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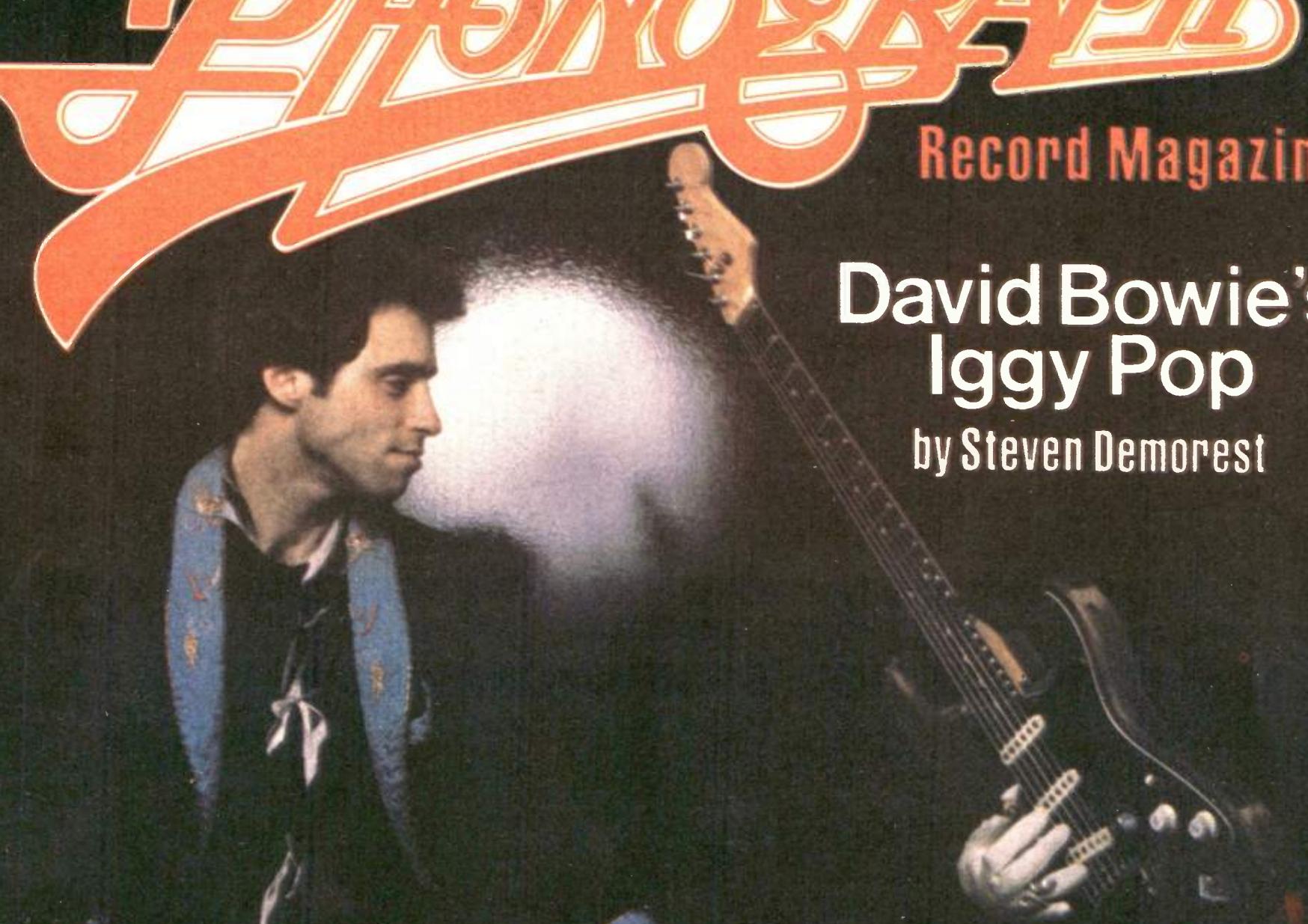
THE NEW YORK

# PHONOGRAPH

Record Magazine

David Bowie's  
Iggy Pop

by Steven Demorest



Nils Lofgren Shakes Rock 1977

Free From NEWEN

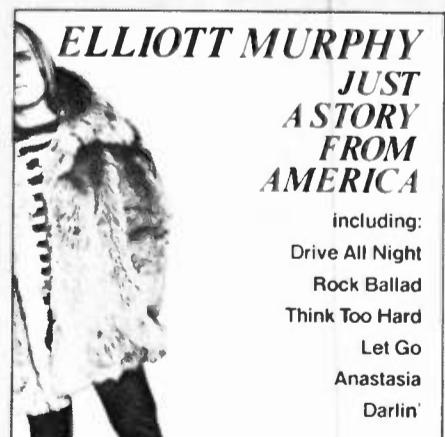
by  
Lester  
Bangs

# NILS

**He could  
write a book.**



**But he chose  
rock and roll  
instead.**



**Elliott Murphy.  
"Just a Story From  
America."  
On Columbia Records  
and Tapes.**

Produced by Robin Geoffrey Cable.

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TO THE  
BOTTOM LINE

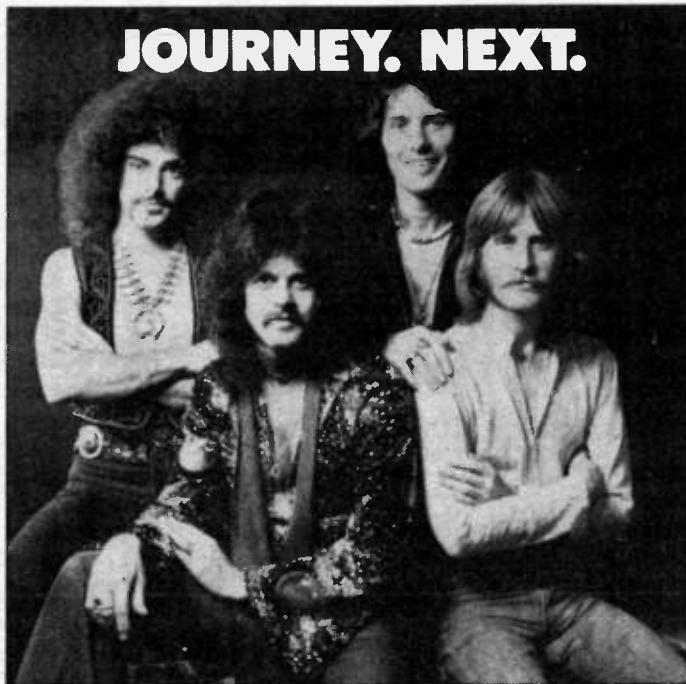
We've enjoyed sharing the many good times, good feelings and good music that you, Allan & Stanley, and your staff have given to WNEW-FM and our listeners.

All of us at WNEW-FM wish you continued success.

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Pat Dawson



# "Next": They sound less like where they came from, and more like Journey.



Three albums ago, ex-members of Santana, the Steve Miller Band and the Mothers of Invention combined talents to form Journey.

Reviewers couldn't help comparing their new music to their former bands (quite favorably, we might add). And concert goers went to see what their old friends Gregg Rolie, Neal Schon, Ross Valory and Aynsley Dunbar were up to these days.

Now, with "Next," it's official. Journey is a musical force all its own.

Listen to "Next," and you'll never again think of Gregg, Neal, Ross and Aynsley as anything but members of Journey.

**On Columbia Records and Tapes.**

# PHONOGRAPH

RECORD  
MAGAZINE

April, 1977 Issue #77

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### STARDOM FOR NILS: *Can He Back It Up?*

Music's Rock and Roll Kid is ready. Nils Lofgren is ready to complete that move from adored cult figure to all-American superstar. After a stint with the tearfully missed group Grin, through two acclaimed solo albums, Nils Lofgren remains unknown to the majority of Americans, as of April, 1977. But his latest, most accessible album, *I Came To Dance* should change that. Yet at what expense will stardom come? Some observers feel Nils has gone too far at making his music easy to like. Even Nils himself anticipates some will say *I Came To Dance* is an attempt to cash in on the disco-like rhythmic emphasis so in vogue today. Arguments notwithstanding, Nils feels the new album is a credible effort at attracting the masses, and warns, "If you don't like it, you don't like me."

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Aside from making movies and space-rock albums, David Bowie has devoted much of his time recently producing one Jim Osterberg. With his album now hitting the stores, Osterberg is preparing a U.S. tour, and reports out of England tell of David Bowie sitting in onstage. As always, Osterberg is billing himself by the name of which he is best known: Iggy. With *The Idiot*, Iggy shows himself to be as schizophrenic as ever, but then, unbelievability has always been his inspiration. But with Bowie's help, Iggy has finally achieved a degree of artistic legitimacy on record, and with it, you have to wonder how long Iggy can take seriously this concept of himself as Mr. Lunatic Fringe Tuff Guy.

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### BAD COMPANY IN 1977: *Runnin' With The Angels*

Paul Rodgers thinks he's so tough. And should there be any doubters, Bad Company's volatile lead vocalist has taken up the art of karate. But instead of using his feet to kick roadies' heads in or disfigure hotel rooms, other group members maintain that Rodgers' new hobby is actually having a soothing effect. As Bad Company issues its fourth album, *Burnin' Sky*, and prepares to begin a four-month American tour, the boys are cooling the raging hijinks which once gave the band the rowdiest of images. By doing so, the group—which has so far squeezed two ex-Free members, an ex-King Crimson, and one ex-Mott the Hoople into one harmonious ball—hopes to forever avoid the typical British band "break-up" syndrome. Meanwhile, Andy Fraser, Rodgers' old partner in Free, is currently trying to follow Bad Company's lead into the realm of sophisticated heavy-metal with a new group, the Screamers. And another group of in limbo British musicians has formed Rough Diamond in an attempt to crash the party.

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Produced by John Anthony and Eddie Kramer

ON A&M RECORDS & TAPES





## Performances

L-R: John Deacon, Freddie Mercury, Roger Taylor & Brian May.

**QUEEN and THIN LIZZY**  
Chicago Stadium  
Chicago, Illinois

By TED JOSEPH

It should, by all means and stretches of the imagination, have been the hot show to end the winter freeze-out that finds rock and roll barrenness haunting this windy city in a post-Christmas hangover. But, Thin Lizzy's challenge to Queen's throne turned out to be a rather luke-warm battle.

Lizzy is obviously looking for a break to stardom in the U.S. after years as headliners in Britain, and this could have been the tour for it to happen. Not this time around. Quite simply, Lizzy's likeable, somewhat spirited music doesn't have much life on stage, due to a number of factors.

It's stage presence simply isn't that of an up-and-coming '70s band, but rather a ghost like reminiscence of the rising days of Ten Years After or Black Sabbath. Bassist/lead singer Phil Lynott down on his knees screaming 'baby...baby...baby' seems ridiculously out of place in 1977.

Thin Lizzy has a minimal of pacing. Opening with screaming sirens and flashing police cherries to accompany "Jailbreak" is a real eye-opening kicker, but the energy level is all downhill from there. After opening with two stalwart songs, and burying its anthem ("The Boys Are Back in Town") somewhere in the middle, there is nothing to effectively close with.

Most of all, with a band so

obviously centered on the dual lead guitar concept, you'd think the absence of guitarist Brian Robertson would be compensated for, that Scott Gorham would work doubly hard to cover Robertson's void, but not so. L.A.-based substitute Gary Moore filled for Robertson, and the result was an exchange of mediocre licks between Moore and Gorham, a lowering of the finesse level to make it work. In actuality, it didn't work at all.

So maybe that less than impressive opening is why Queen didn't play its best, either. Any excuse will do. Fact of the matter is, in relaxing and refining himself onstage, Freddie Mercury has taken a certain childlike excitement away from the show. His struts are more theatrical and less natural, and the perpetually fading vocals says either the sound crew are asleep at the dials or Mercury is spending so much energy on appearance that his vocal force has suffered for it.

It's tempting to say 'they're big stars, they don't have to worry,' but the superb lighting, pyrotechnics and musical pulse from guitarist Brian May, bassist John Deacon and drummer Roger Taylor have stayed at the same level since they departed the States last year. It's one of the best integrated, most fully developed power trio sounds remaining today, and without a lot of noise to mimic the real music. Deacon and Taylor remain visually unobtrusive, but run together with May like finely lubed cogs; and May's royal leads constantly tug the show to new levels.

That's where Lizzy can take a

lesson from the royalty: Queen know their own dynamics and their audiences' interdynamics well. Their pacing has become exquisite. They still open with a killer rocker ("Tie Your Mother Down," this time), shift to a softer tempo and sound by mid-set ("You Take My Breath Away"), fit in most (if not all) of their hits, balance their material historically, close with the power of "In the Lap of the Gods," and still have the classic stage routine of "Now I'm Here" left for an encore.

The final flashes and finesse leave the crowd standing in anticipation of things to come, which is always the next tour. It leaves the audience hot and hard, and hungry for what the next tour brings. It's an art called creative anticipation, and it's something that not too many bands have. In this case, it's the difference. It's what builds a following.

**LONE STAR**  
Westfield College  
London, England

By GEOFF BARTON

Lone Star's power-packed debut album had everybody, but everybody, talking when it was first released in Britain back in mid-1976 and has stirred more excitement since being issued recently in the U.S. Roy Thomas Baker, formerly associated with Queen, produced the LP, brimful of immaculate heavy rocking tunes—especially a tasteful reworking of the Beatles' "She Said."

At the time, Lone Star's path into the future seemed safe, smooth, and assured. But in reality, events

quickly took a turn for the worse. Cutting it live, onstage, was the first problem. Lone's Star premiere British tour with Mott turned out to be less than successful, their clumsy and overbearing stage act leaving much to be desired. Several weeks of intensive rehearsals more or less smoothed this over. But then, the band's vocalist and prime songwriter, Kenny Driscoll, decided to call it a day. And not content with splitting from the group, Driscoll began claiming that the Lone Star title belonged to him by right.

Pushing to the back of their minds the possibility of legal action and a change of name, Lone Star opened their first headlining British tour with a hastily recruited singer, one John Sloman, and played so well, it was scarcely credible. London's tiny Westfield College staged the first date, and the band literally raised the roof as if they hadn't a care in the world.

Heading off with "A Million Stars," Lone Star's three front men; Sloman, and guitarists Tony Smith and Paul Chapman, immediately came across as a supremely confident, ultra-competent trio. Sloman has a strong, insistent voice, although his range isn't quite as extensive as his predecessor's. Smith and Chapman exchanged licks and soloed neatly. The remainder of the band; Rick Worsnop, keyboards, Peter Hurley, bass, and Dixie Lee, drums, were no slouchs, either, the rhythm section being particularly emphatic.

The over-used term "heavy-metal" remains the most apt description of Lone Star's music. The band's set included most of the numbers from their album, including "Lonely Soldier," "She Said," and "Spaceship," together with a fair smattering of new material.

The drawbacks were few, but nonetheless, need to be resolved if Lone Star is to mature successfully. First off, the group's set appears to be too consciously rehearsed at the moment; the lip-pouting, grimacing and bare-chested macho moves seemingly coming from the mind of a choreographer than from natural spontaneity. Also, I'd hoped that Roy Thomas Baker's frilly musical production edges would have disappeared in concert performance. Well, some of them have, but most of them haven't. Many of the band's songs are too structured. A new funk-oriented number in particular incorporated so many time changes that it was hard to keep count. Less clever musicianship and more straight-ahead rock and roll would help matters considerably.

However, quibbles aside, Lone Star really do deserve their position as one of Britain's most exciting new '70s generation bands. If they can overcome the aforementioned difficulties, their path into the future will indeed be safe, smooth, and assured.



# NEW NILS LOFGREN. "I CAME TO DANCE"

Produced by Nils Lofgren and Andy Newmark



**VICIOUS DIRT, RUMORS  
and SCANDALS from**

**HOLLYWOOD**

**Rodney Bingenheimer**

**"If it's trendy  
I'll print it"**

Hooray for Hollywood, everybody! Yours truly has just returned to West Coast shores from a top-secret mission in New York. I was flown by one of the biggest record companies in the world to check-out the punk scene supposedly in full blossom in the land of the Brooklyn Bridge. Well, I couldn't find any action, so I split early, leaving the record company with the hotel bill. I was thrilled to return to my adopted hometown, where the real punks are. Why, even Blondie and the Ramones have temporarily transplanted themselves to Hollywood. It was all happening when both groups performed at the revitalized Whiskey A-Go-Go.

At the show, all of Hollywood's stars turned out to toast my return...and perhaps to watch the show. Ray Davies, Alice Cooper, Sparks and Phil Spector all grabbed my arm and told me Hollywood just wasn't the same without their Prince of Pop. They actually begged me never to leave again. Don't fret, boys, I won't. The actual show was short, and afterwards, Phil and I went upstairs to complain about the Ramones' lack of endurance. There, we found Malcolm McLaren, the Sex Pistols' manager, engaged in a brawl with Joey of the Ramones. Needless to say, we split but fast.

The wall-of-sound King and his Prince instead sought less violent company, and found it with Blondie. The X-offender herself came up to Phil's posh home for a night of jamming, and other unrepeatable delights. The highlight came when Phil and Blondie sang a duet of "Then He Kissed Me." Then, Phil pulled out his latest project: a Leonard Cohen song, "Heart On," which

features backing vocals by Bob Dylan and your prince. I thought Bob sounded a little off-key, personally.

Taking my humble advice, royalty rockers Queen, also transplanted their base of operations to Hollywood for the Western leg of their recent U.S. tour. I acted as guide and groupie inspector for the band. For one, I

took guitarist Brian May and drummer Roger Taylor to meet Blondie at her hideaway hotel, the Bel Air Sands. With Blondie sitting on my lap, we drove up the Sunset Strip to eat at the new in-spot, Carlos & Charlies, which is partly owned by Alice Cooper. My favorite drink Tab was priced at \$1.25. I was outraged. Alice must be broke to have to charge such prices.

Anyway, Queen captivated Forum crowds two nights in succession, but the real show occurred after the first when the group hosted a catered oriental food party in the Forum Club. Besides the geisha hostesses and high-flying kites, there was a buffet of teriyaki and flied lice. I'd never had flied lice, but I found it to be delightfully tasty. However, some of the celebrities that made it to the club did get rather sick. Tatum O'Neil escorted by Michael Jackson, the popular local radio commentator, along with a rather heavy John Reid, Bernie Taupin, Burton

Cummings and E.L.O.'s Bev Bevan all looked queasy. Actual Queen members didn't eat, and made a quick getaway when a bunch of Willie Nelson picnic leftovers crashed the party.

**Lawsuit News:** It seems that members of a local group, Pop, didn't like what Sparks' Ron Mael had to say about them during a locally aired radio interview. I guess they didn't like Ron's comment that one of their singers was kicked out due to a drug overdose. The matter currently rests in California Superior Court. Thus, I am starting the Rodney Bingenheimer's Sparks' Defense Fund. Those interested in making a fat contribution in my quest for justice should write care of this paper. Otherwise, I might be put in the slammer, and the world would be without the best music scoops in town.

While I am still able to roam the streets freely, I've made it a point to muscle my way into every concert in town, particularly if there is a spare-rib dinner preceding it. Such was the case with the recent Rick Derringer show at the Whiskey. I must have eaten an all-time high of 12 spareribs before Derringer took the stage. Playing with an all-new band, Rick proceeded to cremate the ears of anyone within a five mile radius. Rick got four encores for his mellow proficiency, and the crowd got several busted eardrums.

One of the last things I listened to before my hearing left me completely was the new and perhaps last single by Venus & the Razorblades. The A-side is a classic called "Punkerama." The B-side is an interview featuring your Prince and Kim Fowley throwing questions at the now-defunct band.

A new group, Legs Diamond, may be the ones to replace Venus & the Razorblades as this city's most promising rockers. Whispers abound that the group will shortly be opening for Kiss on a national tour. Watch out for a criminal invasion.

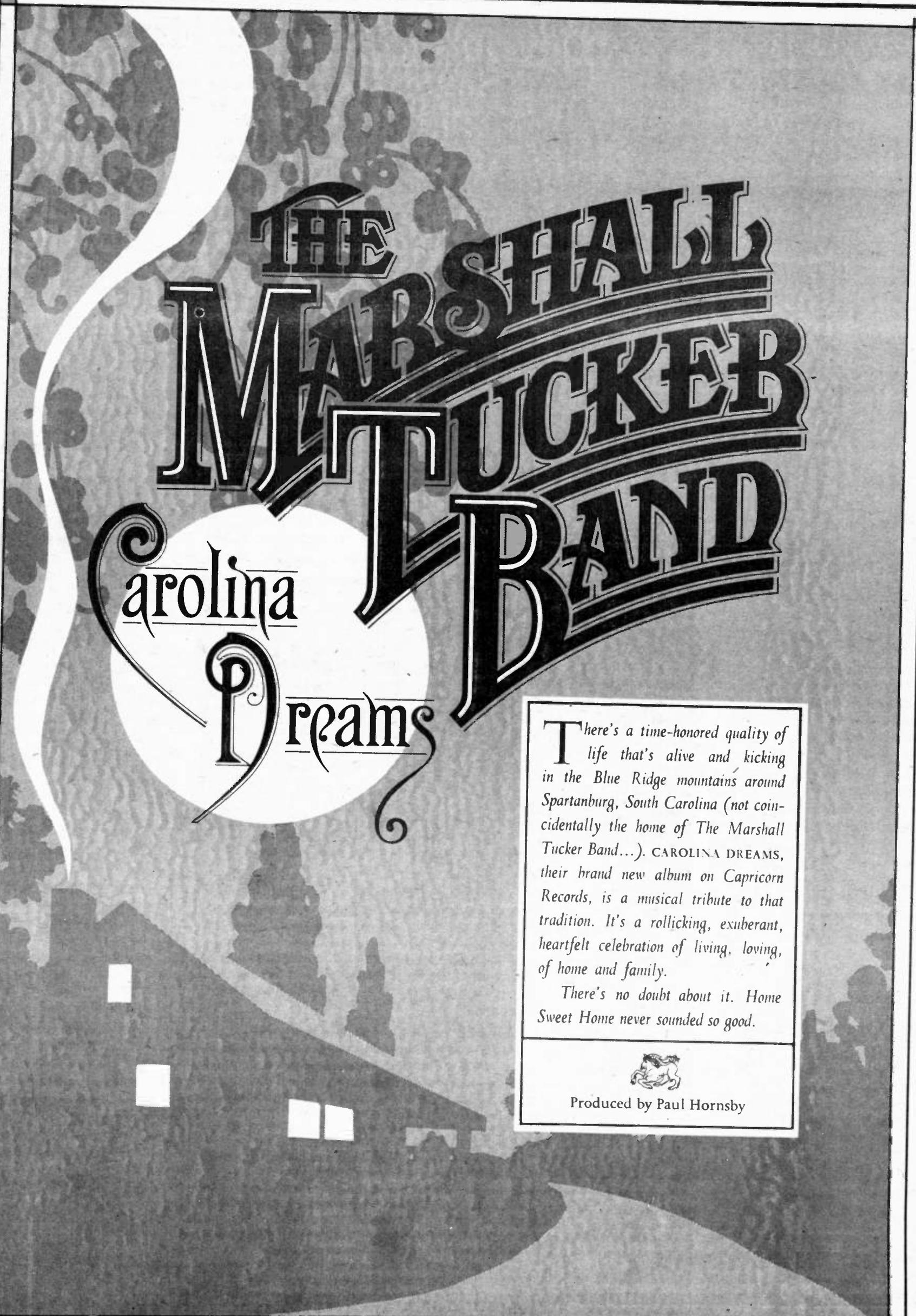
Finally, the very short-lived Quick/Kim Fowley association is over. Not only did those boys give up the chance of a lifetime to work with Mr. F., but they've also lost their record contract with Mercury. Tough luck, kids.

**Joey Ramone and Rodney display the latest rage in New York fashions.**



**Lascivious Sable Starr [L]  
and Deborah Harry  
[Blondie] drool while  
Rodney remains calm.**

Chuck Kraft



# THE MARSHALL TUCKER BAND

## Carolina Dreams

There's a time-honored quality of life that's alive and kicking in the Blue Ridge mountains around Spartanburg, South Carolina (not coincidentally the home of The Marshall Tucker Band...). CAROLINA DREAMS, their brand new album on Capricorn Records, is a musical tribute to that tradition. It's a rollicking, exuberant, heartfelt celebration of living, loving, of home and family.

There's no doubt about it. Home Sweet Home never sounded so good.



Produced by Paul Hornsby



**It's the best thing for your hair  
next to your blowdryer**

## Stephen Bishop's Musical Exhibition

By MICHAEL BARACKMAN

Hollywood—The frazzled young man, his arms burdened with lithograph paintings, was making his rounds along Sunset Blvd.—the core of actual music business activity—when he spotted a special potential customer; Michael Jackson, lead singer of the Jackson Five. After Jackson took interest in the lithographs, the young man attempted another type of sale, explaining that he was actually a songwriter and had some material more worthy than the lithographs. "Oh yeah, you write songs, huh," the uninterested Jackson replied a bit incredulously. The young man withered away, returning to his \$110-a-month flat, downtrodden.

Two years later, however, Stephen Bishop would have his revenge. "Save It For A Rainy Day," one of the several songs Jackson and every record company in town had turned down, hit the Top Twenty, while his debut album *Careless* bulleted accordingly. More notably, Bishop's reputation has swelled to the point where many are calling him one of pop music's most important emerging songwriters.

"He's going to be gigantic," asserted music entrepreneur Dick Clark. Clark formed his opinion during an "American Bandstand" segment where Bishop sang "Save It For A Rainy Day," actually one of his lightest, most commercial numbers. In the bulk of his work, Bishop mixes complex rhyming schemes and intricate jazz chordings into an acoustic mid-tempo style made compelling by his soothing yet sensitive vocals.

Bishop, a native of San Diego, arrived in Hollywood in 1969 to pursue a career as a singer-songwriter. He started out cocky, brazenly entering every record company and song publisher's door. But as the years accumulated, so did the insecurities. A few unknown artists covered this material, and he auditioned many of the songs which appear on *Careless* for Barbra Streisand, Helen Reddy, and the like, yet remained virtually unknown. In early 1975, while considering whether he should give up and return to San Diego, Bishop took the job selling lithographs after his unemployment insurance had run out.

Bishop's big break came two months later when Art Garfunkel became interested in his material. Garfunkel recorded "Looking For the Right One" and "The Same Old Tears On a New Background" on *Breakaway*, his 1975 gold album. Soon—after a six year wait—Bishop got to make his own record. He didn't waste the opportunity. *Careless* is a mature showcase of



inviting melodic pop numbers framed by emotionally affecting lyrics.

At his new two-story home in Laurel Canyon, a framed gold album of *Breakaway* hangs on the living room wall, and a picture window offers a hypnotic view of the vast Los Angeles oasis. If you look closely enough, you can see the very streets Bishop plodded up and down for those six years.

"You can't help but be a little resentful," Bishop, 25, says. "I try to keep it at a minimum, 'cause everybody's human and can make mistakes. But occasionally someone will say, 'Hey Steve, remember when I had you in my office and I said you sounded like shit? I was just kidding.' Things like that make you resentful."

While Bishop's is perhaps one of the most extreme and exasperating cases of dues-paying, many others have gone through similar experiences. Karla Bonoff, Carole Sager,

and Libby Titus have all written high-quality songs for years, but it's all taken well-known artists (Linda Ronstadt, Janis Ian, Carly Simon) covering their material to give them credibility to realize solo contracts. Bishop has his own theory of why it takes so long.

"A lot of people who call the shots in the music business are business men, and many don't always know music."

"I remember one time I went to see this song publisher. I gave him my tape, and he started playing the first song. Suddenly, after a few seconds, he pushed the stop button, then fast forward. Next song—stop, fast forward. Finally he stopped the tape and was just about to hit fast forward when I said, 'Wait a minute, this time why don't you try rewind?' He said, 'What?' I said, 'Give me my tape.' I finally had enough pride to get out of there."

"In the music business, it's your emotions rather than technical abil-

ity what counts. When a businessman pushes fast forward, he does not realize he's saying 'f--- you' to one of your personal experiences."

Bishop is quite sensitive about his songs. Most are morose ballads dealing with love lost. The songs directly contrast Bishop's zany personal demeanor. At his early L.A. club appearances, some would just come to hear the funny bits he'd do between songs. Recently, at his premier concert appearance, opening for Dave Mason at a 3,000-seat Theatre-In-The-Round in Phoenix, Bishop found out the hard way that the two elements don't always mix. He told a joke about dog food only to hear one girl yell back at him, "You are dog food!"

Just as the humor can affect the serious tone of his songs, Bishop worries that the disco-influenced "Save It For A Rainy Day" may stereotype him to the point where his ballads will seem out of place.

"I had this fear when the single was about to come out," says Bishop, his feet plopped upon a brown leather couch. "I wanted to release 'One More Night' at first because it's a good song to show where I'm at. My ballads are basically my strong point. But finally I thought, well, 'Save It For a Rainy Day' is the most commercial, so I might as well give it my best shot. But I also thought, 'Gosh, I hope people don't think this is what I always sound like'."

Still, Bishop isn't complaining about how he's garnered recognition. "Save It For a Rainy Day" allowed him to meet many of the goals he set long ago. While Art Garfunkel, who once entertained notions of recording an album of all Stephen Bishop songs, has decided on Jimmy Webb for that project, several other artists are covering his material. Kenny Rankin's new album features "On And On," which will probably be Bishop's next single. And Kim Fowley, a long-time Bishop admirer, brought "One More Night" to Helen Reddy's attention as part of their current production arrangement. Reddy has picked "One More Night" as her next single. Despite these achievements, the years Bishop spent struggling have somewhat tainted his current success.

"When I was younger, I had a lot more enthusiasm for it," Bishop explains. "Now, I'm not as excited as I would have been when I was younger. When I first came to Hollywood, all I thought you had to do was somehow make a record for \$20, and then you just became a star. I didn't have any idea of all the other business things it takes. I wanted it so badly. Now, I don't want to be a star as much as I want to make good music and progress in my art."

"The whole thing is like a big game. Being a rock star, and all the things that go with it, would make a great Parker Brothers follow-up to Monopoly."



# From Russia With Love Bowie's Iggy

By STEPHEN DEMOREST

"You got a personality crisis,  
You got it while it was hot.  
But now frustration and  
heartache is what you got...  
Personality, when your  
mind starts to bend...  
Wondering how celebrities  
ever mend."

[*"Personality Crisis"*  
—Thunders/Johansen]

Some swear that, as late as 1965, Jim Osterberg was normal. He sat around in trees a bit, and had those pop eyes, of course, but there were a lot of those types in college in the latter sixties. This was more than a year before Osterberg's debut as Iggy Pop of the Psychedelic Stooges on Halloween, 1967. After that, the word got around that he was very

sweet—a heart throb, in fact—but had this little thing about attracting attention.

Iggy's inspiration was not only to make himself unbelievable—everyone was a freak in those days—but also to be perverse about it. In my sector, they used the terms 'long-ball' and 'short-ball'—long was better. A short-ball is a guy who, say, spits blood that isn't even his own. A long-ball is a guy who eats lightbulbs and then sticks his tongue into an electric socket to see if his stomach will light up. Obviously, the best way to qualify for long-ball status was to damage yourself, and out in Michigan, Iggy Pop's feats of auto-destruction soon became legendary.

Everyone has his own favorite Iggy story; the list reads like an Evel Knievel medical report. The one I like best is told by Lisa

Robinson. In a scene closer to Fellini than to 'The Exorcist,' Iggy walked out over the audience on the out-stretched palms of the crowd, a godhead treading upon the watershed of rock and roll. But then the rug was yanked out from under him.

*The Stooges* (1969) didn't sell many copies, and *Funhouse* (1970) didn't even hit the Top 200. By the time David Bowie's production of *Raw Power* came out in 1973, the Stooges were a legend growing musty on the shelf. The first time I saw Iggy onstage was New Years, 1974, opening for Blue Oyster Cult and following the Manhattan debut of a new act called Kiss. Iggy wore diapers, looked puffy, and kept falling into the pit (later, I was told he was aiming at a photographer).

The first time I met Iggy Pop (for about 30 seconds), he was jogging

Shown above: Iggy accompanied Bowie on a sound and vision tour of Russia last year. Note how the Ruskies steer clear.

along the sidewalk on Sunset Boulevard in early 1975, looking tan and healthy. A year later, at Max's in New York, he flashed a dazzling smile, beamed a set of eyes so clear and white they almost shouted 'Go head and fire, I dare ya!', and gave me a handshake that could have snapped the doorknob off the Yale Club. The guy had cleaned up his act so much I'd have turned my back on him at a skeet shooting range without a qualm. But that was last year.

By the time we spoke over the wires from Berlin this winter, Iggy was a tired Teuton. The deep voice

(con't on page 14)

## SAMMY HAGAR

has played in countless bands in countless bars and nightclubs over the years including a two-year stint with the powerhouse Montrose band.

Last year, Sammy went out on his own and recorded his first album, Nine On A Ten Scale.

While it didn't break any sales records, it received a tremendous amount of airplay—and established Sammy as a young singer/songwriter to watch.

Since recording that first album, Sammy's reputation as a dynamic performer has grown immeasurably—"live" on the concert stage, and in his second studio album, Sammy Hagar.

The album was recorded at Abbey Road Studios in London, was produced by Carter... and is now available on Capitol Records and Tapes.



# "One wonders how much longer Iggy can take seriously this concept of himself as Mr. Lunatic Fringe Tuff Guy" --Stephen Demorest

## BOWIE'S IGGY

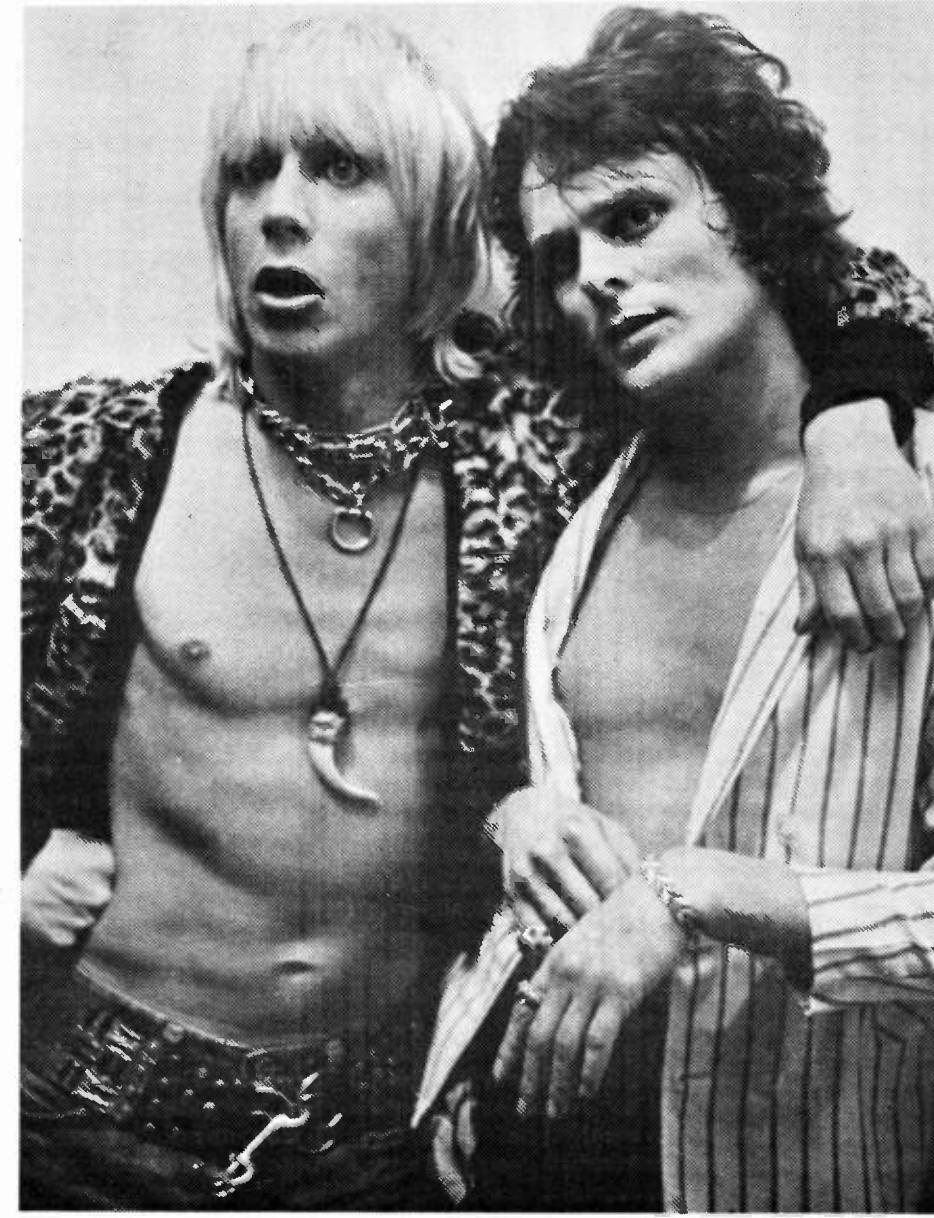
was good-natured, but badly frayed after a rehearsal that extended into the small hours normally reserved for shoemaker's elves and escaping communist refugees. He was drilling his band for his first tour in years, designed to promote *The Idiot*, his new RCA album. Again, David Bowie produced. Iggy said, "The record is bent because that's the way I felt. I've never succeeded before in making a record that was quite as bent sounding as I am."

I enjoy *The Idiot* because its completely schizophrenic. It's a mixture of bluff, in which Iggy's kidding no one more than himself, and beauty, which he seems to comprehend only fleetingly. To these ears, it has a couple of perfectly dreadful tracks, with lyrics that imitate his own imitators, and only Lou Reed is supposed to parody himself that way. On the otherhand, there are a couple of genuinely touching numbers in the middle of the sequence, including one autobiographical heart-stunner called "China Girl," which make me wonder how much longer he can take seriously this concept of himself as Mr. Lunatic Fringe Tuff Guy.

Anyway, in the course of our conversation, Iggy coughed up the following information—

Preparation: "I've been around the music scene, but not around the business scene, and I've enjoyed getting away from Los Angeles. I'd been down on the beach in San Diego a lot, and I hadn't heard what Grand Funk was doing, or what the new Hot Chocolate single was. I like it here in Germany very much, and I've been in France quite a bit, down in Bordeaux. It's farm country there."

**Vintage  
Hermaphrodites:**  
**Top—1972; Bowie,  
Iggy, and Lou Reed.**  
**Bottom: L.A. Days,  
1974; The Igg hugs  
Michael Des Barres  
(Silverhead).**



Lyrics: "The lyrics and most of the melodies are mine, but I had very little to do with the music, that's mostly all David. I didn't write down any of the lyrics for this album before they were done. I just went in with the tape, and something would pop into my head. I'd take it from the top, perhaps 30 seconds into the song. Then, having had that idea, I would write down maybe three more lines and go on from there. I'm not trying to say I was Lenny Bruce, but it was halfway like that, and in maybe four or five bursts of mood I would complete the song."

Punks: "I heard something the Damned did that I really liked. I thought they were interesting. I couldn't say the same for the Sex Pistols, I didn't think much of them. When I was in New York, I ran into Johnny Thunder from the Heartbreakers; he's a nice boy. I didn't get to hear them play, but I did some playing with Johnny one night because I like him very much. I think he's got a lot of talent."

The first four tracks of *The Idiot* present Iggy's famous tortured nihilist persona. The incessant, lumbering "Sister Midnight" has him dreaming of making it with momma, running from poppa, and croaking things like "I'm a breakage inside." "Nightclubbing" is such a goblin dirge, you can practically see the skeletons dancing. "It's about the incredible coldness and deathly feeling you have after you've done something like that, and how much you enjoy it. It could be Los Angeles or Paris or New York or anywhere, really." The pounding, Velvet Underground-like "Funtime" is what Iggy laughingly calls his "love song," though only a bride of Frankenstein would find it hot. The lyrics sound straight out of Bobby "Boris" Pickett's "Monster Mash":

*Last night I was down in  
the lab  
Talkin' to Dracula and his  
crew...  
Baby, baby we like your  
pants...  
We want some we want  
some  
All aboard for funtime. \*\**

\*© Bewlay Bros./BMI.

"Baby" is yet another creepy back alley of wax, though this time the

vampire is cautioning the listener to stay clean, stay young, and not cry, because he's already done it all. "Mass Production" is an ugly/pretty song to loneliness, feeling so sorry for itself that the listener can't.

It's the three cuts in the heart of the LP that strike me as revealing. They are emotionally honest numbers in which Jimmy O. seems to cut through his own "ultimate nova blowtorch of nihilism" legend to nail himself in moments of vulnerability. In "Tiny Girls," his disappointment in an asshole girl's behavior overflows the edges of his cynicism. "Dum Dum Boys," with raggedly swirling guitars, is a nostalgic salute to his old gang, and bares a keen sense of loss. ("Where are you now, my dum dum boys... have you left me the last of the dum dum daze?") Offered Iggy, "It's just about how fascinated I was with them at the time, and how beautiful they were to me. I felt almost like a sociologist looking back, but I still feel the same about it. I still believe in it, the difference being that most of the people involved are either dead or very screwed up."

Easily the gem of the album, though, is "China Girl." It's *The Idiot*'s most upbeat track, it has the richest arrangement, and the lyrics are a startling masterpiece of healthy self-awareness in contrast to the alienated poses struck elsewhere. Admitted Iggy: "It's about a very blundering, blustering rock and roll hero who has big plans and western habits who becomes enchanted and subdued by a Chinese girl. That actually happened to me." Here's a nice, fat excerpt (find the Bowie sideswipe).

*I'd stumble into town  
Just like a sacred cow  
Visions of swastikas in my  
head  
And plans for everyone.  
My little China Girl  
You shouldn't mess with  
me  
I'll ruin everything you  
are...  
I'll give you men who want  
to rule the world.  
And when I get excited  
My little China Girl says  
Oh Jimmy just you  
Shut your mouth  
She says 'Shhh'...\*\**

Yep, that's what these pop stars need—someone who calls them by their real names and makes them kick the superman habit. The grave watch of *The Idiot* is depressing when he wallows futilely in the passe decadence of helpless frustration. When he stops playing numb, though, and makes an attempt to hook his affections on something, Osterberg writes a terrific song. Wise up, Jimmy, and stop fighting it: hope is a thrill, and hopeful people aren't deceiving themselves any more than Iggy is.

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## PROGRAM SCHEDULE

	MON.	TUES.	WEDS.	THURS.	FRI.	SAT.
12-6am	Vin Scelsa	Vin Scelsa	Richard Neer	Richard Neer	Al Bernstein	Tom Morrera
6-10am	Dave Herman	Dave Herman	Dave Herman	Dave Herman	Dave Herman	Al Bernstein
10-2pm	Pete Fornatale	Pete Fornatale	Pete Fornatale	Pete Fornatale	Vin Scelsa	Vin Scelsa
2-6pm	Scott Muni	Scott Muni	Scott Muni	Scott Muni	Scott Muni	Richard Neer
6-10pm	Dennis Elsas	Dennis Elsas	Dennis Elsas	Dennis Elsas	Dennis Elsas	Dennis Elsas
10-2am	Alison Steele	Alison Steele	Alison Steele	Alison Steele	Richard Neer	Pat Dawson

## SUNDAY

2-4:30am	Al Bernstein	12-4pm	Richard Neer
4:30-8am	RELIGION and NEWS CLOSEUP	4-8pm	Pete Fornatale
8-12N	Vin Scelsa	8-12mid	Alison Steele

WNEW-FM

102.7  
METROMEDIA STEREO

Rough Diamond (L-R): Clem Clempson, David Byron, Willie Bath, Geoff Britton, Damon Butcher.



## SPLINTER GROUPS: Rough Diamond

By DON SNOWDEN

It's not exactly news that the business sector of the music world is exceedingly formula-conscious, always ready to swoop down on a fresh musical approach at the first hint of commercial success and quickly reduce it to a standardized style. Of late, one of the main trends has been running towards a return to straightforward rock and roll bands, inspired largely by Bad Company's dramatic, one album leap from support band to arena headliners. Their success prompted a number of bands with the same ingredients: two or three bloodied veterans of second-line British bands—preferably of the critic-cult favorite variety—plus a couple of talented unknowns and a musical commitment to the aforementioned uncomplicated English rock. First out of the blocks was the short-lived Boxer and now comes Rough Diamond.

The name contingent here consists of former Uriah Heep singer David Byron, ex-Wings drummer Geoff Britton and the man who replaced Peter Frampton as lead guitar-second fiddle to Steve Marriott in Humble Pie, Clem Clempson. The nucleus of Rough Diamond was formed when Britton suggested to Byron that he front a band rather than go the solo album route after being sacked from the Heep. When Clempson and Damon Butcher (keyboards) returned from playing on Marriott's solo tour last summer, contact was made and forces were joined. Willie Bath, an old friend of Britton, was brought in to fill the bass slot. The quintet recorded their debut Island album in three weeks with Steve Smith producing.

The result is something more than one might have expected from this combination. The music throughout is marked by taste and restraint, qualities not generally associated with either Humble Pie

or Uriah Heep. The single most surprising element is the assured vocal work of Byron, easily one of the most dismissable singers in rock during his Heep days. Though there are obvious cases of influences at work—"Rock And Roll" contains a hefty slice of "Takin' Care Of Business" and the basic riff to "Hold On" borrows heavily from the opening to Robin Trower's "I Can't Stand It"—the music sounds fresh with a healthy emphasis on melody over frenzied riffing.

The first side, in fact, is composed entirely of strong, interesting songs. "Rock And Roll" starts things off with a fairly standard tribute to that venerable warhorse, but the next two cuts indicate the promise of the Byron-Clempson writing team. Both are well-crafted, moderately up-tempo songs featuring controlled organ-guitar interplay between Butcher and Clempson. The side closes with a somewhat overextended ballad ("Sea Song") that allows Byron to demonstrate that there's more in his vocal chords than mindless screaming. The quality of the material drops off rather drastically on side two. The opening and closing rockers are essentially nondescript. "Hold On" starts out promisingly enough but carries on far too long, the only instance where Rough Diamond strays from cohesive ensemble work to indulge in extraneous soloing.

A mixed debut, then, but one side of solid material seems to be beyond the capabilities of many groups these days. The playing is economical and professional, the production unobtrusive. And it's nice to hear so much of the pure Hammond sound in an age of synthesizers, string ensembles and clavinet. Still, the collection of recycled elements that comprise the bulk of Rough Diamond's work seem destined to prevent this band from ever becoming a priceless gem.

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## SPLINTER GROUPS!



### Andy Fraser's Screamers

By DON SNOWDEN

The sound of Traffic's first album reverberates against barren, functional walls as gray as the overcast L.A. day outside. Tony Sales shifts position with the nonchalant grace of the practiced poseur as other members of The Stealers keep a wary eye out for the red rubber ball being hurled at them in a vain attempt to keep the photo session interesting. And Andy Fraser, the focal point of Stealers and once the musical architect of Free, sits with his eyes fixed on the camera lens in a fierce, unrelenting glare.

At a time when most rockers were flexing their instrumental muscles on extended, high velocity jams, Free's spartan, no-nonsense approach stood in stark contrast to the prevailing excess. Raw but ever so subtle, slow almost to the point of being ponderous, the music was all fire and emotion with no deadwood allowed to interrupt the message. The Free sound didn't click with the record buying public until "All Right Now" burst like an explosive charge out of car radios everywhere en route to becoming the first standard bar band copy of the '70s tune. Despite another mid-chart success in "Wishing

Well," Free succumbed to internal tensions and, in 1973, broke up. The four original members moved on to strikingly different fates, Paul Rodgers and Simon Kirke to fame and fortune with Bad Company, Paul Kossoff to an early grave and Andy Fraser to the peculiar netherworld reserved for most bass players who strike out on their own.

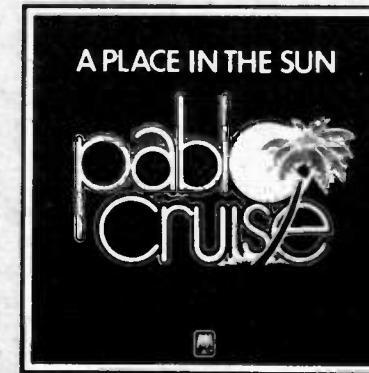
"One reason Free split up," the short, intense Fraser reflects on the eve of his return to the American music scene, "was for ages and ages I wrote songs and I didn't have a situation where I could sing them. Songs are very personal things, a very personal expression and you want to express them. Free wasn't geared that way. Apart from Paul Rodgers not needing another singer, he didn't want another singer. So it was really a question of if I wanted to sing I had to go somewhere else to do it."

Andy Fraser's search for the proper setting for his voice became a five year odyssey that left his name a fading memory on these shores. Only import collectors were able to follow his musical efforts during this period—one album with the much-touted Sharks and another with his own imaginatively constructed trio, plus a cut-and-

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# Philadelphia Heroes: JOHNNY'S DANCE BAND



Janet Melaragni

By ED SCIAKY

**PHILADELPHIA**—This city may not possess New York's intense punk energy or L.A.'s mythic laid-back aura, but it too is quite an in-tune, bustling pop music center...and always has been. Some of the most important songs from rock and roll's first era in the 1950s emanated from Philadelphia. In the '70s, when disco became in vogue, Gamble & Huff and Thom Bell restored order and maintained the style's credibility. Bruce Springsteen, Al Stewart, Janis Ian, and Billy Joel all hit big in Philadelphia prior to breaking out across the rest of the country.

Yet Philadelphia's importance in terms of pop culture is often overlooked by observers to the scene...and many times by the area's own music artists. Indeed, the city has yet to shake its image as the epitome of Dick Clark pop cleanliness and computerized soul. Todd Rundgren and Hall & Oates, natives of the city, have preferred to sweep their collective past ties with Philadelphia under the rug.

However, now emerges a band that's actually proud of its heritage. Their name is a dead giveaway: Johnny's Dance Band. The group, a much-worshipped cult item locally for several years, has recorded a debut album on the RCA-distributed Windsong label, and is on the brink of touring nationally. But this is one band not about to forget its roots.

"We're proud of the fact that we come from Philadelphia," asserted Tony Juliano, the band's lead singer. "We're not going to desert the city, like those others. For us, Philly makes it in a lot of ways."

Though Johnny's Dance Band shares Philadelphia's enduring interest in rhythm, the unit's name is a bit deceiving. For one, their musical slant is more rock-oriented than in an R&B vein, with a '50s-rock. At times, the screaming Juliano appears to be parodying Elvis Presley. Also, there's a strong accent on rather bizarre humor, which is showcased in abundance during the band's live shows.

Juliano and three classmates at Philadelphia's College of Art form-

ed Johnny's Dance Band in 1969. They soon garnered a record deal on Jamie Records, a local label, and with high hopes, released "I'm Walkin'" to the public. But the single's B-side, "Porcelain Convenience," an ode to the joys of restrooms, led to both sides being suppressed, leaving the group short of stardom. Finally, in 1976, after expanding to a seven-member outfit, the group signed a more legitimate management agreement with Jerry Weintraub, the controversial pop music business executive also associated with John Denver. That led to their current national recording contract.

In recording their debut album, Johnny's Dance Band found translating their stage act to disc difficult. As with the Tubes, the group's lively humor failed to sustain itself in the studio. In the end, Johnny's Dance Band opted for a straight musical approach. "Novelty is a dirty word in the music business," Juliano complained.

The end result may surprise even the long-time Philadelphia supporters. *Johnny's Dance Band* features slickly dramatic production by Donald Murray. It's basically a pop record, with a high degree of accessibility. Overall, it directly contrasts the band's live show. "You do things differently live, and it should always be that way," argued Juliano, defending the band's studio approach. "With our live show, it's here and then it's gone, and if you aren't there to catch it, then it's tough shit for you. But making a record, that's timeless."

While the group's debut may take some getting used to within Philadelphia's perimeters, it seems destined to please the massive American music audience which is currently infatuated with easy-listening pop. The album may result in Johnny's Dance Band becoming the first Philadelphia act to become stars while still living in the city. And if the LP fizzles, there's always the local clubs that are filled to the brim every time the group plays. As guitarist Bobby Lenti put it, "Who knows what the rest of the world will think. If it fails, it fails and if it succeeds, great...We'll see."

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## POP SINGLES FOR THE '70s

Guest Editor  
**KEN BARNES**

It's great to be here doing a guest shot for "Juke Box Jury," but for some reason I feel like substitute host for Johnny Carson. Anyway, I always enjoy writing about singles, that beleaguered configuration threatened by 12-inch disco editions, massive consumer indifference—singles' sales have been plummeting for some time. Still, though they may be on the road to extinction, singles are the basic rock & roll art form. Acts take their best shots in three minutes of condensed, essential artistry, unprotected by a cushion of sympathetic album cuts but forced to compete in a vicious battle with hundreds of other best shots thrown up against the wall.

## LOVE [AND HATE] ON THE AIRWAVES

With that inspirational monologue out of the way, let's look at the audible state of the art, the tip-of-the-iceberg records that you actually hear on the radio. The best single of 1977 going away is still Fleetwood Mac's perfectly brilliant "Go Your Own Way" [WB 8304]. But hard-rock from the mass-appeal Mac had mixed results, as the single went Top Five in some cities and dropped off quickly elsewhere. Thus, another single from the excellent *Rumours* album is called for, and the best choices seem to be Christine McVie's hypnotic "You Make Loving Fun" or Stevie Nicks' lovely "Dreams" [the label may send my finders' fee c/o the magazine]. Meanwhile, buy a copy of "Go Your Own Way," if for no other reason than the B-side, a mesmerizing Nicks tune called "Silver Springs," which is not on the album.

Best of the rest in the hit category are ELO's "Do Ya" [UA

939]—great to hear this 70's rock classic in hit rotation at last, even if it's a bit softened up—and Rod Stewart's masterful performance of Cat Stevens' best early song, "First Cut Is The Deepest" [WB 8321], finally a chartmaker after half a dozen worthy attempts by others.

Falling off the charts is Linda Ronstadt's "Someone To Lay Down Beside Me" [Asylum 45361], a gorgeous, chilling performance which stiffed badly, clearly indicating that if she's not recutting an oldie, radio is not going to give her airtime. Lots of intriguing stiffs out and about now, foremost being Elton John's "Bite Your Lip" [MCA/Rocket 40677], his disco spectacular from *Blue Moves* which would have been an automatic hit a year or two ago. Looks like a cold spell coming on for Elton. Hard to believe, but then who'd have ever thought that Helen Reddy, Olivia Newton-John, Neil Diamond and John Denver would not have a bona fide hit between them in 1976? Not that I'm complaining...

Other less-than-overwhelming chartbusters: the Bee Gees' tiresome "Boogie Child" [RSO 867], their first relative miss since 1974; and Boston with "Long Time" [Epic 50329], catchy enough but decidedly inferior to the superb "More Than A Feeling." Still, they can afford a sluggish second single with their debut album up to 3.1 million and climbing [better living through technology].

The top of the chart is sounding annoyingly soppy, thanks to a deadly 1-2 punch in the form of Mary MacGregor and Barbra Streisand [you don't need the record numbers; you'll have no trouble buying 'em anywhere should you so desire]. "Torn Between Two Lovers" is as drab and insipid a No. One as I can remember, as producer Peter Yarrow stalks the chart-tops with his first blockbuster since Peter, Paul & Mary unleashed the John Denver demon in '69 by record-

ing "Leaving On A Jet Plane."

Also in the upper chart reaches is Manfred Mann with "Blinded By The Light" [WB 8252]—nice to have him back, even if it's with an increasingly irritating vehicle propelled by its enigmatic chorus line ["wrapped up like a douche" or whatever it says]. Wait for the probable follow-up, the far superior "Spirit In The Night" [ready for its third try]. Another surprising British entrant to the Top Five is Al Stewart's "Year Of The Cat," [Janus 266], rapidly exhausting its welcome but marked by a highly tasteful instrumental break [the acoustic to electric guitar transition is a delight].

One sleeper to watch for possible hit status: "I Think We're Alone Now" by the Rubinoos [Beserkley 5741]. The last thing on anyone's mind was an actual hit from the tiny, eccentric Beserkley label, but after six months the Rubinoos' infectious Tommy James update is catching fire in several regions and has a definite shot. Stay tuned for their album—bursting with stunners.

## NEW HITS IN TOWN

Champagne—"Rock & Roll Star" [Ariola America 7658]: They look distressingly like the Manhattan Transfer on the picture sleeve, but the sound on this European hit is pure "SOS"-style Abba. Like Abba's Benny Andersson, a veteran of Swedish mid-60's hitmakers the Hep Stars, "Rock & Roll Star's" co-writer Wally Tax was lead singer for Dutch stars the Outsiders, who sounded a lot like the Beau Brummels and made a number of excellent records. A strong American debut. And speaking of Abba, while the delightful "Dancing Queen" is becoming their biggest U.S. hit ever, two records later in England their new single is "Knowing Me Knowing You," a standout massive-production number from the *Arrival* LP. Let's hope

Atlantic releases it here as the eventual follow-up instead of the relatively lustreless "Money Money Money" [their last international hit].

Darlene Love—"Lord If You're A Woman" [Warner/Spector 0410]: Darlene's first new solo record in a decade and Phil Spector's highest-commercial-potential production since his return to action. A throbbing sonic structure is wedded to a contemporary gospel song format, and Darlene, as always, sings her heart out. Feminist lyrics on this Mann-Weil composition add piquancy. Cross your fingers and maybe Spector will get that all-important hit.

Travis Wammack—"Do Me" [Warner/Curb 8314]: Ordinary funk-rock song, but it's sparked by the most vicious guitar fills this side of early Jimmy Page. If somebody ever convinced Wammack to stretch out and cut loose [and provided sympathetic backing], the results could be staggering.

After three inexplicably tin-eared choices to follow up "The Boys Are Back In Town," Thin Lizzy finally have another killer with the compact, melodic hard-rocker "Don't Believe A Word" [Mercury 73892], but I'm afraid their singles' momentum is shot [why weren't "Jailbreak" and "Johnny" released?]. Continuing in this English vein, the Babys' "If You've Got The Time" [Chrysalis 2132] is a current fave, an enthralling rocker with Bad Company overtones mixed with an endearing melody line. Incidentally, I hope Chrysalis singles out the British hit by Racing Cars, "They Shoot Horses, Don't They," an exceptionally compelling ballad. Glider are new from UA, and "You're Like A Melody" [UA 938] is a strong mainstream rocker with impressive guitar lines. Finally, RCA has put out "Sound And Vision" [RCA 10905] from David Bowie's perverse *Low* LP, and while it is an intriguing single, the potential 45 classic [best since "Rebel

Rebel"] on the album is "Be My Wife." Maybe next time.

On the English new wave scene, Eddie & the Hot Rods have their first U.S. single out [Island 082]—"Get Out Of Denver," the rapid-velocity run-through on Bob Seger's Chuck Berry tribute, backed with the Rods' pessimistic anthem "Teenage Depression." And, for import singles fans, don't miss the Gorillas' "Gorilla Got Me," [Chiswick 8], a frantic, largely-instrumental B-side that rivals the band's idols the Small Faces for feedback rave-up intensity.

Deftly moving into the American new-wave sphere, it's worth noting that Patti Smith now has two special radio-promotional-only singles from the *Radio Ethiopia* album, as "Ask The Angels" joins "Pissing In The River" on limited-edition 45's. Neither have made any noticeable impact on the airwaves, but at least Arista is certainly making Patti's singles hot collector's items [not neglecting "My Generation" as well].

Four excellent locally-produced singles [out of dozens of deserving disks; the trend is mushrooming] stand out this month. Crime's "Hotwire My Heart" [no label info] features vintage Velvets vocals and the rocking effect overcomes the rough production. Boston legend Willie Alexander returns with "You Looked So Pretty When," [Garage 6146] a riveting, melodic, well-produced number that is far superior to its A-side. The fourth single from L.A.'s Droogs is a tribute to punk patriarch Sky Saxon and the Seeds. "Overnite Success" [Plug 'n' Socket 004] works both as a faithful act of homage and as an exciting extension of 60's garage-rock styles. Finally, Pete Ubu's "Street Waves"/"My Dark Ages [I Don't Get Around]" [Hearthan 003] is a fascinating bleak evocation of Cleveland's teenage wasteland ambiance, and is as powerful and skillfully-produced a record as has yet emerged from the entire scene.

dried solo LP, *In Your Eye*, recorded in one week with the Muscle Shoals rhythm section. Finding himself without a recording contract, his career fortunes at low ebb, Fraser left England last year with former Back Door drummer Tony Hicks for a ten acre hilltop retreat in the Brentwood section of Los Angeles.

Energized by their new surroundings, Fraser and Hicks quickly recruited John Hardin (sax) and Mad Dog (keyboards) for the Stealers. But the guitar slot remained vacant through six months of intensive auditioning until Tony Sales appeared on the scene. The quintet completed work on their debut Polydor LP shortly thereafter.

Says Fraser: "The music still has a lot of the Otis Redding-Aretha Franklin sort of basic blues-soul feeling about it. Of late, people like Stevie Wonder and Marvin Gaye have really influenced me. They're coming from the same place—black talk, blues and soul—but have a contemporary way of saying it and producing it. To me, they're expressing the times."

Listening to several tracks from *The Night is Gone* confirms that Fraser has retained his songwriting touch without living in his musical past. Sturdily supported by his distinctively understated bass lines, the sound is richly textured, full of dynamic changes and the multiple colors offered by the guitar-keyboards-sax front line. The music is marked by the kind of cohesive group interplay and personal empathy that characterized Free at their best.

"We're still very much coming from songs," Fraser emphasizes almost vehemently, "very simple songs. Free was nothing I was ashamed of and I feel this is a natural extension. It's funky without being...paaarty."

The big surprise for American ears is Fraser's voice, an expressive instrument that, not surprisingly, recalls Paul Rodgers as well as the Spooky Tooth duo of Gary Wright and Mike Harrison. But the secret weapon in the Stealers' arsenal could well be Hardin, who contributes several blistering solos in the Junior Walker-King Curtis vein. And when one thinks of how much Clarence Clemons has meant to Springsteen....

A smile slowly forms on Fraser's dark features as he contemplates the radical change in his fortunes over the past nine months. Given a new lease on musical life, working with a strong new band—a band in the old-fashioned, collective sense of the word—Andy Fraser is free at last from the problems that once plagued him.

"One way or another, I've been through a lot of trips in England. Bad management, bad band, bad production, a lot of bad-mouthing. Whereas, in America, it's just been Free, so it's comin' in fresh. It's comin' in from a new standpoint."



## Cleveland International Records RONNIE SPECTOR BREAKS CLEVELAND!

By MARTIN CERF

**CLEVELAND**—It's a freezing night in mid-February for this city that knows no excess in terms of its insatiable hunger for pop. Indisputably, this is the hottest breakout market, perhaps the very vortex of the pop world. Disciples of a once near forgotten rock art-form, from the entire Cleveland-Akron-Canton & Kent population will all be crushed together happily, in one room, very late into the night. They came to dance.

Cleveland's pop loyalists are almost single-handedly responsible for breaking everybody that's anybody in '70s pop. Tonight these hard-core PVC devotees will be paid back in kind for their contribution: Ronnie Spector will perform.

And what of the other Ronettes? Bruce Springsteen and his boys from New Jersey will share honors with LA's Flo & Eddie (Mark Volman & Howard Kaylan). We're talkin' a pop mythogenesis on a Cuyahoga County level.

This performance, and this particular configuration could mark the beginning of many such decidedly important events in the lives of pop-purists everywhere. The linkage of Ronnie Spector, Cleveland, Springsteen/Miami Steve/Southside Johnny and a few other (un)related segments—not the least of which is Steve Popovich's new Cleveland Inter-

national record label—will become more than mere coincidence in the near months to come.

Ronnie Spector's first single in years is en-route to local distributors throughout the nation even as this is written. "Say Goodbye to Hollywood" is a little known title out of an equally anonymous recent Billy Joel album. (Incidentally, like the Jukes and E-Streeters, Joel is of Delaware Valley extraction). This is also the debut release of the new *Cleveland International Records* line; one of the Epic/CBS Custom labels—which is important because that means if the fans should ask the local stores if they know from a new Ronnie record, they'll be able to get stock and not stuck.

Ronnie's new single was produced by 'Miami' Steve Van Zandt, a former Asbury Juke, and still the band's producer. Van Zandt is, of course, an integral part of the Springsteen-sound-entourage: As Willie Dixon was to Muddy Waters, so 'Miami' is to Bruce. In the vernacular, they are 'very tight'. Van Zandt plans to complete an entire LP with Ronnie shortly, which is a projected May release.

Contemplating production of a new Ronnie Spector single, to say nothing of an entire LP, is an orgasmic albeit devastating challenge. (Remember, Ronnie never actually recorded an 'LP' as such...previous Ronettes' releases were assemblages of various

tracks from singles dates). Conceptually, who could deny the long range effect, the full ramifications that Phil Spector's early work—particularly certain Ronnie titles—has had on the rock/pop-art form. (For years, Brian Wilson has talked of only two 45s—his mind is a tape loop which tracks from The Ronettes' "Be My Baby" to Dylan's "Like A Rolling Stone," and then back again).

Spector was the first to fully recognize the importance of recording (engineering), creating 'a sound' in the studio artificially. Even though it's more than 15 years that the Godfather of digital-delay was about history at Gold Star Studios in Hollywood; the proverbial 'Spector Wall of Sound' is still pop's pinnacle achievement.

To the extent many attempt variations in an effort to 'update' or 'improve upon' Spector studio technique, that is fathomable. To the extent that Van Zandt would do the same with Ronnie Spector in 1977, that takes balls. "He's a mix-master madman," says Mark Volman (Flo, of & Eddie fame). "He goes for that magic aural white light only those tuned to a very effete channel are capable of hearing...I'll be anxious to hear what he comes up with," Volman says with reservation.

The *Cleveland International Records* story is rock history in the making and all that much more fascinating with Ronnie (Cont'd. on next page)

**(RONNIE SPECTOR)**

Spector as a first release. Steve Popovich, a 13 year CBS Records veteran, is convinced Cleveland is to pop what Nashville is to country. "I've spent the last seven years watching Cleveland develop into an incredibly important record market," says Popovich, who is himself a Cleveland native. "When I left Cleveland back in 1969, it was different—in order to do anything in the business—he played in local bands at the time)—you had to get out of Cleveland. —Few companies were aware of any talent here.

"What happened with Mott the Hoople, David Bowie, Lou Reed, Patti Smith... 'The Harder They Come' film & LP, and countless other '70s breakthroughs was by way of Cleveland's initial acceptance of same." Popovich, who as a former promotion man—local, regional and national—credits the vital local radio scene a major factor in the evolution of Cleveland's pop taste buds. "Specifically, WMMS has done so much to further the state of both recorded and live pop—they're truly fantastic."

But Cleveland was always a trendsetter, right from the beginning. Alan Freed. Leo's Casino. The Upbeat (syndicated) TV show. Bobby Womack. O'Jays. James Gang. Eric Carmen. Joe Walsh. — All Cleveland. The history of the area's contribution is endless, but Cleveland has never acquired the reputation nationally that it deserves. "Things are going to change now," predicts Popovich. "Aside from *Cleveland International*, there's Sweet City Records (Wild Cherry), which is run by perhaps the most successful promoter in the country—Mike Belkin. What MMS has done for radio in Cleveland, Belkin has achieved with live talent here." Popovich says the local retail situation is one of the strongest and most competitive there is east of the Mississippi. "The Record Theatre, The Record Rendezvous, The Record Revolution, Peaches... all have very healthy, successful stores everywhere. Combined with the radio, concert and local talent scene, it's easy to understand why Cleveland has become the pop stronghold it is," concludes Popovich, who this month moved 'back home' (from New York) to set up shop.

Initially *CI Records* will host a 4-act artist roster. Aside from Ronnie Spector, Popovich tells of a Chicago-based band called Essence, which will likely be *CI's* second release.

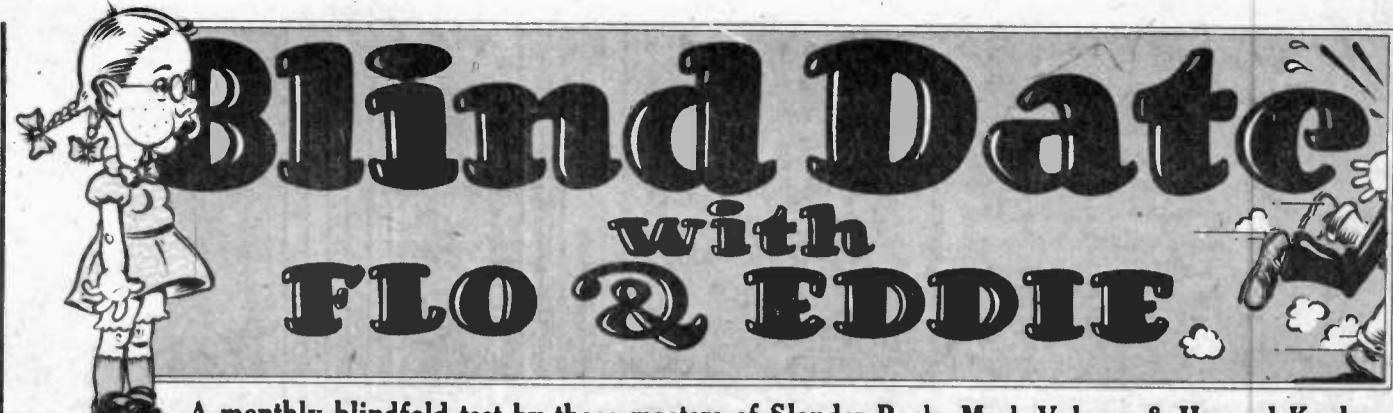
The balance of the roster (both of them), have yet to be finalized.

It's safe to say anything that comes from *Cleveland International* will be 'collectible'—the nation's pop fans will be watching.

# Blind Date

## with

### FLO & EDDIE



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

**Edited by KEN BARNES**

Flo & Eddie were excited. Any-one could see that. "Well, guys, what's the big deal?" I queried.

"We just got back from Cleve-land, where we were singing with 'The Boss.'"

The boss? I was puzzled. Turns out "The Boss" is what friends, associates, hangers-on, and background singers call Bruce Springsteen. Flo & Eddie, to make matters more momentous, had sung with Springsteen and Ronnie Spector on "Be My Baby," "Baby I Love You," and "Walking In The Rain." Naturally, they were ecstatic, but of course they kept the usual level-headed Flo & Eddie perspective about the whole thing.

"Bruce—can we give up every-thing we own to tour with you? He is The Boss, there's no point in reviewing any other albums."

That doesn't leave us with much of a column this month, I pointed out gently.

"Well, everybody should go out and see him live. Hey, have you seen our new Flo & Eddie belt buckles?"

With that, they buckled down to work, with the following monument to hilarity resulting.

#### Cheap Trick

including:  
Elo Kiddies / Mandocello  
The Ballad Of TV Violence (I'm Not The Only Boy)  
Hot Love / Taxman, Mr. Thief



**EXCERPTS—Cheap Trick (Epic)**

Here we go, Blind Date fans. Another excursion through the Record Store of your Mind without ever having to pull out your charge card! That's very good, I like that. "ELO Kiddies" is the cut? Jeff Lynne's children? Napoleon XIV drum sound. Suzi Quatro. Name is like an inexpensive subterfuge? Ingenious clue there. Cheap trick. We got one! They're friends of ours. I like it. We've been watching them for a couple years. Where'd we work with them, Lansing,

Michigan? Go out and give 'em a break. They've got a Side A and a Side One on their album. Produced by Jack Douglas. Can't go wrong. Jack, let us know how much you got. Why? So we can do their next one cheaper. That's a cheap trick.



**EXCERPTS—Red Sammy Hagar (Capitol)**

"Hungry?" One of the great songs! Former lead singer of San Francisco heavy rock group? Keith Allison. A little Burton Cummings in there. The lead singer with Blue Cheer? Big group? Bigger than the Classics 4? Like REO or something? "Catch The Wind?" I like the way he did this. Going for that Nazareth market. He should put a little P.J. Proby into it. Sammy Hagar, eh? Was he on "Hee-Haw"? From Montrose. How come everything on the album cover is red. Because it's a Hipgnosis cover. A Patti Smith song? This isn't a bad album. Definitely does not sound like Montrose—except on this cut. There a lot of these? Well, I don't think he has a bad voice.

Composed, Performed, And Produced By  
**RICK WAKEMAN**



**EXCERPTS—White Rock Rick Wakeman (A&M)**

An instantly recognizable Flo & Eddie Favorite? Malo. Eno. Closer to Eno than Malo? Rick Wakeman! We get 'em folks, don't worry. The soundtrack from the Innsbruck

Winter Games movie. He could be my favorite artist ever. Surf music! What could be better for a ski movie soundtrack? Nice logo—but he should have used the White Rock soft drink symbol. White rock, all right. We started reading things into Rick's personality when he came backstage at the Bottom Line and told us we were his favorite act. Is there any Flo & Eddie influence on his music now? This sounds like "Search For Tomorrow."

**EXCERPTS—Sallin' Kim Carnes (A&M)**

Female singer on A&M with a name that resembles yours? Great clue, Ken. Jennifer...Jen Warnes? Kim Carnes! Very serious stuff. She sings good, I like her voice. I love any girl singer who's the least bit inventive, and there's so few. Patti Dahlstrom was so close—she had that stylized voice. Kim has a little Jackie De Shannon look, and voice, a little Rod Stewart too—in the voice, that is. She was in the Sugar Bears? What's that? A cartoon group based on the Sugar Crisp cereal package? Serious stuff, all right.

# SHOWADDYWADDY

**EXCERPTS—Showaddywaddy [Arista]**

Let us get this story straight. This is an album that somebody told you that Clive Davis was so embarrassed about having to put out that Arista didn't send it to any reviewers and were really upset that people even knew it was out? He doesn't want any reviews, eh? Well, the fearless Blind Date will cover it. What could it be, the Outlaws? A British group...I'm gonna love 'em. Showaddywaddy? All right, we got another one! It already shipped a cutout? It was in a series with the Glitter Band and Slik? And Clive was ashamed of this?

"Under The Moon Of Love" sounds like "C-C-Cinnamon Cin-

der." I can understand why Clive would think next to Barry Manilow this is lacking something. Like Schmaltz. "Trocadero" ...I like it, man. I've been trying not to say I like it for the last three cuts, but I think it's great. I think everything that gets released should get a shot. No one likes to be buried. No label, even Columbia, should release an album unless they believe in it. "Walk Don't Run" in the middle of "Trocadero." That's wonderful! Clive, hold your head up high. Showaddywaddy only want to be your friends.



**EXCERPTS—Can't Let You Go**  
John Travolta (Midland Int'l.)

Teen idol? Gino Vanelli. One of the biggest White Whale hits ever, outside of the Turtles? "All Strung Out On You Baby." Barry Manilow. Mac Davis. John Travolta! He can sing, can't he? He's better than Donny Most. He wasn't that good last year. Last year, there wasn't a Donny Most to kick around. Come on Donny, leave us alone. Donny's getting old, he's already phasing himself out of "Happy Days." This is no worse than Keith Carradine. Another great record for Jeff Barry. It's a consistent pop album. It's great for the young, up and coming

stewardesses, because it's sort of a cross-section of what's happening today in music as seen through the eyes of Jeff Barry, interpreted by whoever's around. Jeff always manages to take voiceless people and turn them into...voiceless people.

### INDIGO

Includes Feels Right/Step By Step  
Prisoner of the Spirit World  
What's It Matter

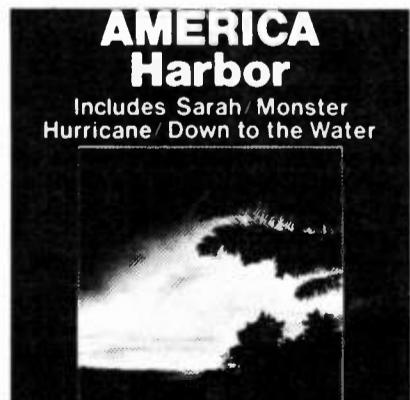


**EXCERPTS—Indigo**  
(WB)

An L.A. group called Genesis? We don't remember! Uh-oh. One of the girls is from there? Colorful name? Deep Purple. Crimson. Fuchsia. Ochre. That's a vegetable! Tangerine. That's a fruit! Mauve. Roy Wood has nothing to do with it? Chartreuse. Aqua. Navy. Turquoise. Indigo! I never would have gotten it. AL NICHOL'S GIRLFRIEND! (Al Nichol being an illustrious, long-retired ex-Turtle). This could be the discovery of the year! Sue Richman. That's her! She used to be in Genesis? That's Al Nichol's girlfriend. Wow! Sue, write and let us know if you're not Al Nichol's girlfriend. Al Nichol, if you're out there....What a piece of trivia! Around 1969-70, Al Nichol's girlfriend. We know someone in Indigo! Someone Al knew survived to go on as something else! I hope we find out the real answer to this one!

## FLO & EDDIE'S FINE-TUNED 45 FINDING SERVICE

**Involuntary Client: America**  
(Harbor, Warners)



A group named after a country? Hungary? That was Sammy Hagar. America. Oh, that country. Posters, custom labels, pictures of Hawaii. Is there a single? Not yet? OK, we'll pick it for them. Side One, Track 1: That's nice. They need a hit, though. They're cold.

Track 2: The one that doesn't sound like a hit on the album will be the hit.

Track 3: This might be the single. I don't know...go on.

Track 4: "She's Gone?" Skip it. Can't be a hit again with that title.

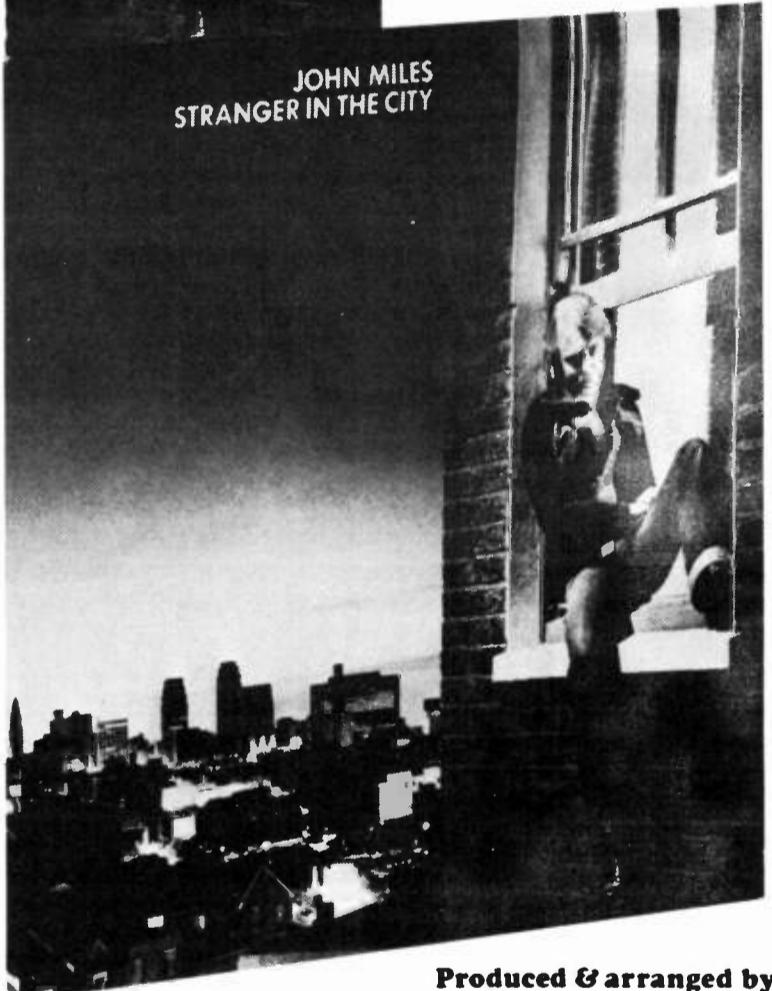
Track 5: "Political Poachers"? There's a title. Uh-oh—sounds like "Tin Man." "Political Poachers" could be the one. A little muskrat solo in there. They're one of my favorite bands. Really!

Track 6: Too slow? What do you mean? Burton wouldn't say that. This is the Age of the Schmaltz. Clive would love to get America. Maybe he'd trade Showaddywaddy and throw in the Glitter Band. Too slow!

Side Two, Track 1: "Sgt. Darkness?" Pick it up. That's not the single. It's gonna kick in in a minute. Oh well.



**JOHN MILES**  
STRANGER IN THE CITY



Produced & arranged by  
Rupert Holmes

**The LP  
available now...**

**The tour soon!**

A  
WIDESCREEN  
PRODUCTION



**LONDON**  
RECORDS & TAPES

NEW HARVEST... FIRST GATHERING

*Dolly Parton*



"Any time you make a change, you gotta pay the price. A lot of country people feel I'm leaving the country, that I'm not proud of Nashville, which is the biggest lie there is.

I don't want to leave the country, but to take the whole country with me wherever I go. There are really no limits now. After the first of the year my new life begins."

*Dolly Parton*

"They are really all quite wonderful songs...it's hard to see how she can miss. Certainly her own spirits are restlessly eager, and as usual her own songs say it best: 'I've been like a captured eagle; you know, an eagle's born to fly.'"

John Rockwell, NEW YORK TIMES, November 19, 1976

# NILS



By LESTER BANGS

Nils Lofgren has a new album in the stores and a new tour on the road, yet the majority of Americans still don't care. However, there's a feeling in the air that it's finally time for him to complete that move from cult figure to all-American superstar. Lofgren has been as honest and persistent as Bob Seger, but more than a Horatio Alger in black leather. Misconceptions about the man abound. I had as many as any one else, perhaps more, so I recopied his recorded output, spoke a bit on the phone to Nils himself and bathed in his music for days on end and found a major American writer, at least one all-time rock 'n' roll classic ("Keith Don't Go"), and a new album that sounds like it's full of little white lies.

"What I am is a rock 'n' roll artist who hopefully will be healthy and playing on the road a long time," Lofgren philosophized. "I'm very physical, athletic. So what I'm into would best be described as 'athletic rock.' Working out and getting in shape for the road is a real physical thing, and on the road's where it really counts. If I'm gonna play in front of 500,000 kids I wanna come back again; that's what will determine if I'm good or bad."

Rather than the archetypal punk, Nils has always epitomized for me the Rock 'n' Roll **Kid**—a subtle but crucial distinction. There's not a trace of real malice in his music even at its fiercest; when he sang "Love or Else" he didn't really mean the second part. The song's about bluster, however removed its creator might be from its protagonist. But rock fans are absolutists. The paradox in Nils music is merely the fundamental misconception of roles at

RV. PATRICK HENDERSON

ANDY NEWMARK

NILS LOFGREN

TOM LOFGREN

WORNELL JONES



the heart of the music itself. Not just the old tough-guy-sensitive-underneath routine, but a kid with an eye for nuance who had it drummed into him that there's no time for that shit if you're gonna walk tall all the way—kind of like Bruce Springsteen, except that Bruce partially through surfeit of talent and partially through self-consciousness feels constrained to translate all simple street nuance into mythic dramaturgically heightened cityscapes. Nils has no patience for such grandiosities—his songs are terse, from the heart, to the point. Economy marks everything he does, even his most Hendrixian guitar forays. In that sense he is closer both to pure pop and the streets, than to Springsteen. There is nothing literary about Nils Lofgren.

"I wanna be like Rod Stewart and Sam Cooke," Lofgren explained. "Not that I want to cop their styles, but I just want to be myself as much as I can. That's why I think that whatever sort of images people try to apply to me, I just try to forget about it as much as possible. Sometimes when I see that punk-rock stuff pointed at me, I cringe. But it's like, I'm not gonna sit around and cry over spilled milk."

The new Nils Lofgren album has problems. Many of the songs sound like they had to be written in the sense that it was time to get a record out, rather than the sense that there was something on his mind he just had to say. But I always say "Back it up." And if he can back up "Rock Me at Home" and "Jealous Gun" live, the way he did previous songs on the

authorized bootleg, then we'll all be raising our glasses high. In the meantime, if these notes on the new album seem superficial or even snotty, blame it on the fact that I'd just discovered "Keith Don't Go" the same day.

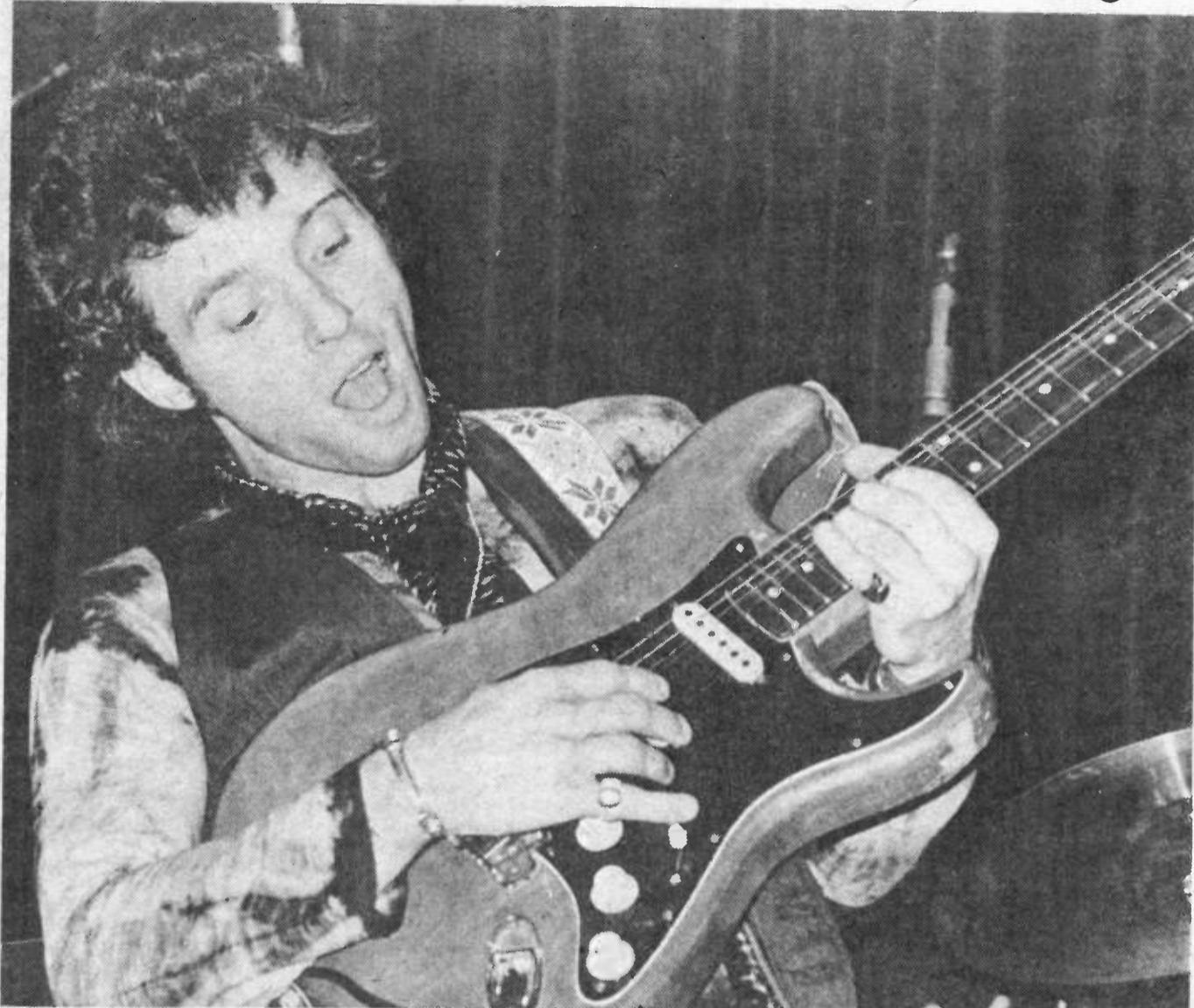
In a long review of Nils' group Grin's 2nd album, *I plus I*, in the March 1972 issue of **Creem** magazine, Greil Marcus said of Nils and all the very greatest rock 'n' roll: "...when **this** music becomes the core instead of the outside chance" the seeds of pop revolution are sown. "Nils Lofgren...doesn't seem to have to reach for this kind of music—it seems to come **naturally** to him... most of Lofgren's songs are pure pop, of the something's-

shown Above(L-R): Pianist RV. Patrick Henderson; Andy Newmark, drums; lead guitarist Nils Lofgren; Tom Lofgren, rhythm guitar; and bassist Wornell Jones.

wrong-with-love-and-it-throws-me type... He pulls this off without ever being cute or self-conscious..."

Cut to the present and see what a love deferred can do. It can make you cough and quail and bend back at the knees from blizzards of public non-acceptance. You romp 'n' stomp declaiming yourself louder than ever, proclaiming what a high hot time you are having. It can make you write lyrics like: *My Manager kept tellin' me if I want to be great I'd better wise up and sing my songs straight.*

**"I'm 25, and I intend to keep playing my ass off when I'm 30 and way past that, too." --Nils Lofgren**



Brad Eherman

I said, "Lissen here, fool, in order to survive I've gotta be my dirty self, I won't play no jive."

Nils anticipates that "people will say 'I Came to Dance' is trying to cash in on disco, but it's not. To me disco is background music; if people like it, fine, but I don't. I hate it. And I don't play it. There's no feeling. I can see how people might think I'm coping out, putting on one song called 'I Came to Dance' just so they'll buy it, but that's not what I'm doing. What I really meant by the song, and it's in the lyrics, is that now I'm 25, I've come this far but I've got so far to go, and I'm gonna keep on trying to get better instead of sitting around worrying about it, and that I intend to keep playing my ass off when

I'm 30 and way past that too."

Statements like that make it hard to argue with him about the new album, produced by Nils and Andy Newmark. "Jealous Gun" is a plea for rifle control delivered from the endangered species' point of view, "To Be a Dreamer" recounts a bit of sage advice once passed on to li'l Nils by ole Pop Lofgren, and most of the others are equally pleasant. Still, they tend to be unremarkable, suggesting that Nils Lofgren (shudder) may be trying to make a Peter Frampton album!

The exceptions that reveal the majority of his new sides for what they are include a cover of the Stones' "Happy," which doesn't cut the original but can come to my party anytime, and "Code of the

Road," a bitterly twanging early Springfieldish moral tale that's not only about, but **stands** for something. Something went into this song emotionally, and something equally strong comes back—the kind of music both the Eagles and Bad Company **should** be making if they were what they purport to be. It's real. For once on the album, total honesty replaces shifting levels of coyness.

Nils doesn't feel that way at all, of course, although he is correct in allowing that the audience will be final judge. "I really think my new album is the best thing I've done, the most like a live performance. I think more people will like it; if not, I'm to blame, I take all responsibility. So if you don't like it, you don't like

me."

Lofgren's best songs plow right through any and all images. "Love just ain't enough/I need devotion to back it up"—that's the timber Nils Lofgren was hewn from. His vulnerability is in perfect harmonic balance, neither repressively impacted nor wimpily on his sleeve. A rock 'n' roll kid who breathes his roots (Buddy Holly in "One More Saturday Night," for instance) so naturally he never has to belabor his right to the sceptre. The real thing never has to tell you it is. And that's why I find the title track and general tone of **I Came to Dance** a self-betrayal. **He just doesn't need it.**

Here's what makes Nils magic: in "Keith Don't Go" there's not a hint of sickly sentimentality, self-aggrandizement, incestuousness or ambulance chasing. Just an impassioned plea we all share, so pure because it is so selfless. Though his guitar solo is supercharged, there is no hint of flash for its own sake—it's as if he's trying to will the life back into his hero by gouging out his own frets. There's no gee-isn't-it-groovy—we're-all-stars-together-so-keep-the-faith-Keith creep jive...this is an epistle from someone who is what all the greatest rockers remain: an ultimate fan.

But owing to the nature of the album in question I'm not so sure it would be entirely appropriate to close this article on anybody's reverent note. **I Came to Dance**, and dance I believe the millions of us may yet. In purely marketing terms, now is Nils' time: he looks like a punk, plays virtuoso guitar, and sings more or less soothingly. In other words, a safe CBGB, a white Hendrix, a Frampton badasses can like and still hold their heads up. All things to all people, and still true to himself. Which seems too good to be true. Maybe it is.

# BAD COMPANY: Revolt Into Style



By ROBIN KATZ

**LONDON**—With Bad Company's four-month American tour set to kick off in Denver on April 25th, the group's personal assistants are taking bets on whether or not Paul Rodgers will continue the rigorous karate training which has absorbed his attention since Bad Company took time off at the end of last year. Decked in a kimono, the newly shorn Rodgers has visibly dropped both drink and weight. He intends to bring his karate teacher on the road for the European tour which pre-empts the American visit. The question is, how long will Eastern discipline intermingle with road-weary Western hijinks?

"It's good therapy, what Paul's doing," a relaxed Mick Ralphs says of Bad Company's volatile lead vocalist. "People tend to pick on

him, especially on the subject of his aggressiveness, or the band's name. He's just a f--king great singer, and he doesn't want people coming up to him wanting aggro all the time. By doing this, which is a direct influence from his Japanese wife, it can only help. Karate makes you calmer. If someone shouts at you, you don't automatically jump up and bop him on the nose."

While Rodgers has tightened the screws on his personal life, Bad Company as a whole has loosened up considerably on *Burnin' Sky*, their fourth album release in less than three years. The LP is the important follow-up to last year's *Runnin' With The Pack*, which sparked massive popular acceptance while drawing critical raves. Yet instead of pressuring themselves into mistakes, Bad Company approached the new album nonchalantly.

"I think you set out to have your own style," says guitarist Ralphs, skirting the attitude that provides the foundation for this album. "Style is a positive idea because you can develop from it. We're exploiting what we have between us, and therefore we don't feel any limitations. We've always built on a strong platform. This album broadens it. If you enjoy what you're doing, and if it's what you do best, then why switch course in mid-stream? Just because you maintain a certain style doesn't mean you're predictable. Predictable is a negative word. It implies that you're not going anywhere. On this album, we're tighter as a unit, more confident than ever, but definitely more relaxed. There's a lot more diverse sounds, because several of the cuts were just jams."

After last year's immensely suc-

cessful American tour, the group took two weeks off, then trucked straight into their studios in France with nothing prepared. "Master Of Ceremonies," a Robert Plant title, was extended to a seven-minute long jam that featured Rodgers on guitar and Ralphs on organ. Overall, it has a strikingly different kind of blues feel. "The jam as the last track on the album leaves us open for where we go next," says Ralphs happily.

Obviously the honeymoon is in no way over for this conglomeration of ex-Free members Simon Kirke and Paul Rodgers, ex-King Crimson man Boz Burrell, and ex-Mott the Hoople Ralphs. Other bands with similar prolific personnel, have disintegrated upon the first sight of stardom. Bad Company has endured intact, proving an exception to the rule. Over Christmas, the

quartet played a set in their old rehearsal hall, billing themselves as Rough Diamond (another group of formerly in-limbo musicians has hence claimed the name). It wasn't until the end of the set filled with old songs like Sam and Dave's "Hold On I'm Coming" and Wilson Pickett's "In the Midnight Hour" that the festive patrons realized who they were watching. "Hell, we're musicians," says Ralphs, making the point very obvious. "We need to tiddle around, have a blow with some mates and keep it fresh. We just play all the stuff we used to warm up with at rehearsals. It's your backlog of influences if you like, and all the records you ever got off on. It was Booker T and the MG's "Green Onion" that got me to pick up a guitar in the first place. Before that, music was too syrupy sounding for me."

"I'm amazed that people don't know Albert King," he says switching his focus to American fans. "People are more aware of Jimmy Page than Albert King, which is a shame, really. When I was on tour with Mott years ago, I was at a gig with Freddie and Albert King. I was out of my mind with excitement. Albert King is this enormous figure, and when you really like someone, you don't know what to say, you know? I got very humble in front of him. He let me play his guitar. I can't tell you what it felt like."

Picturing Mick Ralphs as humble, or Bad Company deliriously playing '60s soul songs seems completely out of step with the public's image of them as being the last of the heavy metal gunfighters in rock's O.K. corral. Why, Mick Ralphs even has a marvelous sense of humor. But Bad Company, seen as anything less than hell-raising, would make for boring copy. "Copy, that's a word like product," Ralphs notes carefully. "All the incidents you read about this band get blown out of proportion. It's probably because of our name."

"We're just four firesigns. Put that together and you get a lot of energy. When we're all together we're invisible. If the four of us were here now, we'd probably give you a hard time. Not intentionally, but when the four of us are together," he hesitates, "it's like...."

It's like everything you've ever read from insiders about the Beatles during their pressurized heyday. Together, Bad Company forms an intangible insular group. They are acutely protective of one another. When magazine writers come bombarding at them in an attempt to crack their unity, up goes the barrier. On the other hand, it's the same four who will quickly prick one another's egos. "It's a great sharing situation," says Ralphs. "There's no crap." And no crap was also Ralphs' comment on the idea of self-indulgent solo albums from group members in the imme-



**Top:** Mick Ralphs, Bad Company's lead guitarist, talks shop with Led Zeppelin's Jimmy Page.

**Bottom [L-R]:** Paul Rodgers, Simon Kirke, Boz Burrell, and Mick Ralphs.

iate future.

"The people concentrate on the Aggro aspect," says Ralphs. "We would like to play that down. We don't try to live up to any image. It's the music that counts. The word 'bad' on soul stations means good. And that's us. We come on strong because our music is straight down the line, and we don't like half-measures. Sure, we might start screaming at the roadies. If someone's watching, they think, 'I wouldn't want to work with f---ers like them.' But once you're offstage the problem is over with. I mean, you're not still mad at the guy, there's no malice intended. But if people continually have a go at you, then you're going to get defensive. It's a drag. I'm sure Joe Frazier doesn't like people coming up to him at bars trying to test his strength. He just wants to relax and have a drink. We're like that too. We don't want a hard time. What we do is a job."

Ralphs aligns his private life somewhat to John Bonham's earthy fantasy in "The Song Remains the Same," Led Zeppelin's celluloid epic. The group spent one tax year out of Britain, and during time off, Ralphs got depressed sitting around the French Villa alone for two weeks. On one of his few "legal" days in England, he bought a farm in Burkeshire, which dates back from 1475. "I found all these rooms I didn't even know about," he laughed. "I'll pay the taxes. I just want a home to go to."

Given a chance, Ralphs would like to see Bad Company compile a definitive rock documentary film. "I liked Zep's film, particularly Bonzo's bit, but I've always felt that there's never been a film to cover all the aspects of this business. It's not just the music. It's meeting all the weird and diverse people backstage at parties, on the plane to gigs. It's people phoning you that you don't know, or the threats. All the things the public doesn't know about. It would be entertaining just by the insight it would give. It would take the lid off the glamour. Remember how we thought cowboys were handsome clean-cut heroes? Now you know that they were just ruthless little murderers. Personally, I'd like to do that about rock with no holds barred.

"It's been very hard to slow down," he concludes, reflecting on the group's recent three-month layoff. "It took me a month to get settled. We all need to rest physically and mentally, but then you start pacing up and down waiting for the phone to ring. You go crazy. What's happening is that we're going back to work because we all have itchy feet. Am I looking forward to this tour, four months on the road? I am, actually. As long as we enjoy each other's company and the music, then we'll continue to carry on."



I can't put it off any longer. I've been avoiding it for months now, hoping that somebody else would do it. Then I realized that nobody else could do it. Do it *right*, I mean. Yes, friends, you guessed it—it's time for *Pipeline* to tackle that hot new trend, that avant garde new wave of music: punk rock.

New trend, indeed! I have to laugh. Ha Ha! You see, I was the guy who *invented* punk rock. That's right, *invented it*, and you can ask anyone and they'll tell you it's true. One night I was working late in my laboratory, working on something else, in fact, and all of a sudden there it was...

But seriously, folks, it's a fact that over five years ago I published a slick fanzine that dealt exclusively with the music that's now being called punk. I have every album

and every single that's even remotely concerned with the genre. I am, with all due modesty, one of the world's foremost experts on the subject, and it's only fitting that readers of *Pipeline* should expect me to deliver the definitive survey of the current punk scene. So here it is:

**TELEVISION** *Marquee Moon* (Elektra): This is the best thing to come out of New York since Rodney Dangerfield. Their debut album is uneven, but I think that's because I left it out in the sun all afternoon. Three killer cuts: "See No Evil," "Venue," and "Elevation." They have ability, desire—and even more important—big bucks behind them, and they could go all the way. Or then again, they may not. One thing is certain, though: they'll either do one or the other.

**THE RAMONES** *Ramones Leave Home* (Sire): This is the most

written about, talked about, and most widely debated group on the whole scene. And with good reason, you can be sure. (Personally, I don't know what the reason is, but you can be sure there is one). The Ramones are famous for their fierce, primal energy, their over-reliance on loud chording, and their banal, juvenile lyrics. It is said that it's impossible to be lukewarm about this group. You either love them or hate them. In my own brief survey, I've found this to be true. Those who love them do not seem to hate them, and vice versa.

**BLONDIE** (Private Stock): This is practically the only group on the scene that understands and uses the missing link between the punk rock of today and the real thing as it existed in 1966: The Farfisa Organ! The Seeds used it, Question Mark & The Mysterians used it, The Standells used it, and Blondie, to

their everlasting credit, uses it a lot. Onstage, they're a very visual act, reminding one of Marilyn Monroe backed by the Dave Clark Five. (Not a bad idea for a group, actually, except the fact that the Dave Clark Five have split up might make it difficult to pull off. Still, worth a try for some ambitious promoter...) They've already got the best song of the new wave to their credit, the sublime Phil Specter/Bruce Springsteen-ish "X-Offender," about a girl who falls in love with the cop who busts her. Also arresting is "In The Sun," the best piece of surf music to come out since "Pipeline." Critical reaction to Blondie has thus far been mixed. The only thing that everybody agrees about is that it would have been impossible for this album to come out even two years ago. Which makes a lot of sense, since the group hadn't even met each other two years ago!

**EDDIE & THE HOT RODS** (Island): The Sex Pistols' main competition in the English punk-rock sweepstakes, Eddie & The Hot Rods, do not rely on gimmicks like torn T-shirts and safety pins through their ears. They have their own gimmicks and the most remarkable is the fact that this group is made up of one human being (Eddie) and four automobiles. Eddie, a former mechanic for the Who's fleet of Bentleys, was the first person to discover that cars could read music



## Attend Valerie Carter's debut.

It seemed like everybody who was anybody in L.A. turned out for the sessions that led to this, Valerie Carter's debut album. Valerie has friends in the business, and no wonder. She's sung backup for Jackson Browne, James Taylor and Little Feat... written tunes like "Cook With Honey" for Judy Collins. Her music is fresh, but she's no newcomer.

Now Valerie is about to make as many friends outside the music business as she's made inside.

And no wonder.

**Valerie Carter  
Just A Stone's Throw Away**

including:  
Ooh Child/City Lights/Cowboy Angel  
Heartache/Back To Blue Some More



"Just A Stone's Throw Away."  
The voice and songs of Valerie Carter,  
on Columbia Records and Tapes

INDIVIDUALLY MASTERS  
COLLECTIVELY.  
A MASTERPIECE



Works. Volume I  
**Emerson Lake & Palmer**  
On Atlantic Records and Tapes.

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# SEX PISTOLS: 'No future but what a past'

(Cont'd from prev. pg.)

if given the proper training. "It's important to get them when they're young," he told England's *Melody Maker*. "By the time they've got 20,000 miles on them, they no longer have the patience or the attention span for it." The group's stage act includes an abundance of oldies, among them "Mustang Sally," "Little Deuce Coupe," and "Jaguar And The Thunderbird." As you can well imagine, the group is constantly on the road and in great demand throughout the country. Eddie is quite candid about the advantages that a rock 'n' band composed of automobiles has over one with actual people in it. "We don't have the problems that other bands have," Eddie claims. "Cars are always on time for rehearsal. We never have to worry or spend the money that most groups do for hotels and transportation. It's a perfect set-up and that's why the established bands refuse to take us seriously. We pose a threat to them. It's as simple as that."

**LOU REED and PATTI SMITH** (Arista): The most famous quote in the brief history of the punk rock renaissance came from Clive Davis, president of Arista Records, in a speech reported on in the November 20, 1976 issue of *Billboard Magazine*. It reads as follows:

"Punk rock doesn't exist, but if it does, Arista has the two best in Patti Smith and Lou Reed."

I think that's a great statement. I don't understand it, but I think it's a great statement.

Lou Reed was at one time with a group called the Velvet Underground. They were associated with Andy Warhol earlier in their career, then were never able to shake off the association. (Although when The Association threatened to release their version of "Sister Ray" as the follow-up to "Along Comes Mary," Lou Reed personally attacked a member of the Association with a giant Campbell's Soup can). His most famous Velvet Underground song, "Heroin," was reportedly about drugs, although that's open to individual interpretation. After the release of "Loaded" (possibly another drug-reference) the group split up and Reed, the prime mover, signed with RCA. It was there that he had his first hit single, "Walk On The Wild Side" and struck up a relationship with label-mate David Bowie. The peak of his career came with his two-album set, "Metal Machine Music." Released in 1973, it anticipated the work that Eddie & The Hot Rods were to get much of the credit for three years later. Lou gave "Metal Machine Music" everything he had, only to watch it die in the face of RCA's indifference toward it. Phil Spector felt the same thing with "River Deep-Mountain High." Brian Wilson felt

it with "Pet Sounds." Now it was Reed's turn and he never forgave RCA for it. The minute his contract ran out, he sought out Clive Davis. The meeting was brief but historically significant to the punk rock revival. The complete text (as overheard by Clifton Parker, Arista Vice-President, Janitorial Division) is as follows:

**REED:** Clive, my kind of music doesn't exist. But if it does, I'm the leading exponent in my field.

**DAVIS:** Makes sense to me, Lou. Sign right here.

The rest is history.

Patti Smith was a different story. She was a poet. But not just an ordinary poet. She was a street poet. (The difference is that an ordinary poet lives indoors). Her work was published regularly in such scholarly journals as Detroit's *Creem Magazine*, among others. She looked a lot like Mick Jagger and she seemed to be quite sexually repressed. In short, she was much like any other normal American girl, but her fate hadn't hit her yet. It arrived with Lenny Kaye, a noted rock critic who also played guitar. (Although this two-fold talent seemed prodigious at the time, it was later learned that only two rock critics in the entire country didn't also play the guitar). Within weeks, Patti's poems were set to music, a couple more local musicians were rounded up and Patti was opening at the Bottom Line. Opening night she sat nervously backstage watching cartoons on TV while waiting to go onstage. Her reception was nothing short of incredible. She was able to pick up stations in Toronto, and this with an indoor antenna!

That night fate struck again. Who should be in the audience but Bob Dylan! From this point on the story begins to take on Hollywood overtones. Clive Davis called from Hollywood and asked Patti to sing over the dial tone. Her first album, *Horses* brought her nationwide acclaim. Her picture was in all the magazines. The big hair shampoo companies in New York began to work secretly against her, fearing that if she were to become an idol of young people, their sales to that market could be cut by as much as 50%. She toured the world. Gone were the frilly, summer cotton dresses she wore on the streets of New York. In their place was a dirty T-shirt and baggy old levis. Clothing manufacturers began to have private meetings where the "PSP" (Patti Smith Problem) was discussed behind closed doors. They were out to stop her. It wasn't fair, but they don't fight clean at the top, and never have. Clive Davis got word of it and took action. Unreported to the public and unannounced to the press, he is said to have appeared before the assembled clothing manufacturers at their annual convention to discuss the "PSP."

"Gentlemen," he said. "There is no Patti Smith problem."

He paused. There was some commotion in the room. He waited until it died down, then continued:

"The kind of music she and her band play is called 'Punk Rock' and IT DOESN'T EXIST. So you have nothing to fear."

From that day to this, no one has ever mentioned the 'PSP' again and Patti's career has flourished to the point where she has become so financially successful that she has decided to take up residency in this country to avoid the harsh British tax structure. The question was raised by a curious reporter from *Newsday* about why she should take up residency in America when she was, in fact, born here and not subject to British taxation laws.

"The time comes in everyone's life," she replied, "when it's important to take a stand for what you believe in. Injustice is injustice. What difference does it make where a person is born?"

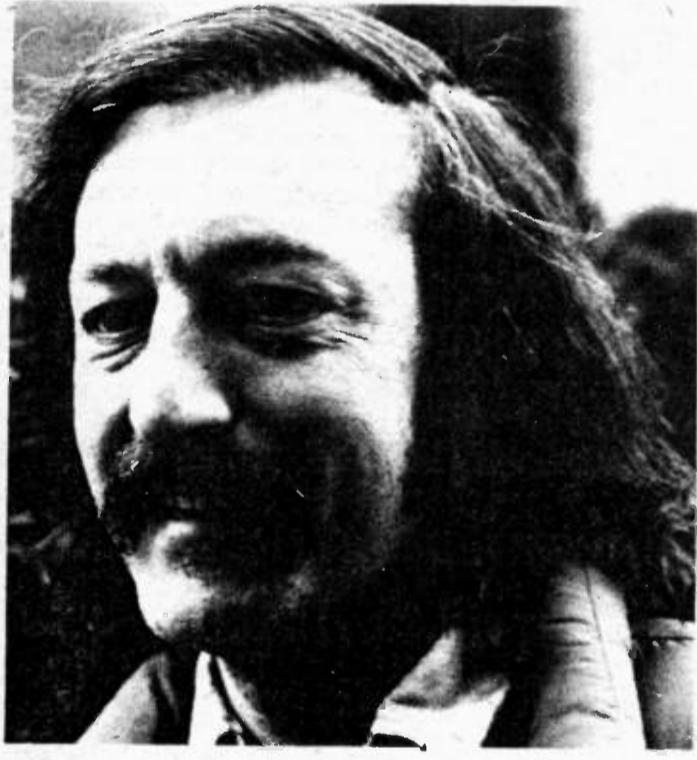
Nobody I know would argue with that.

**LIVE AT CBGB's (Atlantic):** This is a compilation album, a two-record set recorded in that throbbing hotbed of punk activity right in the core of the Big Apple, CBGB's. It seems certain that if you had to sum up the entire new wave in only two records, you would choose *Television* and *Blondie*, and not this turkey. The only good stuff is by the *Miamis* and *Talking Heads*, and that's it. The rest is horrible, and even a guest appearance on lead guitar by Johnny Ramone on the two cuts by *Pregnant Mice* fails to spark the album. For those who are interested, other groups included in this anthology are *Walking Stomachs*, *Torn Sideburns*, *African Police Car*, and *Bahama Trauma*. For collectors only...

**TOM PETTY AND THE HEARTBREAKERS** (Shelter): They tell a story in Florida (where this group originally comes from) that Tom Petty's real name is Tom Petowski or something like that. They say he didn't get the name of Tom Petty until the band relocated to Los Angeles and Tom started to get somewhat, uh...petty. For example, one source claims that Tom insists that every member of the Heartbreakers wear green jockey shorts (underneath their pants, of course) onstage. Supposedly, the drummer was wearing the standard white jockey shorts one night and Tom refused to let him onstage until he went home and changed. There's plenty of Tom Petty stories, so many, in fact, that it's tough to know which ones are true and which are legend. A groupie standing in front of the Whisky informed me Tom insists that the temperature in any hotel room he stays in after a gig be precisely 68 degrees. She says he carries around a

thermometer to check this out. Just in case the room's thermostat has been rigged. Those owners who refuse to comply with Tom's directives are likely to find an entire jar of Bosco poured over the channel selector of the room's TV set. When Tom gets into a mood like this, the Heartbreakers wisely avoid him, and I would too. His album is good but nowhere near as dynamic as his stage act. Among the finest of the new wave hard rockers.

**THE SEX PISTOLS (EMI/England, now looking for a label):** Punk rock knows no borders (although it has met a few people who just want to stay the night) and has become a genuine international phenomena. The Sex Pistols are England's premier punk outfit. Everything they do, every move they make, has tremendous influence up on the youth of England. If they wear torn T-shirts on TV, the very next day, young people throughout England are wearing torn T-shirts. If they pierce their ears and put safety pins in them, within a week there's hardly an un-pierced ear or a safety pin left in the entire country. They created a tremendous uproar throughout England recently when they appeared live on nationwide TV and proceeded to spew a stream of obscenities at a bewildered talk show host. The very next day, teenage gangs prowled the streets of England looking for talk show hosts to swear at. At this point you might wonder if the Sex Pistols are merely a hype or if they're really innovative. They are innovative, and there can be no argument about this. Prior to the Sex Pistols' incident, no person born in England had ever uttered an obscenity out loud. I know this statement seems outrageous, but there is documentation to back it up. There existed a feeling in England prior to the Sex Pistols that the British accent was simply not equipped to handle coarse American vulgarisms. It was designed for words like "marvelous" and "petrol" and phrases like "spot of tea" and "Ta, luv." But all that's changed now. Thanks to the Sex Pistols, English people are swearing all day long and they love it. Some have even taken to setting their alarm clock to wake them at 3 in the morning, at which time they call someone up, swear at them, and go back to sleep. However, there is resistance in some quarters. EMI, the Sex Pistols' label, was so outraged at the obscenity incident that they immediately dropped the group. Not, however, before they had released their first single, "Anarchy In The U.K." It was unfortunate timing for the Sex Pistols. Had they been dropped before the record was released no one would have ever heard this piece of dismal garbage. As it is, they've got no label and no future. But what a past!



DAVE HERMAN  
Monday-Friday  
6:00am-10:00am

Born in Huntington, Long Island, and raised in the Bronx, WNEW-FM morning man Dave Herman was one of a handful of pioneers in the development of FM radio in the 1960's. He hosted the first progressive rock FM show in Philadelphia for Metromedia's WMMR in 1968. His program, "The Marconi Experiment," soon became Philly's top-rated evening radio show. Dave then came to New York to do a nationally syndicated FM program for the American Broadcasting Company before joining WNEW-FM in 1972.

"Radio is an intimate part of people's lives," Dave believes. "Especially in the morning. The kind of close relationship you can develop with people you never see constantly amazes me...But that's why I love the kind of radio station WNEW-FM is—it enables you to get so close to your audience."

Besides his daily WNEW-FM show, Dave is now developing and producing a series of nation-wide audio documentaries profiling the lives of rock celebrities.

**WNEW-FM**

**102.7**  
METROMEDIA STEREO



Kathy Clary

## FLEETWOOD MAC Rumours

Includes the Hit Go Your Own Way  
Also Includes Dreams  
The Chain Don't Stop Songbird



**RUMOURS**  
Fleetwood Mac  
Warner Bros. BSK 3010

By BUD SCOPPA

I'm convinced there's gonna be heavy bidding on the movie rights to this story: A legendary but unstable British rock band emigrates to L.A., where its sound gets sunnier while various guitar players and singers come and go. Then the band solidifies into (catch this wrinkle!) two couples, as the enigmatic bassman (a founding member) and his sweet-singing wife (a

star in her own right back in England) hook up with a pair of foxy Californians, the guy an ace guitarist, the gal a tawny seductress with a spoiled-brat pout of a voice. Then there's the lanky, lonely English drummer in a key character role. Just days after they team up, they record an album, which (you guessed it) becomes a huge hit, spurred on by an eerie single written and sung by the new bombshell. Suddenly they're big stars, playing football stadiums and posing for poster-sized shots in the rock mags.

But the pressure of instant fame 'n' fortune takes its toll, and both couples look on helplessly as their relationships disintegrate. Miraculously, the band stays together through this prolonged romantic trauma, the principals reach a new understanding of themselves and each other (even after the tawny fox takes up with —let's say— one of the Eagles), and they decide to make their next album a document of their collective heartbreak and self-discovery. They labor long and hard, reliving their real-life anguish in the studio, and when at last the album gets released, the public embraces it with unforeseen ex-

citement. And the band goes on...Does that sound too much like *A Star Is Born*?

I've written myself in, too, as a hard-to-please record reviewer. My character praises the album's first hit single, a pathos-laden scorch from the guitarist with the perfect title "Go Your Own Way." I carefully explain how the track's arching harmonies, skewering guitars, and relentlessly expanding intensity make it clear that this is now a thoroughly Angelized unit with a debt to the town's rich rock history. I also heap praise on "The Chain," a similarly powerful heart-break-rocker credited to the whole band, and on a pair of typically classy numbers from the romantic Englishwoman.

But then I get cranky, complaining about how the band members respected fragile feelings contained in some of the songs so much that they left them spare and meek instead of driving them across with the love-raked ferocity their lyrics suggest. Even more icily, I carp about the overly petulant nasality of the foxy lady's lead vocals, and I go so far as to bitch about the way the usually empathetic English beauty allows the minor-key twang of "Oh,

Daddy" to transfigure her from a wronged lover to a mere witchy woman.

Of course, I don't want to make my role totally heartless. I admit that even the overly cautious tracks pass by with ease and quiet beauty. Further, I rave about the unifying power and precision the performances of the stolid sympathetic drummer, about the rich authenticity of the vocal blend, and about the scarred splendor of the unleashed electric guitars. Finally, with devastating ambivalence, I profess ignorance as to why in the world the band would hide the most haunting song and lead vocal yet by the Americana girl (we'll call it "Silver Springs") on the flip side of the single, and not even put it on the LP!

As the camera zeroes in on that final incriminating question, the pulp-tabloid page the words are printed on begins to spin. In no time it's spinning so fast that it becomes an indistinct circular shape, and at the last moment the audience realizes it has imperceptibly become an album revolving on a turntable. As the spinning slows, the words "The End?" can be read on the label...Any opening bids?

**At left, The Fleetwood's family affair [clockwise]: Stevie Nicks, Lindsey Buckingham, Christine McVie, John McVie, Mick Fleetwood.**



**ISLANDS**  
The Band  
Capitol SO-11602

By MARK SHIPPER

A friend of mine called me one night last summer and told me he had an extra ticket to the Band concert that night and asked me if I wanted to go. I'd never seen the group live, even though I had all their albums and had been a fan since the late '60s. For some reason, I didn't feel the compelling need to see them, figuring that they'd be around forever and I'd catch up to them sooner or later. It was then I learned that the tour last summer was to be their last, and I went.

At intermission, my friend leaned over and asked me what I thought of the first half of the show. I actually enjoyed it, but because he was both one of the world's biggest Band fans and also one of the world's biggest smart-asses, I decided to give him some of his own treatment.

"This isn't a rock concert," I told him. "It's a goddamn American History lesson. I feel like I should be taking notes. Why don't they have a blackboard up there? Is there gonna be a test at the end of the show?"

I was only kidding, but it seemed that there was an element of reality in it, which would help explain the limited audience the Band has had in recent years. Their sound and subject matter have always recalled an earlier America, and while it may have had a widespread appeal in the late '60s (when young people felt a general dis-enfranchisement with America), it just didn't seem to work in the middle-'70s. It wasn't trivial enough. Robbie Robertson's oft-quoted statement that "music should never be harmless," was totally at odds with contemporary music. The Band simply have too much identity and integrity to share the spotlight with Peter Frampton and Elton John. The time seems right for them to go their separate ways.

*Islands* was reportedly thrown together hastily to fulfill their obligation to Capitol, which is interesting because it's easily their finest album since their 1969 classic, *The Band*. If it wasn't common knowledge that the group is splitting up for a while, *Islands* would certainly be viewed as the Band's "comeback" album.

Robbie Robertson (who wrote or co-wrote eight of *Islands* ten songs) is still at the top of his form. His lyrics are unique in the entire rock idiom. The subject matter is always away from himself, often away from anything even remotely familiar to today's audience. You come away from a good Band album with the same feeling you get from a good novel: that another world exists besides the one you live in. And every song has at least one or two great lines of something that can only be described as "universal truth" that stays with you long after you've filed the album away.

The first side of *Islands* goes from strength to strength. "Right As Rain" seems to me to be as beautiful a song as anything Robertson has ever written. Like all of his best material, it's the kind of song that only the Band could do justice. It's unthinkable to imagine this song without Garth Hudson's organ, without Levon Helm's drumming. Robertson's songs are so tailor-made for this group, that cover versions invariably reduce them to something like the mess that Joan Baez made of "The Night They Drove Old Dixie Down."

"Streetwalker" is Robertson at his storytelling best, while "Let The Night Fall" and "Christmas Must Be Tonight" are both rich ballads, loaded with imagery and beautifully sung. An old Stax standard, "Ain't That A Lot Of Love" breaks up the two ballads with a fine slice of rock 'n' roll, reminiscent of their *Moondog Matinee* oldies album.

The weak moments of *Islands* are all on side two. The title cut, an instrumental, is the only evidence on the album of the hastily thrown-together nature of the project. And a version of "Georgia On My Mind" is poorly sung and sluggishly played, its inclusion an unnecessary reminder that the group is steeped in American tradition.

"Livin' In A Dream," the closing cut on *Islands* is one of Robertson's finest recent songs, musically recalling "The Shape I'm In" and with lyrics that are equally as cogent.

Whether or not this will be the Band's last album is anyone's guess at this point. They claim they'll be making more albums together, but so did the Moody Blues and they haven't (not that anyone cares), nor have Roxy Music (which is a shame, and everyone's loss).

But if *Islands* turns out to be the Band's swan song, they've gone out with a bang. It probably won't even come close to the Top Ten, but it's the kind of album that will be played and enjoyed long after the

occupants of today's chart list have been forgotten.

## Blondie Chaplin



**BLONDIE CHAPLIN**  
Blondie Chaplin  
Asylum 7E-1095

By BUD SCOPPA

If you can resist Blondie Chaplin's spine-tingling lead vocal on the Beach Boys' anthem, "Sail on, Sailor," there must be something wrong with you. Blondie's got the magic, and there's something wonderfully inevitable about a mulatto kid from Durban, South Africa, making the long voyage to America and cultivating his special gift for rocking & rolling in the exalted company of our most revered and durable rock group.

Chaplin hasn't been heard from since he and his partner/countryman Ricky Fataar left the Beach Boys a couple years ago. But during that time they've been pouring their energy and skill into the music that graces Blondie's endlessly captivating solo debut album. Chaplin animates his straightforward romantic songs with remarkable vocal style that encompasses the husky warmth of Paul McCartney, the acrobatic fluidity of Stevie Wonder, and the swooping spontaneity of Aretha—the man sings. But that ain't all: Blondie plays electric guitar in the gleaming, celebrative style of prime Beatles/Stones/Who, and he underscores his feeling for mid-Sixties rock with bouncy basslines and ringing piano chords on most of the eleven tracks (inspired session men and promising unknowns play on the rest). Fataar pushes it all across with aggressive economical drumming that's always right on the money.

What makes this music ragingly powerful rather than just appealing is a sombre, mystic energy that resonates beneath the album's exuberant pop veneer. You can hear it most dramatically on the majestic "Riverboat Queen," a brilliant track that recounts Blondie's journey with penetrating clarity; while the story unfolds, the players rock out in ever-hotter waves of electric frenzy, with Blondie's Keith-riffs leading the way. That same mysterious energy amps such tracks as "For Your Love," "Woman Don't Cry," "Lonely Traveler," and "Can You Hear Me," all of them yearning love songs, but all rammed across with an almost violent urgency.

Blondie's music is too rich and real to pass on. If you do—pass on it, that is—there must be something wrong with you. Take a pill and consult your rock & roll doctor in the morning.

## Valerie Carter Just A Stone's Throw Away

including:  
Ooh Child/City Lights/Cowboy Angel  
Heartache/Back To Blue Some More



**JUST A STONE'S THROW AWAY**  
Valerie Carter  
Columbia PL 34155

By LESTER BANGS

Valerie is a singer who happens to be very beautiful, with sultry lips and ethereal Emmylou Harris eyes. This bit of good fortune should not be held against her, but it's worth keeping in front of your mind. Carter is also good friends with and used to sing backup for Lowell George of Little Feat, (who co-produced two songs on this album) and Jackson Browne. That shouldn't be held against her either, for neither George nor Browne are the kind of guys who come sidling up to you at decadent parties like Andrew Loog Oldham to Marianne Faithfull and gurgling "C'mere, baby, I can make you a star."

On the other hand, pretty backup singers as a class are notorious for failing to deliver the goods when somebody decides to graduate them to front-line stardom. I don't know about you, but I think the world could get along without solo albums by Merry Clayton, Rita Coolidge, etc. al. *Just a Stone's Throw Away* follows in their tradition: a little country, a little soul, doin' it all in the middle-of-the-road.

Although Carter co-wrote several songs (you may remember something called "Cook With Honey" she scripted for Judy Collins), and sings splendidly, splendidness is cheap these days and may often be mere competence getting uppity. There's nothing offensive here, but nothing extraordinary either. Of course, there is nothing at all extraordinary about Emmylou Harris for that matter, but one listen to Ronstadt or say Dionne Warwick at their respective bests confirms what you may have suspected this album of lacking as soon as you looked into Carter's cool detached eyes: dynamism. And as a good rule of thumb, I'd suggest you never buy any album by an unproven talent with a long roster of big-name friends on the cover. Because in such cases, the consumer is the one who usually ends up paying dues.

# BEACH BOYS "LOVE YOU":

"This album is so much Brian's that the rest of the group seems to have faded into the woodwork."

--Ken Barnes



THE BEACH BOYS LOVE YOU  
Beach Boys  
Reprise/Brother MSK 2258

By KEN BARNES

I'm simultaneously charmed and irritated by the new Beach Boys album, and I'm not sure where the charm leaves off and the irritation starts. Good news first—there are 14 new Brian Wilson songs here, and not only are there a couple of first-class tunes among them but the overall quality is encouragingly solid. None are anywhere near as lame as "That Same Song," "TM Song," or "Back Home," Brian's initial new stabs at writing on *15 Big Ones*, and "Johnny Carson," (that's right), "The Night Was So Young," and several others are positive delights.

But that irritation remains. For one thing, it's irritating to be forced to write that the overall quality of the songs is "encouragingly solid," and to cheer about a mere "couple of" "first-class" tunes. This isn't some "promising" group like Artful Dodger on their third album, this is the Beach Boys' 20th album of new material, and with albums like *Pet Sounds*, *Today* and *Sunflower* among the first 19, all their material should be first-class. "Encouragingly solid" shouldn't even enter into it.

That kind of tentative termin-



ology is natural in a way, though, as *Beach Boys Love You* is the first album of Brian Wilson originals since *Wild Honey* nine years ago, and while *15 Big Ones* was a first step back in the water, the new album has to be regarded as an all-out plunge.

This album is so much Brian's, as it turns out, that the rest of the group seems to have faded into the woodwork. Mike Love's reassuring nasality is hardly to be found, and even the group harmonies are on the sparse side. This situation, combined with a lot of extremely rough-edged singing by Brian, creates a half-hearted, unfinished ambience.

Which is a pity, since in several ways *Beach Boys Love You* is their strongest album since *Sunflower* in 1970. The instrumental production, while not overwhelming, is forceful and yet still delicate. Just about all the songs are at least catchy, and a few sound like they could have aspired to a place on *Pet Sounds*. But the half-hearted approach conspires against the songs' intrinsic

strength, most irritatingly on "The Night Was So Young." It's a brooding, rather majestic number starting with an ersatz Bill Medley vocal passage leading into a gorgeous full-harmony sequence. Positively thrilling, until you realize that the entire song consists of unvaried repetitions of the same pattern—there's no development, no bridge, just the skeleton of a great song.

Some of these songs are really impressive, though. "Let Us Go On This Way" and "Roller Skating Child" (supposedly the first single) are enthralling openers, heavy on the percussion even if light on the lyrics. "Honkin' Down The Highway" takes some delightful and intriguing melodic turns, and I defy you to keep "Johnny Carson" from replaying for hours inside your brain. "Good Time" sounds good, too, but then it ought to, being a six-year-old track that was probably rejected from *Sunflower*. Unlike last album's six-year-old *Sunflower* reject, "Susie Cincinnati," this one fits remarkably well with the rest of

the LP, with its casual production and coy lines ("My girlfriend Penny/She's kinda skinny/And so she needs her falsies on").

Lyrically, the album will provoke mixed feelings. If you like your lyrics naive, this is the place for you. The point is not so much that Brian Wilson is the only contemporary songwriter who could get away with lines like "I go and get my skates on and I catch up with her/We do it holding hands, it's so cold I go 'brrrr'..." or "Well, oh my, oh gosh, oh gee/She really sends chills inside of me" (both from "Roller Skating Child") but that he's the only one who'd even attempt to get away with it.

Admittedly, sometimes the ultra-naive approach contrives to create something irresistible, as with "Johnny Carson." Backed by a great insidious organ riff, Brian composes a fan letter:

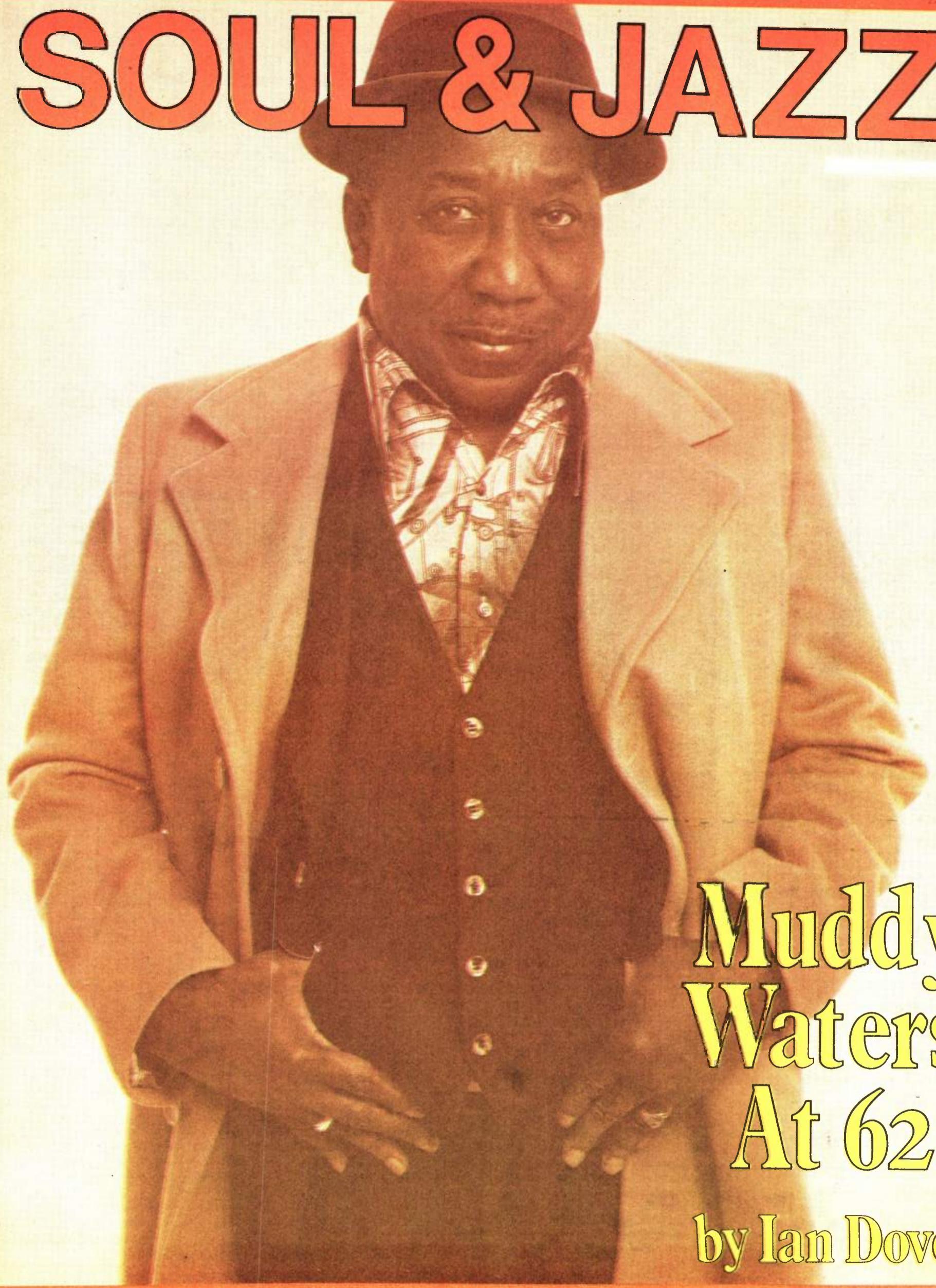
"He sits behind his microphone  
John-ny Car-son  
He speaks in such a manly tone  
John-ny Car-son  
Ed McMahon comes on and says, Here's Johnny  
Every night at 11:30 he's so funny...

©1977 Brother Music

There's definitely a place of honor in rock & roll annals for such staggering simplicity, and if this doesn't get Brian on the *Tonight Show*, I don't know what will.

But the question is whether Beach Boys fans, both the long-timers who grew up with the band and the new, post-*Surf's Up* generation, are going to put up with this sort of verbal vacuity for long. Ever since Brian burned his fire tapes he's been starting over with determined simplicity, but it's a thin line between charm and irritation and the concerted assault of naivete here may have irrevocably crossed over to the annoying side.

# SOUL & JAZZ



Muddy  
Waters  
At 62.

by Ian Dove



## MUDDY WATERS: REBORN AT 62

By IAN DOVE

Muddy Waters, the blues singer, relaxed in the kitchen of his home in the Chicago suburbs. He likes Chicago although rarely goes into the city center or the South Side, former home of Chicago blues, a special kind of blues that spread, not once but twice, through the whole music scene.

The second time, the decade of the 1950s, it was the sound of the Muddy Waters Band that became its catalyst. Muddy Waters' Chess records, along with those by Chuck Berry, Bo Diddley, Little Walter, Howlin' Wolf and others, formed the bedrock listening of British musicians who later became part of the Great British Rock Invasion of the 1960s.

Muddy Waters, the bossman and father figure, sits comfortably, his children, band members and their kids dropping in to talk to him.

The image of the blues patriarch suits him...

His manager warns me about questions Muddy Waters will not answer: [a] how he got his name, [b] what he thinks of the Rolling

Stones and [c] what he thinks of Chess Records. He won't answer the first two because he's tired of doing so over the last 14 years and the last one because of a publishing royalties lawsuit currently in the courts.

"Born again," exclaimed Muddy Waters at 62, "I wanted to get back, get some of the real Muddy Waters."

Richard Avedon took the stark black and white photograph of the blues singer on his new album. *Hard Again* is essentially untrilled Waters. He has his working band with him, fleshed out by James Cotton on harmonica and Winter on guitar, and something called miscellaneous screaming. There are no additions bowing to some current music industry fad. A couple of tracks get down to the root of the Waters electric blues style—"Mannish Boy," which is two decades old and "I Can't Be Satisfied," a faithful companion of Waters since he first recorded it in April, 1948.

Of course, it predates this: "I was doing it when I was a kid on

Stovall's plantation (1941, when 'musicologist' Alan Lomax first recorded the fledgling delta blues singer for the Library of Congress archives).

"These may be old songs but (on the road) we don't do them night after night. We haven't done 'Mannish Boy' since I don't know when. We'll put it back out—it's a strong song. Lot of my songs we don't touch anymore. Forgot the lyrics to a lot of them and I must have written a couple of hundred."

The firm of Waters and Winter goes back some, too. Recalled Waters: "Johnny's been playing my music since he was 12-years-old in Texas. Texas is where I first came to know him. He was scuffling, just trying to make it in music....

The *Hard Again* sessions were done in two days because, said Waters, "I can't stay long in the studio. People go into the studio, stay months. What am I going to do in there for a whole month? I can do it better if they let me go...I gets my songs, I sleeps on them. I puts them in the bed with me...until that

session and when I go in I'm mostly ready for it. I guess I'm the only performer that sleeps on his songs—I put them under the pillow at night, actually do that.

"I did five new songs for the LP and one was written with Brownie (McGee, singer-guitarist who works with harmonica player Sonny Terry). That's 'The Blues Had a Baby and They Called It Rock 'N' Roll.' Brownie gave me the idea and I put my words to it. Happened just before the session I was up at Woodstock and he came by. I guess Willie Dixon wrote more songs with me than anybody, including some of my big hits..."

Willie Dixon's name gives Muddy Waters another pause for reflection. And another comment on a long association in the blues.

Muddy Waters (by this time he had dropped his real name McKinley Morganfield in favor of his nom de blues) came to Chicago from Clarksdale, Mississippi when he was 28-years old.

That was 1943 and the blues scene in Chicago was centered

(Cont'd.)

# She got her looks from her father.



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## Odyssey House

We're trying to stop drug abuse from leading to child abuse.

## Muddy Waters

(Cont'd. from page 38)

around Big Bill Broonzy, Ransom Knowling, Tampa Red, Sonny Boy Williamson No. 1, Big Maceo Merriweather, Memphis Minnie, Washboard Sam, Roosevelt Sykes, Jazz Gillum. It was the blues of the 1930s, now relegated to the vintage lines of record label repackaging. Willie Dixon was there too, on bass.

Dixon, three months younger than Muddy Waters, arrived in Chicago eight years before him and caught the tail end of the first big Chicago blues scene. Musician, composer, singer, organizer, a&r man, he was to play a major part in the emergence of the second blues scene in the 1950s that would have the Muddy Waters band sound as its core.

Like Waters, he was long associated—not always happily, he too currently has a lawsuit against them—with the Chess and Checker labels in the city. He wrote many hit songs with Waters in the emergent r&b scene. "I first ran into Willie in about 1947, when he was working for the Big Three Trio—'Early In The Morning' was a great big record going for him then," said Waters.

"'Hoochie Coochie Man', he brought that to me. I was in the dressing room. I learned it in over a minute and went back on the stage and sung it. The house went crazy...I knew it was a big thing for me then. Willie's songs fit me but not his bass. He played nice bass but not Muddy Waters style. Ernest Crawford, Big Crawford, he was on 'I Can't Be Satisfied' back then—HE had that Muddy Waters sound."

Muddy Waters seemed to have his own personal musical identity set after he was in Chicago a short while—the country blues influence of Son House and Robert Johnson mixed with the tough urgency and higher decibels of his amp—but it took him a little while to establish himself on the local circuit. He remembers Big Bill Broonzy as "a very kind man, he didn't believe in putting his feet on you." He also remembers work at a "paper factory, driving trucks for a venetian blind company and a firm making radio parts because I couldn't make it off my guitar, not at that time.

"When I first recorded, Leonard Chess, he didn't know anything about blues but he had a partner, was a lady, and she was the one that dug what I did. They held me up six to eight months before they released me. They was releasing Gene Ammons (jazz tenor saxophone) and all that stuff. Held me on the shelf, 'what the hell is this?', they said."

Muddy Waters' first record was "Gypsy Woman" and "Little Anna

Mae" on Aristocrat, which later became Chess.

Continued Muddy: "When they did release the thing, they released it in Chicago. I believe the figure was 3000 on Friday and on Sunday morning, couldn't buy one. Sold out. I know what I'm talking about—I went to a record store and tried to buy two. No. Said it was one to a customer. I had to buy one and send my wife in to get another, that's how fast it was selling.

"When I started to get work in the clubs, as a sideman, well, the city people would say, er, this country blues thing. They'd knock me, all that jive. Yeah, we used to get laughed at a lot of times but it never turned me around.

"I just stayed there and came out with money.

"Chicago, man, was full of clubs all the time. I lived on the South Side and I had a couple of clubs where we played within walking distance. Four or five clubs in the neighborhood. I came out on record and the bigger, more up to date, clubs would hire me, like on La Salle Street. I'd come up with fish fries...parties in your own home. I was very much hip to that.

"I stayed in Chicago when I first started getting attention, never went on the road. Had more work than I could do here. I was working seven nights, had Sunday matinees and also Saturday matinees. That's about nine nights work a week. Probably was getting 15 bucks a night, a long night so I'd be doing \$100 and something a week and I could live on that those times.

"Maybe it's the wrong way round but life now is mostly on the road, in my older days."

In 1969, Muddy Waters, traveling to a gig in his automobile, was involved in a crash that killed his driver and had him on crutches for six months. He still at times, has to use a cane.

"I'm about half good," he said. "I'm afraid of cars. I had to find another way to do it. I'm afraid of planes too, but...I don't have to go through a 24-hour scare if I fly. I just go for an hour, hour and a half. Three hours get you anywhere in the United States from Chicago. But at the time we would just use the two cars—well, when a car was a year old with use it had about 100,000 miles on it and we'd get another."

Muddy Waters and his band had just returned from a five week European tour, one of the George Wein promoted Newport Jazz Festival packages that allowed Waters to visit Poland and Yugoslavia for the first time. He's no longer surprised at the strong reaction his blues creates in such places, although the first European trip—to England—was certainly a surprise. It was 1958 and probably had the same effect on the emergent, derived, local and white blues scene as his 1950s tenure in Chicago had.

[Cont'd. on Page 41]

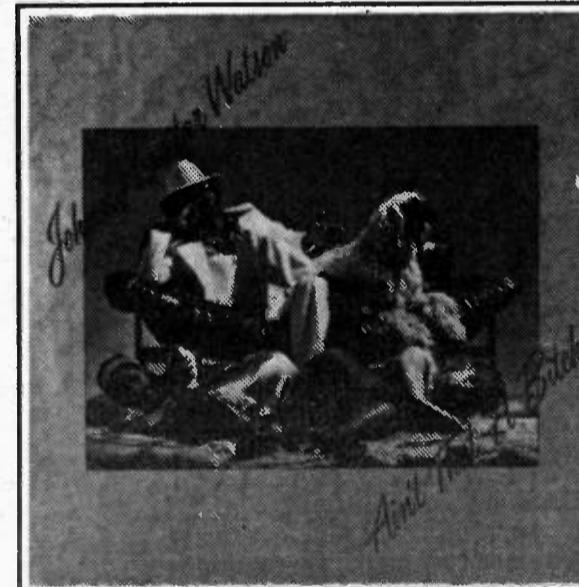
# 1977: The Year of Johnny "Guitar" Watson

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## Johnny's First Smash Album



DJLPA-3

## Johnny "Guitar" Watson

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## "Waters gave tremendous impact to the English electric blues scene that eventually spawned the Stones, Yardbirds, Eric Clapton, etc." --Ian Dove

"Nobody told me, don't bring your amp," he laughed.

At that time, the traditional jazz bands in England, very popular, were in the laudable habit of importing solo musicians, mainly blues players, to augment their tours. Big Bill Broonzy was probably the most popular. He had a last-of-the-great-country-blues singers image, only two steps behind the mule. It set the style for the genuine original imports and so the fans were quite unprepared for Muddy Waters with his amp, Otis Spann and his piano and the tough, electric new Chicago blues.

"We screamed them up," said Waters. "I was much too loud for them at that time. Chris Barber who I was touring with could have told me to go acoustic...But on the other hand I opened their eyes. I kicked it off over there. The next time I went to England (in 1962), went to the club where the boys were playing and, man, I had to leave. My ears were burning.

"We don't play loud. Blues are not made to be played that loud. Sometimes my band gets too loud and I have to try and keep them down."

Volume aside, the arrival of Waters and Spann gave tremen-



dous impact to the English electric blues scene that eventually spawned the Stones, Yardbirds, Clapton and so forth (remember the Beatles wanted to see Muddy Waters and Bo Diddley on their first US tour? "Where's that?" a reporter asked).

Although Muddy Waters, following the U.K. adulation, his Newport

Folk Festival appearance in 1960, has been working college audiences steadily, and was getting his Grammy awards and nominations, B.B. King seemed to be outstripping him in terms of press and public attention.

A lot of this, according to Waters, has to do with his record company. "The record business?

Well, it's just dog eat dog. Seems like they'd just put out one of my records and have it played on the air maybe once. Like my *Woodstock* album—they only had a little money for promotion in Boston. People were trying to get the record and couldn't lay their hands on it. And I believe *Woodstock* was the best I ever did at a push. What it did, it did on its own—the label didn't do nothing for it. All that old stuff of mine—I wish I could get my hands on it.

"Now this new album, seems like it's been out a couple of weeks and already done 25,000 to 30,000 units. I just got back from a Columbia (who distribute Blue Sky) convention in Atlanta and got a double encore, standing ovation at a show they had there.

"Nobody got it but me and my little pluckers. We must have been trucking pretty good." Yes sir, born again.

### Footnote.

Okay. He's called Muddy Waters because [a] that was what his grandmother nicknamed him for playing in the mud or [b] he got it selling fish for the Saturday night fish fries in Clarksdale. "He'd Muddy on Friday, sell 'em on Saturday" according to one source. And, he loves the Rolling Stones.

## "Heavy Weather." You can dress for it, but you can't escape it.

### WEATHER REPORT.

#### "HEAVY WEATHER."

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## SOUL & JAZZ SINGLES



By JOE McEWEN

Would you believe me if I told you there is a new Otis Redding single sitting on my turntable? You better, because it's true and it's playing right now. How it came to be is pretty confusing and I don't really know the whole story. "You Left the Water Running" (Stone 209), a Muscle Shoals standard that has also been recorded by Wilson Pickett, Barbara Lynn and Percy Sledge, is apparently the only song Otis ever recorded at Rick Hall's Fame Studio. I first heard it in October on a New Orleans juke box. Nobody seemed too excited that I had found an Otis Redding record that wasn't on any of the albums, so after one play I forgot about it—maybe it was just my imagination. Luckily for me (and for you), it wasn't. John Fred (yes, of the Playboys) has put the song out on his Stone label. I don't know where he got the tape, but apparently Mrs. Redding demanded that the record be taken off the market. There's no address on the single other than Big "O" Distributors, Memphis, Tennessee. As for the song? Well, it's a mid-tempo and not the best Otis Redding record around. Then again, it's not the worst, but somewhere on a par with a song like "Think About It" or "Hard to Handle." Which isn't too bad at all, is it?

And how about "Do Me" (Warner Brothers 8314) by Travis Wammack, a song that's so good it's scary. Wammack is the Muscle Shoals guitarist whose own records (at least of recent vintage) have always seemed to come up short. "Do Me" will delight fans of both late '60s Muscle Shoals soul and Lonnie Mack. It may be the only record of the year with a hook line that goes, "You can bump it up/And you can hustle it down..." and has absolutely nothing to do with disco. "Do Me" is just an old-fashioned, Southern dance record full of thick rhythm guitar and a Wammack solo that cuts dirty, like a rusty razor through flesh.

And those are only the first two records in my pile. Shirley Brown's "Blessed is the Woman" (Arista 0231) is a tasteful ballad with an imaginative bridge, and is a nice re-creation of early Aretha. It's

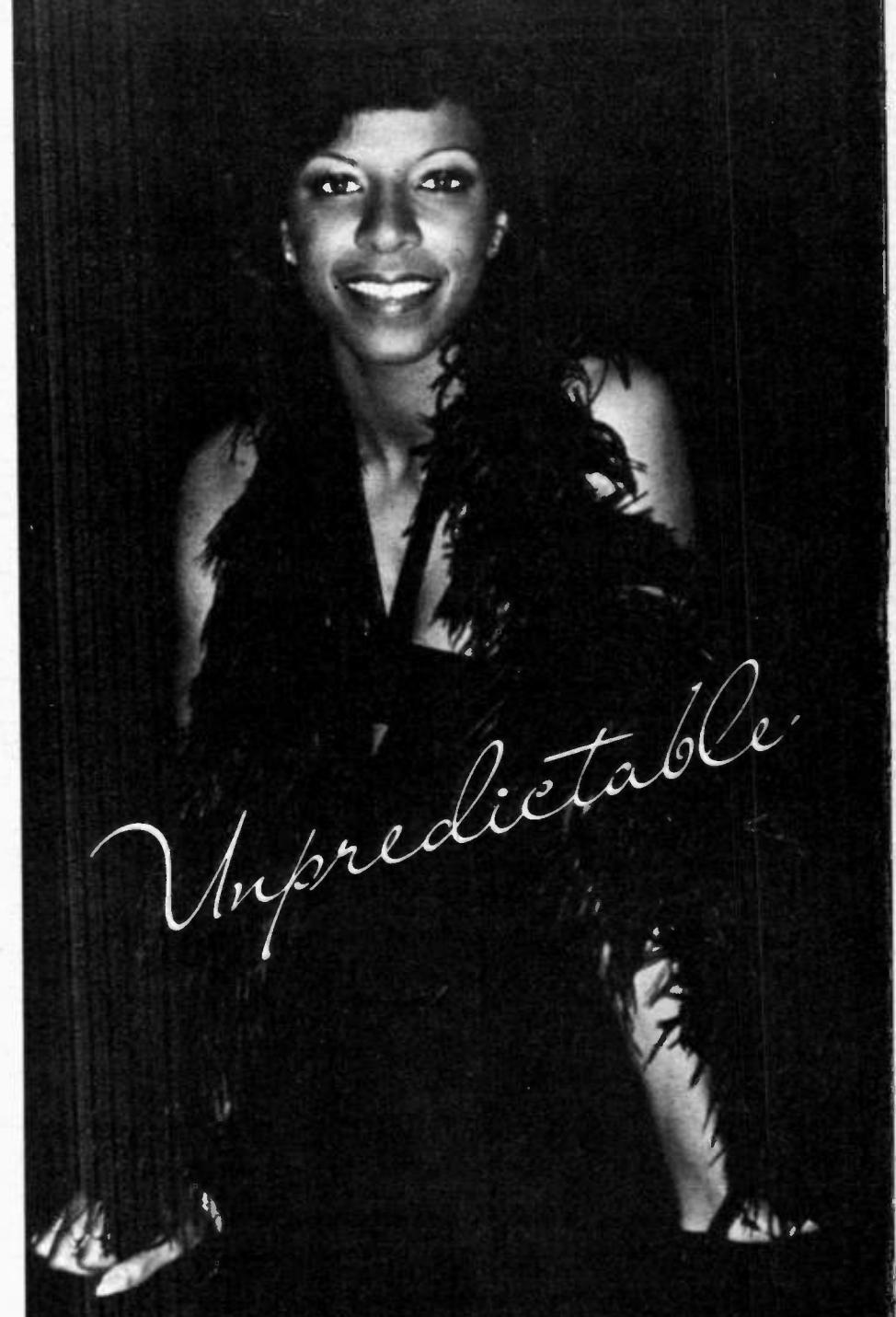
highly recommended, as is Ann Sexton's "I'm His Wife" (Sound Stage 2504)—another in the seemingly endless stream of triangle love songs. Sexton is a gritty, underrated singer who has been recording for John R. for years, and "I'm His Wife" will remind many of Betty Wright's "Girls Can't Do What the Guys Do."

"Only Love Can Mend a Broken Heart" (Arista 0234) is yet another strong single from General Johnson's debut album, and speaking of debut's, listen to Eugene Record's "Laying Beside You" (Warner Bros. 8322)—a single almost as soft and seamless as the Moments' "Sexy Mama." Record, you'll remember, was the former lead singer and songwriter for the Chi-Lites. Happily, his departure did not relegate the group to eternal mediocrity. "Vanishing Love" (Mercury 73886) is their second, post-Record single. It's uptempo, but not bludgeoned by disco overkill. In fact, you would do well to get the whole album, *Happy Being Lonely*, tastefully produced by longtime member Marshall Thompson.

Jean Carn's "Free Love" (Phila. Int. 3614) is my favorite Philadelphia record of the month ("Find someone who loves you/And not just for your body") and the single has been speeded up just a little taste from the album version. What can you say about Sly's "Family Again" (Epic 50331) that Sly hasn't already said. Nice, if you need a reprise of "Dance to the Music." Who said there's no such thing as pop mummies? And do we really need another group mimicking the Ohio Players mimicking Sly. Hold your nose and say "Too Hot to Stop" (Mercury 73888) and you'll get an idea what the Bar-Kays sound like these days.

Smokey Robinson's "There'll Come a Day" (Tamla 54279) opens with a few notes from "You Really Got a Hold On Me" and then oozes into my favorite post-Miracles, Robinson single. A charming song about some guy who works 9 to 5 and has a crush on a girl who doesn't know he's alive. And Smokey didn't even write or produce this one—credits go to Michael Sutton.

Natalie Cole



Over the past eighteen months, Natalie Cole has recorded Two Gold Albums, Three #1 Singles and won Two Grammy Awards! We are safely predicting that you'll think her third album, "Unpredictable," that includes her hit, "I've Got Love On My Mind," is her best and brightest album ever! (There is nothing unpredictable about Natalie's incredible talent!) Produced by Chuck Jackson and Marvin Yancy.



# Soul & Jazz Reviews

## Minnie Riperton Stay in Love

including:  
Gettin' Ready For Your Love  
Young Willing And Able/Could It Be I'm In Love  
Stick Together/Stay In Love



"STAY IN LOVE"  
Minnie Riperton  
Epic PE 34191

By DON MIZELL

The latest Minnie Riperton album is not exactly an *adventure* in paradise, but then it doesn't claim to be. While it is in one sense a further extension of the vocal ideas laid down in her classic previous LP, *Adventures in Paradise*, overall it is a much funkier, more diverse affair, though with not quite as much vocalizing flair. But in one sense it is a return to paradise

because once again the theme is romance—Riperton sings beautifully, if not always convincingly, of the importance and joy of love between a man and a woman in a loveless world ("Stick Together," "Stay in Love").

Freddie Perren's production work is impeccable, adding just enough bite and punch to the rhythmic underpinning to rescue Minnie from her tendency to be almost saccharine sweet, and yet bringing in enough of the right combination of strings, horns, piano and guitar to complement the woman's natural gift for pleasant lyrical and melodic flights into the clouds. All of which shows Minnie off to good advantage. While the compelling uniqueness of her style is now lessened by a spate of imitators (such as Deneice Williams, and the Emotions), there can be no doubt that she is the original. That distinctive love-struck little girl vocal posturing, sliding up and down the scale effortlessly (almost unbelievably) has a way of tingling your spine. Somewhat detracting is the lack of variety of texture in her approach: a certain lack of throatiness and funk in her voice. For that reason she's personally more effective on the less funky, traditional R&B type tunes; she has more melodic space to explore her basically pop style.

There is a decidedly warm, professional feel to this whole album—it's quite enjoyable, if not exactly thrilling, and danceable as well. The recurring churning disco

bottom keeps things moving nicely through a delightful jungle of lush strings, sunshine horns and peaceful acoustics.



ONE TO ONE  
Syreeta Wright  
Motown 16-34951

By TOM VICKERS

Most female singer-songwriters are prisoners of producers, and Syreeta Wright is no exception. Her most popular release, *Stevie Wonder Presents Syreeta Wright*, came out in 1975, when former hubbie Wonder held the keys to her career. Wonder's production, arrangements, and material gave Syreeta a lush, elegant sound that quickly lifted her into the top ranks of up-and-coming female vocal stylists. But to many listeners, that first LP wasn't an indication of Syreeta's vocal skill as much as an example of Stevie's production talent. *One to One* confirms that feeling.

Leon Ware (who's produced many of Motown's biggest artists, including Diana Ross and Marvin Gaye) handled the production on most of the album's tracks with the exception of one Stevie-produced gem (no doubt an outtake from the earlier album). In Ware's hands, Syreeta emerges as far less exciting a talent. Instead of the lush, but muted tones of her Wonder album, Ware makes the unfortunate mistake of letting Syreeta's pipes loose, and it soon becomes obvious that she doesn't have the stuff to warrant such freedom.

The album opens with the title track, "One to One" (which also closes the LP in a thinly disguised filler "reprise"). The vocals are busy, the lyrics vapidly inane, and the production leaning more towards easy listening than soul. The album continues with these weaknesses except for "Tiki Tiki Donga." A fiery, rhythmic drum track opens this tune, but it differs from the rest of the album only in that it sounds like African easy listening music as opposed to American (give me Miriam Makeba anyday).

The only track with any rhythmic or lyrical feel, naturally, is the one that Wonder produced, wrote, and arranged, "Harbour Love." Here Syreeta's thin voice is held in check behind a bouncy rhythm track, and the results show why so many were interested in her to begin with. The lyrics are sensitive and joyous in the Wonder mold, while her delivery sounds honest and free.

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**TROPICAL**  
Jorge Ben  
Island ILPS 9390

By COLMAN ANDREWS

Jorge Ben is a black Brazilian singer, songwriter, and guitarist, best known in the U.S. through one of his compositions, "Mas Que Nada," which became a "Bossa Nova" standard, thanks largely to a particularly colorless hit recording of it made some years ago by Sergio Mendes (who is to Brazilian jazz approximately what Johnny Nash is to reggae). The song does not define Ben's talent any more than Bossa Nova defines Brazilian music, but it is at least a starting place—and it is present, in a vaguely muscular version, sung with some true passion, on this LP.

Ben's compositions, in general, are quite appealing, and are sometimes incredibly beautiful, with that

pure melodic simplicity that is typical of the best Brazilian music. On the other hand, he is not really among the most brilliant of his countrymen as a creator of songs. He doesn't come close, for instance, to Jobim, Dorival Cayme, or Toquinho and Vinicius de Moraes. Some of Ben's melodies are lovely, but some verge on disco-samba; his lyrics are almost never worthy of much attention.

His great asset is his voice, which is smoky, friendly, and, if such a thing is possible, velvety rough. It is one of the most urgently attractive voices in any kind of popular music today—in a way that has little to do with technique and much to do with sensual charm. And it is a voice that matches perfectly the soft, slurred warmth of lower-class Brazilian Portuguese.

*Tropical* was apparently recorded in pretty much a straightforward Brazilian style, with Ben backed by his regular group, and then "produced" later in England by the admirable Robin Geoffrey Cable. In other words, it's been tarted up with strings, a string synthesizer, a brass section, etc., in ways that only work occasionally. The first album Island released by Ben in this country (*Samba Nova*, ILPS 9361) would probably be a better introduction to Ben's talents (It's a compilation of tracks from other albums, whereas *Tropical* is apparently integral).

The best songs here, besides

"Mas Que Nada," are the energetic "Taj Mahal," the downright rousing "Pais Tropical" (which has a French pop-song sound), "O Namorado da Viuva" (the closest thing to a plain jazz samba on the album), and the exquisite "Os Alquimistas Estao Chegando os Alquimistas," which consists mostly of the title being repeated over and over (it sounds roughly like "Ozh al-kemeeshrias eszhthao shaygando ozh al-kemeeshrias"). The worst songs are the flaccid "Georgia," and a long, uni-dimensional number called "My Lady," which shows that Ben sounds as ridiculous in English as he does sublime in Portuguese.



**IN FLIGHT**  
George Benson  
WB BSK 2983

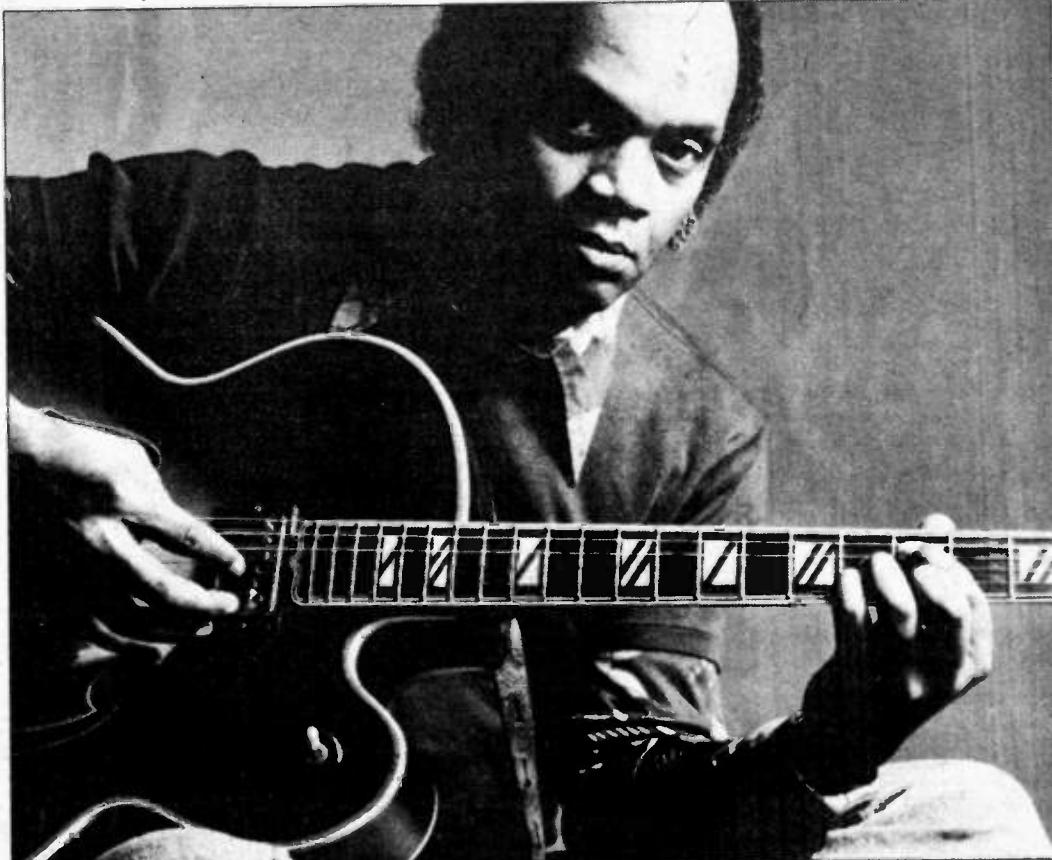
By ROBERT GLASSENBERG

Often an artist goes through a period of adjustment that's easy to recognize simply by listening to their latest LP. Many times, it is frustrating to hear this adjustment.

Such is the case with George Benson and his newest LP, *In Flight*. The album is not bad. Only his ardent, long-time followers, those who remember him as one of jazz's most expanding guitarists will be disappointed. The one million people who bought his debut LP on Warner Bros. Records, *Breezin'*, probably won't be let down, for Benson has given them more of the same watered down riffs.

One can't really blame him for his latest effort. It isn't very often that a jazz musician sells a million records overnight, with the strength of an excellent single. Benson's rendition of Leon Russell's "Masquerade" allowed him to sell more LPs than all of his previous albums on CTI or RCA. Maybe now, Benson's stable mate at CTI, Grover Washington, Jr., will start singing. Who knows?

This is not to say that Benson has a flukey voice. It's just that while Benson's guitar-playing is a very unique assimilation of past styles, his voice is really quite common. Just another student from the Stevie Wonder vocal school. The LP's main problem is Benson's rigid voice. It has a range, but its use is limited pretty much to straight



## "Ginseng Woman" burns with Eric Gale.

Eric Gale has always been a master guitar phenomenon who really burns. Just ask Hubert Laws, Don Sebesky, or Grover Washington Jr., among others with whom he's worked. For years an integral part of the CTI sound, recently a member of the group Stuff, now Eric Gale is fronting his own band with "Ginseng Woman," his first solo effort. Hear for yourself what makes Eric burn. On Columbia Records and Tapes.



forward vocals and scatting with his guitar. How much scatting with a guitar can anyone tolerate, especially when the clear tones of the guitar would be a great deal more expressive?

And so, we have the standard record business capitalization of a good thing to the point of exterminating it.

**NATALIE COLE**  
Unpredictable



**UNPREDICTABLE**  
Natalie Cole  
Capitol SO 11600

By RUSSELL SHAW

If the contents of this album were of the virtue the title implies, then a sense of creativity would surely be present. "Unpredictability" is an imperative asset to a good soul vocalist; an artist hangs on a note because he or she feels it, not because some superdue producer says to give him a trill at the end of the measure.

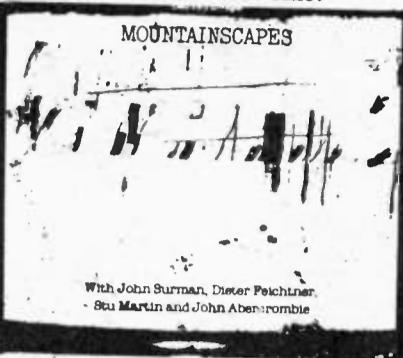
Unfortunately, save for the preachy sermonette "I'm Catching Hell," most of the fare on this new disc is the opposite, to wit, quite predictable. Given Cole's considerable capabilities, the slickness of this production turns a potentially stirring performance into a pile of string-infested, overarranged mush.

By opting for these formularized approaches, Natalie is treading very close to the Las Vegas style of soulstering; a tack as spontaneous as an Oscar-presenter's script off a cue card. Indeed, the world has seen too many would-be Etta James and Betty Wrights purchase a fancy wardrobe of satin dresses, hire an expensive orchestra, and appear on the prime time variety shows.

In her obvious desire to be the next Diana Ross, Cole has issued ten tracks which, in the strict sense of the word, are polished and professional. Negotiating a fluid middle ground between "week at Lake Tahoe" MOR and discobumpmania, such tunes as "This Heart" and "Party Lights" both have swirls of syncopated violins, bleating horn charts, chunka-chunka guitars, and four-four trap beats. Over this all reigns the famous daughter, coaxing her voice into the upper reaches of altoism, howling like a Banshee.

Despite these excesses, the main failing of the album lies not in its bastard hybrid disco-pop focus, but in its alarming inevitability. One fondly remembers co-producer

Chuck Jackson doing those sixties classics like "I Don't Wanna Cry." Yet the intervening twelve years have turned Jackson into one of those artisans of funk-chic.



**MOUNTAINSCAPES**  
Barre Phillips  
ECM 1076

By COLMAN ANDREWS

Barre Phillips is a fine, not particularly flashy, bassist, well-known as a founding member of the mid-'60s internationalist European avant-garde, and all too seldom heard on records distributed in America. *Mountainscapes* is a good chance to acquaint yourself with him, since he is the leader here, and the composer of the long impressionistic series of pieces which makes up the album and thus gives himself, not unreasonably, a generous amount of solo space and up-front ensemble playing.

*Mountainscapes* also gives plenty of room to reed player John Surman, who is certainly one of the

most adept and genuinely fluent of the younger jazzmen in Europe today. (Surman has been playing mostly bass clarinet and soprano lately, but here he does a fair amount of work with baritone as well—the horn on which he first gained his fame, and conceivably still the one with which he is the most original and the most exciting). The drummer is Stu Martin, who was a longtime associate of Phillips and Surman in a group called The Trio. Both Surman and Martin play synthesizer here occasionally, and there's a full-time synthesizerist, too, called Dieter Feichtner (John Abercrombie, the benevolent terrorist of the jazz guitar, is present on one track).

Phillips is particularly impressive for his confident power as an accompanist, and for the soft-edged grace of his pizzicato solo passages. He never chooses callous fury, and there is an almost Eastern tranquility about the way he builds his lines around repeated figures, sometimes with the help of a synthesizer's tamboura-like drone. As a composer, Phillips is not startlingly unique (two of the most-often-quoted pieces of modern music, Joe Zawinul's "Dr. Honoris Causis" and Ornette Coleman's "European Echoes" are referred to here, in #2 and #4 respectively), but there is, appropriately, an almost alpine serenity about the quiet passages—even if an alpine sense of grandeur never quite appears.

Come with Minnie on her romantic fantasy and stay in love. Or just listen to Minnie and stay in love. Minnie is the voice of love. Her new album, "Stay In Love A Romantic Fantasy Set to Music." You know how good it's going to be.



**Minnie Riperton "Stay In Love"** On Epic Records and Tapes.

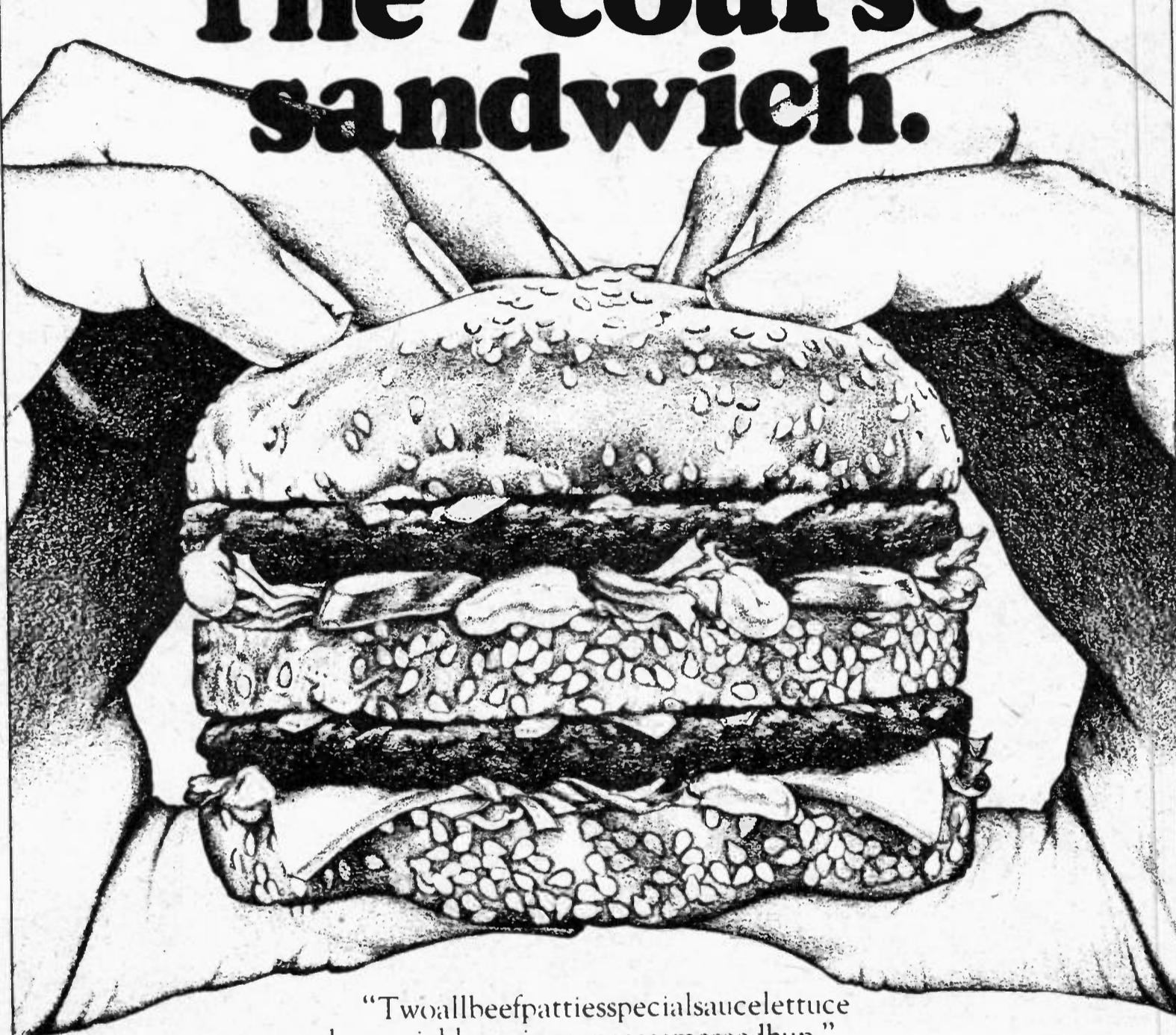
Produced by Freddie Perren for Grand Slam Productions.

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