, that Jarrett effects. His melodies (three of his originals appear here, one of which is played in two different versions) are confident and hauntingly attractive, even if the ghost of "In a Silent Way" is present behind them (behind the songs contributed by Cronkhite and Isham, too). A brief traditional Chinese flute piece is included, as is a Bulgarian folk song, which provides a stirring 55 seconds. (The Turkish-Swedish jazz-folk group, Sevdha, has done similar material at greater length; and, of course, the Bulgarians themselves do it for hours).

I find myself playing this record frequently. It's a fine example of what genuinely pleasant music can be created through the assimilation of rich material, the restraints of good taste, and the easily recognizable clarity of un-self-conscious technical proficiency.

AUTOMATIC MAN

"My Pearl"
[Island]

There's something futuristic about this record that I find quite appealing. For one thing there's absolutely no bottom in the mix, it's all mid-range and highs. The vocals and guitar solos (debts to Jimi) are fashionably phased, even if the lyrics are quite ordinary. But that hardly matters. Like Phil Spector once said, "It's not what it means, it's what it makes you feel."

BEE GEES

"Should Be Dancing"
[RSO]

The first record to be influenced by KC and the Sunshine Band won hands down against the original 1976 entry. "Dancing" rocked "Shake Your Booty" right off the turntable.

BOOTSIE'S BAND

"Psychoticbumpschool"
[Warner Brothers]

A record that's about absolutely nothing. Alumni Funkadelic and bassist Bootsy Collins hit a common denominator with this schoolyard couplet: "Peace-OK/I don't Play." It got 9,000 people in New Orleans on their feet shouting "BOOTSIE"—me too.

DRAMATICS

"Be My Girl"
[ABC]

A stunning example of contemporary harmonizing. Sweet, greasy and for real—just like it should be.

TYRONE DAVIS

"Turning Point"
[Dakar]

One could easily have chosen Tyrone's first Columbia single "Give It Up," as well. TD's groove has changed little since "Can I Change My Mind," but then it's so appealing. Tyrone Davis is not only the current king of Chicago soul but also soul music's hottest selling male singer.

SOUL & JAZZ SINGLES



JOE McEWEN'S TOP 20
SOUL & JAZZ SINGLES
OF 1976

[Arranged alphabetically]

DOUBLE EXPOSURE

"Ten Percent"
[Salsoul]

The only Philadelphia record to be included this year and deservedly so. It shamed everything out of Philly International save the O'Jays "Livin' For the Weekend."

EARTH, WIND FIRE

"Getaway"
[Columbia]

Even diehard E,W&F haters should like this. An escapist theme in the tradition of urban fantasy classics like "Up On The Roof," "Getaway" is also one of the most sophisticated, self-contained hits of the year.

EMOTIONS

"Flowers"
[Columbia]

E,W&F had a hand in this one, too. "Flowers" is spiritual, minus the pretense, while the flip is taut, aggressive dance music. Better yet buy the album. Wanda Hutchison can sing.

AL GREEN

"Keep Me Crying"
[Hi]

Al may have peaked commercially, but his music is still compelling. If this single is any indication, Green seems on the verge of being consumed by his own paranoia and passion. A laudable Willie Mitchell effort as well.

DOBIE GRAY

"Find 'em, Fool 'em,
[Capricorn]

This sounds neither like Dobie Gray nor like George Jackson's original. Gray softened up the lyric to blot out charges of sexism.

WILLIE HUTCH

"Party Down"
[Motown]

Hutch is a limited but often appealing singer/songwriter. "Party Down" hits the jackpot.

TESSIE HILL

"Great Things"
[ABC]

A simple and moving gospel record that is a must for fans of Aretha's early Atlantic ballads. Whatever happened to Rance Allen?

GENERAL JOHNSON

"All In The Family"
[Arista]

This is the same guy who wrote "Patches" and one might call "All in the Family" an urban version of that theme. It's all about the hard times the Johnson family endured in the winter of 1962. There's a neat bit of romantic realism (?) here that serves as a counterpoint to the Temptations "Papa Was a Rolling Stone."

BROTHERS JOHNSON

"I'll Be Good To You"
[A&M]

One of many instant groups that surfaced in '76. The Brothers are also included on the Ten Worst list as well, with the tedious "Get the Funk Out Ma Face."

MIRAGE

"I Had A Fight
With Love"
[Warners]

Like Tessie Hill, this is a real left fielder. Blue-eyed soul with a "Clean Up Woman" feel.

PARLIAMENT

'Roof Off The Sucker'
[Casablanca]

The only group with two 45's in the Top 20, Parliament (and alter ego Funkadelic) was simply the happening group of 1976. The only band licensed to say "Funk used to be a bad word." Hopefully, the vision won't falter.

STAIRSTEPS

"From Us To You"
[Dark Horse]

A short-lived comeback far different from the old 5 Stairsteps belly rub hits of the past. Hopefully the new association with Warners will bring a more sustained profile.

BOBBY WOMACK

"Daylight"
[UA]

Womack seems to be able to write memorable hit songs at the drop of a hat. Still his albums are inconsistent and even producer David Rubinson couldn't change that. Like the Drells' "Let's Groove," "Daylight" was a disco anthem of sorts.

STEVIE WONDER

"I Wish"
[Tamla]

The one truly outstanding selection from *Songs in the Key of Life*, "I Wish" is poignant, witty and rocking. You can't ask for more than that.

The Bizzare World of George Clinton

(Parliament/Funkadelic Drop The Funk-Bomb On America)

By JOE NICK PATOSKI

NEW ORLEANS—Maintaining two separate personalities and record labels for his band Parliament/Funkadelic has been an act of schizophrenic genius on the part of Maggot Overlord, George Clinton. Combining the two entities for the P-Funk Earth Opera—the most lavish, outrageous black music touring show on the planet—is merely a stroke of brilliance. As far as Clinton is concerned though, it's just another step in the master plan in which the spectator becomes raw cloning material, ripe for programming into the new age of the Funk Bomb.

Twenty five proverbial screaming Negroes, attired in everything from moose antlers down to guitarist Gary Shider's next-to-nothing diapers should be enough to break down most doubters' resistance. But this is almost 1977, and pop music's growing technical sophistication as a live medium makes the competitive edge sharper. Thus, the insane asylum atmosphere is intensified with a \$275,000 stage designed by Jules Stein (who put together similar shows for Kiss, David Bowie, and Alice Cooper), pulled together in a two-hour epic that tells a loose-ended story about man's misuse of funk and the subsequent giving up of the funk to Astronauts from the Mothership. If this sounds a little too extraterrestrial, then good, because P-Funk intentionally employs every psychedelic and spiritual cliché from the Sixties, and lets the audience in on the joke. It's all there—fog machines, strobe lights, 40-foot space people in stacked heels and tennis shoes, an inflatable pimpmobile climaxed by an actual flying saucer—the Mothership—that descends from a giant Big Apple cap dangling above the stage.

Admittedly, all of this sounds a bit too similar to the past extravaganzas by the likes of Kiss and Alice Cooper. Beneath the glitter and backdrop of this stage show is some meat. The psychotic sax player who walks around like a good clone with the stiffness of Robbie the Robot is Maceo Parker, formerly of James Brown's band. Next to him is JB's old arranger Fred Wesley. And the teenage idol whacking his star-shaped bass—that's Bootsy Collins, another Brown alumni. Either way you have it, JB's made it to the Seventies (without making a personal appearance), and glam-rock finally has a substantial beat to shake your booty to.

P-Funk may be the ultimate 70's riff. There are no requirements, no demands, no thinking, no nothing. This is entertainment—George Clinton's stupid liberation movement that in essence fuses the post-Beatles search for meaning

with neo-Disco party sensibilities. "Stupid is positive. Dumb is when you fucked up on the negative side. Funk is positive and negative," Clinton explains. "Dumb you can know something and see it through the wrong thing. Stupid is you don't know no better—positive ignorance."

Clinton spoke during a rare earthbound moment riding through the French Quarter of New Orleans, the scene of a Funk Bomb explosion the night before. George is wearing one of a closetful of spacesuits and his protege next to him, Bootsy, looks tough in his star-shaped mirror shades. Even the temporary Mothership, in this case a horse-drawn carriage, gets in the act, the horse duded out in a safari helmet and diapers. Bootsy, as leader of Bootsy's Rubber Band, the opening act of the P-Funk show, is George's third phase of his Total Funk plan to convert all earth to the Mothership. Bootsy's crowd includes the pre-teens, or what the Booted One calls "the geepies."

"You can bet there was at least 1000 converts last night," George is saying, and Bootsy nods. "The young ones analyze. They got to figure out if it's all right. I mean there's this weird one up there with a diaper on."

If they're with their parents they don't know how to act. What it seems like is they're coming to school to learn. They be lookin' for it. They're heavy. They wanna know about the A to Z. Glory be, the funk's on me!"

The seed for all this legal insanity was the actual sighting of the Mothership by George and Bootsy a couple of years ago, conveniently just after Parliament finished recording *Mothership Connection* for Casablanca, now a platinum album. The Overlord and his sidekick were driving in their car one night and

"we were seeing this light for about a half mile away and neither of us said anything. But as we approached the spot where it happened, we looked around like we knew what the other had seen." Three times in a row light hit the car. "We thought the Mothership was mad at us for giving up the funk without permission. And then it hit the car again head on. we accepted that as proof and said, 'Let's go funk in.' We had been endowed. Bootsy emphasized the magnitude of the sighting on his life, "Yeah, we're superheroes here and now but when that happened, we had to run."





Parliament Power—"They'd come in there with their mink coats on and their diamonds and we blew their minds so much they went naked, dancing onstage."

--George Clinton



After the Mothership sighting, the stage show naturally evolved. "We were planning all along to do it when all the other groups were doing it like Earth, Wind, and Hot Air," George says coyly. "We knew we were gonna do it but we didn't want to do nothing less than anybody else, including white rock groups. We had already been freaking out for years, we didn't want anyone putting the "one" on us. So when we saw all these Martians flying around, we bought a spaceship from 'em."

Actually, previous to the discovery of a guiding light, it wasn't always so easy to win converts with the new language of conceptual funk. Clinton and the heart of Parliament—Calvin Simon, Fuzzy Haskins, Grady Thomas, and Ray Davis—were conceived around Clinton's hairdressing shop in Newark back in the fifties where, as semi-normal earthlings, they hung out doing street corner Jersey doo-wop. They progressed through numerous labels, including ABC and Tamla-Motown, before Parliament's first hit "I Just Wanna Testify" hit the charts in 1966 on the Revilot label. By this time, they moved headquarters to Detroit. Already, sweet soul sound was being infiltrated by sinister forces. When Parliament was caught in one of those infamous contractual snags, Clinton simply fractured the band's persona into Funkadelic, a guitar-laden black rock group. Within that structure developed a weirdness akin to a San Francisco acid nightmare. Cosmic perfection became *Cosmic Slop*, devotees transformed into maggot brains, and to all the stoned out hippies too transfixed to move, the chant rose, "Shit; Goddam! Get off your ass and jam." Free-form ethics were twisted to the limit.

Mindless expansion was actually in progress before Funkadelic was born, and the doo woppers paid the price for riding with the new wave. "They wouldn't accept us then," George recalls. P-Funk aligned

themselves more closely to Ann Arbor rock circa MC-5 and Iggy Stooze than with Motown silk n' soul. Clinton claims they inspired Iggy's improvisational onstage guerilla tactics. "He got most of that stuff from us. We've cleaned up a lot since then."

Bootsy described a typical night in the late sixties: "George used to come out onstage and he'd be so loaded, he just made faces and then he'd get off." George extrapolated. "It was pantomime. Back in those days it was so loud, the PA couldn't pick us up, so you never heard what we were saying anyway. So we'd just go out and pantomime."

Occasionally Clinton would actually open his mouth and get some results. "We played the 20 Grand Club in Detroit, which was a straight club for blacks where all the Motown acts were at, and we used to make them strip naked. They'd come in there with their mink coats on and their diamonds and we blew their minds so much they went naked, dancing onstage."

Funkadelic still found themselves without a popular base, though. Blacks beyond the 20 Grand couldn't relate and the white psychedelic crowd, while perhaps dazzled, didn't get entirely on the good foot behind the Parliafunkadelicment Thang.

While Funkadelic worked as an album band, Parliament experienced one of their periodic revivals and hit with a few disco single, such as "Up With the Down Stroke" on Casablanca. Amazingly the two personalities rarely clashed and, even today remaining distinct. "One has guitars, one has horns," George explains. "Funkadelic is louder." The duality extends to the point that each band's fans often compete. "There's people that like Parliament that can't stand Funkadelic and the other way around. Funkadelic is our oldest audience and they can't stand Parliament. They like the concept of P-Funk, but, uh, we'd rather hear *Maggot*

Brain and shit, goddam, get off your ass.... To them it's the one on it."

Competition between the two is passe with the evolution of the *Clones of Dr. Funkenstein* by Parliament and *Hard Core Jollies*, Funkadelic's latest album and first for Warner Brothers. Clones no longer need to funk behind closed doors in this era of stupid liberation deeply expanded boundaries. "How far can we go?" George asks rhetorically. "Oh man, how fat is the Universe? They told me there's a hole in the Universe. We intend to go through it and see what's on the other side of that. We're not gonna stop them. It's in perpetual motion now."

In P-Funk's Brave New World, drugs are inoperative. "Now I'm not gonna say 'No more drugs,' cause we're a drug. We're a positive drug. We're habit-forming but positive. We'll take you to the same place, we'll get you there. We're LSD."

P-Funk not only works as a mindless stimulant, it contains all the spiritual values of TM, EST, ESP, etc. with half the mess, causing inexplicable acts of harmony. "With TRM, you have to use twenty minutes of the day, with funk all you have to do is acknowledge it." It evidently is sufficient cause for two record companies—practitioners of viciousness common only to the business world and cannibals to work together in the P-Funk blitz. "Who would ever thought they would be holding hands? In the name of funk. Funk bridges everything, even in the hard core record business. If you can do it in the record business, you can do it anywhere," George cockily claims. "I mean they were actually getting along. They were holding hands."

If Clinton can actually maintain the delicate balance, P/F's future projections appear less shuck-and-jive space rap oriented and more geared towards taking care of business for the U.S. Funk Mob. Certainly they're well qualified. George Worrell, Glen Goins, and Bootsy backed Johnny Taylor on the monstrous "Disco Lady" and it's Bootsy, Worrell, and Clinton that lay down most of the basic rhythm tracks on present and future projects. There'll be plenty of those if George can keep up with all his split personalities. He figures by the end of next year he'll have at least five acts to direct.

"We intend to take it like Motown did. Everyone in the group can write. We've really been going to school. When we cut records we try to create more producers within the group that understand the concept and have other concepts."

"The first five groups that we put out are going to be what they call superstars. Our clones will be programmed to the max. We're not gonna put out any 3.2 groups." Fred Wesley and Maceo have a release scheduled on Atlantic as the Horny Horns and Bernie Worrell, Fuzzy Haskins, the two female vocalists are all slated to pour into Clinton's superstar vinyl mold.

The Mothership will even extend a hand to non-believers. For starters, they're hoping to pull James Brown back into the fun(k). "We're funk with James until he says 'I'm mad and I'm bad'." They're also taking on Sly, another comeback attempt, on the road as a supporting act. Sly is the first, in George's view, to effectively weld funk and rock values together, and Clinton would like nothing better than to have him convert. "We're gonna beg him to come on. He's got to give up the funk and he can. He's the only one here that's capable of giving it up to the extent of being accepted on the Mothership."

Clinton figures he'll come around, but even if Sly doesn't, George is careful not to make the same mistakes as his predecessor. Space may be the place, but it's no free ride staying in orbit. "Most people lose at this stage of the game. They get in on top and they either think they did it by themselves or they ain't got to work no more. Whatever it is for some reason it all falls short right about now. And this is where we want to begin."

There are virtually no barriers to the mindlessness of this Uri Geller of funk, as evidenced by offering the first concrete alternative to Gamble-Huff's Peace n' Love hippie adaptations. Instead of carrying a message-laden tune rife with socio-political implications, P-Funk projects only the most warped sci-fi values conceivable. Rather than have a Billy Paul celebrating the joys of making babies, Clinton says, "We don't have babies. We clone our babies. Having babies is obsolete."

Clinton perceives the stage show constantly altering shape. "Next year we're gonna have an underwater show. Dolfunk and smoking seaweed, things like that." The current production eventually will expand into a full-blown stage play, if he was his conceptual way, even though the current routine easily makes *Green Pastures* look like summer stock. Meanwhile the Funk Mob is awaiting further instruction from the beyond. Bootsy offers one futuristic glimpse: "Everybody will be talking like we are now. We'll be somewhere else like the moon or Venus."

Blending together Sixties street rap with Seventies business sophistication provided P-Funk with their own personal liberation. And it looms as the perfect statement of making music on a mass scale today. Keep it simple, make it fun, be off the wall and the rest will follow. "All hippies was trying to be was free and stupid. Stupid mixtures of colors and craziness. On purpose, though. It was intentional. You don't match colors, you won't starve. It was a way of breakin' loose. That's what we figure, we'll break it loose some more and take it another step. We'll break all the way loose. I don't think we're gonna die. Matter of fact, I think we might get rich."

"IT'S PEACHY"

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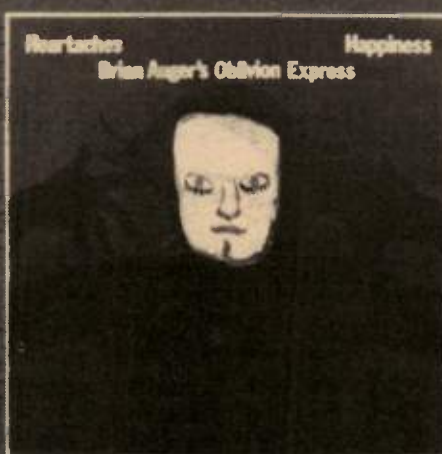


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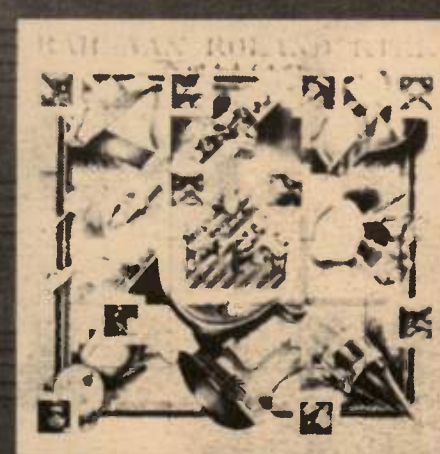


HERMETO PASCOAL

HERMETO PASCOAL: *Slaves Mass*. Brazil's vanguard pianist debuts for Warner's with an album produced by Flora Purim, Aírto Moreira.



BRIAN AUGER'S OBLIVION EXPRESS: *Happiness Heartaches*. Ten years of trailblazing in jazz-rock have made him the premier organist in his field.



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ALICE COLTRANE: *Rudha Krishna Nama Sankirtana*. "The moment is reflective of the music and the music is reflective of the moment." Alice's piano artistry highlights her second W.B. LP. Ed Michel co-produces.

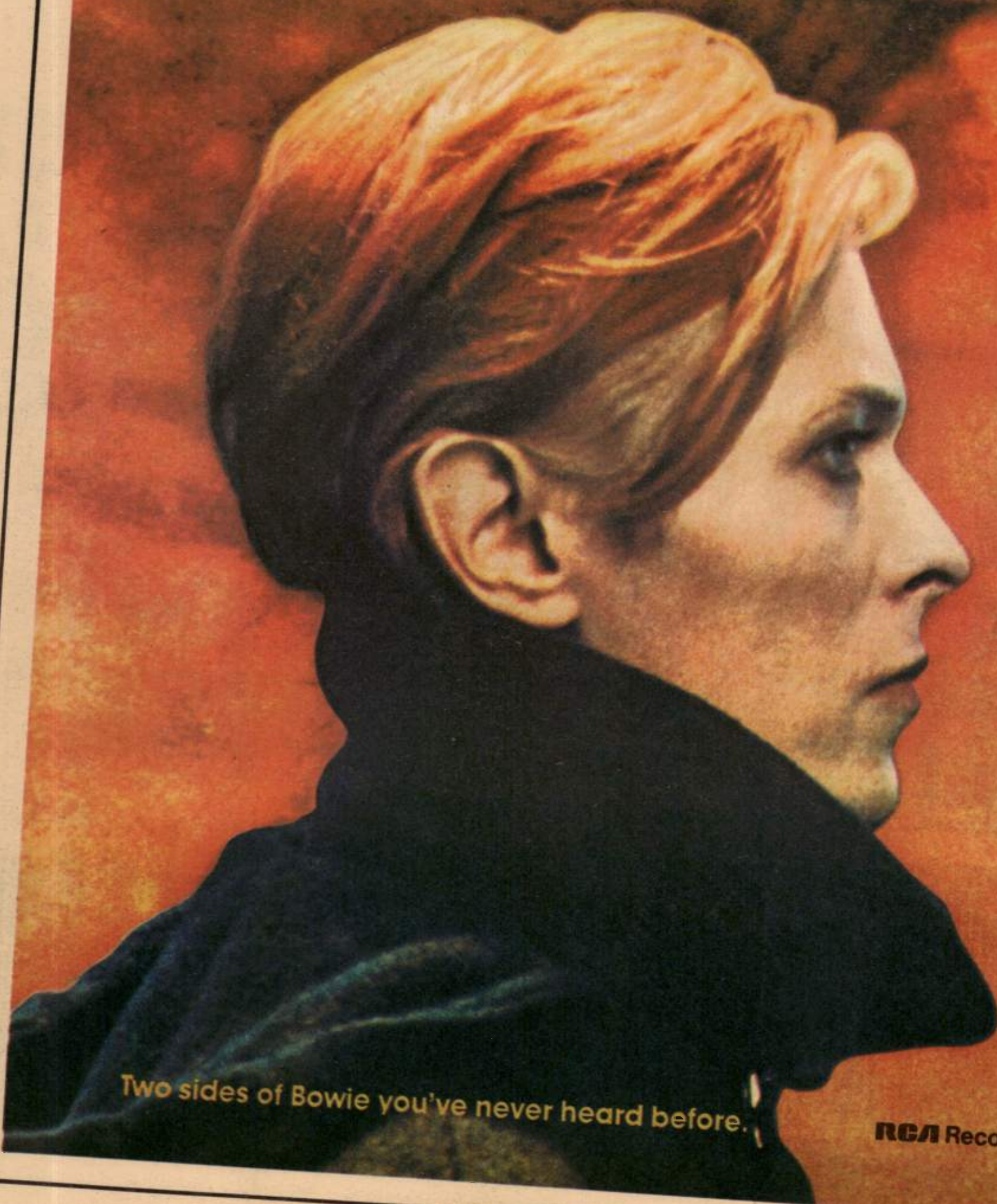


MICHAEL FRANKS: *Sleeping Gypsy*. Franks' *The Art of Tea* ("Popsicle Toes") was last year's sleeper. Recording with Tommy LiPuma in Brazil and California, Franks goes further still in establishing himself as a threat on jazz and pop charts.



THE CLAUD OGERMAN ORCHESTRA: *Gate of Dreams*. Ground-breaking project for the distinguished composer-conductor. George Benson and David Sanborn participate in this Tommy LiPuma production.

DAVID BOWIE Low



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