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**"LED ZEPPELIN TOUR U.S." • "PETER GABRIEL SOLO"**

# ERIC CARMEN

## The New Pop Art

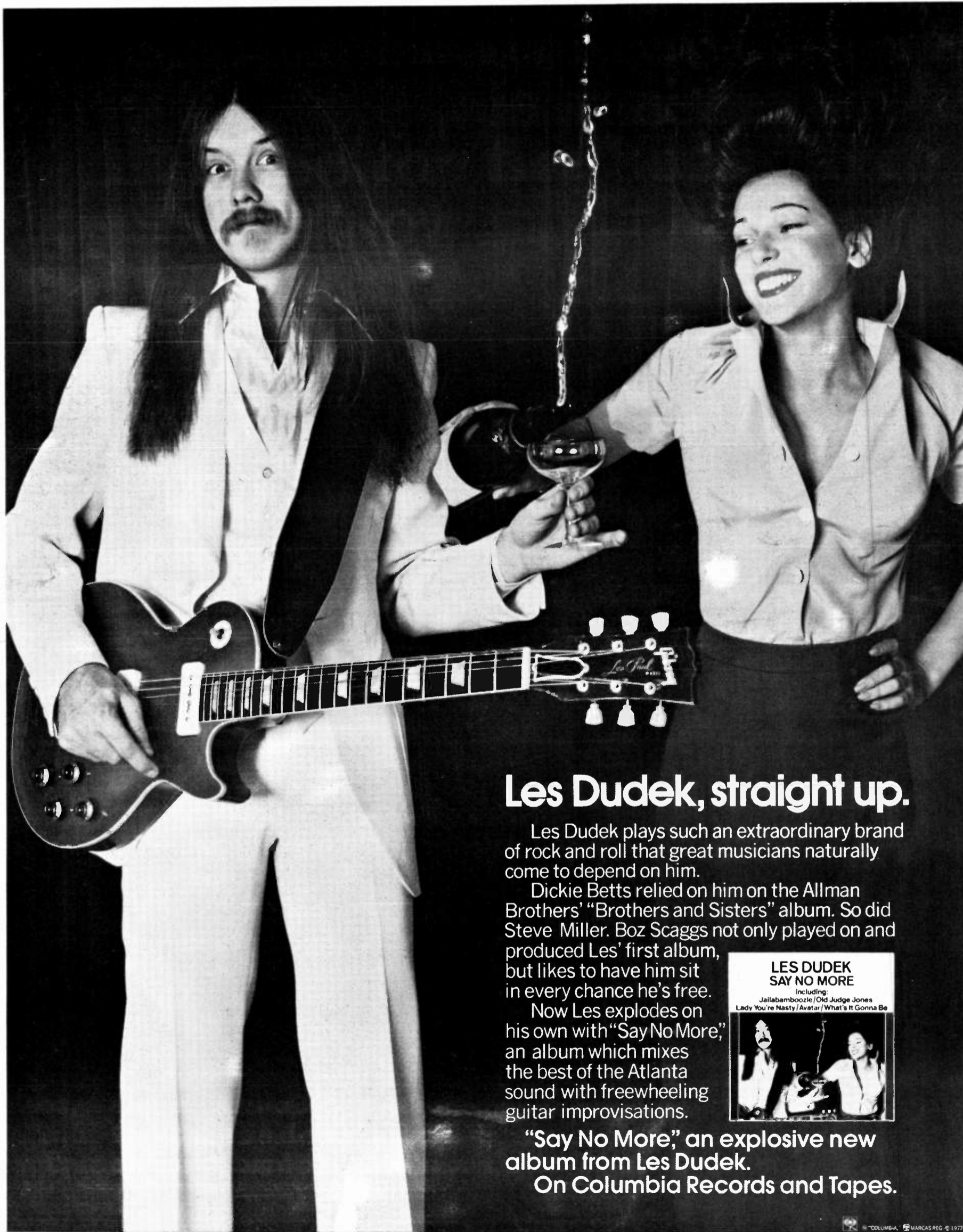
by Michael  
Barackman



May, 1977/Issue #78

AMERICA'S LOCAL TALENT, 1977 • POP FROM BOSTON TO BERKELEY  
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Phonograph Record Magazine's 4th Annual  
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# PHONOGRAPH

## Record Magazine

Issue #78

MAY, 1977

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#### ERIC CARMEN: *Overhauled Sensation*

All those dreams of stardom that Eric Carmen seemed so obsessed with while a member of the Raspberries, finally came true when—as a debuting solo—his "All By Myself" became a number one hit in 1976. Now, with his second album, *Boats Against the Current* ready at a time when pop music is without a bonafide Leader Of the Pack, Carmen has a golden opportunity to ascend the throne. While tanning handsomely on a popular level, Carmen is finding that many continue to view him merely as some kid who grew up on Beach Boys' records with the notion that he could play that. Carmen is tired of being consistently identified as some care-free spirit in a PG-rated rock fantasy, and, with *Boats Against the Current*, is out to show the world that there's some artistic substance within the cresting waves of harmonies.

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#### THE SOUNDS OF THE CITIES: *Local Talent in America, 1977*

People are catching on. Whereas once the pop populus only perked their collective ears for action from across the Atlantic and in a few key American musical hubs, now they're starting to understand that the "next big thing" could very well be breaking right under their very noses. Local scenes are thriving, more legitimate now than ever, and as the flurry of New York Street Band signings showed, sometimes extremely profitable. *Phonograph Record Magazine* has been there all along. This is our fourth annual spotlight on the very best in new and aspiring local talent. Last year, we predicted the rise of Heart, the Ramones, Firefall, etc. Who will be the stars of the future? It's likely you'll find them in the Sound Of the Cities, 1977.

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#### GABRIEL SANS GENESIS: *David Meets Goliath*

After Peter Gabriel exited Genesis in 1975, everybody thought the big surprise had occurred when the group rebounded nicely with two big-selling albums. But with one of this year's most important album releases together with a most dynamic stage presentation, Gabriel has again beat out his mates at the unexpected. He doesn't dress up like an ogre anymore; his spastic body movements and frightening glazed stare are flamboyant enough. Peter the Great indeed! Yet offstage, Gabriel is withdrawn, almost like a child standing shyly in the corner. In barely audible mumblings, Dr. Jekyll talked of Mr. Hyde, and explained why he left a life's project just when the returns were coming in—to begin looking anew for his creative paragon.

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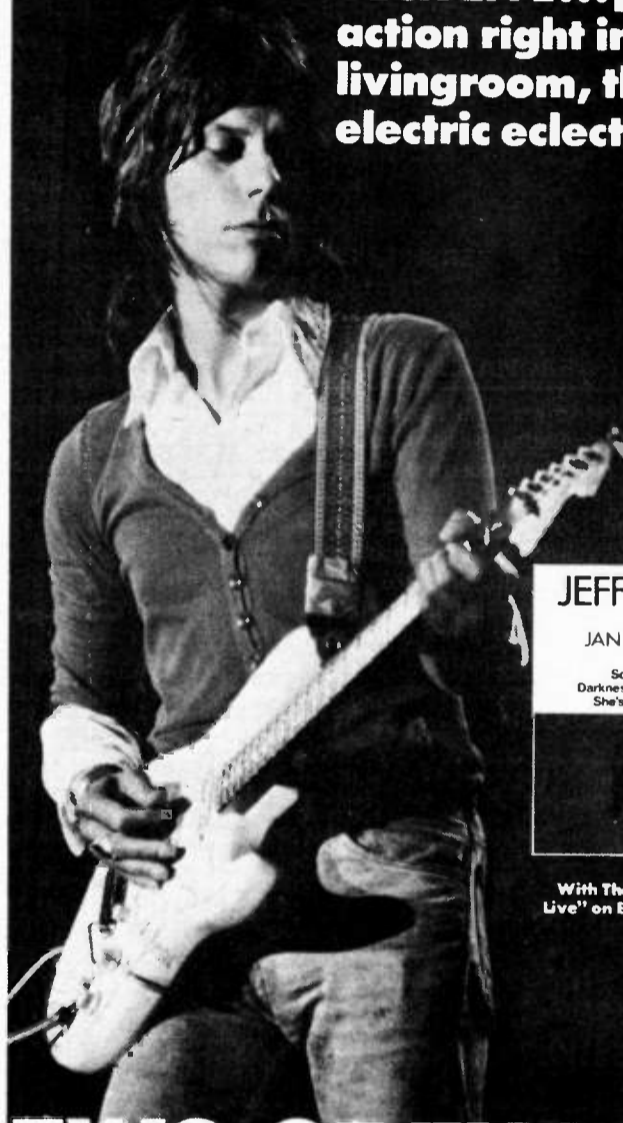
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# Performances



Andy Kent

**LED ZEPPELIN**  
Met Center/Minneapolis  
Civic Center/St. Paul

By JOHN BREAM

The fears that Led Zeppelin would be permanently grounded by Robert Plant's near-fatal 1975 auto accident are, of course, unfounded. On its 40-concert tour, the band has self-consciously set out to prove on its biennial U.S. tour that a) the musicians are artists, not merely the energizers they seemed to be on their '73 and '75 tours, and b) Led Zeppelin is still the most popular band in the world, even though its recent concert film flopped and the sales of its last two albums haven't measured up to their predecessors.

This was the first time the Twin Cities had hosted concerts by a rock superstar on two consecutive nights. The only other occasions it happened were for John Denver, Up with People and Elvis Presley. Met Center in suburban Minneapolis apparently isn't an auspicious venue for Zeppelin. The quartet kicked off its '75 tour there unspectacularly with Jimmy Page hampered by a finger in a splint and Robert Plant plagued by rusty pipes. This time, Zeppelin's rain-delayed plane left Chicago's O'Hare Airport a few minutes before the band was scheduled to be onstage at the Met. Hence, the show started 75 minutes late and the 16,000 fans,

whose energy was noticeably dissipated by an extra hour of playing with Frisbees, ignited firecrackers throughout the show. Plant admonished them twice but they persisted, even during the acoustic set, during which a smoke bomb landed at John Bonham's feet. "That's almost as bad as third-rate Alice Cooper," Plant observed.

The show opened with the prototypical white noise number, "The Song remains the Same," a theme non-hardcore listeners think aptly describes all of Zeppelin's heavy metal. Using well-chosen transition songs, the band then moved into a set of the blues—Page's forte—a 3-song acoustic set during which all four players (Bonham on tambourine) sat on stools a la Crosby, Stills, Nash & Young, and then closed with a heavy metal barrage accompanied by the band's own fire bombs, stage fog and psychedelic laser lights.

The unanticipated acoustic set was quite trying, marred especially by Plant's singing. He may be the greatest screamer in rock, but he's hardly soulful. The arrangement on the country-tinged "Black Country Woman" makes as much sense as pairing Little Richard with Seals & Crofts.

In the end, there is just too much. The slowly paced show became boring. There were too many indulgent, unmoving solos by Page and John Paul Jones on keyboards, especially on "No Quarter," that made listeners

yearn for Page's taut arrangements on Zeppelin's records. On record, the musicians have been artists, not merely the artisans and energizers they have been onstage.

For whatever reasons, Zeppelin never seemed to get on track during its 17-song show.

The next night, however, across the river in St. Paul, Page played with renewed ferociousness and the undistracted Plant let loose, striking his familiar cocky poses and frenetically chopping his arms to basically the same set he had played the night before. The push-comes-to-shove-do-you-have-any-papers-man crowd of 17,500 roared at the powerhouse performance.

Zeppelin understands the power of rock better than any performer since Jimi Hendrix. Concertgoers don't tap their feet to Zeppelin's music, they ecstatically shake their heads. Zeppelin's unexpectedly versatile, well-orchestrated, 3¼ hour show included no new material, obviously intended to sate its voracious fans. Yet, in the end, the overlong show succumbed to excess and indulgence.

## THE JOHN CALE BAND

Greg Kihn  
The Boarding House  
San Francisco, CA.

By TERI MORRIS

On Greg Kihn's first album, released last year by Beserkley Records, he appears as a pop singer/song-writer with definite folkish leanings. But regular performances in the Bay Area have taught him that the more he gilds his plentiful hooks with snappy rock and roll the better. At the Boardinghouse, Kihn and his band flaunted its newly found brash instrumental tightness.

One minute they were swinging through a gently uptempo ballad, "Don't Expect to be Right," with drummer Larry Lynch at work inserting a cast-iron backbone and Kihn managing to spit out the words without disrupting the sweet evocativeness of his voice. Then came a microsecond of silence, during which he flashed a grin so boyish as to rival label-mate Jonathan Richman's, and with only the slightest ado from bassist Steve Wright the song charged back to life—a streamlined, crashing version of its former self. It may be calculated, it may be corny, but the intense focus of its energy can be counted on to provide exhilarating moments. One thing you can say about Greg Kihn's band, they've got it under control. Each provocatively simple arrangement is pared of any excess, trimmed right down to the bones of rhythm and, most importantly, melody.

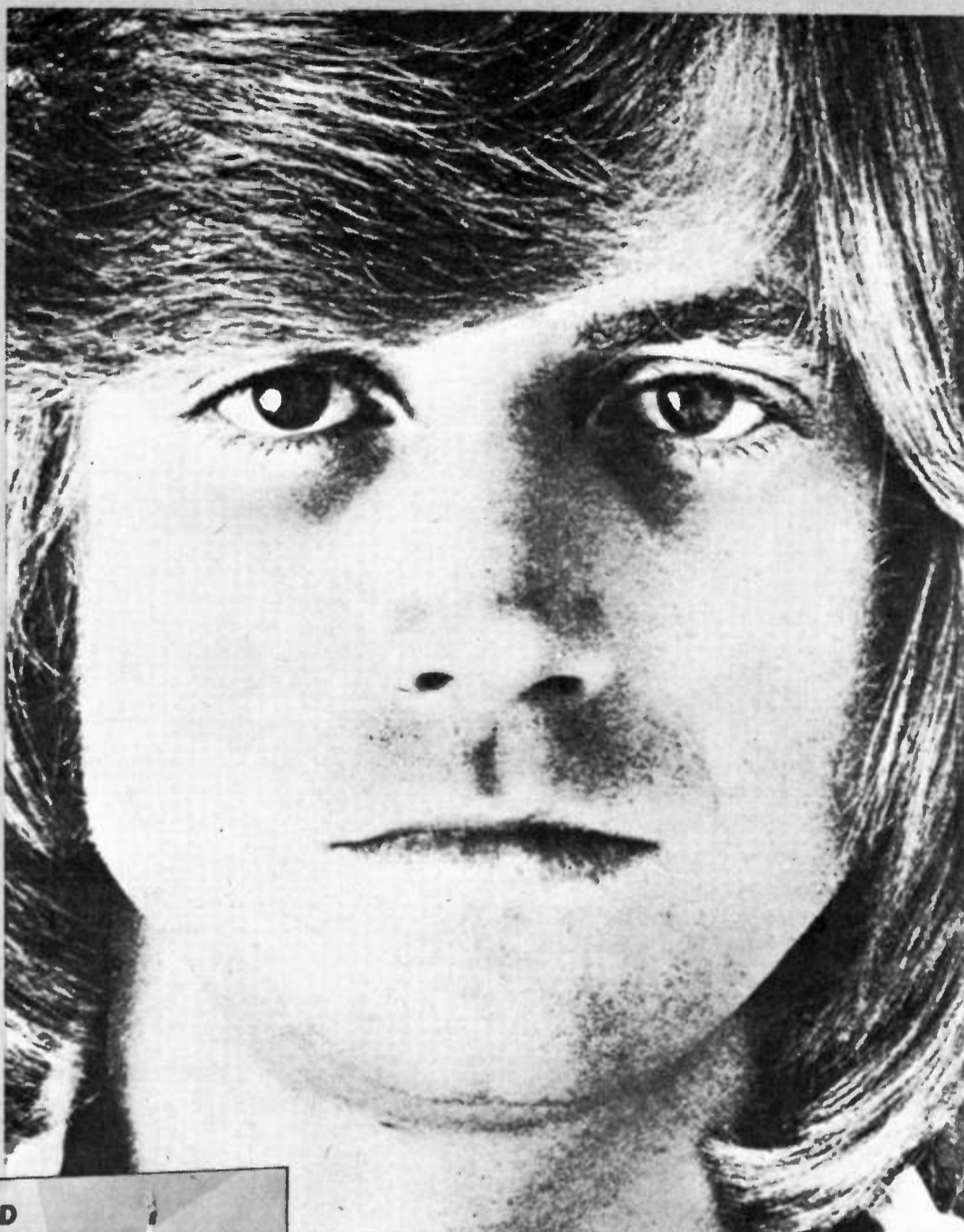
Characteristic of the dynamic approach Kihn and the band take these days is the only non-original

they performed, Bruce Springsteen's "For You." In it the teeny background vocals, flashy drumming and Dave Carpenter's subtle lead guitar create a whole that pulses expectantly as the singer tosses his head up and down with the beat and gives every word a punctuating snap. The result is rock and roll as infectious as any being produced by neo-pop revivalists like Dwight Twilley and Blondie.

On the other hand, John Cale doesn't do hardly anything that's nice. Even his ballads are snarling explosions of emotion capable of stunting the growth of small children. Admit it, "The bugger in the short sleeves f--ked my wife/Did it quick and split" is not a nice way to begin a song, nor is the cuckold's gory revenge as chronicled on "Guts" the stuff upon which mass acceptance and successful careers are built. (Yet.) But Cale, master of The Scream, possessor of a thickening waistline (said to be a positive indication as to the state of his health) and a singularly reserved manner, cuts quite a dignified—albeit obsessed—figure on stage. Though he behaved rather shyly in front of the audience—the only words he said were a few song titles and maybe a good night—there was nothing but the most intense kind of expression in his singing. His voice is low and steady, approaching a growl most of the time, and he has a genuinely nasty way of pushing and pulling at the melody as he sings. This was especially noticeable in the evil groove numbers like "Helen of Troy" and "Heartbreak Hotel." Though he seemed not to take much interest in a new song called "Hedda Gabler," the set hit emotional peaks as Cale threw himself violently into "Leaving it Up to You," almost sliding off the piano bench during the final bars of "Waiting for My Man." "Cause he's slow," he whined, with a manic pounding of the piano keys, "so slow!"

Cale has worked mostly with loose assemblages of British hotshots like Eno, Phil Manzanera and Chris Spedding for the past few years, and those original arrangements are of a dynamic and powerful enough nature to warrant almost complete adoption by the John Cale Band, composed of four NYC unknowns. They lend Cale a vital backdrop against which to hurl his narrative, communicating the ceaseless ebb and flow of the moods which propel each song. When Blondie's Debbie Harry called Cale "the Richard Burton of rock" she might have been referring to more than their shared Welsh background. Cale's is a dignity that blends with an actor's compulsion, forcing the audience to feel every aspect of the songs. As such, there can be few more commanding presences onstage today.

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# **VICIOUS DIRT, RUMORS and SCANDALS from** **HOLLYWOOD** *by Rodney Bingenheimer* *"If it's trendy I'll print it"*

It's punk-o-rama time, boys and girls. That is the word on the streets these days. And as usual, your Prince of Pop is right in the middle of the street. Speaking of legends, the legendary John Cale celebrated his umpteenth birthday in real punk fashion at our very own Starwood, the hip haven for all punks. Typically, it ended up with a cake throwing free-for-all in the dressing room. I picked up what was left on the floor and had a rather sweet dinner. There haven't been that many crumbs available since **Todd Rundgren** hosted a coming out party for the gold-winning now defunct Grand Funk.

Speaking of Todd, after a sold-out Utopian show at the SMC [Sado-Masochism Civic], a cast of thousands caravaned over to Alice Cooper's already infamous eatery, Carlos and Charlies, to celebrate the long awaited return of the runt. While Gucci-bagged socialites glared outside the door, friends and stars alike made their way through the heavily guarded door. An exclusive room was set aside for all of the real in-crowd, which of course included me and my lovely date, who oddly called herself Costa Mesa. At my side throughout were Rod Stewart sporting red hair, and this time with Britt, Ron Wood, this time with Chrissy, Gene Simmons of Kiss, Solo, and John Hall, or is it Daryl Oates? Also, lingering and oogling the real stars, were Tom Petty, the Runaways, Sparks, Backstage Pass, Smokie, Detective, Milk 'n Cookies, Little Anthony, and only the best of Todd and Bebe's close friends. As usual local hanger-oners managed to sweet talk their way into the starstudded room, and it crowded the situation a lot. Gene

Simmons barely made his way through the packed guests before photographers recognized him without makeup and started flashing hundreds of shots which caused Mr. Lizard to cover his face and flee. Glasses were toasted to beautiful Bebe's health, as she was seven months pregnant, though still as statuesque as ever, smiling by her husband's side the entire night. The party lasted till the wee hours of the night, ending upstairs at the private club El Privado, where promoter David Forest retreated with Todd, Bebe, a close family friend, Rod, Britt, Ronnie, Chrissy and myself. We

weren't inside the glamorous, mirrored wall club for more than five minutes when Todd commented "They're playing disco music here," with a very sour tone in his voice. I replied, "Death to disco," and on that command, everyone said goodbye and left to return back to our respective homes, only to meet up at the local 7-11 where even Todd and Bebe showed up.

The absolute newest rave in town is none other than **Cheap Trick**, who I humbly predict will be playing at the 18,000-seat Forum by 1978. Whew! These guys got more people standing on their chairs than that unforgettable night with **Dr. Feelgood**.



*Dylan attempts in vain to attract Rodney's attention at a Roxy opening.*



*Monkees '77: Rodney sits in for Michael Nesmith as Peter Tork [with beard & beer] re-joins Mickey and Davy one more time.*



*Cheap Trick knew where to find their kind of action in LA—Rodney. [Shown with Chicago's prime punks is Marie Currie, twin sis to Cherie of The Runaways].*

Just like Regis Philbin, I'm shooting straight from the hip when I proclaim that Cheap Trick offers something for everyone; guitarist Rick Neilson even tells iced tea jokes. Even Cheap Trick was tricked though, as I coerced **Cherie Currie's** twin sister to show up backstage to congratulate the boys. Photographers started clicking away at what they thought was the lead singer of the Runaways. Even Cheap Tricksters admitted they were fooled for a couple of minutes, and beamed that clever Rodney had indeed beat them at their own game. When the real Runaways did show up to do their show the following week, Rod Stewart and Britt popped in before the girls jetted off to Japan and Australia, just long enough for Rod to get his fill of what real teenage blondes are all about without having Britt getting suspicious at any devious intentions he may have been thinking up. I understand that the Runaways are making a few changes with management. David "Detective, Elvin Bishop, Steve Miller" Forest, who also sidelines as concert promoter, added the group to his roster of bread winning, bread eating rock and rollers. Word has it that Jack Douglas, that name on the back of Aerosmith's lp's, may be producing the next album, as **Kim Fowley** has been kept all too busy with the likes of **Helen Reddy** and **Andy Williams**. Has Kim forgotten what 'punk' is all about?

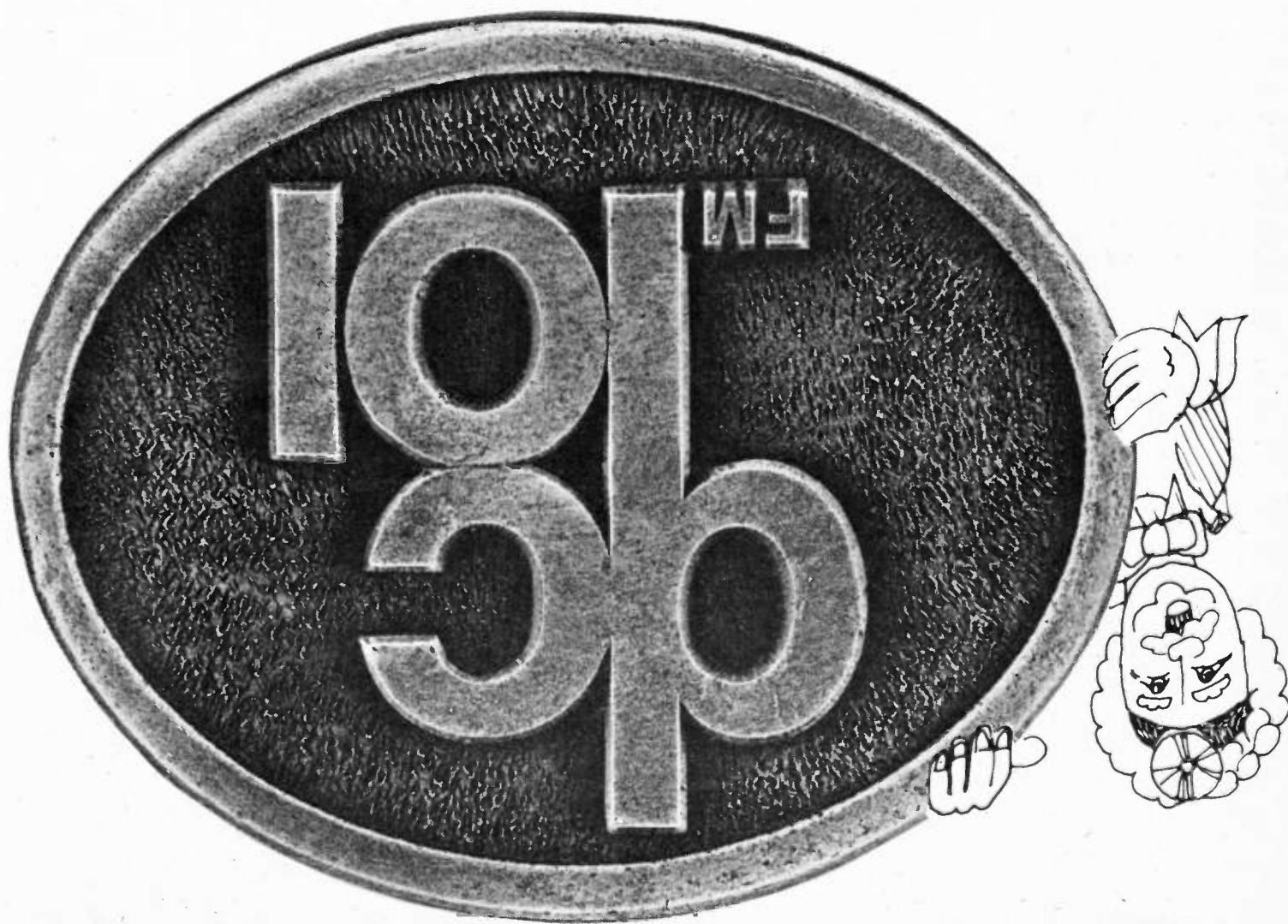
Just a few weeks ago newly crowned King David premiered his newest brainstorm, **Detective**. The heavy hard-rocking band sound Beck/Led Zeppelin influenced. They managed to surprise the packed audience with ex-Silverhead's **Michael Des Barres**, Ex-Bowie Tony Kaye, ex-Stepenwolf Michael Monarch, flaming red-haired drummer Jon Hyde and soulful bassist Bobby Pickett churning out the noise. Even reclusive **Jeff Beck** came out of the Hollywood hills to hear the set. Watch out for their upcoming tour with Starz...not to be confused with the **Hollywood Stars** who finally released their album on Arista after years in the making with Harry Maslin. Kim Fowley produced, so maybe he does know what's punk after all.

All of the young Hollywood came out in full force when the **Monkees** played the Starwood

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# Post Genesis: Peter Gabriel Solo

By TED JOSEPH

CHICAGO—The radio clicked on to a popular local 'underground' station as the car slid away from the brand new Holiday Inn shrouded in fog—from the 22nd floor on up. Peter Gabriel was roosting in room 2223 as the radio announcer continued to babble ecstatically about how he'd seen God himself the night before in the form of Gabriel's debut appearance as a solo artist.

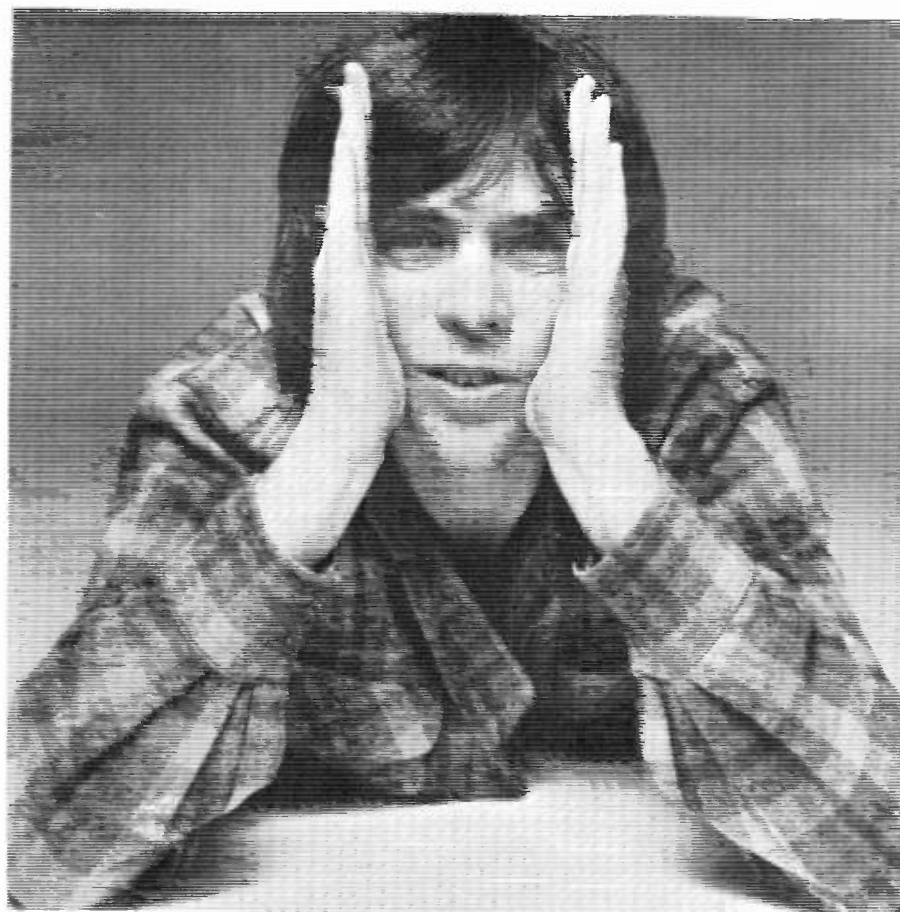
"I hesitate to use the word charismatic," he bubbled, "but there isn't another appropriate one in my vocabulary...just too many times I couldn't take my eyes off him, even when he wasn't doing anything. Incredible. The album is superb, the stage show enticing, but the combination is incredibly enthralling.

"If he hadn't gotten into rock and roll he could probably have been an incredibly powerful religious leader or politician. Actually, I think he has so much power in front of a group of people he could probably pull it off as a dictator."

A dictator? Peter the Great? Perhaps, but Gabriel doesn't want to take it beyond a musical level—for the time being, anyway. Those who've followed Gabriel's work for seven years with Genesis will confirm his charismatic power, starting an entree solo tour as follow-up to a debut solo album has placed Gabriel back at go: building a name and a following to match. He's willing and is off to a rather astoundingly fast start.

The night before he'd played to a three quarters capacity house in a 2,500 seat theatre with more audience intensity and bedlam than a lead Led Zeppelin and 20,000 nubies. At the end of a lengthy set that included everything from the Gabriel LP plus three new tunes and slightly twisted renditions of the Kinks' "All Day and All Night" and the classic "Ain't That Peculiar," Gabriel strutted about in a grey sweatsuit—then followed with an encore of "Back in New York City" (the only Genesis tune in the show). Still the audience went fruitcake.

Gabriel's silent warriors strolled back out shrugging their shoulders in astonishment, and their leader fumbled with his mike for a minute before he embarrassingly explained in an almost timid whisper that they didn't know any more songs. Would the crowd like



to hear one over again? Silly question. On came the hypnotic and sinisterly churning chords of "Modern Love." The sound blew out once, twice, three times before the unanticipated third finale ended and Gabriel left with a stunned bow.

While Genesis' current LP and tour show Gabriel clearly didn't take all the musical talent when they divorced, it's clear who won custody of the intense stage dynamics. But through all the Genesis road tours and seven albums never was the God-like veneer of the Gabriel image exposed long enough for the public to see what was really inside—until the close of solo show number one with the revealing verbal stumble and humble bow.

Gabriel is a humble man. In his hotel room before the radio babblings set in, Dr. Jekyll talked of Mr. Hyde. A childlike man clad in blue jeans and tennis shirt, he spoke softly and articulately about a persona that really belongs to somebody else. The only real key in a conversation of audible mumblings that the two were one in the same person was the mischievous/mysterious flash from the knowing eyes. The eyes themselves reveal more than any words could: the artistic musical pursuer who dropped out of a life's project just when the returns were beginning to come in—to begin looking anew for his personal creative paragon.

"One of the problems is that I've only got one album, and people aren't very familiar with it, so there's still bound to be some interest in the fact that I was in Genesis, but as much as possible I'd like to account for something by myself," Gabriel said. "We

still get along very well, and get on amicably, essentially, but the sooner I can make my way and move away from them, the faster I can forget about it.

"Playing 'Back In New York City' feels great, though. I've thought about adding more Genesis songs, but when it's there I'll want to rely on it. If I can get through this tour without using it as a crutch, then I'll feel better about doing more things on my own."

If a solo artist is out for the bucks after splitting a band, the surest way to re-establish recognition is to carry over a plethora of material from past history. If it's for art's sake, he starts fresh. Gabriel is starting as fresh as possible, and he also took two years away from the public eye to contemplate whether his art was worth the constant jarring of an obviously sensitive psyche.

"I wasn't sure I wanted to carry on (as a musician/performer), so I took a good long while to decide," Gabriel reflected. "First I was just quietly functioning as a normal human being, and then I began to write songs again. I had to get them out, so I got back into it."

And the minute he got back into it he drew talent to him like a magnet. First producer Bob Ezrin of Alice Cooper, Kiss and Lou Reed credit enthusiastically agreed to turn the Gabriel dials. Then the musicians followed the scent. To the Toronto recording sessions from Britain came Robert Fripp, reknowned as the forceful guitar backbone for King Crimson. From the U.S. came a host of Alice Cooper playmates.

The tunes were eclectic, and the musicians entrapped by Gabriel's uniqueness: dynamic mixings of

funk, rock, barber shop quartets, blues, and inter-stellar imagination.

"I was trying to get away from the Genesis area on the album, because I write songs in different areas, so I just thought I'd take them to their stylistic conclusions, rather than the Genesis material, which always used to come towards a common denominator. What I did was right for the songs. I tried to get an 'older' sound, where you could hear one voice and one instrument, whereas Genesis was making pastures of music, with arrangements always becoming the focus.

Once on the road, the songs gained new life, new arrangements and colorations came from the studio musicians turned travelling band (save a switch to Philip Aarberg on keys replacing Chirowski). Then came the new songs, the ones to appear on the next LP: "Mickey Mouse," a Gabriel piano/vocal tune featuring a harmonizer, a newly applied vocal synthesizer that splits a single vocal into two harmonizing octaves; "On the Air," and "Why Don't We?"

Beyond that there's the hope of an anxiously awaited audio/video/theatrical show, *Mozo*, that Gabriel worked feverishly on in his two year absence. Even two years down the line, he envisions the basics: spending a week or two in each city with full stage settings, special audio and visual effects, and, of course, Peter's non-verbal dramatics. It will come after solo credibility and financial stability, the immediate goals, but rest assured it's no dream.

"I still believe that storytelling with music hasn't been done properly by anyone yet, and it's still something I want to do," he quietly emphasized. "I think what I did with Genesis was very good in places, but we didn't re-define the focus points that well. The band as a whole was working very hard on the music, and then there was the whole separate presentation in terms of what I was doing on the stage.

"It was a thing where I was trying to point it and turn it rather than everyone agreeing on it. *The Lamb Lies Down On Broadway* (Genesis' 1975 album and stage drama) was the sort of thing I was pulling towards, rather than *Wind and Wuthering* and *Trick of the Tail* (the two post-Gabriel LPs). Those are the types of song situations into which they were trying to move. There was no conflict. It was a matter of evolution rather than revolution.

"Even so, it wasn't a good idea (for us to be touring America at the same time). I guess it doesn't really effect us, but it does feel a little bit like David and Goliath," he reflected on the early tour dilemma, then smiled like the dark horse about to scurry past the favorite at the finish line. "I won't say who is who, though."

# Eric Carmen: Caught at the Brink of Super-Stardom, Looks to the Future Without Looking Back, Much.

By  
MICHAEL BARACKMAN

LOS ANGELES—An outsider looking in on Eric Carmen's career could easily get the impression that the illustrious singer-songwriter is irkingly difficult to get along with. After making the Raspberries fourth and best album, *Starting Over*, Carmen left the group because—among other things—he didn't like what fellow band members had to say about his work.

"Looks like it's Ricky and the Tooth," Carmen declared in his first solo album, referring to himself and Jimmy Jenner, his producer on all the Raspberries sessions and similarly on his initial solo outing. But though 1976's "All By Myself" gave Carmen a degree of legitimacy he'd never come close to while with the Raspberries, he soon after severed his professional relationship with Jenner, who many thought had played a crucial role in Carmen's success.

Carmen instead sought the pinnacle of pop heaven by aligning himself with Gus Dudgeon, Elton John's long-time producer. But midway through the pair's first album together, a series of major disagreements—culminating in an argument over the use of a certain horn player—led Dudgeon to curtail his involvement and return to England. Admit it, most parents would probably worry if Carmen started seeing their daughter.

This day, however, Carmen has the air of a very friendly man. Though he hasn't slept for two days, and is deeply immersed in the final week of what has turned out to be a prolonged, testing nine-month project, Carmen wants to talk. He chats excitedly about his new album, *Boats Against the Current*, even though he's insisted that he doesn't want to talk about it. And he doesn't even flinch until the last questions about the Raspberries. In fact, Carmen is so obliging, such the perfect gentleman, that you begin to wonder...

"Dave, as far as I'm concerned, is near genius as a bass player," Carmen says. Sitting across from Eric in the latter's simple hotel suite in L.A. (his home for these many months), David Wintour, formerly a sideman for Neil

Sedaka, nearly topples over upon hearing the remark. He gropes blindly for cigarettes, for anything to compose himself. Wintour is part of the new contingency Carmen is taking out on the road this summer. Eric and his last band received almost universal bad reviews on their first time out last year. The new band was to have included Nigel Olsson, but he recently dropped out for unexplained reasons. "Seriously," Carmen continues earnestly, "I'm so amazed that it's made me want to play twice as well."

"Gus Dudgeon is an excellent, excellent producer," Eric says later. Wintour has accused Dudgeon of having "tantrums" in the studio, but Carmen will have no part of it. "All that really happened was that we sort of crossed paths at the wrong time. The moon was in the wrong phase, or something. We were both going through some very trying times personally, and it resulted in a mismatch. Call Gus in England," Eric suggests, to prove that there's no bitterness. But the words on the back of a tentative lyric sheet for the new album perhaps give a clearer picture: "Basic recording of drums, bass, and one electric guitar supervised by Gus Dudgeon. All other tracks recorded and remixed by Eric Carmen."

I begin to ask, inevitably, about Jimmy Jenner, but am cut off. "There's no way I can answer that without bad-rapping somebody, which I really don't want to do," Carmen says. He reluctantly illuminates with the words: "It was time for a change."

Eric Carmen doesn't want to blow it. He's already learned that a pleasant but blase live show just doesn't cut it anymore, and that a plush and polished recording will generally be applauded, but forgotten quickly. He's also learned to watch what he says. For Carmen, experience has indeed been the best teacher.

Carmen's come too far for any more missteps. While with the Raspberries, you always got the feeling that Carmen would have in an instant traded all those glowing press clippings for a taste of mass adulation. But his near obsession with becoming anything akin to an "Overnight Sensation" remained unfulfilled until "All By Myself,"



# Boats Against The Current:

'Carmen answers the question of whether he's a true creative individual or a pop hustler.'

## "People never seem to realize that I was dead serious about 'Go All The Way'."

a number one hit, brought his name to the rock and roll populace.

Now, Carmen has a chance to take it a giant step further. Elton John, who once ruled pop music, is fading considerably from the scene. His last two singles have stiffed, and he's gone into semi-seclusion. The time seems right for a new pop idol. In a way, Carmen's music is similar to Elton's in that it is pop music which is sophisticated, yet endearingly accessible. Some call it the new pop art. Carmen knows that if he just plays his cards right this time around, *Boats Against the Current* could be gigantic, surpassing 'everything' he's thus far accomplished.

"You just strap on that guitar, and you can make yourself a star..."

And look at everything with a jaded nonchalance/ You've got money, you've got fame/ You've got coast to coast acclaim

You're everything that a man could ever want/ Everything"

"There's only one thing I care about," Carmen stresses, "and that's having my records be successful enough so that I can justify continuing to do it. In terms of fame, glory, and monetary standards, I couldn't care less about being an Elton John or a rock idol."

The song "Everything" appeared on Carmen's first solo album, along with two songs similar in theme, "Great Expectations" and a Carmen interpretation of the old Drifters' classic, "On Broadway." Taken together, they give strong evidence that

Carmen never lost his infatuation with stardom. In an elevator en-route to a change of scenery, Carmen insists that it's all a matter of misinterpretation. His record company, he explains, changed the sequencing of the LP's songs, thus leaving the listener with an erroneous conclusion.

"'Everything' was just one verse. I played it for Jimmy and he said, 'God, you've got to cut that.' I said, 'My God, it's only one verse.' Jenner: 'Then do it like that—just the verse.'"

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"Oh, definitely not," Carmen cries emphatically, when asked if popularity he's already found does in fact mean "Everything" to him. The song is just my way of saying; 'If you had any idea...'"

As he becomes more established, it aggravates Carmen that many—even his most loyal supporters—continue to think of him as a kid who grew up on Beach Boys' records with the notion that he could play that. In the Raspberries, it was Carmen's cute, teen-heartthrob image that stood out, and on *Eric Carmen*, he was lauded more for the familiar rich sounds he achieved than for what he had to say. Carmen bristles at consistently being identified as some care-free spirit in a PG-rated rock fantasy. He feels his work has substance.

"I've always been dead serious about what I'm doing," Carmen declares. "It's just that people never seem to realize...I was dead serious about 'Go All the Way,' but in a nonchalant way. Like I'm sure Brian Wilson was dead serious about 'Wouldn't It Be Nice,' even though it'd been a long time since he'd had feelings

like that.

"When my solo album came out, everybody came up to me and said, 'Wow, this is so different from the Raspberries.' The truth of it is, it's not really all that different. It's just that I've matured more as an artist and know what I'm doing a bit more in the studio."

Carmen often emphasizes the words "as an artist" in conversation. Instead of some Bruce Johnston-type, Carmen perceives himself as a sensitive, deep, introspective composer. In that fashion, the songs on *Eric Carmen* are dominantly morose tearjerkers. And as any true "artiste" would, Carmen slaved—for months—making *Boats Against the Current*. It's obvious that Carmen is trying hard, even desperately, to overcome the lingering light attitude that pervades evaluation of his work.

The trouble is, Carmen—so far—doesn't seem all that convincing as a pained artist. He doesn't look like one, that's for sure. When he first greeted me at the door, I was awestruck at how much he resembled a young Frankie Valli. He's as skinny as any English bassplayer, and could still pass as a teenager. With that kind of persona, it becomes difficult to be really moved by lines like: "When I was young I never needed anyone/And makin' love was just for fun/But those days are gone..." And when he speaks in almost-whispers, as if deep in thought, the chocolate bars and Coke muffle (figuratively and literally) the levity of his pronouncements.

Carmen's spare record collection is filled with old Pickwick Beach Boys' albums, and a fresh copy of *Phil Spector's Greatest*

*Hits*. Carmen readily acknowledges his influences, but insists he's a bonafide original, singing from his own heart. Indirectly, he blames Jimmy Jenner for the fact that few others share this impression.

"As an artist," he begins, "it takes a certain amount of time to figure out who you are. When someone all of a sudden comes up and hands you a record contract and says, 'Be you,' you wonder, 'Who's me?' At that point, you undergo the tedious process of finding out who in the hell you are artistically. Some figure it out real quick...It took me until *this* album to really know."

"Sometimes, though, there are a lot of variables—and this is why I don't like to get into anything offensive at all. It depends a lot on how something is recorded as to whether it is looked on as a copy or parody, or whether it's valid in its own right. Comments leveled at the Raspberries being a copy band might well have been due to improper recording."

"On every album I've made so far, there have been two or three successes and six or seven failures. The ones that might have been bad-rapped are probably those deemed failures by me because they didn't live up on record to the ideals I had set out to create in the studio."

With *Boats Against the Current*, Carmen has chosen to bluntly answer—for himself probably as much as for others—the question of whether he is a true creative individual or a pop hustler. At stake: the chance for popular advancement and a handsome critical reputation. He's gambled big. On the album, he played several instruments, over-

[Continued on next page]

# "I'm really analytical. It's my best and worst characteristic." -Eric Carmen

dubbed most of the vocals, wrote the selections, and, in the end, wound up producing— "No compromises this time."

To avoid the blatant comparisons with his past influences, Carmen has substantially altered his style. Though Andrew Gold, Kurt Becher, and Bruce Johnston guest, the album is far different from Carmen's last subtle, easy-listening pop exercise: this one rocks *hard*. "It makes the last one sound like the Archies." Cautious Carmen catches himself: "I

shouldn't say that. It's not really true at all. The last one was a really good album. I really like it. But there are a lot of things I would liked to have seen done differently."

Most noticeable is the change in Carmen's voice. Whereas he used to come off as a sweet-toothed Carl Wilson, constant smoking and a deliberate drastic reduction in sleeping time have resulted in a gravelly, tough-edged tone, not unlike Rod Stewart's. The lack of sleep also worked to combat the detrimental preciseness that comes with spending so much time in the studio. Carmen calls what he's done to his body "adrenalin-fatigue."



"I know that if I go into sing real rested that: 1—I won't like the sound of my voice ('cause it's too smooth), and 2— I'll have too much presence of mind...I can think it to death.

"I'm really analytical. It's my best and worst characteristic. So I have to get beyond the point where I'll zoom in and try to change a little vocal curl, and instead just sing and feel the song. It's a matter of getting myself back to 10 months ago when I wrote the damn things."

By June, after the album and single (another ballad, possibly the title cut) have shipped, and Carmen's tour of 3-5,000 seat halls is underway, we should know if Carmen has won his bet. Or, if by attempting so much, he's drowned himself in his own melodrama.

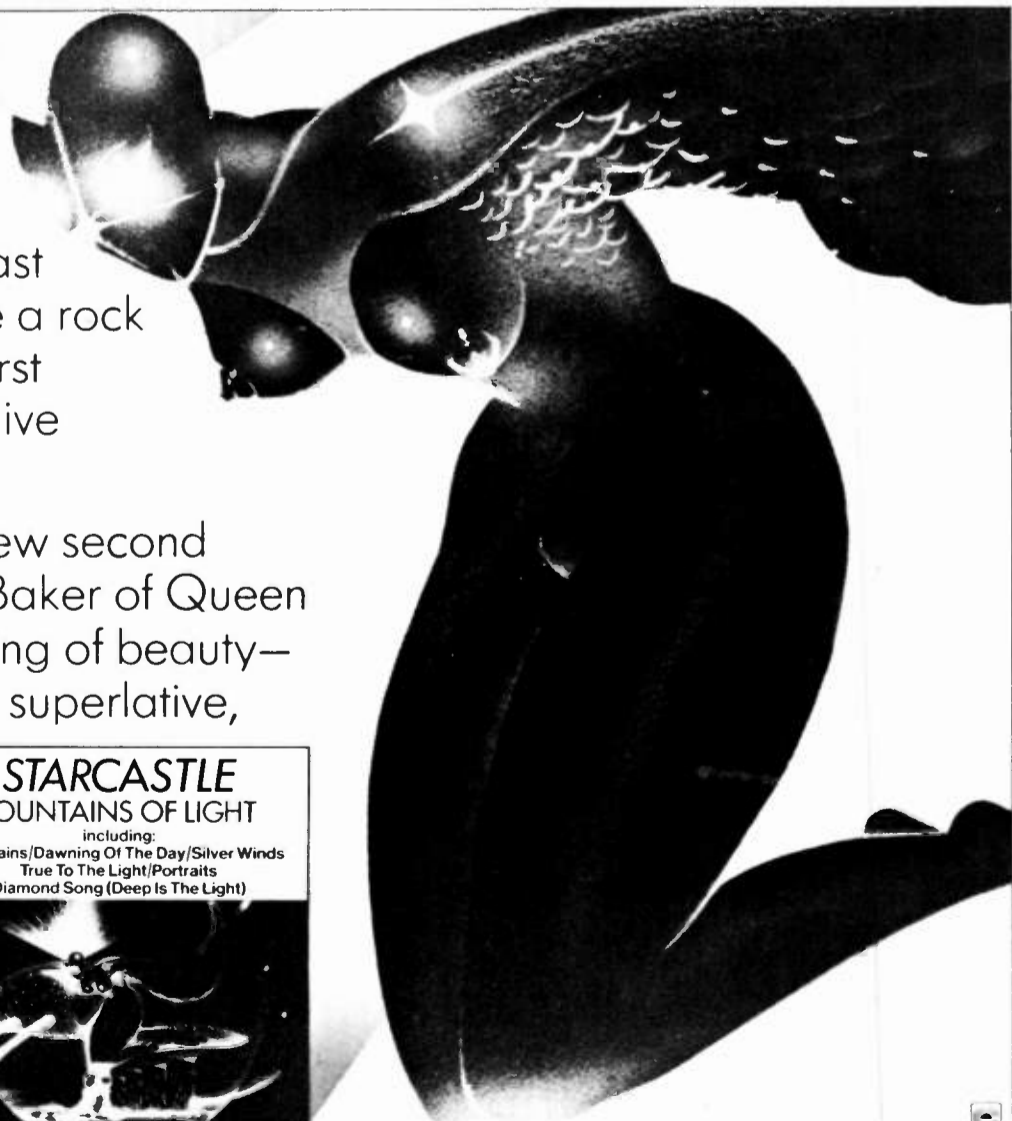
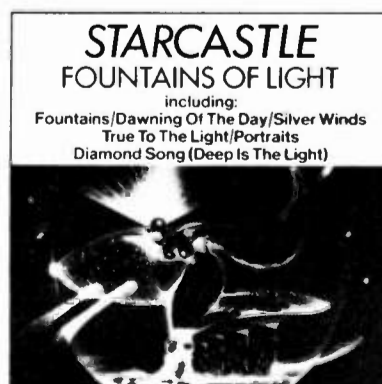
For Jimmy Ienner and Gus Dudgeon, "Boats" failing would probably be sweet revenge. On the other hand, if Carmen wins, "I'll have proved the old adage by Igor Stravinsky: 'Democracy in government; Aristocracy in music'... that's entirely my own opinion," Eric laughs. "you've got to have one guy in control. I'm betting I've done what it takes to get it right."

## STARCASTLE: LET THERE BE "LIGHT"!

They came out of nowhere early last year, exploding over the scene like a rock supernova with their spectacular first album and an incredible series of live appearances.

"Fountains of Light" is their brand-new second album. Produced by Roy Thomas Baker of Queen renown, "Fountains of Light" is a thing of beauty—technically well-crafted, artistically superlative, featuring fine close harmonies, ethereal lyrics and absolutely celestial synthesizer.

**"Fountains of Light."**  
The incandescent new album  
from Starcastle.  
On Epic Records and Tapes.





# THE CITIES

The history of America is the history of its cities. New York, Philadelphia, Chicago, New Orleans, San Francisco... the heritage of a nation so vast as to encompass a range of cultures hardly less diverse than one would find in, say, all of Western Europe.

If civilization is built on the knowledge men share in common, then culture is built on the differences—regional, local and individual—that contribute to a steady stream of new influences in our lives and our art. In rock roll, the dominant art form of our time, this process is all the more vital. This music, the music of youth, of experiment, of discovery,

owes its continued existence to an ongoing process of renewal that depends on a constant upsurge of inspiration from the roots; those same grass roots that are the traditional backbone of American life.

This is the fourth year that we have assembled this survey of local talent in America. Since 1974, we've seen this concept of regional/local talent come to life—flourish like never before. Now more than ever, all across America local groups are reaffirming their regional culture in their music, as people work to build the kind of local scenes that can prosper, independent of any patronage from the national nabobs of culture.

Literally dozens of those artists which have appeared in these pages in years past now are among the most successful acts in America today (Aerosmith, Eric Carmen...). Consequently, in 1977, the excitement and enthusiasm for America's local talent is mind-boggling when compared to four years ago. In the pages that follow, you're invited once again to share in a sneak preview of tomorrow's hit acts, today.

The catalogue of talent to be discovered in every corner of the land is almost enough to convince anyone that a true revolution is, once again, just about inevitable, if not already upon us.

AMERICA'S  
LOCAL  
TALENT 1977

By Alan Betrock

## THE SOUNDS OF NEW YORK

O.K., so New York rockers get the best of breaks, what with the intense media glare, and money men of rock crawling all over town, but who in their wildest fantasies could have imagined the absolute explosion of legitimately trendsetting talent now crowding into the city? Not only are there at least a dozen potential chartbusting groups gigging in various dives, but New York seems to have ignited a worldwide surge of powerhouse rock 'n' roll. What makes New York so special at this juncture is the simple fact that there is no real pervasive musical style or trend. London has its punk bands who all dress and sound the same, and the fledgling L.A./Boston etc. American scenes appear equally limited. The four above-ground biggies: Patti Smith, The Ramones, Blondie, and Television are as much a part as Freddie Cannon, The Shangri-Las, Rolling Stones, and Jimi Hendrix were in their day. Sure there's a similar thrust of true rock 'n' roll spirit, but judged purely on a musical level, their directions run full circle. And contrary to predictions swearing that the local scene would die as soon as the leaders moved on, the musical pulsebeat has continued to throb at a phenomenal clip. Capitol will be exerting pressure to break Mink DeVille and their charismatic lead singer Willy, via their forthcoming Jack Nitzsche produced LP. The Pazband's catchy harmonies are gaining notice on Passport. The Demons are recording for Mercury, and the distinctive ex-lead singer from Tuff Darts, Robert Gordon, is waxing for Private Stock. There's peripheral input too, from sources as diverse as Lou Reed, Cathy Chamberlain, The Movies, Alesis, Garland Jeffries, Elliott Murphy, Orchestra Luna, and hoards of bands from the cabaret, Long Island, and New Jersey scenes.

Around Manhattan, CBGB's and Max's are still the focal points, but as soon as rival venues are shuttered (On The Rocks, Club 82), new ones open up. Copperfield's smack in the middle of the West Village, has been showcasing so many new bands that it's literally impossible to keep track of them all. Bands like the Erasers, Public Problem, Squirrels, Lollipop, The Pirates, Stiletto, The Brats, and Boyfriend have all recently premiered at the club. A former film revival theatre, The Elgin, is now being transformed into what's promised to be the premiere new rock palace in the city, bringing in new wave bands from all over the world.

Despite this continued surge of diverse activity, a select number of groups do stand out. In all honesty, it may be wrong to trim it down to those few, so first, here's some other outfits deserving of mention. Talking Heads have matured tremendously over the last few months, and bolstered by the addition of ex-Modern Lover Jerry Harrison on keyboards, they now forge an individualistic style combining bubblegum, disco, and art-rock minimalism. David Johansen has just signed with Blue Sky, and the soon-to-be-recorded LP should be a monster. David has been writing great songs, keeping in shape with sporadic gigs, and has the innate talent and past experience to accomplish this time what everyone thought the Dolls (R.I.P.) were going to do last time.

The Paley Brothers, ex-of Boston's Sidewinders notoriety, have enough material in the Brian Wilson/Phil Spector/Every Brothers vein to satisfy the cravings of any pop-starved junkie. The Shirts' twin guitar/twin drum attack is most appealingly packaged around lead singer Annie Golden, and their FM-styled rock indicates limitless commercial possibilities. Same goes for the tuneful and witty Miamis, who are finally getting to record their classic songs like "Another Time, Another

# New York Street Bands: "Commitment, dedication, frequent flashes of brilliance, and a love of rock and roll..."



THE PLANETS



NYC Illustrated [clockwise from top left]: THE MUMPS (Kevin Kiley, Rob DuPrey, Kristian Hoffman, Paul Ruttner, Lance Loud); FUSE; THE MIAMIS; TALKING HEADS (Chris Frantz, David Byrne, Tina Weymouth) and THE PLANETS (Tally, Steve Korff, Anthony Jones, Binky Phillips).

Place," "Detente," and "We Deliver." Tuff Darts, led by the studious Jeff Salen on guitar, have been buoyed by Ian Hunter's keen interest and support, add their "All For The Love Of Rock 'N' Roll" was the hit of the CBGB's LP. Out-of-town groups are arriving daily, with Memphis' Alex Chilton, and Cleveland's Dead Boys attracting the most attention.

Another contingent of New Yorkers has gone to England to search for their fortunes. (fame didn't satisfy their demanding landlords...), so popular bands like Johnny Thunders' Heartbreakers, Wayne County, and Cherry Vanilla aren't here anymore. One wonders where all the possessed people come from to create dozens of weird and macabre bands, but at least two, The Cramps and Suicide, have packaged it so appealingly that one is hard-pressed to resist its impact. And there still are solid young bands with potential: The Fast, Marbles, The Feelies, and remnants of the wonderful Milk 'n' Cookies.

For the Top Five, I've picked bands from separate stratas of public recognition and career mobility, while coincidentally, each outfit represents a distinct musical philosophy. Richard Hell, the unpredictable ex-Television and ex-Heartbreaker star, has just wrapped up his first album for Sire Records. Due for a mid-June release, Hell has managed to mesh the artistic sensibilities of Patti and Television with the raw rock 'n' roll spirit of the British new wave, creating a superior mixture totally apart from anything else. With producer Richard Gottschler manning the board, Hell and his band the Void Oids have devised some brilliant rock 'n' roll. His "Bland Generation" was for a while the anthem of the new rock scene (when, for a moment, there appeared to be one cohesive direction...), and "You Gotta Lose," and "Love Comes In Spurts," were big favorites with his previous bands. But it's the newer compositions, like "New Pleasure," "Down At The Rock 'N' Roll Club," and "I'm Your Man" which are startling in their impact—the stuff from which legends grow. The recording is full and heavy, but sparingly produced with few overdubs: "It's exactly what I wanted," said Richard the night the album was finished, "and I'm totally happy..." Hell is deeply passionate and devoted to his work, and one suspects the public's reaction will be similarly disposed, whether the verdict is pro or con.

Cross Blue Oyster Cult with Kiss, add some Flo and Eddie, shake thoroughly and you've got a close approximation of the Dictators. At present they are halfway through their debut Elektra LP, although it's actually their second long player (having released one on Epic a few years back). Now sporting an updated lineup, they're the tightest and most energetic unrecorded band on the scene, and quite possibly the country. Their long term strength will come from the songwriting talent and pop sensibility of Adny Shernoff, and the high-powered guitar battles between Ross "The Boss" Funicello, and Scott "Top Ten" Kempner. With influences that range from Jan and Dean to Iggy Pop, from wrestling to McDonalds, the Dictators are planning to foist songs like "Science Gone Too Far," "Sleeping With A TV On," "Disease," "How Does A Brain So Small Move Fingers So Fast," and a rave-up version of "Search & Destroy" upon an unsuspecting public. It's heavy metal pop at its best, with a stage show to match.

Of all the unsigned bands, the Planets have the most immediate mass market success potential on the \$\$\$\$ scale. They've been together four years, solidifying and polishing every nuance of their style. Originally a Who-influenced outfit, The Planets have more recently showed their devotion to the likes of The Easybeats, Mitch Ryder, and most significantly, The Young Rascals. They're a powerhouse band led by flash guitarist Binky Phillips whose mastery of the guitar alone could help sell a million albums. Add a moving and stylish lead singer by the name of Tally Talliaferrow, a slew of solid original songs, and you have the makings of a monster-sized success. Planets are also among the most agreeable to a production sound on vinyl, and showcase steady professional grooming, factors which can only add to their speedy ascent.

A revitalized Mumps has reappeared on the scene recently, having balanced their intricate and literate songs by playing them against the backdrop of nasty guitar attacks. Kristian Hoffman's melodic compositions are ripe for the full production treatment, and to choose a single from such dazzling originals as "I Believe In Anyone But You," "Not Again," "Ideal," "Awkward Age," and "I Like To Be Clean" would be an impossible task. Guitarist Rob DuPrey is already somewhat of a cult hero, and lead singer Lance Loud's stage antics are

as unpredictable as they are entertaining.

Finally we come to Fuse, a quartet whose collective psyche is aligned more with the British new wave than anything else. They're like the Ramones, meet the Sex Pistols meet Eddie and the Hot Rods, which means that they're raw, powerful, direct, and unpretentious. They're the youngest and most refreshing new band on the scene, and one is immediately struck by the obvious fact that guitarist Joey Pinter will blossom into a huge guitar hero. He already possesses a whiplash style not unlike an unrelenting jackhammer, joined by a surprisingly confident stage presence as well. Most songs are basic, initially barely distinguishable from each other, but a few like "Rock 'N' Roll," "New York," and "Action" force your adrenalin to pump like crazy. Whether or not there will be a market for such powerful stuff is questionable, but as Pinter himself says, "this is all we do and all we're gonna do..."

And that's precisely the attitude of most of the rest of the bands: commitment, dedication, frequent flashes of brilliance, and a love of rock 'n' roll. In time the truly gifted who persevere will rise to the top, and then others will arise to do it all over again. All that remains to be answered is where, who and when. To this writer, and hoards of other New York rock fans, the answers are clear: New York, these bands, and right now.

—Alan Betrock

Alan Betrock is editor of New York Rocker.



AMERICA'S  
LOCAL  
TALENT 1977

By Kim Fowley

## THE SOUNDS OF LOS ANGELES

One doesn't need to write any introduction on the general rock history and geographical relevance of Hollywood. Hollywood is Los Angeles, Los Angeles is California and thus, Hollywood is the big time!

This year there is only one choice for new aspiring and worthy new talent: Van Halen!

Van Halen, newly signed to Warner Brothers Records, are a modern-day Black Oak Arkansas and are just a few steps removed from the level of rock greatness attained by Led Zeppelin during their "Squeeze My Lemon" period. Lead singer Dave Roth is rock authority and lead guitar genius Ed Van Halen is going to change a lot of lives around the world in the next 12 months.

Without the benefit of any tinsel town hype, Van Halen has amassed a huge street following. Real meat and potatoes music! Van Halen has worked its way up from the rock bottom of Pasadena to open shows for Santana, Lee Michaels, Sparks, and Nils Lofgren. All before their Warner Brothers contract.

Platinum power, Ted Templeman, is producing and Van Halen, the band that Gene Simmons picked to click, will prove the Kiss strategist correct once again.

Last year's hopefuls, The Runaways, are still mired in cult over-kill here in the U.S.A. However, they actually are Godheads in the national sales charts of Sweden, Australia and Japan. Their brother group, The Quick, have left Mercury Records and are currently shopping for a new label deal. The Quick, called "too swank" by some local critics, have been together since the 7th grade and will probably make it if they can project elements of "Arena Rock" in their presentation.

The balance of the local hopefuls is now explained in various ways by assorted wags of the L.A. bloodbath. ABC Records' Sue Sawyer runs down a cluster of "teen" hopefuls:

Sway—"They've been together for 10 years—play Stones-type Rock 'N' Roll, —based in Hollywood."

The Shock—"I've never seen them, but I've heard they are awful."

Low Numbers—"A cross between Hawkwind, The Dictators and Lou Reed."

Backstage Pass—"Usually an all-female band—call themselves Rock 'N' Roll's answer to Sesame Street - (Pabulum rock?)."

The Screemers—"Tomato DuPlenty and Gear are New Yorkers who came to L.A. via Seattle, where they were known as the Tuppenwares (had to change their name after Tupperware threatened to sue). To this date they've never appeared in L.A., but are rehearsing and plan to soon."

The Model—"Will be making their debut soon—currently rehearsing—supposedly a promising band."

Orange—"Hard rock, but I don't know what their a 'peel' is. I think Wartoke manages them. Play the Starwood often."

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Dan Teckenoff, of Star West Productions offers his portifications about his Southern California hot spot, The Golden West Ballroom.

"With the support of KEZY Radio in Anaheim, Eulogy has become a major attraction here in Orange County as one of the strongest local bands yet to be signed."

**Kim Fowley: Always out in the streets with the LA Punk Bands, except when he's in the middle-of-the-road with Helen Reddy.**



Already landing a beefy Warner's deal, LA's latest and greatest street sensation VAN HALEN is in a hurry for hits.

## BACKSTAGE PASS: "Rock 'n' Roll's answer to Sesame Street."



## "Hollywood is Los Angeles Los Angeles is California and thus, Hollywood is the big time!"

"Sorcery headed one of the biggest Halloween masquerade bashes ever. They are a dynamic mixture of fire, magic, and kick-ass rock-n-roll.

"Roving bands like Swan, featuring Bob James, ex-lead singer of Montrose, Dice, and Spike, play "side street venues" like the Longshoreman's Hall in San Pedro.

"The 'first' Hollywood street rock band of the 70's—the Hollywood Stars, have, after a 3½ year wait landed a record deal with Arista Records. Clive Davis is hoping the single "All The Kids On The Street" does the trick. Even if "Kids" doesn't reach up the charts to number one, Davis has enough faith in the writing abilities of Mark Anthony to continue with the group."

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"Back Door Man's Phast Phreddie raps the following names and faces: Slow Children: "Patti Smith on a commercial level." Smokey: "Releasing an L.P. soon!" Weiridos: "3 guitars, 1 bass, no drums; a cross between the Sex Pistols and the Bonzo Dog Band." Phreddie also refers to "half man/half woman" projector Max Laser; as a "throw back to glitter."

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Lisa Fancher of *Street Life Magazine* likes the Monitors, and the Dills (Sci-Fi Rock). She feels the Quick are ultimate. Greg Shaw of *Bomp Industries* likes the NYC and U.K. overlap now infiltrating new groups like, The Screamers, The Model, The Dills, and The Weiridos.

Radio Free Hollywood is still running with Pop, and the Dogs, and their well written fanzine. Zolar X and Quiet Riot are still plugging along as are the Berlin Brats, once L.A.'s most pushy group who now must share this title with the Nerves and Bad Axe. The Nerves have promoted shows at the Punk Palace and the Orpheum Theatre.

Glen Buxton of Decadent Enterprises promoted Sister In The First, a Punk Rock event at the Troubadour. Sister eat worms on stage. So do Black Magic, a band of 14-year-old boys.

Club-wise it's still the Whiskey and the Starwood. But you won't find outfits there like Dirty Diapers, Wild Cats, Volcano, Kid Sapphire, High Water, Boys in Bondage, Thunder, Rough and Ready, and the Continental Minatures until things loosen up.

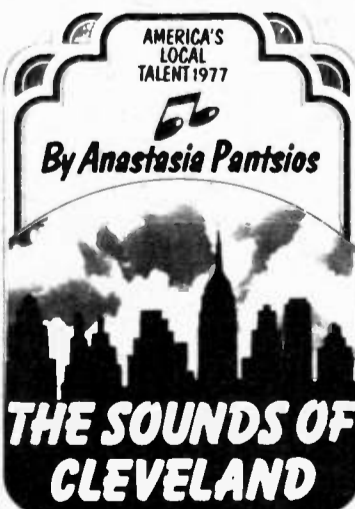
Four all-girl bands exist in L.A.: Juice, Rage, Rouge and Seizure. Rodney Bingenheimer's Radio Showcase, Sunday on KROQ-AM and FM is a Punk Listener's must.

All in all, L.A.-Hollywood hasn't produced a Gold Record rock band single since 1971's "Run, Run, Run" by Jo Jo Gunne.

Something's wrong: Too many fresh faces in the wrong time and the wrong space.

—Kim Fowley

Kim Fowley is co-producer of the current Helen Reddy LP and single.



It looks like just about nothing can kill Cleveland's local music scene. After disco made its attempt and failed, the local talent tried to kill itself off via boredom. That failed, too.

A year ago, the scene was going into a deceptive eclipse, crowned by the break-up last summer of the city's most

exciting band, Windfall. Perennial complainers were handed the perfect opportunity to grouse some more about what a hostile place Cleveland is to original, creative talent.

But to those of us with an ear to the ground, the year has been more of a necessary transition than a decline. The past couple of years have seen an almost complete changing of generations. Old faces that had been fixtures on the scene for up to 10 years vanished. They joined lounge groups; they became booking agents; they sold insurance. Younger bands composed of musicians whose names hadn't cropped up before started to pull down the desirable club jobs.

The younger bands were naturally less polished than the older acts, some of which had been together for five or more years in some form. And younger musicians were more likely to be intimidated by demands of club owners and agents that certain material be played. They were much less likely to do what the older acts learned to do to retain individuality: nod, agree and do as they damn well pleased, as long as they had an appreciative audience.

The worst blow was the unexpected break-up of Windfall, featured here last year. The group's lead vocalist, around whom the band built its unique sound, split to accept what he thought was a better offer. Because Windfall had always been mavericks, fighting to be original and work steadily, the break-up was demoralizing to the whole local music community.

Of the other two bands spotlighted here last year, Freewheelin' recently disbanded and are regrouping around the core of sax player Norman Tischler and vocalist/guitarist Danny Joe Cox. Jasper just completed a necessary reorganization that included learning badly needed new material and adding a keyboard player. The band had coasted on its reputation too long, and found itself slipping on stale material and an arrogant attitude. But they're young and have proven songwriting ability, so it's likely they'll get back on the right track.

Also mentioned in last year's article were Peter Panic, a bar band with a definite original flavor and a stable of excellent songwriters. At that time, half the quartet had just left to join the band Tattoo with ex-Raspberry guitarist Wally Bryson. Tattoo turned out to be best forgotten and singer David Thomas and bassist Dan Klawson have evidently returned to re-join colleagues, guitarist Randy Klawon and drummer Todd Weaver, bringing along ex-Tattoo and Raspberry keyboard man Jeff Hutton. This could be some of the best news the Cleveland music scene has heard in a while.

Despite the dearth of entertaining, well-developed live rock bands in the past year, the tenacity of the Cleveland bar scene has proved to be incredible. It would've been the ideal time for disco to move in and wipe out everything in its path. It didn't.

And early this year, the new bands started to appear. More than in the past, bands have set their sights on writing and recording—although, Cleveland being Cleveland, most also perform locally. The usual source of Cleveland talent is bar bands that have finally made the leap into writing their own tunes. Historically, all Cleveland's recording acts have come directly from being bar bands, with the exception of the Michael Stanley Band. Currently, the most promising are the Maxx Band & Love Affair.

Recently, some groups of experienced local musicians have simply decided not

## "The immediate future could be one of the most musically exciting periods in years for homegrown Cleveland rock 'n' roll."

to do another bar band, and started rehearsing and performing strictly as concert-style acts. Although the going isn't easy, these bands are finding their existence far more feasible than anyone here dreamed. Two such acts are Pictures and Fun.

Before discussing these acts further, I want to emphasize that I'm not anointing these bands as the only acts to watch coming from Cleveland. There are a host of other bands around town enjoying various degrees of popularity and manifesting varying degrees of originality.

Some, like Strutter and Inner City, are highly entertaining but too new and undeveloped to describe accurately. Others, like the Kay Morgan Band and Rapsallion, have been doing their own material for years and slowly improving as performers. Youngstown's hard rockers Left End and funky Coconut are seasoned acts who have been through many ups and downs, possess impeccable musicianship and are trying to shift emphasis to their own material.

Cleveland has its alternative music scene, which here refers to blues or country based bands rather than punk acts. Flatbush and Buckeye Biscuit are country bands which command sizable followings and who've released their own singles. The Brennan-Cosma Band is a squeaky clean folk-rock act with college appeal. 15-60-75 out of Kent play gutsy blues-originated rock, and put out their own album last year.

Finally, though the New York style music has generally been a bust here in Cleveland (the Ramones haven't played here and Iggy attracted only 1972 glitter left-overs standing on each other's shoulders to ogle David Bowie), there are the Dead Boys, who made a mini-mark on the East Coast and an even minier mark in Cleveland where they seldom play. Though they wear the required black leather jackets and have safety pins in their ears and holes in their clothes, their music has basic midwest mainstream roots. These guys played Kiss long before Kiss tunes became bar band staples.

Cleveland does not now have anything resembling a "most popular" band (other than its favorite recording act, the Michael Stanley Band), but the Maxx Band has managed to gain a respectable following as it has improved to the point of being one of Cleveland's most promising bands.

A little more than a year ago, drummer Kevin Kosec, guitarists Gary Kosec and John Cebuly and bassist Bob "Hoss" Ostrunic came upon singer Michael Graziano, an adorable, dark-haired diminutive (he wears size 5-girls') who doesn't like to be called a Steven Tyler look-a-like. He proved to be the visual spark the already solid band needed. It remained only for Michael to learn to sing with a band and for the band to spruce up its harmonies.

Harmonies still aren't its strong point, but the Maxx Band's emerging personality hasn't emphasized that kind of music. The band skillfully covers the required repertoire—Thin Lizzy, Alex Harvey, Artful Dodger, Aerosmith—plus some off-the-wall selections like Ted Nugent's "Dog Eat Dog" and Patti

Smith's "Ask the Angels." Like many other younger bands, the Maxx Band had to overcome its fear of losing jobs if it didn't play the songlist. At one time, it even learned "Play that Funky Music." It saw the error of its ways and dropped the song.

The band's arrangements have their own slant and Michael's delivery and phrasing owe to no one. The band's stage presentation is among the best in town. Each musician is a strong individual, though Michael carries the burden of the show, rousing crowds with his unforced verve rather than with set speechifying ("I hear you people like to rock 'n roll...").

The band does tuneful, energetics and has just recorded a single it plans to use for promotion and to showcase its abilities. The Maxx Band aims to be an entertaining hard rock band with musicianship and taste, and it looks likely to succeed.

Love Affair also plays the bars and high schools, and are gearing themselves up for a not-too-eventual try at recording.

Love Affair have for several years had the distinction of being the youngest band in town to gig steadily. The members have now reached the ripe old ages of 19 and 20. The band's style is lighter than most bar bands and its image is fresh-faced and almost "Teenybopper," to resurrect a term that once dogged another Cleveland band, the Raspberries.

Keyboard player Rich Spinza does most of the writing, while guitarist John Zdarvecky and Wes Coolbaugh, bassist Wayne Cukras and drummer Michael Hudak all share in the vocals. All five are good-looking, spunky performers and predictably, the band is especially popular with girls.

Definitely not kick-ass, the band covers a wide range of material, with a songlist of over 130 tunes. Much of their material is quite pop, like old Buckinghams tunes and "Goodbye to Love" by the Carpenters. Some of it is simply and pleasantly surprising, like "I Can't Get Next to You," by the Temptations. What the band lacks in ballsiness, it makes up in youthful exuberance and clean listenable arrangements.

Pictures was a band that nobody really thought would happen. In a sense, it resulted from the lamentable break-up of Windfall. Guitarists Craig and Bruce Balzer had been sitting around dreaming and trying to put together an original band since their highly successful bar band, Circus, went to the rock 'n' roll graveyard in late 1974. Craig was famous for having his feet in the clouds and his head God only knows where.

But when Windfall went to the winds, the Balzers latched on to the group's drummer Jim Bonfanti and keyboard player Kevin Raleigh and also got bassist Greg Holt who had played with Kevin in Freeport, once Cleveland's most notable progressive ('60s style) band.

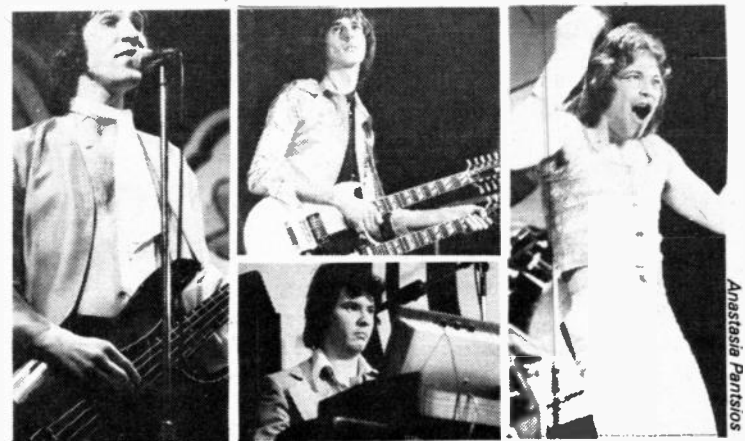
The band spent six months rehearsing its tunes prior to playing its first job in January in the midst of the season's worst blizzard. People came to hear them; that had to be a good sign.

The band is a sleek, poised musical



THE MAXX BAND; A Cleveland rock treat for the feet AND seat. [L to R] Gary Kosec, Kevin Kosec, Bob Ostrunic, Michael Graziano, John Cebuly.

**"Despite the dearth of entertaining, well developed live rock acts in the past year, the tenacity of Cleveland bar bands has proven to be incredible".**



The 1977 Cleveland Pop Gallery [L to R] PICTURES (Bruce Balzer, Kevin Raleigh, Craig Balzer); LOVE AFFAIR (Michael Hudak, John Zdarvecky, Wayne Cukras, Rich Spina—front, Wes Coolbaugh); FUN (Tom Brame, Bill Pettijohn, Jerry Moran, Doug Derringer).

that could make them hits. They are mainly straight rock, spiced with some nice ballads.

Pictures' chief priority is producing an acceptable well-honed demo. They have already contacted and evoked some interest from music business people. Though they plan to play concerts, most of the band's energies are devoted to getting signed and recorded.

Fun's goal is similar. Three of Fun's members were in a band called Dragonwyck, an awful but endearing bar band best suited for getting drunk to on Saturday nights. Dragonwyck sported a fair batch of original tunes written primarily by guitarist Tom Brame and singer Bill Pettijohn. They put out a single that attracted quite a bit of press and publicity.

Fun also includes a pair of adept keyboardmen, Jerry Moran (also from Dragonwyck) and John Simonell, bassist Doug Derringer and Cleveland's most stylishly powerful drummer, Michael McBride, another former Raspberry.

The band's tunes are a mixed bag that tends toward ornate, heavy rock. The band was always heavily into the Moody Blues, borrowing that band's complexity rather than their airy textures. Sound-wise, Fun is hard rock. Stronger instrumentally than vocally, and just now getting its stage act together by playing local concerts, Fun has been forming for two years and has just now reached a sufficiently finished state to play out.

Both Fun and Pictures involve veteran musicians who weaned themselves away from the hampering idea of making a living playing music for the time being, in order to pursue more creative goals that will hopefully pay off bigger in the long run. It's a gamble, of course, but one that needed to be taken in this city where originality is usually squelched by desire not to take a day job. So Fun's Bill Pettijohn spins records in a bar; Fun may some day have reason to give thanks to the disco craze.

These bands come on the heels of some promising developments that have enriched the climate of Cleveland as a national music town. Cleveland is now home to three nationally distributed record labels—Sweet City, which gave us Wild Cherry (semi-locals from Steubenville, Ohio), Sounds of Cleveland founded by the O'Jays (also semi-local, from Canton) and Cleveland International, founded by ex-Epic Vice President Steve Popovich, a native Clevelander lately returned home. Radio is still dominated by the progressive WMMS, with smaller stations with mostly tighter formats (and one much looser) providing contrast.

Molke Cole is possibly the last band to hold the title of the most popular bar band in town. They were recently picked up by Janus Records, and their album came out in February. But they were the first brand new act to be signed out of Cleveland in several years. Hopefully, and if justice prevails, they won't be the last. The immediate future could be one of the most musically exciting periods in years for homegrown Cleveland rock 'n' roll.

—Anastasia Pantisios

Anastasia Pantisios is a contributing music critic of the Cleveland Plain-Dealer.



In last year's *Sounds of the Cities* installment, I seemingly contradicted myself by bemoaning the fact that the Colorado music situation was listless and lacking direction...then providing a fairly awesome directory of the state's residents. Those who call Colorado home include Dan Fogelberg, Richie Furay, Chris Hillman, Firefall, Jimmy Buffett, The Nitty Gritty Dirt Band, Michael Murphey, Ed Cassidy, and Gerard. John Denver still lives here, too.

Well, the Rocky Mountain dichotomy has continued into 1977 as the talent and physical facilities remain, but the live music interaction has gone limp, victimized by mismanagement. There will always be hope for Boulder to emerge as the Muscle Shoals of the southwest as there are several fine studios and an abundance of gifted pickers. The question is: can the starving loyalists survive the famine?

1976 was a productive year for the rookies as well as the veterans on the "comeback trail." Firefall debuted with a gold album and two hit singles, establishing themselves as a rare rock/MOR crossover. '76 also saw solo debuts from Chris Hillman and Richie Furay, both of whom had retreated from the spotlight to get rid of the bad taste of the ill-conceived Souther-Hillman-Furay experiment.

The locals who will likely generate national interest this year are thankfully not pigeonholed into the too-predictable Rocky Mountain country-rock idiom. Watch for some authoritative punk-rock, jazz-rock, progressive country and relevant comedy to emanate from Boulder.

The Ravers, a five-piece unit which merged via bulletin board connections a year ago, fuse punk rock and reggae brilliantly. Though they do classy covers of Marley, Toots, Tuff Darts, and the Bobby Fuller Four, their real strength lies in the original visions of lead singer Marc Campbell. If there ever was a visual cross between Mick Jagger and Patti Smith, Campbell fits the bill and that alone should have corporate scouts drooling. Above the surface are some great songs...but it may take a move to the east coast to garner adequate recognition.

"I've been living in Boulder for eight years and one day I realized that there has never been any rock 'n' roll here," Campbell raved, momentarily forgetting

**"Colorado chugs on, serving as a haven for growing musicians and a refuge for those tired of 'life in the fast lane'."**

that the late Tommy Bolin honed his licks in these foothills. "People are bored and we want to be the cure." The Ravers would like nothing more than to break out of Colorado, but the mellow public-at-large has greeted them with mixed feelings.

Another local who may be forced to seek shelter in Hollywood due to local indifference is comedian Bennie Boulder. A native of Alamosa, Colorado (one of the coldest places in the state), Bennie has opened shows for almost every major act to play at Denver's Ebbets Field. Though it sounds cliché, he instantly brings Lenny Bruce to mind. His wit and spontaneity are fantastic. His subject matter is always topical, dealing with the general themes of repression of freedom (1977-style), drugs, sex, religion, et. al. Unlike most comics, he doesn't beat a routine into the ground. I've seen him a minimum of 50 times with nary a repetitive lick.

"It's frustrating, though," he admitted in a common moment of candor (the man is for real on stage and off). "I've had to do gas station and condominium commercials to get by. I almost threw in the towel last week." As fate would kindly have it, Bennie was opening for George Duke and Duke's manager Herb Cohen (who also handles the likes of Tom Waits and Frank Zappa) was impressed enough to tell Bennie to head for L.A.

Success couldn't happen to a nicer bunch of people than Navarro. More representative of the so-called Colorado sound, Navarro mixes well-crafted vocal harmonies with simple lyrics of life, love and the mountains. Sophisticated music is what puts them long steps ahead of the pap other bands pour out. Featuring songwriter Mark Hallman and a tasty young guitarist in Robert McEntee, Navarro was discovered by Carole King who was recording some tracks at Caribou Ranch. King immediately enlisted the group to back her up on her new album and also gave them an attractive deal on her new label. The only hassles which remain involve King's settling with her old boss Lou Adler and Ode Records. When (and if...) that's resolved, check your local shelves for what promises to be a pleasant debut disc from Navarro.

Remember the name Jimmy Ibbotson? He used to provide strong vocals during the early days of The Nitty Gritty Dirt Band. He left that band a few years ago and hasn't appeared on vinyl since. He did a short stint with Chris Hillman (which ended with a one-punch knock out...winner, Hillman) and recently formed the group Telluride. The band, which also consists of former members of local favorites Colours, plays out of the plush mountain community of Evergreen (Michael Murphey's adopted home town) and have captured the fancy of more than a few local agents/promoters.

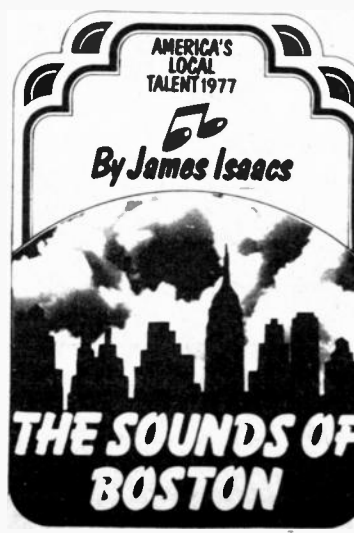
Dark horse of the Colorado pack is a great singer, a la Gram Parsons, named Michael Woody. Former frontman for Woody and the Peckers, Woody has gone solo and his best bet at this time is to peddle his demo and let a producer do the rest. He's got the tunes, voice and charisma...just no band at the moment.

One hot guitarist who must be mentioned despite a fluctuating career is Michael Roach. Roach, in constant demand as a "guest lead guitarist," is uncertain whether he should pursue his own trip or join an established band. He's had feelers in the past from Dan Fogelberg and Michael Murphey, but neither panned out. He is currently being wooed by Gerard for a full time commitment and may take the job just so he doesn't have to think about assembling a new band (his old group, Bubba Rand, recently fragmented). At any rate, be on the lookout for the gentleman with searing licks, Michael Roach, who will hopefully transcend the mountain bar circuit soon.

So Colorado chugs on, serving as a haven for growing musicians (mainly Boulder) and as refuge for those tired of "life in the fast lane." But, as one local-on-the-verge recently noted, "The ambience of living in this area plants the seeds of its own destruction." The Colorado music scene will prosper only if a healthy live music climate is regenerated so that the talent can survive and the public can remain interested. If this doesn't happen soon, Colorado will go down in the musical record books as a highly touted prospect which fell victim to an excessive amount of torn ligaments.

—Kenny Weissberg

Kenny Weissberg has been program director of KRNV-FM for the past five years, and is currently an editor of the Rocky Mountain Musical Express.



There are approximately as many estimable musicians in Boston-Cambridge as there are parking tickets given out annually within the two burghs. Unlike the citations, though, sometimes the musicians do get paid. Feeble stabs at levity aside, "the hub" indeed has a slew of laudable bands and artists working hereabouts on a reasonably regular basis. Singing out a select few ensembles and/or solo acts for special recognition is roughly analogous to a Harvard freshman with a BankAmericard trying to select four or five silk ties from the Andover Shop—it can be done, but what deprivation.

Despite its relatively low population density (Boston-Cambridge combined is about 750,000), the cities' watering places offer a highly variegated talent fare. Only New York and Los Angeles, both of which are more than 10 times Boston's size, can compare with this city for musical excellence and diversity on the "local" level. Within a three-mile radius of the Harvard Bridge, connecting Boston's Back Bay to the M.I.T. campus in Cambridge, one can, on any given evening, encounter a panoply of styles; from *nouveaux* rockers to old-time fiddlers, from avant-garde saxophone solos to comedic sousaphone solos, from boogie and folk blues and progressive country to cabaret warbling and reggae rejoicing.

Probably of primary interest to many PRM readers are the "Rat bands," that is, those groups who gig at the Rathskeller in Kenmore Square. The Rat's cavalcade of stars is a hardy but struggling lot, as the Rat is, for all practical purposes, the only game in town for "punk," "the Blank Generation," or whatever one wishes to dub contemporary rock 'n' rollers.

Truly a "cellar full of noise," the subterranean bistro is frequently packed by a collection of fans whose fealty is unimpeachable (as witness "The Boston Groupie News," a lively and sometimes graphic publication devoted to all sorts of revelations). In the past year or so the international popstar community has discovered the Rat, with Iggy Pop, Piper and members of Queen and Thin Lizzy dropping by after their shows to relax and/or sit in.

Rat bands are often dismissed en masse as being inordinately loud, crude and sullen—not necessarily in that order. The fact is, however, that almost all the groups that perform at the Rat have a distinct approach to their medium. Reddy Teddy, for example, is a maverick four-piece band whose unpredictable guitar leads and subtle, imaginative lyrics (both by guitarist Matthew MacKenzie) makes them a delight. Their debut LP on the Spoonfed label was extravagantly praised in a recent PRM review.

Thundertrain, whose initial album, *Teenage Suicide*, is slated for spring

# "There are approximately as many musicians in Boston-Cambridge as parking tickets given annually in the two burgs."

release on Jelly, is a relentlessly energetic quintet whose furiously paced 45, "Hot For Teacher," was one of the most salaciously endearing singles of 1976 (a year in which there was no dearth of "naughty tunes"). Fox Pass, once guided by composer-lead singer Jon Macey's acrid sensibility, has moved in a decidedly more pop direction, having discovered the joys of ABBA. Nevertheless, they still are committed to rock 'n' roll.

Willie Loco and the Boom-Boom Band (now preparing an album) is unquestionably one of the supreme three-chord aggregations anywhere. Lead singer Willie Alexander is a galvanic on-stage presence, guitarist Billy Loosigian has a beautifully rich tone, and the pounding, boom-boom rhythm is primal and urgent. Cars, as their name suggests, plays a brand of rock 'n' roll that sounds mechanized (but not mechanical), futuristic and polished. They are a band to watch.

Other Rat units of note are the invigorating Infliktors, the blistering Johnny Barnes band, the unerringly terse Nervous Eaters, the flamboyant Third Rail, the elegant Atlantics, the anarchic DMZ (closer to pure punk, in the Stooges sense, than any other band on the scene), the natty Sass and the howling Laurence Talbot. For a more comprehensive picture of "Rodentia dementia" order *Live at the Rat*, a two-LP set featuring 10 of the Rat regulars (send a check for \$9.74 to Rat Records, 528 Comm. Ave., Boston MA 02215).

Cambridge and the Allston student ghetto of Boston are the territories of the "Bar bands," a generic term which encompasses a multitude of styles. The Ellis Hall Group offers a modern funk, while Roomful of Blues harkens back to the days of the Kansas City jump bands. The Steamers favor the good-time southern r 'n' b of Don Covay and his ilk, while Gypsy fuses jazz and soul.

The Chris Rhodes Band features the silken vocalizing of its leader. Jamaicaway essays reggae and calypso with aplomb. Barbara Holliday is earthy and intense. The Powerhouse Blues Band, the Allston Funk Band and Nonie's Blues are favored among veteran boogie enthusiasts. Radio King and his Court of Rhythm are non-parallel groove makers. The common ground between all these entries is that they attract dancing drinkers.

Boston-Cambridge is not the folk and country blues mecca that it was a dozen years ago, but there is a coterie of local singer-songwriters who continue to work in that tradition. Chris Smith, Reeve Little, Peter Johnson (who has been experimenting with electronic *musique concrete*, of late), Mason Daring and Jeannie Stahl, Josiah Spaulding, Robin Lane, John McAuliffe, Bill Staines and the sublime Ina May Wool all produce engaging acoustic music.

Progressive country is well-represented by John Lincoln Wright and the Sour Mash Boys and Wheatstraw, which is piloted by Chuck McDermott. Wright's smoky baritone is a most evocative instrument. McDermott, to quote a recent article, is a songwriter who "treats standard C&W themes in novel ways." As for bluegrass, Joe Val and his New England Bluegrass Boys are long-time faves.

In the realms of cabaret and comedy one can begin with Orchestra Luna—whose *modus operandi* encompasses elements of off-Broadway revues, poetry, jazz, choreographed motion, parody and high decibel rock 'n' roll. Luna is the only band in town that goes over at the Rat, Jonathan Swift's in Cambridge (where country and boogie holds forth) and Matt Talbot's in Boston, which attracts a somewhat older crowd. Jade and Sarsaparilla and Stormin' Norman and Suzy are a pair of duos who have developed loyal following (Norman and Suzy are a hot act in New York just now), but the foremost cult item in Boston is Dale Michaels. Michaels, who stands 6' 8", serenades the clientele in several taverns around the town with sousaphone recitals, often in conjunction with a nimble soft shoe or balancing a cane on his nose. He also renders the dizzying "Flight of the Bumblebee" on

coin changer, bellows and plumber's friend. Dale has also been known to interpret the challenging piece on unusual instruments.

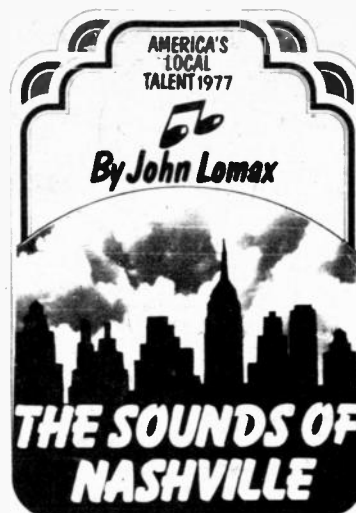
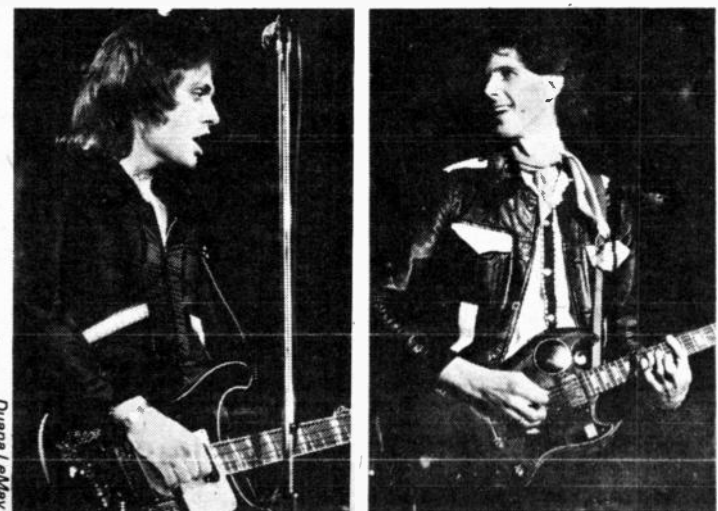
Finally, if you become a bit weary from listening, you can always partake in one of the Gong Shows, which are spreading like a yaws epidemic in boites

throughout the Boston area.

—James Isaacs

James Isaacs is a columnist for the Boston Phoenix and drummer with the Isaacs Brothers, a quartet whose forte is "understated jazz-funk modernism."

**There's more tough local action in Boston/Cambridge than you can stick a shake to. Starting from the top—REDDY TEDDY; THUNDERTRAIN; THE BOOM BOOM BAND and CARS' members Ben Orr [L] & Rick Ocasek**



Nashville's recording facilities are the equal of any in the world. We have a vast supply of musical talent of all styles to plug into this machinery. Many feel the pleasant living conditions and high musical standards will spark a new boom; musicians from around the world will come to record in this hassle-free environment only a fifteen minute drive from open country.

You have to understand that Nashville is a singer-songwriter town. There is a meager band scene. The best players in town record and/or tour, for themselves, and for the country superstars, some who tour 250 days annually. There are countless motel/club country-copy outfits, fleeing the tourists while hoping someone important will materialize. We've got teenage rock/disco/boogie aggregations whose output gives electricity a bad name. But rock bands? How many Nashville groups can you name? CDB. And Barefoot Jerry. And? And?...

Still, there's good news; four groups and one individual have dodged the pitfalls to emerge as talented acts worthy of national adulation.

Before we discuss them here's a rundown of last year's prognostications: Contenders—band intact, touring extensively though they have no present record deal. Clement, Peace & Quiet are discussed this year. Veteran Townes Van Zandt has a new double live LP now on Tomato Records, a new label. Billy Ray Reynolds is working on a record for a major label. Arizona Star (now Zona) had a deal but it fell through when Jonathan King's Pye Records did. A revamped act and Manhattan foray are planned.

... "Today I seen you flying by  
your nose held high, well so was I  
And I could tell  
By the crazy way you flew  
You don't get down and get high  
The way we used to..."

Chapman/Wahl/Hickey  
© 1977 Enoree Music



Marshall Chapman has moved journalists to more superlatives than anyone I can recall. You'll find several descriptions on the back of *Me, I'm Feelin' Free*, her debut album (Epic). Released in February, it gained little country attention but did garner accolades from the *New York Times*, *Washington Star*, and, of course, *PRM* (3/77).

Why the fuss? CHARISMA. Marshall Chapman has it. A living, breathing Cissy Hawkshaw, she's six feet tall barefooted, her favorite sartorial condition. She writes extremely riveting songs with several co-writers, most notably Joy Wahl and recent addition, journalist Dave Hickey. She can belt out a rock burner with a scream approached only by Roky Ericson, then croon you down

smoothly. She looks as at home with her Telecaster as Matt Dillon with a six gun. She's got stage presence aplenty and a style all her own to go with an outlook on life in tune with the 25-35 year old folks who can't find melodies in rock, instrumental punch in country, or humor in either form.

Like all great performers, she has something for everyone—men can lust at'er her coltish, blonde body, fantasize on her vulnerability, and admire her tomboyish, kickass cool. The women can listen to her tell it all from a woman's viewpoint. Feminists have a champion in Marshall; like Patti Smith, she's making it in a male industry without resorting to blatant sexuality, stereotyped clothing, or clichéd sentiments. Who else has cut a song requesting, nay, demanding, that the gents in her life go down on her?

\*\*\*

"...It feels so good to be bad  
It was too dark to be seen  
She said you look like Mick Jagger  
I said I feel like Lou Reed..."

© 1976 Panama Red Storysongs



Are you sure he's from Nashville? A left-handed, red-haired elf who learned to do a standing back flip whilst playing electric guitar for Kinky Friedman. Panama's "a cross between Humphrey Bogart and Popeye the Sailor." He perpetuates the myth of his own "madness" and designates himself a legend at 32.

"Hey Panama, here's a post card for you. It came here to the bar."

"Lemme see it. (Puts on ridiculous arched spectacles) Hmmm. It's from my old friend, the Dalai Lama. He says he's been very concerned over my problem of not having a major recording label. Here, he sez, 'Look at it this way: Hitler made it without a label.'"

Fun is what you get when you take in Panama Red & Montezuma's Revenge, a band sc-briquet both original and humorous. Fiscally sound as well, for Panama lined up a deal with the makers of Montezuma tequila—"it's an in-market promotion and product endorsement. We publicize their hooch and they drop a few bucks on us."

They perform before a neon sign bearing the star's name. Panama appears in several outrageous costumes, romping his way through creations like "Tequila Mockingbird," "She Was More Than Everything," "Something's Wrong With the Beaver," and "Goddam the News."

Eccentric rep nonetheless, I found him as crazy as Jimmy Carter. Turns out Panama has a degree from Miami U. in music merchandising. Does this sound crazy to you?

"I don't want a label to feel they have to adopt me to get a record out. I look to a label to provide distribution and a minimum of promotion...I want to know I can sell, say, 200 records in Charleston, 1000 in Miami, 20,000 in Texas. And now I can...What I'm doing is feeding ten people—without a record."

Doing it with his wife, Pat. All the booking, managing, publishing, hassling with a bus and a road band, and taking their baby along for good measure, Panama Red is a walking comedy movie in search of a camera. He's already a star in his own mind; he should be in yours.

\*\*\*

"If I was Saturday night and you were Sunday morning  
For a fleeting moment we could touch at midnight"

And in that moment could you really know me?

But I am looking 'cross the river

Longing to be near

The water is too wide, I cannot reach you

I'm as close as I can ever hope to be...

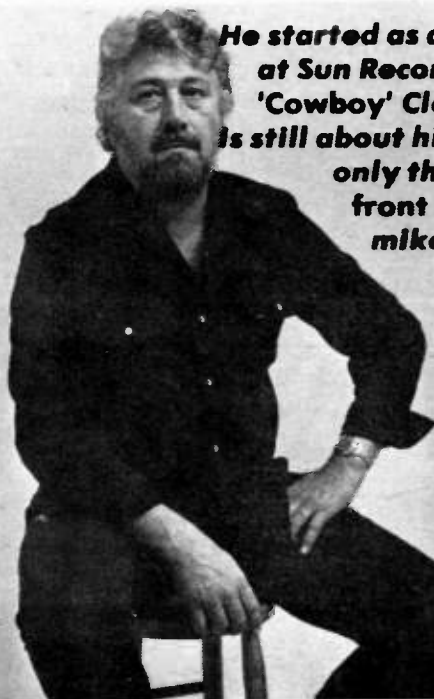
© 1975 David Olney

And David? He just trucks right on, building a rep among songwriters and street folks.

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Cowboys have to fall in love, get hurt and all that bit  
Let their hearts hang out so they can write you all a hit  
So ladies, if they ask you don't refuse  
Let's all help the Cowboy sing the blues...

© 1975 J. Clement/Jack Music



**He started as a producer at Sun Records, Jack 'Cowboy' Clement '77 is still about history—only this time in front of the mike.**

Since last year's survey Jack Cowboy Clement nailed down a recording deal with Elektra. The album will be out by midsummer so it can't be long 'till Cowboy will be riding the range of listening rooms, resuming a performing career interrupted a quarter-century ago.

Jack started producing at Sun Records with Johnny Cash and Jerry Lee Lewis; he has since been entangled with a long list of luminaries, including Waylon, George Jones, Porter and Dolly, the Glaser Brothers, Charley Pride, Jim Reeves, Dickey Lee, Allen Reynolds, Shel Silverstein, Louis Armstrong, Townes Van Zandt, Doc Watson and Bobby Bare. He's built seven recording studios, operated a successful art and photography studio, established a free-lance construction company and made a movie.

But his greatest contributions to Nashville lie in the area of talent discovery and development. Waylon, Pride, Cash, Don Williams, Van Zandt, the Glasers, and Watson owe congratulations to Jack for his studio wizardry. Countless songwriters, engineers, players, and executives here graduated from Cowboy's College of Musical Knowledge.

One brief example: the Nashville Songwriters Association recently chose Bob McDill as "Songwriter of the Year." Nineteen other writers were cited; McDill and five others were Clement alumni.

What's he like on stage? Bizarre. The Ragtime Band fluctuates from four to sixteen, and the song selection ranges from "Folsom Prison Blues" and "Brazil" to "Tiger Rag" and "Watermelon Man." Cowboy plays guitar, mandolin, and pedal steel, though not simultaneously. And he sings like a happy bird with a trace of whiskey attached. He's got the best sense of rhythm I've observed. An entertainer deluxe, he's made to order for TV and video with his awareness of drama and craggy face that looks like a mad Peter Ustinov mixed with a mellow Paladin. So keep your eyes peeled for Cowboy; he's had a habit of being several years ahead.

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The best band in town is Peace & Quiet, a quartet recently hired to back up Crystal Gayle. Since last year they've toured with Crystal, Clement, and Buffy

St. Marie, recorded with those acts and Rudy McNeely, travelled to Australia, New Zealand, western Canada, and England, and kept their band going.

Spady Brannan and Chris Leuzinger joined the original Peace and Quiet in 1969, some two years after Ric Steele formed the group in West Palm Beach. Dwight Scott enlisted two years later and new drummer Vic Mastrianni signed up this year, replacing Teener Krawczyn.

Backing up such an array of artists will broaden the repertoire—guitarist Chris estimates that they know some 600 tunes. "For a while there were five Peace & Quiet's: the Buffy P & Q, the Cowboy P & Q, the Rudy McNeely P & Q, the Top 40 P & Q, and the real Peace and Quiet." In addition Spady, Chris, and Dwight each sing and write their own songs designed to fit into quartet format.

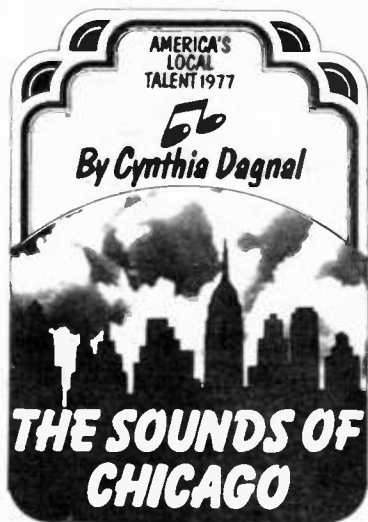
Unfortunately, this crowded schedule prevents Peace & Quiet from playing many local gigs. In April, they went with Crystal to play Wembley and a festival

in Finland. But when they are booked locally, you can find me in the front row. Good live rock is hard to find here; this bunch of burners plays as well as anyone around, be it rock, reggae, country, blues or r'n'b.

Peace & Quiet have been in the studio with Norbert Putnam and Roger Cook, the latter an English native now living here. Nothing of serious consequence has emerged since Norbert is loaded down producing "name" acts while Roger is building a studio and a working arrangement with Capricorn Records.

—John Lomax

John Lomax, son of noted blues historian John Lomax, Sr., is a Nashville-based free-lance writer.



They do everything wrong. They don't know how to dress. They move badly onstage, especially big concert stages—they're bar babies mostly, not used to wide open spaces. They don't even have a rudimentary knowledge of the business behind the business.

But the music is fine. And grateful young Chicagoans keep them alive. Kids, disgruntled with the disco craze, are flocking to live music clubs. They delight in the scruffy, unassuming locals who look so much like the guy next door. In fact, the neighborhood kids chip in to see to it they always have a good cheering section up front.

## Chicago's Local Talent:

**"They do everything wrong... But the music is fine. And grateful young Chicagoans keep them alive."**

The Midwestern boogie backlash is strong here. Tired of the dictums of the east and west coasts, and the British barrage, it's the rock and roll Rocky's they support, the local guys suddenly slugging their way to the top. Record contracts are being signed left and right as record company A & R men become increasingly aware of the fresh sounds.

Why the sudden interest? Midwest bands have retained the rawness, the infectious spirit and creativity of the '60s. It's old fashioned "progressive" rock of yesteryear, coupled with the technology and funk of the '70s. Record execs hear echoes of their pasts in them: Cream, Jeff Beck, Jimi Hendrix, Buffalo Springfield, every facet comes alive again, and improved upon many times over. It's exciting, an oasis of naive and real enthusiasm undimmed by fame and oversaturation.

But there is no "business" here—no agents, few record companies, managers, people who know what to do with talent once it's found. Many bands wither on the vine, or leave for California where their lack of biz sense finally tells and buries them.

The bands represented here have all survived, and most have recently signed with important labels and produced strong first albums. The one that hasn't will.

Clive Davis discovered and nursed Chicago's current favorite, Bill Quateman. Musicians like Caleb Quaye of Elton John fame and Denny Seiwell of Wings to name only two have deserted the big names to serve time in Chicago out of respect for Quateman. His second album *Night After Night* is a triumph of taste that has caused shock waves through the Springsteen and Stills camps. It's "dues" music, an amalgam of roots built on solid foundations and experience. It won him places on many critics' top album lists this year, and made a strong enough showing to launch him on tours of the east and west coasts, where he has been well received.



**CHEAP TRICK**

Cheap Trick, with a debut album produced by Jack Douglas, has been bubbling under with encouraging punk while their live band reputation grows as they tour with the Kinks. Chicago's most popular bar band, they are mad, manic, and overwhelmingly loud; old fashioned but inventive jammers who incorporate touches of the Who, the Beatles, and 10 cc, along with the American touches of Aerosmith and Kiss et al. A true hybrid of everywhere rock has been. Of them all, this is one band in the punk vein that is ready to make the move.

Jim Peterik is too, and proved it before a hostile audience that came to see Boston and threatened to literally boo him off the stage. Another long time

Chicago favorite, Peterik was the voice of the Ides of March ("Vehicle"), a comfy band more into college degrees than making the big time.

Peterik left the Ides, clung to the funk, but added some hot guitar and restrained keyboards. His first Epic album "Don't Fight The Feeling" rocks out with "Chicago Blues," strolls back to the Fats Domino '50s with "Lazy Susan," and breathes a soul-tinged sigh with "Lay Back," all of which should have been singles. But bad management and record company indifference allowed them to die. A shame, but a familiar tale here in Chicago.

Spector is a band on the brink. Lyrically immature, many songs last too long and say too little, but when they're hot, they're hot. Lead guitarist Paul Bromwell is hands down the most exciting guitarist on the bar circuit, able to go from blues to punk frenetic in the same clean riff. David Spector (lead singer Sherwin is the second Spector and leader of the band) is a drummer of the jazz-soul mold whose solos never forget the beat, despite the multi-rhythmed flights of fancy. Bassist Bill Kerstin ties it all together admirably.

Sherwin himself is a manic karate kicking vocalist who breaks two to three mike stands a night. There's method behind the madness, though. He put this band together carefully: "We're pretty, we kick ass, and we do something up there!" Enough said; he's right on all counts.

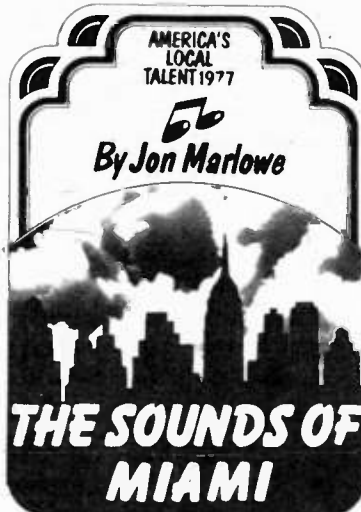
Another "almost there" band that must be mentioned is Pezband. They recently moved to New York after success in Max' Kansas City and CBGB, but Chicago is home, and they spend most of their time shuttling back here.

Cute, commercial, and "pop" oriented, the young suburbanites who are frightened of Cheap Trick adore Pezband. Their first album has been recently released. Their sound, for some of us, is just a trifle too darling, but they are a club packing ensemble and there's money and interest behind them.

Names to watch for in the future: Pearl Handle, not a country outfit, but a fine boogie band. D'Thumbs, who recently snagged Black Oak Arkansas' drummer. Ouray and Jump In The Saddle, both country bands, the latter of which may give Asleep At The Wheel real trouble soon. Roadmaster with "Atom Smasher," is the world's most insane blues-boogie band, with a lead singer that could've given the stars of "Slap Shot" profanity lessons. And finally, Prism, which many club owners regard as an inventive new band, unusually experimental and dependent upon pretty harmonies unique among bar bands.

—Cynthia Dagnal

Cynthia Dagnal is a music critic for the Chicago Sun-Times.



There's no sense kidding ourselves. Though it might look good punching up some three-piece Big Daddy's Lounge act to make it sound like there's something going on in Miami, there really isn't much local action.

Today, Miami's so-called "Local Music Scene" depends primarily on Criteria Recording Studios, TK Productions, and Celler Door Concerts for musical activity.

There is no crucial "watch them grow" club scene here. No Max's or CBGB's. No Roxy. No Bottom Line. No Troubadour. No place at all for local talent to develop their own original material or for secondary acts to headline.

Such was not always the case in Miami. During the late '60s and early '70s, nightclubs like the Flick and The Image were an important musical vehicle for both national and original local talent. It wasn't an uncommon

sight to see Neil Young, Dion, Joni Mitchell, Jimmy Buffett, Mike Pinerra, and a then struggling comedian by the name of Gabe Kaplan all sharing the same stage at the Flick. What happened? Well, it's way too easy to blame the demise of Miami's original music nightclubs on Jim Morrison's nationally reported "Wanna see what's in my pants?" Miami incident. It goes a lot deeper than that. In a city where the Latin population is now close to 50% of the total per capita, you have to understand one thing: Miami's gone funky. Latins aren't exactly interested in hearing "Taking Tiger Mountain By Strategy"—or watching a bunch of kids (who think Dwight Twilley is God's gift to music) power-chord their own diabolical material. Disco may be dying elsewhere—but in Miami—a thousand and one multi-lighted/40,000 watt/automated turntable discotheques loudly (and proudly) proclaim: *Disco is alive and well in Miami!*

Still, Miami has managed to produce some truly incredible rock 'n' roll acts who have had to seek fame and fortune elsewhere. Wowii are without a doubt Miami's ultra great/heartbreaker rock 'n' roll band. Led by lead singer (and Rooster impersonator) Rafael Menendez and superb guitarist Mark Resnick, these musical hoodlums have a ton-load of driving original material like, "Let's Get Crazy and Holler" and "It Ain't No Fun Anymore," that are simply 4/4 classics. But the only time you could ever hear their self-penned blasters was in rehearsal; for Wowii were forced to play "Bad Luck" and assorted other disco material six nights a week; four sets a night; at the Marco Polo Swinger Lounge on Collins Avenue. (The name itself should tell you all you need to know about the establishment). Finally, Wowii could no longer stand being told: "You either play disco or you don't play at all in this town."

"I just couldn't take it any longer" says Mark. "We'd walk into the Swinger night after night and have to play all this stupid disco material when we had our own rock 'n' roll stuff that we wanted to do."

"After awhile, I'd just stand there, not even playing my guitar. I just didn't want anything to do with disco, Suicide crossed my mind a few times, it was that bad. Finally, we just had to get the hell out."

Packing up their original material, Wowii left the Swinger Lounge and moved out of town—to New York City—where they've played CBGB's, gotten rave review notices in *Variety*, and are currently the house band at Bottom's an uptown nitery.

Herman Adelsohn is another Miami boy with a lot of talent—finely crafted three minute pop songs coupled with an infectious "Don't I Look Like Paul McCartney?" Stage presence. But while stuck in Miami with the 'nowhere to play blues again,' Herman was economically forced to perform solo for the nine to five set at the Bayshore Whale and Sail Club and Beef Steak Charlie's; knocking out Beatle medleys and top 40 hits on an acoustic guitar. (Seems some Miami club owners have an expressed fear of wood-grain Fender Telecasters).

After a few years of the above activities, Herman too, couldn't stand it any longer and also moved to New York City where he:

1. Rapidly bought a Fender Telecaster and recruited three other musicians who share his AM pop/rock feelings.
2. Changed his name to Keith Herman.
3. Signed to Midland Records.
4. Had a gala coming out party in December to celebrate the release of his 'fine-chock-full-of-pop songs' LP: *Good News Day*.

Postscript: Keith called last week and said he would really love to come back and play for the people of Miami. There's only one problem. There's still no place for Keith to play.

Jeffrey Arthur, formerly of Arthur, Hurley and Gottlieb fame (two sunshine-rock LPs, one on Columbia and one on A&M) has also moved out of Miami and up to Tampa, voicing the same old complaint: "Man, there's just no place to play in Miami and make a living and get your music together. For some reason, nobody wants to hear an original band in Miami. Disco is still King."

Upon moving to Tampa, Arthur got into commercial work; writing and singing national jingles for 'Roots Shoes' and 'Just Pants' ("We've got you covered at Just Pants"). As of late, Arthur has begun to shut the door on commercial work ("You can only go just so far with jingles") and is talking to well-known producer (and friend) David Spinozza about returning to the studio and making another LP.

# Miami's Local Scene: "There Isn't Much Action."

The Mark and Clark Band are the exception to the NO PLACE TO PLAY Miami rule. This sibling twin-piano duo performed nightly at the Keyboard cabaret in Fort Lauderdale—a club that allowed and encouraged them to show off their 176 key wizardry. But after four years of the same old go-round at the keyboard, nothing ever really happened until Howard "How do you like my suit?" Stein walked in one night, viewed their act, "saw something there," and signed them to a management contract. Next came a recording contract with Columbia Records; and now the boys have just completed a massive promotional tour of the Southwestern United States in a 28-foot motor home.

The musical twins met with radio programmers, fans, and the press while on the road; and according to Tom Sgro, Miami's Columbia representative who travelled with the boys: "Local response to them has just been unbelievable."

Sgro thinks Mark and Clark "are going to happen" and he could very well be right: The boys sport cutesy-poopys teen-age good looks and are classically trained pianists who had had the common sense to dilute Bach down to bubblegum-pop.

"They're a real teen-oriented band with real up-tempo music," says Sgro. "If that's what you're looking for, Mark and Clark really fit the bill."

**STUDIO ACTION:** Criteria Recording Studios has been keeping themselves more than busy with the usual slew of heavyweights (Fleetwood Mac, Black Sabbath, Procol Harum, Firefall, ad infinitum) all clocking hours upon hours of studio time. The biggest news out of Criteria, though, is the formation of their own record company—Good Sounds Records—under the direction of Stephen J. Nichols and Criteria owner Mack Emmerman. Second release on the Good Sounds label (their first was some Mickey Mouse Olympic soundtrack record *Olympus II*) is Miami's own—the Billion Dollar Band.

Recording stars or not, this six member band—who some have called a cross between the Spinners and the Rolling Stones (?!?!?)—have also had problems with finding a place to play. But by using their imaginations, the boys have kept their hand in by playing free Saturday afternoon in the park gigs around town while they wait for their LP to "take off so we can start touring." A word of economic advice: If the Billion Dollar Band ever come to your town, believe it or not, they'll pay you to watch them. Besides having this tremendous live stage show (complete with dance steps and matching suits), they also do this great original song called "Money Don't Grow On Trees," during which they throw out stacks and stacks of real dollars to the audience!

TK Productions, home of "The Miami Sound" keeps cranking out the dance-oholic hits. Right now K.C. and his Sunshine Band are still riding high (DO YOU BELIEVE IT?) with another four word ditty: "I'm Your Boogie Man." But while K.C. keeps the big dollars flowing into Henry Stone's TK Production's pocketbook, people out on the street are wondering: "Why the hell isn't Betty Wright a really big star?" A good question, for Betty's definitely the one TK artist who possesses the talent to go the distance; whether it be records, songwriting, or movies. (C'mon, admit it, whether you like disco or not, "Where Is The Love" is a great, great song).

Part of Betty's disappearance from the national scene is her recent marriage and the ensuing fact that it normally takes nine months to have a baby—which Betty did. But Betty promises: "I'll be back, better than ever."

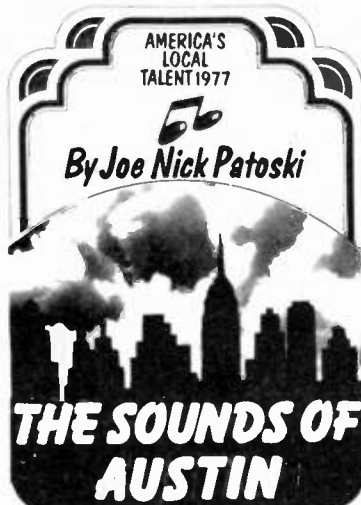
**CONCERT ACTION:** In recent months, Miamians have seen and heard: America, Electric Light Orchestra, Bob Seger, Boston, Bruce Springsteen, Pink Floyd, The Who, Peter Frampton, and Eric Clapton. Not bad, you say? Hell—just try falling in love with a "Hotel Chambermaid" and see what happens to you in this town.

—Jon Marlowe

Jon Marlowe is a music critic for the Miami News.



Miami Motivators [clockwise]: WOW!!; RAFAEL MENENDEZ; ARTHUR, HURLEY & GOTTLEIB; THE BILLION DOLLAR BAND.



Thanks to the migration of musicians who actually believed Austin's blind boast that it was the new country music capital of the world, the central Texas city is currently in the throes of a rebirth as one of the nation's prime live music centers. Sure, Willie Nelson might shoot a game at his pool hall, that could be Jerry Jeff Walker getting a little too rowdy at the Texas Chili Parlor, or the Lost Gonzos trying to throw him out, but by and large, major recording acts who live here rarely perform in the area anymore.

That, and the signings of two of the best local country bands—Alvin Crow & his Pleasant Valley Boys and Marcia Ball & Her Misery Brothers—to recording contracts with Polydor and Capitol respectively, suggests a wide open field for new talent. But prospective carpet-baggers and closet kickers be forewarned: the music's plentiful but the money's not. Cover charges rarely exceed a couple bucks for local bands and the preferred venue is the drink 'n' dance club that seats between 100-500 people. No local band "makes it" until they start booking out of town.

The only style definitely passe in Austin at present is that curious animal born in a p.r. agent's mind—the Cosmic, or cosmic. Cowboy. For all practical purposes, he has traded in his faded jeans for a pair of Neimans' slacks and stumbled back to Houston and Dallas, though on rare occasions some battered and beaten would-be Rusty Weir with a voice as scratchy as Kristofferson's and songs that are even worse will find his

way into the Alliance Wagonyard or the Rome Inn looking for a tryout or Willie's phone number. Country music has by no means faded from the picture, but instead polarized itself, taking a harder, less hipified bent. Progressive has become regressive.

Popular hometown bands like Crow's and Asleep at the Wheel have inspired an influx of swing and neo-rockabilly bands much like themselves, many of whom have started a mini-boomlet in Austin studios by recording their own singles and getting them played on KOKE-FM (progressive country rocker that encourages local product). The best of these include the Dixie Diesels from Illinois, who emulate the Wheel most faithfully: the Howlers from Mississippi (their single is "White Man Blue" b/w "Louisiana Belle" on the Mellocoir label); the frantic Jon Emery from Nebraska (the cut two originals "Still Hung Up On Yesterday" and "Brothers of the Blues" on the Down Home label); California's Reynolds Sisters ("By By Baby" b/w "Million Miles From Me" World Records); and locals Doc Jones Band ("Waster" b/w "House Full of Windows" on Blind Duck) and the Cooder Browne Band.

It's a writer from Lubbock though, Butch Hancock, who is the most highly touted (and still unsigned) new voice. Hancock creates surreal western imagery, a Zachariah with an I.Q., as it were, with some of his songs already appearing on albums by J.J. Walker and Joe Ely ("Standing At the Big Hotel," "Suckin' a Big Bottle of Gin"). Set to music quite suitable for Texas-Two-Stepping and doing the Cotton Eyed Joe, a regional stomp, Hancock evokes the cerebral side of cowboy music need not be preachy or lament the Indians.

The hard rock drought that paralleled the country rock boomlet of the past five years has been relieved somewhat, though no club books pure metal acts consistently since Mother Earth burned to the ground last fall. Too Smooth is one of the more interesting and well-known purveyors of jackhammer tactics. A

quartet of Ted Nugent clones that borrow unabashedly from their Midwest piledriving brothers in live performance, they came off sounding more like the Doobie Brothers on their last recording effort, a single for Buddah last year.

If a rocker worthy of national import emerges from Austin soon, odds are it will be one of two groups dredged from the third-eye opening vaults of the now-defunct International Artists label from Houston. The South Texas-bred Bubble Puppy ("Hot Smoke and Sassafras") resurfaced recently almost completely intact (new bass player apparently) having lost neither chromosomes nor killer instinct from their previous day-glo heyday. Throaty belter Rod Prince is in fine form and the new BP material, though taking a slightly melodic tact compared to 10 years ago, could signal an acid rock revival (Prince sez he prefers mescaline now). The darkhorse lurking somewhere down in the bottoms is former 13th Floor Elevator composer/vocalist Roky Erickson. After cutting last year's regional hit, "Two Headed Dog" b/w the Buddy Holly-esque "Starry Eyes" (Mars), Erickson made the familiar Texas-Northern California trek, where he and his band, the Aliens, cut two records produced by Austin-Lubbock guitarist John Reed. Both discs, "Bermuda Triangle" b/w "The Interpreter" on Los Angeles' Rhino label, and a four song EP on Sponge, a French label, were released recently this spring. Erickson on record remains full of mystic undertones and the kind of psychic intrigue previously available only to readers of the *National Tattler* (listen to the words of the not-yet-released "Lizzie Borden"—"Chop, chop, chop your blues away"), which blends in appropriately with the electric autoharp of Tommy Hall's classic electric jug in the Elevators). Sinister lyrics or not, Erickson flat out possesses that rare kind of slash-and-burn inspired vocal delivery that Brit rockers can only fawn upon. Since the first of the year, the Rok's been

back in town and makes numerous unannounced appearances with Doug Sahm's Texas Tornados, who make a decent back-up group for Erickson. Reportedly, a hush-hush album project Roky & the Aliens Sing Buddy & the Crickets is in the works.

Sir Doug himself isn't overtly active these days other than making his customary Soap Creek Saloon gigs and coaching softball. But his influence continues to carry plenty of weight, evidenced by sort of a Tex-Mex subgenre fermenting. One of his *Tejano conjunto* discoveries, psychedelic accordion player Steve Jordan, recently appeared here and refuted everyone's preconception that polkas are for old people. Sahm's pachuco soul connection, San Antonio's El West Side Horns—Rocky Morales, Charlie McBirney, and Luis Bustos—frequently pop up around Austin, working with Sahm, Augie Meyers' Western Head Band, or Texas' first native punk band, El Molino. The Molinos are led by an unlikely gringo who calls himself Hoe Carrasco and constantly wiggles out of control. The band, which includes veterans from an amalgam of historic Austin bands, namely Johnny Oleen, Conqueroo, Shiva's Headband, and Short & the Corvettes, subsists on a Texas Trash diet of 50s standards by the likes of Roy Head, Sunny and the Sunliners, and Jimmy Donley (heavy on the triplets) mixed with a similar bag of originals such as "Rock Esta Noche" and the instantly-dated "Tell Me." By the time you read this, Molino's debut album *Mezcal Road* will be out on Augie Meyer's spunky independent Texas Re-Cord label (catalog from Box 19, Bulverde, Texas 78163).

From somewhere deep in left field, Rhythm 'n' Blues has been storming back into the local picture, which isn't so unnatural considering Jimmy Reed and Ike and Tina are as much a tradition around here as Waylon 'n David Allen Coe ever will be. Most of the action centers downtown at Antone's, a classically macho re-enactment of the Big Oaks and other Texas-Louisiana clubs that once attracted underage teens from

Texas to the underbelly of music back in the '50s. Proper dress means hair combed, shirt tail out, cigarette hanging from lip. Big daddy Clifford Antone frequently books national acts, but the off nights belong to the local white blues bands, the same kind of purist Texas groups that produced Johnny Winter, Steve Miller, and ZZ Top's Billy Gibbons. The better bands included the Silvertones, a jazz-tinged outfit from Ann Arbor; Bill Campbell and the Homewreckers, of whom critic Nick Tosches remarked are far more dedicated and committed than any act he'd ever seen at CBGB's; and the Fabulous Thunderbirds, whose lead player Jimmie Von is the most likely to succeed white blues boy in the state, by virtue of the mojo hand job he puts on his guitar. The T-Birds are everything bad and good about the white blues syndrome. They're not very visually exciting (except when someone inadvertently falls off stage), very little material is original, but at the same time the music is appropriately lowdown enough to please old masters like Muddy Waters and Big Walter Horton (they said so themselves) and jive enough that harp player, Kim Wilson, sports a turban. Jimmie's little brother Steve, shares axe duties with Denny Freeman in probably the most popular of the local R&B bands, Paul Ray and his X-Rated Cobras. The Cobras confirmed blues aren't obscure around Texas by winning 'Band of the Year' honors in the Texas Sun's 1977 Reader's poll, then issuing their first single the jumpy "Other Days" b/w "Texas Clover," another yankee reggae variation. If not an exactly brilliant debut effort, it does avoid the play-all-hits syndrome that plagues any top-notch dance band.

Jazz is even making inroads lately, notably with the progressive-oriented Starcrest, the Jazzmanian Devil, James Polk Quintet, and Natalie Zoe. Typically though, an immigrant band, the Point, is attracting most of the attention. Led by former Hot Lick violinist, Sid Page, and bolstered by a Guatemalan percussion

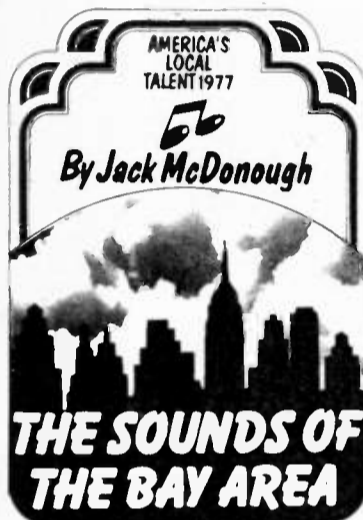
section, they won Jazz Band honors in the Sun poll on the basis of their flowing, Latino drenched improvisations. It's already too late for Austin audiences, however, because the Point swears they're through playing in public until a record contract is signed.

Austin's music community is growing and growing up. It's even learned to laugh at (not with) itself with its very own satirical mob, the Uranium Savages, a 14 piece surf/western band with a parody for everyone from Elvis Presley, Buddy Holly, and Ed McMahon to the renowned Frenchman Moe d'Laun and local deejays. The business end of music is even rearing its head often enough to bust the idyllic Marin Country-inspired bubble that pretended to shield out such realities. It spells a healthy future for Austin. Even if the studios and record companies never arrive, the live music promises to keep those smug looks on the faces of the local folks.

[All the above listed singles are available for \$1.25 plus \$ .75 postage from Inner Sanctum Records, 504 West 24th St., Austin, Texas 78705].

—Joe Nick Patoski

Joe Nick Patoski covers the Texas scene for numerous publications, including Rolling Stone and Country Music Magazine.



Over the past year the fermentation process which usually results in one or two little-known bands moving clearly to the forefront of the local consciousness has slowed down a bit. Mostly it has been a time of consolidation, with the bands listed here last year as most-likely-to-succeed taking the first solid steps in their careers. The club scene has changed also, with the net effect being a lessening in the number of good places for a new band to stretch out.

Of the bands listed as most-likely last year (Carrie Nation, Stoneground, Eddie Money, Yesterday & Today, Obeah, Steve Seskin and Little Roger & the Goosebumps) both Eddie Money and Yesterday & Today have secured contracts. Money has signed with Wolfgang Productions (a new entity of Bill Graham's FM Productions which has contracted to present three new acts per year to Columbia) and is about to begin work in Los Angeles on his initial LP. As a consequence of the signing Eddie took himself off the club circuit for awhile though recently he has been in evidence, with a four-night run at Mabuhay Gardens, in addition to a performance in a one-man play titled *Bakk's Tracks*, which ran for three weeks at the Chi-Chi Theatre on Broadway.

Yesterday & Today, a thunderous metal quartet from Hayward managed by Lou Brame's Spread Eagle Productions, released their first LP on London in the fall and have been touring the Midwest with the Runaways. The album had a strong single, "Alcohol," and generated good initial response, but it will take at least another album before there will be a clear idea whether Y&T can carry nationwide.

Of the other bands mentioned last year, Carrie Nation has dropped out of sight completely; Obeah is heard from little though they still play the West Dakota club regularly; Seskin secured many good college dates through the national talent conventions and was thus able to keep from going bust; and Little Roger and his band are currently working up a stage musical version of "Beyond the Valley of the Dolls," which may turn into the next Dick Bright Show. (Bright and Roger became known to local audiences over a year ago with their takeoff on the Tonight show.)

Stoneground put in a year of very

hard work. After finishing an album for their own Flat Out label in the spring (recorded at CBS with Roy Segal producing) the band established a booking contract with Variety Artists of Minneapolis and spent the entire autumn season on the road playing club dates and college concerts. Since the record was unknown and distributors were cautious, the tour helped.

By any measure, Stoneground is a band that warrants a very close look from the majors. The band has the double female lead that proved so explosively successful over the past year for Fleetwood Mac and Heart—although the two Stoneground vocalists, Annie Sampson and Jo Baker, do not play instruments. The band has a lot of strong original material; they are one of the most favored units on the local club circuit and always reward the fans with fiery performances; the personnel of the band is personable and warm; and most important of all, the band is seasoned. They know how to make records and they know how to hold up under a tough tour. They also happen to know what they want, which may keep some short-sighted companies away.

Tom Fogerty's band Ruby is also worth a good look. Fogerty, of course, was the rhythm guitarist for Creedence Clearwater. After leaving them he did many local gigs with Jerry Garcia and Merl Saunders, recorded three unsuccessful solo albums for Fantasy, and eventually put together this band, which consists of lead guitarist Randy Oda, drummer Bobby Cochran and bassist Anthony Davis. Their first album on the small Los Angeles-based PBR label has just appeared. The sound is dominated by the crisp and open guitar interplay between Fogerty and Oda, and the mix of material is interesting. The strong points here are roughly similar to Stoneground's: black-white mix in personnel and therefore in influences; good band to dance to; stable, experienced players.

Beyond these obvious choices the graph begins to fall off a bit. The punk rock scene in San Francisco has developed significantly over the past year and may be a likely hunting ground. A local paper named *Psychone* has sprung up to chronicle the punk bands and the aforementioned Mabuhay is providing a focal point. The Nuns seem to be generating the most word of mouth and worked as openers for Television's mid-April Boarding House gig. Crime and Kid Courage have also garnered some attention, Crime because of a self-produced 45 they're selling for \$3.50. Other more sophisticated local bands play Mabuhay as well—for example Pegasus, a talented, hard-working, adventuresome and very English-sounding band with a strong Daltryesque front man, Rick Gallaher.

On the funkier/mellow side the Moonlighters and David Grisman Quintet are worth a mention. The Moonlighters consist mainly of people associated with the old Commander Cody band—Bill Kirchen, Bobby Black and George Higginbotham—and have a deal in the works with Amherst, the label that released a David LaFlamme album last year. Vocalist Billy C. Farlow from the Cody band also has his own aggregation together. "The band is awful," opined one local observer, "but Farlow's great."

The Grisman Quintet, fronted by mandolin master Grisman, is a heavy local favorite, even among those not normally enamored of bluegrass or acoustic music. Grisman's credentials are solid: he's done a ton of session work, played in Old & In the Way with Garcia and Vassar Clements, and had his own record on Rounder awhile back. The music has been described as "a conceptual amalgam of bluegrass and jazz that does not actually wed the two sounds."

This would be the appropriate place to mention Jules Broussard, who has developed an enviable reputation among other players in the area and whose band has drawn steady Sunday afternoon crowds for many months at the Sweetwater Tavern in Mill Valley.

The area continues to foster bands who are putting out their own records (mostly 45's recently) and there is a lot of activity going on in garages and smaller studios. Ron Nagle and his partner Scott Free have been very active in their own studio writing and assembling demo songs; Nagle has placed tunes with Pablo Cruise, Sammy Hagar and The Tubes, who have made a trademark out of "Don't Touch Me There." Nagle's work was used as well in the soundtrack effects for "The Exorcist." San Francisco *Chronicle* writer Joel Selvin puts Nagle very high on his should-be-signed list and cites Jack Nitzsche's opinion that Nagle is the most

## Frisco's Club Scene '77: "Less good places for a new band to stretch out this year."



YESTERDAY & TODAY—[L to R] Joe Alves, Leonard Haze, David Meniketti, Phil Kennemore.



STONEGROUND: "The Bay Area's most favored 'unsigned' local club unit today."



"RON NAGLE is the most underrated writer and producer in the business," according to Jack Nitzsche.

underrated writer and producer in the business.

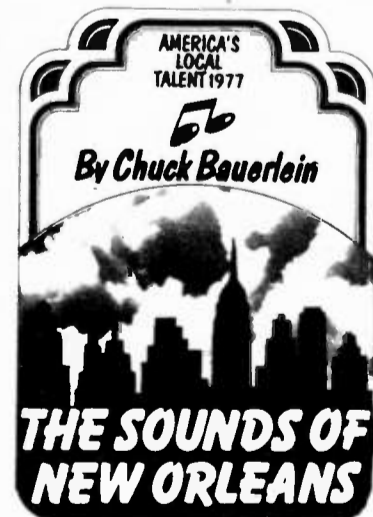
There is also a scene developing around Tweksbury Sound, a new eight-track studio in the East Bay run by Dan Alexander, who has produced singles recently for a group called Prairie Fire and for Dick Wexand, whose "Letta to Loretta" was a takeoff on the Mary Hartman character. Alexander, who also operates the well-respected Guitar Restoration shop in Berkeley specializing in vintage instruments, formerly played guitar with the Rockets, Eddie Money's old band, and has an excellent feel for pop song writing and construction. Chris Solberg, another ex-Rocket most recently with the Shakers, is a regular on the Tweksbury scene.

Another writer who may break out of the demo scene is Bruce Stehens, who wrote "I've Got A Hole In My Soul" as well as "Fillmore Shuffle," just recorded by Sammy Hagar, and who is being touted by several locals with respected

ears. Kent Hausman is yet another writer with a flair, although Hausman's band, SFO, is unstable after a short-lived connection with Thunderpurr, the production company opened here recently by the Nederlanders.

—Jack McDonough

Jack McDonough is San Francisco correspondent for Record World and Performance.



The music of New Orleans has long reflected the richness of cultures that criss-crossed the continents and seas and seemed to find an acceptable wavelength here. But, since the heyday of Fats Domino and subsequent rhythm and blues performers, the problem with the music has not been playing it, but selling it.

Rock and roll historians often point to New Orleans' blacks as having a strong influence on the shape of rock as we know it today. Greats like Fats, Irma Thomas, Chris Kenner, the Neville's and Allen Toussaint produced a sound that guided the early careers of British

teams like Jagger/Richards, Lennon/McCartney and Clapton/Page.

It was a funky, soulful sound that paid careful attention to emotions of the street and the polyrhythmic vibrations those emotions elicited from people. The funk is still here, as evidenced by a recent Mick Jagger quote: "I wish we could play 'Honky Tonk Woman' as well as the Meters." The Stones toured Europe in 1976 and, repaying a loan they borrowed from New Orleans some 15 years ago, they asked the Meters to open their concerts throughout the tour.

The majority of Orleanians, musicians included, continue to look to the coasts with both envy and mistrust. Many feel the city and its music has been severely mistreated in recent years by the record companies, who base their operations in New York and Los Angeles and tell the rest of America what they should be listening to. Sometimes it's hard to argue with neglect.

So, while the national trend has been to neglect the music of New Orleans, local entrepreneurs have taken the affair into their own hands with mixed results. The Crescent City is hardly the musical mecca its reputation enjoyed in the past, but on the other hand, the situation for local artists is better than it has been since the early '60s and its musicians have the talent to make New Orleans the Motown of the '70s.

Allen Toussaint is the one local producer who could write his own ticket in either of the big money markets. But Toussaint is content in New Orleans and seems intent on living here and making his business here. His musical residence, Sea-saint Studio, continues to record local and national talent and serves as a home base for the Meters and Toussaint himself, whose album *Southern Nights* was a pop masterpiece that sold very few copies outside of Louisiana and interested few people until Glen Campbell recorded the title track this year.

If there is one problem with Toussaint it is that no one has yet been able to market his talents or the talents of dozens of musicians he has signed to his studio. Bill Evans, the designer and principal owner of Studio-in-the-Country, a multi-million dollar recording studio in Bogalusa, Louisiana, some 40 miles north of New Orleans, hasn't has that problem. Evans lets the record companies do the marketing.

The past year-and-a-half have been very successful for Evans. His studio has attracted a diverse group of musicians—from Pete Fountain to Willie Nelson to rock classicists Kansas. Kansas' gold album was recorded there and Nelson has two albums in the can, ready for release when Columbia gives its okay. Aside from the most technologically advanced equipment available, Evans boasts acres of undeveloped Louisiana "country," a stable of horses and a crystal clear lake for fishing and swimming. Bands that use his facility have unrequited peace and quiet. He lets Louisiana bands use the recording studio at a discount, and locals Willie Tee, "Gatemouth" Brown and Clifton Chenier have all taken advantage of the offer.

The latter two head a bevy of bands that are immensely popular in France, primarily because of Barclay Records producer, Philippe Rault. Rault has successfully recorded and marketed several local musicians for the French label and they have toured Europe before enthusiastic audiences because of his efforts. Brown is a master musician, known primarily for his swing guitar and cajun fiddlin'. Chenier is the undisputed king of a music indigenous to Louisiana, zydeco. Chenier plays the accordion, hardly your basic rock and roll instrument, but his renditions of rock standards—sung in French—are perfect fare for dancing in the streets, whether they be in gay Paris or the French Quarter. Two of their recent albums were included in Barclay's House of the Blues series, as was a recent record by local rock pianist Roy Byrd, aka Professor Longhair. Longhair is commonly credited among local musicians as being the father of the New Orleans sound—a sound led by cross chorded piano riffs made necessary by Longhair's short fingers. Both Toussaint and Dr. John attribute Byrd as a major influence on their piano styles.

All these and hundreds of other local musicians make their presence felt countless times during the year in local clubs and, most importantly, at the annual Louisiana Jazz and Heritage Festival.

There are multi-talented individuals and bands in the New Orleans area that have a sound and presentation that is destined for commercial success when a lucky break gets tossed their way. The Meters and Allen Toussaint are two less

# New Orleans Hot Local Stars:

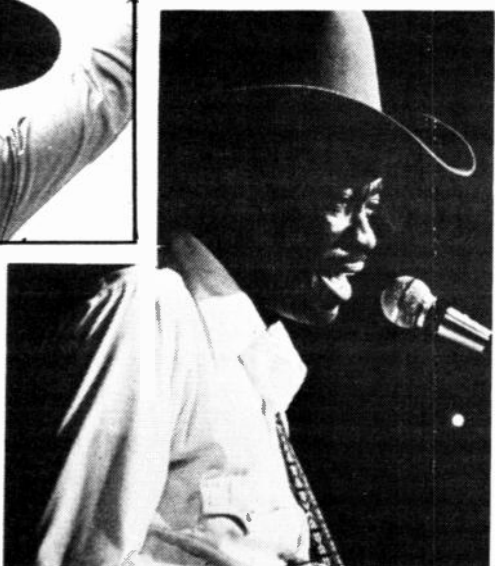
## "We're going to lose some fine musicians to the national audience."



David Richmond



Chuck Bauerlein



**New Orleans future is its heritage [clockwise from left]: JAMES RIVERS, ALLEN TOUSSAINT, CLARENCE 'GATEMOUTH' BROWN, IRMA THOMAS, WILLIE TEE [center].**

fortunate but equally as talented.

Willie Tee is one. Tee wrote and arranged the music for one of the most underrated albums of 1976, *They Call Us Wild* by the wild Magnolias. The Magnolias are an eight man singing group that originated from one of the Mardi Gras Indian tribes who march through the streets of black neighborhoods of New Orleans on Fat Tuesday dressed in splendid Indian costumes. Tee, on synthesizer and piano, supplied the backing for the Indians with his band, the Gators.

Tee also had a very fine debut album on United Artists, *Anticipation*. It was chock full of potential hits, especially a danceable number called "I'd Give It To You," but, unfortunately, the album was released the same week as Stevie Wonder's masterpiece, *Songs in the Key of Life* and Tee's effort got plowed under.

"I tried not to let it get me down," Tee said. "I think my album is every bit as hip as Stevie Wonder's."

One of the city's most diverse musicians is James Rivers. Rivers plays the club circuit in New Orleans and has an underground following here that has supported him for years. His bag of tricks is as varied as anyone's. Known primarily for his sterling saxophone work, Rivers can change gears and play a bluesy harp, the flute with guttural grunts that would make Ian Anderson envious, their synthesizer or, most

incredibly, jazz bagpipes.

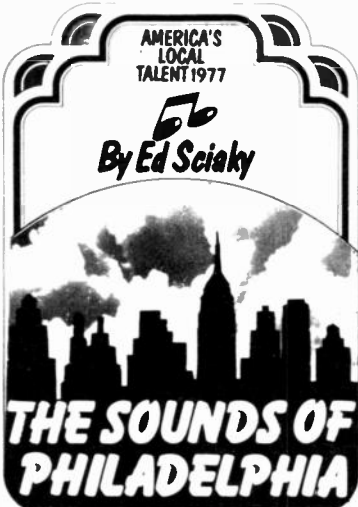
Equally crazy things happen when an electrified cajun band plays in New Orleans. Known as Coteau (French for a "ridge of land" or, if you prefer, a natural high), the band is guaranteed to make you dance. Besides searing guitar licks a la Allman Brothers, Coteau plays an assortment of cajun instruments that give it a unique sound to rock: an electric accordion, a fiddle and a washboard.

The band has drawn standing ovations from festival crowds in Philadelphia, Montreal and Washington, D.C. and at a national Jaycees convention in Indianapolis the conventioners would not let the band quit after playing "only" two hours.

Neither Coteau or James Rivers are under contract to a record label, but both know the essential ingredient to success: motivating an audience. If having an audience screaming for more, standing on their chairs and waving handkerchiefs at the stage is a sign of the time, New Orleans is going to lose some pretty fine musicians to the national audience.

—Chuck Bauerlein

Chuck Bauerlein is a free-lance music writer based in New Orleans.



Philadelphia continues to enjoy the tradition of being a major center of music production and consumption. The city's incredible musical power and importance during the Bandstand/Cameo-Parkway days gave rise to the much-heralded impact of the Philadelphia International/Sigma Sound conglomerate, whose style and techniques, incidentally, in turn greatly influenced the development of our latest local-boys-made-good Daryl Hall & John Oates, who are achieving great success with their synthesis of the city's long-time folk influence and Philly-Soul.

Other Philadelphians who have gone on to some prominence in the rock world are Todd Rundgren, Jesse Colin Young, Jim Croce, Stanley Clarke, the Brecker Brothers, Tim Moore (who's just released a third *Asylum* LP), and Esra Mohawk (who's just released her fourth album, on Private Stock).

I said here last year that our hottest local band for some time had been Johnny's Dance Band. Since then, they've gone on to even greater local fame (gigs, radio, TV), and signed with Windsong. Their first LP, released in March is already a smash here, as the rest of the country begins to take notice.

There are a number of other artists and groups working to refine their craft and build local followings, obviously with an eye toward national recognition.

Last year I also told you about Musica Orbis, a five member group now consisting of David Clark, electric and double basses, voice, vibes, marimba, glockenspiel and piano; Bob Loiselle, electric and grand pianos, organ, guitar and voice; Tom Stephenson, drums, vibes, marimba, percussion, cello and voice; Kitty Brazelton, lead voice, flute, recorder and piano; and Caille Colburn, harp, knee harp, electric and grand pianos and voice. Musica Orbis is a most unusual group, in both instrumentation and musical direction. They've created a wealth of material, alternately blending such forms as classical, folk and jazz into a compelling and enchanting concept. The group has performed here consistently but sparingly, letting their growing legion of fans know in advance when, where, and what they will be performing.

Recently, after getting tired of waiting for a record company to show some interest, the band produced and pressed an album on their own. Titled *To the Listeners*, on their own Longdivity label, the LP represents a remarkable achievement in perseverance, technical quality, and musicianship. Recorded partly at Intermedia Sound in Boston, Lang Concert Hall at Swarthmore (Pa.) College and elsewhere, the album presents several, but not all, facets of the group's music. Side one includes the 14-minute "Fire Opal Sequence," a symphonic piece consisting of three song-segments, and a 6-minute jazz piece called "Cataracts."

The group is selling the first 2500 copies of the album themselves, and is still interested in a major label deal, and deserves one. Musica Orbis and their album are available at: 601 West Lincoln Highway, Exton, Pennsylvania 19341 (\$6).

Alan Mann is a songwriter-performer, who started as a solo artist in 1971, playing in the clubs and cafes of Germany and France. In '72 he formed a band and spent a year playing in Holland. Returning home to Philadelphia in 1973, he began playing solo on the college coffee-house circuit, and eventually formed a new band called A. Mann: Alan on 12-string, Chuck Taylor, bass, and Fred Berman on drums. With this band plus friends Jim Stout on electric guitar and Mark Brown on sax, Alan, like Musica Orbis, decided to make his own album. The result, *Free Arts, Fine Enterprise*, released in December on his own AMDACG label, is a strikingly original collection of songs, and a good recording, too. Musically, Alan figures somewhere in the Dylan-Springsteen connection, (with more of a

nod to Dylan than Bruce ever gave). His performances at area clubs are creating a substantial following for Alan Mann & the Free Arts Band, which, hopefully, along with the LP, will lead to bigger and better things.

Alan can be found at 917 Pine St., Suite 9, Phila. Pa. 19107. The LP is available from AMDACG, 7608 Dicks Ave., Phila. Pa. 19153 (\$5).

Another artist owing a debt to Bob Dylan is Kenn Kweder, a former and sometime folksinger, who with his band the Secret Kidds, has created quite a reputation for his outrageous performances. He first gained notoriety in these parts by plastering literally thousands of posters up all over walls and poles in the area. No one had ever heard of him, yet people began to see these strange posters everywhere: "Reb Barker presents Kenn Kweder and his Secret Kidds on tour" over the famous photo of Jack Ruby shooting Lee Harvey Oswald. The posters created a mystique that the live shows finally capitalized on and added to. Kenn's performances are manic, frantic, sensitive, funny, intense. He credits his influences: lyrics to Dylan, or Paul Simon; delivery to Capt. Beefheart (?), changes to Paul McCartney.

Like Alan Mann, Kenn Kweder spent time in the cafes of Europe, returned home to Philadelphia in 1974, took a day job and played folk clubs at night. In '75, ready to give up, he did some travelling again, and came home determined to form a band, to seek success as a rock artist. He's since become known as a sort of "wildman" of rock and roll, as a result of his crazed performances, but there's much to be impressed with in the music, both the original material and those songs with which Kenn chooses to pay homage to his influences ("Paperback Writer," "Last Train to Clarksburg," among diverse others). Though unrecorded, the band was headlined at Philadelphia's prestigious Bijou Cafe, the Main Point, and countless college dates.

Triton is a five-piece band consisting of John Bush, vocals & guitars, Steve Deptula, keyboards & mellotron, Larry Eubank, bass, David Karr, guitars etc., and Mark Williamson, drums. Triton is a young band, creating original material in the style of English art-rock. They are not a Starcastle-type imitation Yes band, but rather add a quite original dimension to the crowded ranks of the genre. Of course, comparisons are natural, and Triton has been variously and oftentimes favorably likened to Yes, Pink Floyd, Strawbs, Wakeman, King Crimson, ELP, Moody Blues, Barclay James



**Philadelphia Hopefuls:**  
**KAREN BIHARI [at right];**  
**MUSICA ORBIS—(L to R)**  
**Tom Stephenson, Kitty**  
**Brazelton, Caille Colburn,**  
**David Clarke with**  
**WMMR's Ed Sciaky**  
**(center).**  
**At bottom, TRITON.**

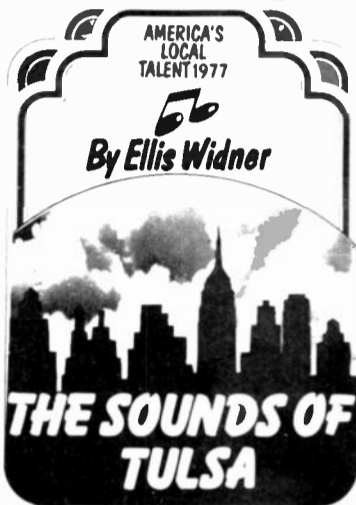


Harvest, Jethro Tull, Genesis, Renaissance, etc.

Triton's founder, David Karr was once a student and is now a teacher of electronic music at Bucks County (Pa.) Community College. Bass-player Eubank composes most of the group's material, along with help from Bush and Karr. They've been building a local following, through regular gigs at area clubs and college concerts, for their quite polished, majestic sound which they call "Fluidics". As yet unrecorded, Triton continue to write and develop. Their address is P.O. Box 9, Langhorne, Pa. 19047.

—Ed Sciahy

Ed Sciahy is a top-rated air personality at WMMR-FM, Philadelphia's leading progressive station.



The Tulsa music tradition is rich with rock and roll, rhythm and blues and country. If one word could be used to describe the Tulsa music community, it would probably be togetherness. At one time or another, nearly everyone has played in a band with nearly everyone else...and yet, there are few hard feelings about all the personnel switches.

The disco phenomenon has taken its toll on clubs available for local musicians. It is getting harder and harder for local musicians to find steady work in Tulsa and many have taken to the road.

The Tulsa community has produced such artists as Leon Russell, David Gates (of Bread), Elvin Bishop, J.J. Cale, and Patti Page. While Russell was one of the principals of Shelter Records, the label had two recording studios in the city.

Tulsans are active in several groups. Eric Clapton works with several—Marcy Levy, Dick Sims, Jamie Oldecker and Sergio Pastora. Levy is now working on a solo album for RSO. Oldecker, who was with Bob Seger in the early seventies, is now on tour with Seger. Rick (Moon) Calhoun is drumming with Rufus. Ann Bell vocalizes with Leon.

The Dwight Twilley Band has gained a lot of attention, particularly on the West Coast, where critics were generally dazzled by the group's first album. Bartlesville native Becky Hobbs has a new album—her second—on Tattoo RCA Records.

One of Tulsa's latest success stories is The Gap Band. A Leon Russell discovery, the group was signed by Shelter and had one album. Now signed to Tattoo-RCA, they have a new album and a single, "Out of the Blue," on the soul charts. The band has worked with Leon Russell and opened a couple of dates for The Rolling Stones.

The country community received a big boost when Roy Clark moved his family and business interests to Tulsa. The Jim Halsey Co., a major country talent and management agency, also has home offices in Tulsa.

Oklahoma City native Alvin Crow leads an extremely promising western swing band. Alvin Crow and the Pleasant Valley Boys have just finished their first album for Polydor.

However, a look at the local community finds these special standouts among a generally very talented group of musicians.

#### MACHO

"Tulsa is tough right now. We wouldn't survive if we didn't travel," says Earl Morse, manager of Macho. Macho plays a highly aggressive, powerful brand of rock and roll. Depending on the tune, they can evoke heavy metal (a la Deep Purple), spacey rock or a tasty acoustic pop tune.

The group tours heavily—particularly Texas, Kansas and Arkansas. They will spend the month of May in Chicago being showcased in nine Windy City rock clubs.

## Tulsa Music Tradition:

# "Rich with rock 'n' roll, rhythm 'n' blues & country."

The band also operates a rock club—The Wharf. They played the club exclusively before they became its owners.

"Tulsa really has a special magic," says Morse. "There are so many quality musicians here."

Macho performs largely original tunes and aspires to a recording contract. "We've been scouted by a couple of labels. We're very hopeful that the Chicago trip results in a recording contract."

In concert, Macho quickly brings a crowd to its feet. They have opened for Charlie Daniels, Gentle Giant, Leslie West and Nitzinger.

#### TURKEY MOUNTAIN TROUBADOURS

In the country field, The Turkey Mountain Troubadours stand tall above the competition. A very popular attraction, the band got its name from Turkey Mountain—a popular "Make-out" parking place in West Tulsa.

It was nearly two years ago TMT played its first gig at a "Battle of the Bands" contest sponsored by KMOD-fm. The prize was a featured opening spot at Cain's Ballroom. The Troubadours won. They've been back several times since, working as an opening act for Dr. Hook, Commander Cody and New Riders of the Purple Sage. They've

also played on "free" weekends for the club.

Turkey Mountain plays a brand of country that is a sort of cross between Commander Cody and Asleep at the Wheel. Whatever it is, it does generate excitement and quickly fills the dance floors wherever the band plays.

#### TONY TWIST, GUS HARDIN & TOGETHER

The latest chapter in the life of Tony Twist, Gus Hardin and Together sounds like a movie script. It is, "The Life and Times of Cherokee Bill."

The producer of the film (which stars Robert Blake, Karen Black and Ben Johnson) flew into Tulsa to scout potential shooting sites. He walked into the Holiday Inn East's VIP lounge and heard the group perform "You and I," one of Tony's original tunes. He liked it so well that he asked Tony, Gus and the group to perform it in the film. Exit Marvin Hamlisch, Paul Williams, et al. Enter Tony and Gus.

Tony, who is Cherokee Indian, is a fine, prolific writer; Gus is a singer with a voice reminiscent of Bonnie Bramlett. The two harmonize well together. Given her choice, Gus would like to sing more blues and R&B. She has an expressive, gutsy voice that is well suited to such material.

With "The Life and Times of

Cherokee Bill" looming big in their future, you can bet Tony and Gus won't be waiting around too long for a contract.

#### SEAGULL

The nucleus of Seagull is Jim Sweeney, Mike Bruce and David Teagarden (formerly of Teagarden and Van Winkle). The band plays an aggressive blend of rock, funk and R&B.

"We travel a five-state area," says Sweeney. "It's hard to maintain a living just working in Tulsa. We work about one to two weeks a month here. It's getting rougher now and I expect we'll hook up with an agency to help us with out of town bookings."

Sweeney, who has played in a number of Tulsa bands, has worked with Ann Bell (now with Leon Russell). "Tulsa has something special," he continues. Bands switch personnel back and forth and there's usually no hard feelings. That is quite consistent with the laid back nature of Tulsa."

David Teagarden is building an eight-track recording studio in his home. "We want to make an album of mostly originals, which we will press & distribute ourselves and hopefully establish Seagull as a recording band in the Midwest...and hopefully, draw a major label's interest."

#### DEBBIE CAMPBELL

When you mention female vocalists in Tulsa, Debbie's name usually surfaces with Marcy Levy, Ann Bell and Gus Hardin. Debbie is a native Texas who settled in Tulsa "because the music climate here is stupendous."

"I work when I want to," says Debbie. She is currently working with Guava, a fluid R&B-jazz band that fluctuates in membership.

Debbie's goal is to "do it all." "I love rock, R&B, country and torchy songs," says Debbie, who is married to Terry Cline, her business manager.

She was signed to Playboy Records, who released several singles. One reached number eleven on MOR charts. "I hated that record," says Debbie. "It wasn't me. I didn't like the song or anything else about the record."

Debbie, who plays electric and acoustic guitar, toured with J.J. Cale last year. "I had a great time and learned a lot, too." J.J.'s producer Audie Ashworth will produce Debbie's next recording session in Nashville later this year. "It's going to be a rock and roll and R&B album," she says.

Debbie's pipes are good and strong. When she sings, people notice...and listen.

#### AND NEXT...

One of the city's bright new prospects is folk-pop singer Rhonda Cunningham. Rhonda, who opened for Leo Kottke at the Tulsa Performing Arts Center recently, accompanies herself on 12-string acoustic guitar. She has a clear, strong voice that can be sweet, gritty or vulnerable. Rhonda is currently performing as a solo act at a small Tulsa club.

—Ellis Widner

Ellis Widner is the Tulsa Tribune's popular music critic.



GRAN MAX: Still Kansas City's triple-threat contender for national acceptance.



Traditionally, Kansas City has not been characterized as a hotbed of local musical talent. Over the years, groups like Brewer and Shipley and the Ozark Mountain Daredevils have achieved considerable popularity and even adopted it as a second home, but few local bands have become household words elsewhere. Over the past few years, however, there have been periods when it seemed as if the local musical community verged on blossoming into a full-blown phenomenon.

Ten years ago, in the height of the days of psychedelia, the music scene was thriving and remarkably well-developed. There were quite a few bands whose engagements at several psychedelic clubs and other outlets were on a rotating basis, and there was also the beginnings of excellent progressive radio to nurture their development. All these factors, you may recall, were relatively widespread in the summer of 1967.

But then, suddenly and inexplicably, the outlets closed, radio changed, the groups disbanded, and a dry spell followed. Only a handful of bands managed to stay together and, due to overexposure, they grew tiresome and boring. There was much more interest in large scale concerts than in promoting local talent. Four or five years ago, an abandoned downtown warehouse district was turned into an entertainment center, with dozens of restaurants and clubs featuring live music. At the same time, intimate concerts in old theaters grew more popular, so there was renewed opportunity for area talent.

About eighteen months ago, we felt the impact of a new wave of local bands maturing. GranMax, one of the first of this wave, had their first album released this year—on the Pacific label, which was begun by their manager, Chris Fritz. The GranMax album was designed with the collector in mind, and was pressed on white vinyl. Although not distributed nationally, GranMax is selling already as far away as Texas. As GranMax transcends the cultural and geographic limitations of being in the heart of the country, as they widen their sphere of influence, they are becoming closely linked to another Chris Fritz extravaganza, Laserama. Laserama is a 45-minute performance to the music of rock classics that even features a genuine hologram. Whenever possible, Laserama will be the opening act for GranMax's brand of heavy metal music.

In an effort to help develop the local music scene, radio station KY-102 recently sponsored the ambitiously titled First Annual Great Midwest Rock Showdown. The groups that made it to the finals were Diamond Jim, Missouri Woodland, Justus, Brisko, and Bluebeard.

Diamond Jim is a five-piece band whose members have supported themselves by music alone for over three years. The members of Diamond Jim grew up hearing mostly country music on the radio, and reflect those influences now as they perform a variety of styles ranging from country to swing. Their tightly-arranged, good-time songs, all with a feel to them, have made Diamond Jim extremely popular in bars, though they have also appeared as opening act for Dave Mason. Diamond Jim have many original compositions, but they also play a generous sampling of other popular songs, and are equally comfortable playing in concert settings or dance environments.

Missouri Woodland is an acoustic duo: each member is a talented songwriter, singer, and guitarist. Though they have proven popular at restaurants, and have appeared widely at clubs, they tend to prefer small concert settings, where the dynamics are more appropriate to the appreciation of their subtleties. Both members have developed unique styles on the guitar, and with the occasional addition of other instruments, their performances are always enjoyable and well-paced.

Justus is a six-piece band of unusually accomplished musicians, falling loosely into the category of jazz with a funky feel. Several members are classically trained, with 10-12 years experience. Besides writing original songs, Justus embrace other artists' material, making it seem their own. Their performances are always marked by a high degree of excitement.

Brisko is a relatively young, four-piece progressive band with great promise. Their songs are often lengthy and complex, weaving lyrical stories that complement their musical movements. Brisko's influences are admittedly English, yet they are committed to performing only original material. With their youth, their enthusiasm, and their dedication, Brisko is definitely a band to watch.

Like Brisko in that they are actually trying to create new art forms, new progressions and extensions of music, Topeka's Bluebeard is a five-piece band together for three years. They too rely exclusively on original material, and their skills as songwriters are becoming stronger through a natural development. They are at times slightly reminiscent of Kansas, who also hail from Topeka. Bluebeard has built much of their reputation on its live show, now opening for many national acts.

—Rick Chafen

Rick Chafen is a contributing editor for Her Majesty's Request.



The energy of a city usually defines its indigenous music. The Twin Cities of Minneapolis and St. Paul are really a big small-town with a laid-back ambience and down-home people. Although two Top 40 hits from the '60s—the Trashmen's "Surfer Bird" and the Castaways' "Liar, Liar"—are probably the biggest records to come out of Bossapolis, the sound that best typifies Twin Cities is traditional acoustic music. (Who remembers folkie Joyce "I Was Discovered by Rod Stewart's manager" Everson's *Crazy Lady* album on Warner Brothers or inactive, pretty-voiced Michael Johnson's *There Is a Breeze* album on Atco?) It was in the Minneapolis coffeehouses that had sprung up in the late '50s and early '60s where Bob Dylan, Koerner, Ray & Clover, Leo Kottke and even David Soul (then Solberg) got their starts.

Coffeehouses still flourish here as probably the most important outlets for original local music, since all but a

# Bossapolis: "The Minneapolis Pop Sound."



**MARK GADDIS: The Twin Cities tepid troubadour of teenage.**

couple of the bars and clubs prescribe cover material. Thus getting noticed by a major record company here is difficult, even though two of the country's largest record distributors—Lieberman Enterprises and Heilicher Brothers/J.L. Marsh—are headquartered here.

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The most talked about performer who best exemplifies the Twin Cities sound is Mark Gaddis, whose locally produced album, *Heart Travels* (Merrimae), received favorable notices in Billboard and Walrus. The 27-year-old folksinger-acoustic guitarist, sings about customary singersonwriter topics—romance and introspection—but Gaddis pulls them off with flair and personality. His songs are tuneful and well-crafted and his attractive voice is an uncommon combination of beauty, strength and emotion.

Gaddis, who financed most of his recording project, set up his own local distribution and handled his own promotion, is about to close a national distribution deal with Ovation Records, a Chicago-based company with a small artist roster.

Meanwhile, Gaddis, who cut his teeth on the local coffeehouse circuit, is performing concerts at colleges throughout the midwest and mideast. He is performing solo, which, in a large hall, somewhat limits the impact of his repertoire of original tunes. "I see a band at some point," Gaddis says. "It's partly a financial thing. You need to be under the wing of a major record company. I really enjoy the loneliness of getting onstage with a guitar, voice and mind. A band sometimes scares me. When it's right...I just want to keep my career building and growing."

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The most unusual group in the Twin Cities is the Wolverines Classic Jazz Orchestra—14 long-hairs dressed in

tuxedos who play note-for-note transcriptions of jazz from the 1920s, 30s and 40s plus a few jazz-related classical works.

The Wolverines play instrumental and dance numbers by such composers as Fletcher Henderson, Django Reinhardt, Igor Stravinsky, and Clarence Williams, and vocal numbers by such singers as Ma Rainey, Billie Holiday and Cab Calloway. The singing is not quite as first-rate as the musicianship, however pony-tailed frontman, banjoist-guitarist Joe Demko, interjects enough levity to make any Wolverines' performance as colorfully entertaining as it is musically rewarding.

"Benny Goodman has expressed an interest in recording the group," reports Wolverines coordinator, 30-year-old reed player Ted Unseth. Without him, I don't think we're anybody to go knocking on record company doors. What I'm learning, though, is that Benny Goodman is going to do all this only when he is good and ready. We're in no position to pressure him."

However, the Wolverines, who recorded their own album on Brandywine Records in 1974, made a trip to the east coast in January to perform before some talent scouts and Vice President Mondale. The group played at the Downing Town Inn near Philadelphia, the Riverboat in New York, where A&R people, representatives of CBS-TV's "60 Minutes" and Norman Mailer showed up, and at an inaugural ball in Washington.

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For the past five years, Willie & the Bumblebees have been limited to performing in a three square-mile area. The Lamont Cranston Band hasn't ventured much farther, either. Neither group has to, they are institutions in Twin Cities bars.



**Below, THE SUICIDE COMMANDOS (Chris Osgood, Steve Almaas, Dave Ahl) perform Eddie Cochran, Ramsey Lewis, Kinks and Yardbirds in succession...their death-wish moniker was inspired by such terminal chemistry.**



"We would like to make a tour of the suburban bars," says Maurice Jacox, saxophonist-flutist and flamboyant sex symbol of the rather motley looking Bees. Jacox, who formerly played with

the Electric Flag, has been around the West Bank—Minneapolis' answer to Haight-Ashbury—almost as long as the Bee's leader, guitarist-bassist Willie Murphy.

Murphy, a rumpled man with scraggly red hair and a long red beard, played with Spider John Koerner on the classic "Runnin', Jumpin' and Standin' Still" (Elektra) in the mid-'60s. Murphy turned down an offer to become a producer at Elektra and stuck around the Twin Cities to form the Bumblebees, who have developed into the area's most inventive band. Their sound is a mix of jazz and R&B filtered through rock-and-roll and the blues. The relaxed yet funky Bees play heartfelt, soul-searching originals, tasty instrumentals and some unusual covers.

The septet backed Bonnie Raitt on her Warner Brothers debut album in 1971, which was recorded in Dave Ray's studio in rural Cushing, Minn.

The Bees recently finished an album featuring such favorites as "Hard-On" and "Spill that Gravy" that Ray has tried in vain to peddle to record companies in Los Angeles. The Bees are contemplating issuing it on Ray's label, Sweet Jane, Ltd., especially since the Lamont Cranston Band reportedly made \$12,000 off its locally produced debut album in 1976.

Cranston is unquestionably the Twin Cities most popular boogie bar band. Electric blues has been the core of the septet's work, however, its album on Shadow Records demonstrates that the road-tested tight Cranston can play swing, rag, soul and blues with equal polish.

"Your blues band per se isn't happening anymore," says Cranston's manager-producer Charlie Campbell. "There's no market for blues. On our next album, the original songs are rock—not blues-oriented."

When Natural Life hit its stride two years ago with Eric Gravatt on drums, the quintet played the most refreshing jazz-rock I'd heard since the original Mahavishnu Orchestra.

"For the first year and a half you had to be there at 8 if you wanted a seat," recalls Mike Elliott, guitarist and

markets, because people want to get laid."

Natural Life has recorded three albums locally and marketed them on its own label, Celebration Records. Elliott has not actively solicited major record companies. "We don't want it (a recording contract) unless we can have total artistic freedom. So we haven't had any nibbles." Ex-Weather Report drummer Gravatt, who had replaced L.A.-bound Bill Berg, got hungry after a while and left Natural Life last year to play with McCoy Tyner. Fortunately, the group was able to attract Paul Lagos, who had drummed with John Mayall and Pure Food and Drug Act.

The five accomplished players in Natural Life can't make ends meet with a group that's on the road only four months a year, so they play with other local jazz outfits and work studio sessions. Elliott performs and records with Atrio, a trio that plays more traditional jazz than Natural Life's "high energy, improvised music in advanced structures." Elliott, 36, also spends about two weeks a month on the road conducting clinics for the Gibson Guitar Co., for which he is a consultant in the research and development department.

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The Suicide Commandos probably have more energy than all of the aforementioned performers combined. Not surprisingly then, the punk rock trio from suburban Minneapolis can't seem to find more than one gig a week in this laid-back market.

Guitarist Chris Osgood is convinced the Commandos can't make it here, so they decided to try to audition at New York's CBGB. Osgood, 22, who makes up for his lack of savoir faire about the music business with his limitless curiosity, enthusiasm and ambition, phoned CBGB manager Hilly Kristal and convinced them the Commandos were "original enough." An audition spot on Memorial Day 1976 was offered.

The Commandos' car broke down on Long Island the day before the gig, so Kristal, who also runs a trucking company, rescued them by sending a van to transport the equipment to the club. "We were so worried about getting the equipment there and wondering if we'd go on at all, that I wasn't that nervous," recalls bassist Steve Almaas.

Tommy Ramone was there in a Minnesota Gophers T-shirt and so were a couple of dozen Commandos fans from the Twin Cities. The group played 15 songs in 50 minutes—renditions of tunes by Eddie Cochran, Ramsey Lewis, Kinks and Yardbirds plus such originals as "Plastic Bullets" and "Beat from Outer Space."

Osgood talked Kristal into another shot. When the Commandos returned to the CBGB in December their high energy, psychic rock EP single—"Emission Control" b/w "Cliche Ole" and "Monster Au Go Go"—was in the jukebox and the Ramones, their manager Danny Fields, and Terry Ork, who managed Television, were in the audience.

The Commandos are back in Minneapolis, getting ready to issue a follow-up single to "Emission Control," which sold its initial pressing of 500 copies through Greg Shaw's Bomp Records and a local headshop.

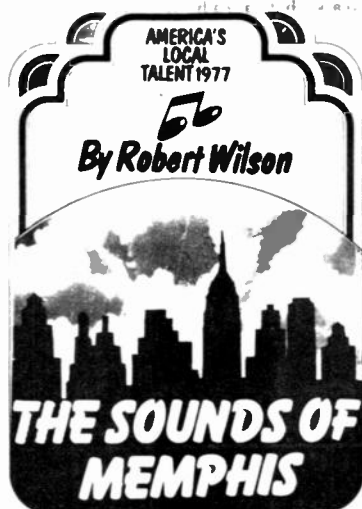
The trio is still hungering for jobs. The Commandos recently played the opening of an art exhibition entitled "Permanent Damage" after being 80-ed by a local bar because all 300 of the band's friends left after its set—the trio's most successful local gig—leaving the headliner without an audience. There seems to be no justice in the Twin Cities for a group that covers songs by the New York Dolls.

—Jon Bream

Jon Bream is music critic of the Minneapolis Star.

## WILLIE & THE BUMBLE BEES





The gentle-but-steady beat of the Mississippi River lapping at the bluffs on which this city was built symbolizes the pulse of a music industry that is as much a part of Memphis' heritage as cotton and Andrew Jackson. For it was this city that effectively gave birth to not one, but two forms of music. Both are still viable, even after a little cosmetic surgery.

The blues sort of migrated to Memphis from the farm fields of West Tennessee and North Mississippi where it was born of the gospel chants and the burden of oppression of indentured blacks of the 19th and early 20th centuries. It searched the South until it found a place to homestead—Beale Street, Memphis, Tenn. Today the blues has taken its rightful place as a true art form, a separate and distinct species of the genus of music.

Though relatively few realize it, Memphis, in addition to giving birth to the blues, also had as much as any other city to do with creating the most celebrated mutation of music since the Gregorian chants. Rock and roll.

That's right. Because it was in Memphis that a prophet in the person of Sam Phillips, who possesses an uncanny ability to spot that intangible "something" that turns ordinary people into stars, found a skinny, greasy-haired kid with the unlikely name of Elvis Presley and made a singer out of him. Phillips had recognized the fact that the public was searching for a new release valve for pent-up revolutionary musical tendencies and he capitalized on it. He, as much as anyone, sold rock and roll to the world. And what a sales staff he had. Presley, Jerry Lee Lewis, Bill Justis, Carl Perkins, Johnny Cash, the list goes on and on.

In more recent years though, Memphis, because of one part of its musical heritage and in spite of another part, has been known as Soul City.

Soul artists in the late-sixties came from all over the country to get "the Memphis sound." The Memphis-based Stax label dwarfed all other recording outfits in the city in terms of stature of artists and records sold. Then came the crunch. By 1974, the Stax empire had entirely collapsed and—sadly—it fell on top of the whole music industry in the city, crushing artists and recording personnel within it.

A faithful few—among them the Phighting Phillips Family—remained to pick up the pieces. The rebuilding began almost immediately, only this time on a much broader and firmer foundation, encompassing more varied forms of music, including country and rhythm and blues in addition to the rock and soul. In a space of two years, the music scene is almost back to what it had been. And the national music moguls are again casting an eye toward Memphis—a Phoenix arising from the ashes of its manuscript paper. And here they come:

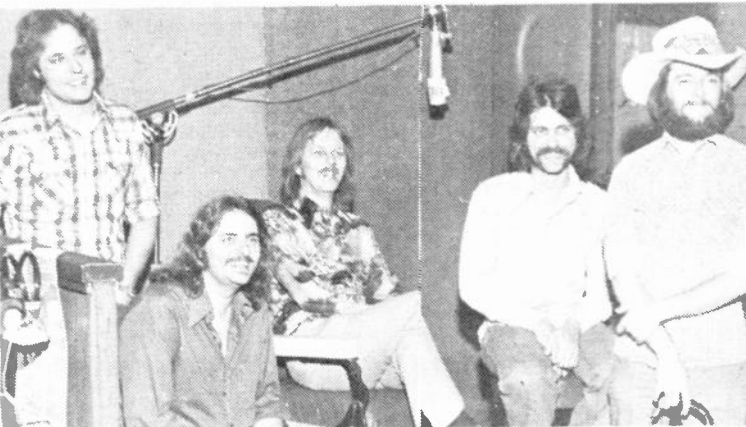
#### THE SILVER CITY BAND

This five-man dynamo is making the very best of the nation's hottest music form at present—progressive country. The group will release its first single in a few months on a CBS label and it looks like pure gold for Silver City.

"The Goodbye Bar and Grill" is a light-hearted-yet-thoughtful yarn that features some terrific instrumental work by guitarist "Delta" Don Singleton and pedal steel player Gene Roush. Vocalizing the sad situation that "every shadow was someone once at the Goodbye Bar and Grill" is Sherrill Parks.

The rest of the group, including bassist Malcolm Gray and drummer Robert "Train Wreck" Morris join in on

## Memphis: The Birthplace of the Blues & the Roots of Rock and Roll, Today.



Shown at top left—THE COON ELDER BAND; top right—SHYLO [L to R] Danny Hogan, Perry York, Ronnie Scaife. Above is Memphis' SILVER CITY BAND—[L to R] Gene Roush, Don Singleton, Malcom Gram, Robert Morris, Sherrill Parks.

backup vocals, producing a rich country-flavored morsel for fans of that musical genre.

In performance, Silver City is a sort of madcap confederation that personifies good-ole-boyism and generally has the crowd on its feet, stomping and clapping a right smart portion of the time.

#### SHYLO

Friends since high school, this troupe has, in the words of Shylo's Danny Hogan, "put together a couple of hundred tunes over the last four years." Shylo has chalked up nine chart successes, mostly by other artists.

The group is now finishing up their second Columbia album, which is loaded with their own material except for a song called "To Be Young and in Love," written for them by Memphis' own Tony Joe "Polk Salad Annie" White.

#### SID SELVIDGE

Just returned from a triumphant stint playing Tramps Cabaret in New York City, Sid Selvidge is on the verge of cuttin' loose with a bluesy blast that should set the music world spinning. Selvidge plays what he calls Appalachian-Delta blues and does it solo.

Memphis nightlife crowds have followed Selvidge closely for a couple of years but now his reputation is gaining boxcar loads of new fans outside the mid-South, as evidenced by the two glowing reviews he received in John Rockwell's column in the New York Times and another by Robert Palmer in Rolling Stone.

"We're working on a new album (his second)," says Selvidge, "but we haven't firmly decided what tunes we want on it."

Actually, it would be his third album if you count the ill-fated one cut by a Stax subsidiary several years ago but which ended up in oblivion. Selvidge, since then, has cut on his own Peabody label "so I can do what I want to." A lot of other people are wanting it too.

In addition to his musical endeavors, Selvidge holds a master's degree—"almost a Ph.D."—in anthropology and until recently taught at a local college, Southwestern at Memphis. But don't try to pin him down on which—music or anthropology—is the vocation or the avocation.

"One is an art and the other is a science," he says, "and I try not to mix them."

#### EDWIN HUBBARD

Here's a mixture for you—a bluegrass flute, Prana music, Edwin Hubbard calls it. Prana, he explains is an Indian Yoga word to describe life force, vitality and consciousness. It's also what he calls his five-piece backup group. Hubbard has just signed with The Rainbow Collection, a New York based management company, the same one that handles Don McLean and Janis Ian. Recording is in the offing, says Hubbard, but he said he doesn't expect to go into the studio right away.

The affable Hubbard is knowledgeable in the field of music, as well he should be, considering he holds a bachelor's and a master's degree in music from Louisiana State University and has "done some work on a doctorate" at North Texas State. His style is a unique combination of bluegrass, jazz and pop with classical overtones. The performance is exactly what Hubbard says he wants it to be—high consciousness level music.

#### THE COON ELDER BRENDA PATTERSON BAND

With a brand new Mercury recording contract in his hot little fist and his first single on the airwaves, Coon Elder and group are just crossing the threshold into the bigtime. They have a hard-drivin' country sound that boggles the mind with its high energy level.

The five-man, one-woman group is part of the dynamic compilation of artists being handled by Memphis' Rick Taylor, whose confidence and indefatigability have been instrumental in bringing Memphis music back to life. He knows talent when he sees it and serves as the catalyst to take it to the world. And that's what he's doing with Elder-Patterson.

None in the group is a stranger to the music business, having played with various local groups for several years. Miss Patterson, in fact, has cut two albums solo but she says she feels more at home with Elder and group.

There are many more talented performers ready to bust loose from the confines of this city's indigenous music scene. These represent just the tip of the proverbial iceberg.

—Robert Wilson



When you mention Cincinnati to someone, certainly a reputation as a rock Mecca is not what comes to mind. Cleveland is thought of as Ohio's only bastion of rock. Nonetheless, things are changing in Cincinnati.

Granted, the town still has a long way to go. Given the area's insular character and stuffy pride in its own history and tradition, it's no wonder that Mark Twain once said (to paraphrase): "If the world were going to end, I'd move to Cincinnati. Things happen there 20 years late."

This is a place that borders on a comfortable secure mediocrity that doesn't drive many musicians, or most creative people living in the area for that matter, to push that hard to get heard. But it's also an area that prides itself on a sense of good taste—no matter that it may be dated.

The musicians and the radio stations in this area tend to favor an easier-listening side of rock, or electric jazz. But given that this is an older city, at a pivotal point between the north and south, there are a lot of traditional musical sources that local musicians draw on and the audiences favor. Bluegrass, the roots of modern soul, and the blues have come from Cincinnati.

All this music—particularly a history of now famous musicians who made Cincinnati a resting place—affects and influences the direction of local music. The black bands especially can model themselves after the success of the Isley Brothers, Phillippe Wynne of the Spinners and Bootsy Collins, who have been associated with the area.

This history is important to bands in the area and their success, because so much of the people playing in the area and on their way to success have been veterans of one well-known local favorite or another. Incestuous pairings occur. Members of Pure Prairie League, now the area's most prominent national group, have performed with people now at work in different bands likely to succeed. And Craig Fuller, originator of PPL and writer of "Ame," plus participant in American Flyer (with Doug Yule, Steve Katz and Eric Kaz), continues to work with many local scene vets, particularly Mike Wheeler and Mickey Foellger.

This condition has led to a lot of intertwined local history and the lack of fresh blood. But it also produces musicians and bands that, when ready, can be super-refined.

One group motivated in this way is Wheels. Virtuosity and experience in the down-falls of regional acts characterizes the group's history. Lead guitarist/singer/pianist Mike Wheeler has come close several times (with Whale Feathers and the Mike Reid Band) yet has been frustrated by one pitfall or another. Drummer Mickey Foellger has worked with the Apple Butter Band (formed by Dan Morgan, whose friendship with the Beach Boys almost brought them a major contract) and a mid-60's pop group—New Lime—that made some noise on the charts. Slide guitarist-pedal steel player Jeff Seeman, plus bassist and singer Mike Baney have been members of groups whose membership has interacted with the other groups of the local quasi-country-boogie-rock spectrum.

As a basic label for this band's sound and it's place in local history, identifying Wheels this way is appropriate. But, given this early stage in the group's development, Wheels may emerge as Cincinnati's answer to the Southern California sound, achieving the recognition of a Little Feat or possibly the broader reach of an Allman Brothers Band.

—Brad Balfour

Next to Wheels, Southwind is the most talked about quasi-country rock outfit around, but is much more. They can be tough, with Mike Jones on lead guitar, or soft with Rick Fox's flute. The band is also participating in the development of a major 24 track studio (Forum Recording Studio) where both Southwind and Wheels will record.

Other contenders with a good shot at success in the country-rock/boogie spectrum are Carefree Day and Bill Bartlett's new band. Bartlett was once a loyal legend with Cincinnati's acid band that made good, The Lemon Pipers, and almost made it again with a tune called "Black Betty." It featured his searing guitar and was immediately recognizable.

Carefree Day is a carefully designed soft-rock band. Very smooth and appealing, they have very commercially adept songs, that as of yet don't bowl me over. But they too have been more at work in their studio rather than featuring new material in clubs.

At the other end of the rock spectrum, more acoustically inclined on his baby grand piano and rich baritone voice is former Bengal football player, Mike Reid. He sounds like Elton John with balls, yet uses a disarming sensitivity and humor that makes him as much an entertainer as musician. Having left big-league football (as a tackle) to become a bar musician is intriguing and his chances at securing a record contract are likely.

One other group that surprised a lot of people with a smart pop sound with a version of Fleetwood Mac's "Silverheels" is Blaze.

Cincy bands are divided into two communities. The country-rockers define the local, say, musical sub-culture, while the commercial hard-rock copy bands—once a gigging at Reflections (now a disco) and now at Alexander's—tend to appear and disappear. Blaze seems to have a lasting power and has been signed in a production deal with Sweet City Records out of Cleveland.

Less apparent, and less rooted locally is Toledo's Raisin Band. But, considering the strong local following and the fact that the group's management is based here, this act deserves a secondary mention behind Blaze as "regional rock copy band most likely to succeed." If no other reason than lead guitarist Rob Fetters' slashing guitar attacks can put the Joe Perrys and Ace Frehleys to shame, Raisin have a good shot at a recording contract. Their Todd Rundgren styled pop tunes are most worthy.

There is an even more down-home country rock scene here represented by bands Coyote and Calico Rose and The Corryville Cowboys. They both have their following, assets and deficits, but Coyote has recently gained the edge aesthetically with the addition of fiddlist Paul Patterson.

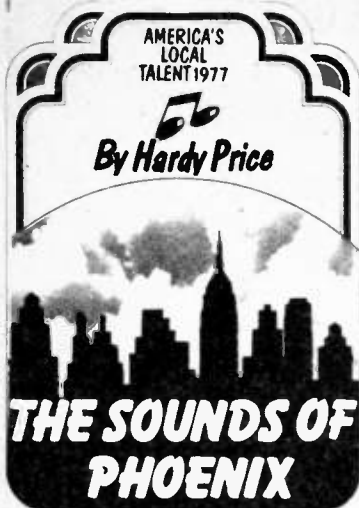
Some vestige of punk rock is vaguely connected to Cincinnati through Nelson Slater, and the Roogolaters. Slater, a one-time Cincy resident whose formative musical years took place here, was a college friend of Lou Reed's who produced his debut album. The album featured two local musicians who have since formed a semi-punk band of their own. The Roogolaters includes Cincy boys who ventured to England to be punks and have produced a single on the Stiff label.

With the new studios cropping up and a producer like Pete Carr (famed Muscle Shoals session guitarist) taking an interest in local talent such as Mike Reid, the chances for a flurry of activity is likely. Cult guitarist Sandy Nassan still calls Cincinnati home (he's been in limbo since the days of his album on Herbie Mann's Embryo label). And Jay Bolotin, a singer/songwriter who is acclaimed by such people as Kris Kristofferson makes excursions from his home in Kentucky to perform here. Jazz guitarist Cal Collins performs with Benny Goodman and backs-up a much unheralded jazz singer Mark Murphy—who nearly makes the area his second home.

Talent filters through the Cincinnati area and too often right back out in search of success. But conditions seem to be changing. Even the influx of discos is at a standstill.

Rock and roll runs in cycles, and maybe it is Cincinnati's time again.

Brad Balfour writes about music and pop culture for the Cincinnati Post.



The sound of Phoenix is rooted in the land. It's a tough unforgiving land, hot in the summer cold at times in the winter; but always demanding. Despite the trappings of a metropolitan population of a million and a half and a great number of newcomers from back East, Phoenix remains a decidedly Western town, as does its music.

The area has spawned such country-western talents as Buck Owens and Marty Robbins. Waylon Jennings, back before his "outlaw" days, and following his stint with Buddy Holly, called Phoenix home, working on a local radio station and singing in a country band on the weekends. Phoenix also gave birth to Alice Cooper and the Tubes.

The Phoenix area is filled with lounges, many of them connected to expensive winter resorts. The talent is hardly ever big name, or local. The bands, mostly imported lounge acts from Las Vegas, and of late a number from the Pacific Northwest, are the two dance set, one show set kind. It's as if lounge owners and managers have a set of guidelines to go by. Every group seems to have a 50's set, to please the "Happy Days" crowds. The music is contemporary cover versions of top 40 hits and standards. Original material is almost nonexistent, as if managers say, "People don't dance to original music and people who don't dance, don't drink."

Jazz is here, but in small doses and upon closer inspection, most of the so-called jazz is little more than uptempo arrangements of standard tunes. Such talents as veteran pianist Buddy Weed and new talents like keyboardist-composer Harvey Truitt and singer Margo Reed are winning new converts and breaking new ground, but not at a speed to write home about.

The disco scene was the hottest thing going only a year ago. Now, however, discos are seemingly going the way of all fads. Clubs that once made a fuss about switching to disco systems are quietly returning to a program of live music, particularly on the weekends. The few strong discos remain that, but their popularity is only a shadow of what it once was.

At the present time, the Phoenix sound, the sound that is produced by local musicians, playing in local clubs, is dominated by the traditional western flavor mentioned earlier but with the added elements of Willie Nelson-Waylon Jennings and bluegrass string bands. That may be a strange combination, but it's one that works for the Normal Brothers, quite possibly the most popular local band, playing to strong followings the last four years. Last summer found the group playing in Colorado, Wyoming and Montana.

"It's a mixture of bluegrass with a dose of country rock and straight country," said one of the Brothers (who are not actually brothers) in discussing the music. "We found that by playing more danceable music that more people would come than when we tried to play a concert type gig. We also found out we could make a living that way."

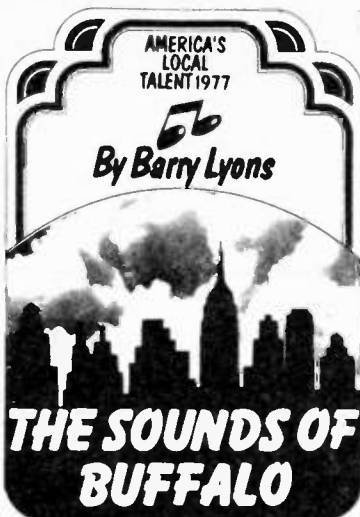
The Brothers' music relies heavily on string band sounds, but hipped with a strong bass beat that pushes the danceability of the music.

Other bands of the same genre enjoying success includes Yesterday's Wine, a six-piece group out of the Willie Waylon and Michael Murphey mold, featuring a pair of lead singers from Fort Worth, Tex.

Grand Junction is a five-piece string band, sounding much like the Normal Brothers, while Nitehawk Diner, also a five-piece band, leans more toward soft country rock with a dash of Marshall Tucker and the Eagles. Jousha Stone, also a five-piece band, hits the bluegrass sound hard.

—Hardy Price

## Buffalo: "A good place for musicians to be from."



Despite rumors of a mass-exodus from the city after this year's nauseating winter, rock 'n' roll still exists in Buffalo. Unfortunately, though, the city has seen little change in its reputation as a good place for musicians to be from, rather than in. Through the years, Buffalo has given the world people like Gary Mallaber—currently drumming for the Steve Miller Band; Eric Andersen; Jim Ralston—drummer and guitarist in David LaFlamme's new group and many others. All these people found real success only after leaving Buffalo, however. To a large degree, the fault lies with Buffalo's music audience, which continues to remain steadfastly indifferent to, and non-supportive of, any creativity or originality in its local acts. Buffalo's rock 'n' roll bar scene, though, remains alive and active. On any given night, you can generally hear well-executed, professional-sounding rock 'n' roll emanating from places like the Poorhouse, McVan's, the Belle Star, the Bona Vista, the Fat Cat, the Barrell Head, and quite a few others. The technical level of the musicianship is generally high, and many of the groups are incorporating the latest techno-flash developments in smoke bombs, explosions, flares, lights, etc. But it's a very insulated scene—the crowds are out to party, and they want to hear music that's familiar—so the bands generally stick to FM-rock faves, with repertoires being drawn from groups like the Tubes, Robin Trower, Deep Purple, Kiss, Aerosmith (at least no one has ever accused Buffalo of not liking its rock 'n' roll hot 'n' heavy). Allman Brothers, Montrose—you get the picture.

Probably the most accomplished band of this type in the area, is a power trio called Talas. All three musicians have an ample arsenal of licks at their command, and I've seen their renditions of songs like "Rock the Nation" and "White Punks on Dope" drive a crowd wild. But the occasional original is generally greeted by numbing indifference. Another group, Rasputin, has even gone so far as to cop Kiss's entire show—costumes, make-up, theatrics, and all, with only minor variations. Crowds at the clubs love it—but musically, it's a dead-end street. Sort of like the mid-60's concept of the Juke-Box band (doing 96 Tears, Gloria, etc.) infused by FM-radio and 70's rock.

The most promising group in the area right now seems to be an outfit called Cock Robin. Their musicianship is excellent, and they've been able to successfully inject some original songs into their sets. The group has a long way to go—especially in developing some strong original material, which is crucial if they're ever going to take that big step from local bar act to national recording stars. But they've been making steady progress over the past 18 months, and the potential is there. The group cut some sides several months back, with ex-Tremelo Chip Hawkes, producing. Their first serious attempt at recording produced some interesting efforts, including versions of "I Fought the Law" and April Wine's "Tonight is a Wonderful Time (to fall in love)," along with several originals. The project was never completely finished, but it gave the group some much-needed studio experience.

Hardy Price is music critic for the Arizona Republican Gazette.

Perhaps the most interesting local music I've heard in Buffalo, has come from a group called Blade. Built around the writing talents of Bill Torrico and Lou Rera, the group has never appeared live in the area—in fact, they've never appeared live anywhere. The reason? They refuse to play other's material, and won't compromise their own material to accommodate the bar audiences. They've already won three honorable mentions in the American Song Festival, and landed a publishing deal with Peer/Southern. They've prepared two demo tapes of their material which is generally excellent. Blade write first-rate pop songs, with great emphasis placed on the vocal harmonies and catchy hooks throughout. They certainly seem to have all the right influences—listening to the tapes one can hear traces of Lennon/McCartney, Badfinger, Hollies, Beach Boys, Goffin/King, Mann/Weil, and others who have made the three-minute pop rock song the premiere musical expression of the last 25 years. Most important, their initial tapes reflect a painstaking care about their music—the songs have obviously been carefully structured and re-defined until virtually no excesses remain.

The other important musical news out of Buffalo concerns the development of Amherst Records. One of the very few labels with strong national distribution not based in New York, Los Angeles, Chicago, or San Francisco, Amherst has grown considerable over the past year and a half. Artists currently with the label, include David LaFlamme, (led it's A Beautiful Day to near-legendary status in the early '70s) Bat McGrath, one of the very few singer/songwriters whose work is infused with a sense of humor. The label has also signed the Moonlighters, a Bay-area group built around the nucleus of Commander Cody's Lost Planet Airmen (Billy Kirchen, Bobby Black, and Rick Higgenbotham). The most recent signing to the label is Jackie DeShannon, certainly one of pop music's most important mainstays.

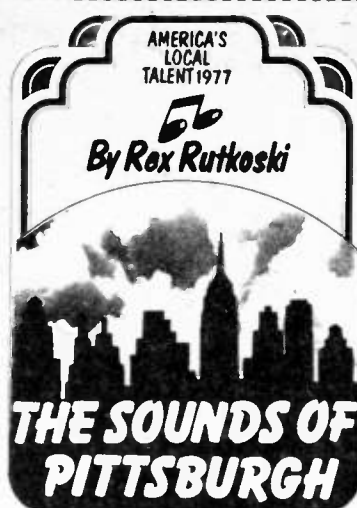
Equally important, is the label's distribution arrangement with British-based DJM (Dick James Music) Records. Thru DJM, Amherst has access to major American acts, like Johnny "Guitar" Watson, and Papa John Creach, as well as a wealth of British rock talent. In the latter category are ex-Fleetwood Mac guitarist Danny Kirwan (with two solo albums out, the second just recently released), Horslips, Amazing Blondel, and the Tremeloes (whose *Shiner* album was one of the undiscovered gems of 1976, and an absolute must for fans of British pop/rock). Despite considerable early skepticism in the industry about running a successful label from Buffalo, the company has enjoyed considerable success over the past year, and is establishing itself nationally as an important new company. Amherst's "roots", incidentally, lie in independent distribution, much like Miami-based TK.

So, despite the fact that a major group has yet to "emerge" from Buffalo, things are happening. If the audience in the city's bars and clubs ever decide to support originality and recognize the creativity inherent in the various local bands, Buffalo could be in for a real musical renaissance. The talent is here, and so are the places to play. Here's hoping 1977 is the year it starts to happen.

—Barry Lyons

Barry Lyons is president of Buffalo-based Amherst Records.

Allegheny County's local talent quotient runs the pop gamut...Shown above, Pittsburgh's perennial 'acoustic' favorites, GRAVEL...And, still dazzling the locals—after nearly two decades—JIMMY BEAUMONT & THE SKYLINERS [bottom left] co-exist comfortably in this same pop realm which rabidly encourages the 'pop-chic' of DIAMOND RIO [below right]. The Pittsburgh pop-ulation is 'rock democracy' personified.



Though 1975 predictions that Pittsburgh was on the verge of becoming "a monstrous music city" were perhaps a bit premature, the town remains a growing threat. The city of three rivers has developed into one of the leading music regions in the nation, regularly appearing on *Billboard Magazine's* weekly listing of the top concert grossers in the U.S.

Local audiences have given early and strong support to such artists as Charlie Daniels, Kansas, Gino Vannelli, Michael Franks, Kenny Rankin, David Sanborn, Foghat and BTO. And, there is indeed a wealth of local talent at least as competent as anywhere else in the nation.

Joe Kelly, director of PMM, a non-profit organization designed to promote Pittsburgh and its musicians, believes the recent success of Pittsburgh native George Benson is an inspiration to local talent.

Kelly: "I think Benson is a great influence on the players here. He's their hero. George played a local club for weeks and weeks. Local musicians would say, 'Benson's here again. When's he going to make it?' Since he did, they identify with him. They can say, 'Hey, it's (success) not that far away.'"

Any survey of Pittsburgh's quality acts would have to include such groups as Gravel and the Rhythm Kings, long two of the city's finest bands; the classic vocal quartet, the Skyliners, a factor in the city's soft rock circles since soaring to national prominence in the '50s; D.C., a group that has been together less than

two years, but already has built a reputation for its first-rate blends of rock, country and jazz, and King Solomon, another relatively new band whose fusion of funk, jazz and older rhythm and blues drew raves from David Sanborn when he jammed with them last November after a show in Pittsburgh.

Street-oriented rock and roll band, Diamond Reo, previewed in this magazine in 1974, still is on the verge of big things after a debut album on Big Tree, an LP on Buddah and a second album on Buddah due in June. Says Joe Kelly: "Diamond Reo will do it on the next release. Individually, the musicianship is too good to try to make it on a punk rock basis. It seems they are being marketed as such when they should be marketed more as a classy hard rock band like Aerosmith or Foghat."

More than 5,000 responses were received in the PMM pop and jazz poll for 1976. The Pittsburgh music audience selected D.C. "best country-rock band," named Beach the premier harmonic player in the city, and another member of the band, D.C. Fitzgerald, as the top acoustic guitarist.

Beach also plays flute and saxophone. In addition to Beach and Fitzgerald, the quartet includes Rick Lacy, electric guitar and mandolin, and Jack Schultz, bass. Everyone sings. Lacy and Fitzgerald do the band's writing. All experienced musicians, the members range in age from 27 to 31.

Also making a strong individual and collective showing in the PMM pop and jazz poll was King Solomon. The sextet placed second in the jazz group category, and drummer Howard Bennett captured second in the "jazz drummer" classification. Debbie Asbury, the group's only female, was named number one female vocalist in Pittsburgh. Bassist Skinny Bishop was voted the number two bassist in the city.

Other members of King Solomon include Kenny Blake, who has done session work for Sha Na Na, saxophone and vocals. Bennett also sings. The age span is 20 to 39. Stag, Blake and Melega have been doing the bulk of the writing.

Serving is a heady mix of rhythm and blues and funk are the Rhythm Kings, about whom PMM director Joe Kelly glows: "They play rings around Bruce Springsteen's E Street Band. Springsteen hypnotizes everybody and you don't really listen to the band. The Rhythm Kings outclass the E Street Band by a mile."

## Pittsburgh Pop Predictions "Perhaps a bit premature."



The group is: Archie Ashe, lead singer; Russ Scanlon, bass; Larry Scott, drums; Fred Delu, keyboards; Henry "Lazy Henry" Reid, lead guitar; and the horns: John Hogue, baritone, Van Crozier, alto, Chris Patarini, tenor and Ed Jonnet, tenor.

A few weeks ago the band played before 5,000 at the Seven Springs Ski Resort in Southwestern Pennsylvania, receiving three encores. They have toured with Roy Buchanan and opened for him at Carnegie Hall, New York City, and have somewhat of a following in Washington D.C. Their live sets are comprised of about 50 percent original material.

The faith of the people, according to singer-writer-pianist Bob Corbin, has kept Gravel an entity for the past seven years. "We've gone through some bad times and record deals, but no matter what happened there always was enough people that believed in us," he adds.

One of those believers is respected freelance writer Dave Goodrich, who reports, "As far as original material goes, Gravel is as good or better than the Eagles and Creedence. Corbin is an incredible songwriter. The band is outstanding. You can feel the music. It's music as it should be, no over amplification—outstanding lyrics and good country-rock and rock and roll."

In addition to Corbin, Gravel currently is: Dave Hanner, guitar and lead vocals; Kip Paxton, bass, brother of Los Angeles studio musician Larry Paxton; Dave Freeland, drums.

Corbin received honorable mentions for two of his entries in the 1975 American Song Festival. The songs were: "Livin' the Good Life" and "I Don't Mind."

The Skyliners are a Pittsburgh legend that aren't living in the past.

The Rolling Stone illustrated History of Rock and Roll, published by Random House, offers this historical note:

"In 1959, a record from Pittsburgh pointed the way to the future. 'Since I Don't Have You' by the Skyliners was one of the first hits that managed to capture the street-corner aura while expanding the horizons of the music with relatively sophisticated harmony, and an elaborately orchestrated production which for a change supported the singers rather than fighting them. Phil Spector, then just getting his producing feet wet with the Teddy Bears, has cited 'Since I Don't Have You' as a major inspiration."

The group, still with original lead singer Jimmy Beaumont and vocalist Janet Vogel, are making another try for widespread recognition.

The Skyliners' forte is smooth and powerful lead vocals with strong support harmonies. They have fused their established sound with a contemporary approach.

The newest members of the Skyliners are Jimmy Ross, for 11 years an original member and lead singer of Pittsburgh's Jaggerz ("The Rapper"), and bass vocalist Bobby Sholes, who was a member of Beaumont's group during a period when the Skyliners were inactive.

To date, "Since I Don't Have You," the lyrics for which were penned by the group's manager, Joe Rock, has sold four million copies. The record was in the national "Top 100" charts for almost five months. It has been recorded by 77 acts, including The Four Seasons, Rick Nelson and Barbra Streisand, and was one of the songs used in the film, "American Graffiti."

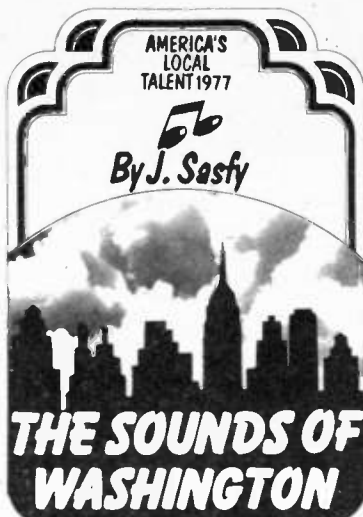
The Pittsburgh music market's heritage is not unimpressive, having produced such home talent as the Skyliners, Jaggerz, Lettermen, Richard Nader, Bobby Vinton, Lou Christie, Perry Como, Henry Mancini, Mervin and Melvin Seals (authors of "Could It Be I'm Falling In Love"), Billy Cox (former bassist for Jimi Hendrix), Eric Andersen, Lena Horne, the Vogues, Ahmed Jamal, Errol Garner, Stanley Turrentine, Billy Eckstine, the Del Vikings, Four Coins, Marcella, Chuck Jackson, Churchill Kohlman (author of "Cry"), the Stereos, Dakota Staton and Billy May.

Joe Rock, a strong supporter of Pittsburgh, offers an optimistic summation of the market:

"You don't have to apologize for the music that came out of this city. When you have contributed everything from 'Blue Moon' to 'Misty,' I think you did something."

—Rex Rutkoski

Rex Rutkoski is a reporter and music columnist for the Valley News Dispatch in suburban Pittsburgh.



Washington D.C. has been a rock cultural adolescent for so long that it is just now beginning to resolve some of the self-perception problems that accompany even a gently burgeoning rock scene. Not unlike a 14-year-old trapped in the high school gym with a crowd of jocks who sport abnormally advanced bushes of pubic hair, the D.C. rock scene is not sure what's going to be there, if anything, when it pulls its pants down.

With no handy characterization (like punk, art, redneck, acid, etc.), the Washington rock scene may have a hard time identifying itself short of being the sum of its best bands. A blasé attitude on the part of the dailies (the *Washington Post* and *Star-News*) has contributed to the false notion that there isn't much significant local rock. Local rock has been dwarfed by the greater media value of high culture (the Kennedy Center renaissance) and national politics (which are local in D.C.), and the social life surrounding their conduct. In the bureaucratic netherworld of Washington, discussions of who's seen with who and doing what are most likely to involve people like Henry Kissinger or Carl Bernstein. Rock makes the news when Bianca Jagger visits the White House or Jack Ford visits Peter Frampton.

Things are turning around, though. In the last few years enough name artists (Nils Lofgren, Roy Buchanan, Emmylou Harris, the Starland Vocal Band) have made it out of the Washington area to give it validity as a meaningful first step towards national attention. Hard rock bands that have made it out of Washington or are composed mostly of Washingtonians include the Pep Boys (AM), Artful Dodger (Columbia), Angel (Casablanca), and Bux (Capitol). Recently, Happy the Man signed with Arista and released their first album of technically-precise space rock. Walter Egan, ex-member of D.C.'s Sawegorth, has come out of nowhere to find the promised land of Columbia Records. His recently released, *Fundamental Roll*, is getting a big commercial shove, a hype totally in tune with the brand of lightweight and catchy California pop that Egan has created. And Jimmy Nalls, ex-guitarist for D.C. Dog, has landed a spot in Sea Level, the Allman Bros. spinoff.

Media problems for local rock are resolving themselves. TV and radio have been full of local bands in the last few months and the rapidly growing music paper—*The Unicorn Times*—is giving these bands the intensive coverage they deserve.

The Southern character of the area is reinforced by the fact that Washington is the bluegrass capital of the world. The Seldom Scene, the Country Gentlemen, and the Bluegrass Cardinals—easily three of the best bluegrass bands in America—are centered around Washington. Clubs like the Birchmere in Arlington and the Red Fox Inn in Bethesda offer a steady diet of these and other top local and national bluegrass bands. There is a Southern attitude that flavors the local rock scene. Most local bands possess a casual and unassuming air that is miles apart from the vigorous hipness and fashion consciousness of N.Y.C. and L.A. Most everybody wants to make it and works hard at making it, but no one is shoving to get in the right place at the right time. The acts below haven't hit the time or place yet, but they have made local waves, have found their audiences, and (in one way or another) deserve national attention. Some will get it.

#### THE ROSSLYN MOUNTAIN BOYS

My choice for most likely to succeed is the Rosslyn Mountain Boys, a five-man country-rock outfit that is Washington's most special and original musical

# D.C. Rock Awareness? "Washington has been a (rock) cultural adolescent for so long..."

resource. The Boys, who are gifted with two of the area's finest songwriters—Tommy Hannum and Joe Tripplett, can run the musical and emotional gamut from tortured C&W ballads (like Conway Twitty's "It's Only Make Believe") to outraged rockabilly (led by the super-charged drumming of Bob Berberich, ex-Grin member). If there's one thing that has consistently set the Rosslyn Mountain Boys apart from the pack of local bands who ply their trade in the D.C. and suburban bars, it is the emotional credibility of their music.

Because they are the area's finest songwriters, their first album *The Rosslyn Mountain Boys* (Adelphi), is easily the best album yet released by a local group. It has achieved considerable local airplay and sales.

The center of the musical and visual panorama that the Rosslyn Mountain Boys unfold each night is Joe Tripplett, who writes most of their songs and sings with a countrified voice that has enough rawness and edge to easily cross into rockabilly, straight rock, or R&B (sort of a cross between George Jones and John Fogerty). With a stage presence and vocal style that are the most captivating of any performer in the D.C. area, Tripplett acts out a nightly drama of cheating women, perplexed lovers, juiced rednecks, tired truckers, and stifled lust that would leave Mary Hartman envious. The wonder is that this panoply of feelings and characters never loses credence. Tripplett's magic, like those before him in C&W, is to subvert sophistication and cynicism with the obviousness and credibility of his feelings. And he does it.

#### THE NIGHTHAWKS

The most popular band in Washington and the one most responsible for giving identity and credence to the local scene is the Nighthawks. The Hawks have taken the old Chicago blues-cum-rock schtick, pumped it full of perspiration and determination, and created the most danceable rock in Washington. Though devoted to electric blues, the Nighthawks aren't purists. Like the J. Geils Band, the Nighthawks are concerned with rocking and rolling the blues, getting people on the dance floor, and blowin' the night away. They are led by a lead singer, harpist Mark Wenner who sports a greasy hairdo, muscles covered by tattoos, an earring, and dirty clothes; he looks mean, but the band plays a mean brand of blues so it all fits. The Nighthawks' most recent album, *Live at the Psyche Delly* (Adelphi), received some national attention, but hardly enough. Kicking off with "Jailhouse Rock" and "Hound Dog" and running through a good variety of blues and R&B, the album is full of the 'rockin' fury characterizing the Hawks' style of blues boogie and jamming.

The Nighthawks have served as hosts for a number of blues nights at the Bayou in Georgetown that have featured them playing with bluesmen like Otis Rush, Albert King, Fenton Robinson, and J.B. Hutto. Additionally, they have helped make Washington a home away from home for popular, white R&B bands like Powerhouse (Boston), the Rhythm Kings (Pittsburgh), and the Fabulous Thunderbirds (Austin). On a recent night at the Bayou, the Hawks had 1100 fans packed in when they turned the stage over (with true Southern Hospitality) to Joe Tripplett, lead singer of the Rosslyn Mountain Boys. With the Hawks backing him, Tripplett ripped through "Be Bop a Lula" and "Great Balls of Fire"—sparks flew, pandemonium broke loose, and maybe the local rock scene came of age. In short, the Nighthawks have brought the blues, alive and sweating, to Washington.

#### BILL HOLLAND & RENT'S DUE

Bill Holland has his limits—his voice is low-keyed and rough, his songs don't immediately grab you by the eardrums, his lyrics deal with a constrained and personal universe—but he is probably Washington's finest singer-songwriter because, within these limits, Holland has

staked out an engaging brand of R&B soul, and street philosophy that doesn't demand attention so much as seduce it. His one album, *If It Ain't One Thing...* (Adelphi) renders Holland as satirical ("Dear George Washington"), cynical ("Got to Get You Off My Mind") and joyful ("Do the Mambo") in musical styles that suggest of Van Morrison, Mose Allison, and Randy Newman. At his best, Holland's music operates like that of Allison and Newman: there's a scotch and soda weariness (philosophical and physical) that lets his music lull you from the bottom while the lyrics sink in from the top.

#### DANNY GATTON

Gatton is Washington's quasi-legendary, guitarists' guitarist. He comes out of the long tradition of Southern stylists like Scotty Moore and James Burton and has local predecessors in Link Wray and Roy Buchanan. His guitar playing is eclectic-traditional—R&B, blues, jazz, and rock 'n roll. I've heard Gatton turn a

bar into a lightning storm, picking out fierce trebly runs (full of echo and reverb) so fast that the notes seemed to be colliding in mid-air. Gatton is featured on one album, *American Music* (Alladin), with his old group, Danny and the Fat Boys. The album is an uneven amalgam of jazz, blues, and rock 'n roll ("Ubangi Stomp"), but on tunes like the jazz classic, "Harlem Nocturne," Gatton just sends shivers up and down your spine. His new band (the Danny Gatton Band) drew Les Paul to Washington and the rumour is Gatton will be recording for Paul's Nashville-based label. Gatton's musical problem (like Buchanan's) is not how to play, but what to play and with whom. If Les Paul can help him resolve these questions, Gatton might break big, because (as they say around town), he can play with anyone.

—Joseph Sasfy

Joseph Sasfy is a psychiatrist, and contributes regularly to the *Unicorn Times*.



Atlanta, and proximal Macon (85 miles away on the interstate), have long produced some of the more creative rock and pop music to grace the charts, jukeboxes and concert halls of the nation and the world. Several early soul greats, such as Chuck Willis, James Brown, Ray Charles, Otis Redding and Clarence Carter have been intimately associated with these environs. Similarly pop stars such as Joe South, Tommy Roe, the Classics IV, and Billy Joe Royal—all employed by the facilities of multi-faceted song factory Lowery Music have composed and recorded some of the standard AM hits of the sixties.

In our decade, variety has been the main keynote. The Capricorn complex in Macon has made immeasurable contributions to the progressive rock litany; the Allman Brothers, Marshall Tucker Band, Wet Willie, and others proved to be their initial calling cards; a re-formed Wet Willie, an ever-prospering Tucker, and jazz-rock bands Sea Level and the

Dixie Dregs are some of the hotter things the company has going for it these days.

The seventies have seen continued peerless output from the Lowery Group. Atlanta Rhythm Section, a band with more of a pop sensibility than the country feel of many regional contemporaries, has reached gold record status via their sixth album, *A Rock And Roll Alternative*. A hit single, "So In To You," graced the nationwide Top Ten this spring. Another hot Lowery act is Starbuck, whose "Moonlight Feels Right" was one of the larger singles in 1976. Lowery is also starting a record label.

Despite the healthy local talent in Atlanta/Macon, there is only one record company presently based in Atlanta proper: Bang Records. Originally located in New York, Bang was once home for Neil Diamond and Van Morrison Recordings; now five years in Atlanta, Bang's current claim to fame is Brick, a soul aggregation who mix complicated jazz textures over and around primal funky disco beats.

The Atlanta area, like any other, also hosts recording talent that promises a great deal in the near future. For example, Mylon Lefevre, a charismatic vocalist/songwriter with mighty pipes and a series of associations cross-bridging many of the English rock greats; Mother's Finest, an excellent high-energy group; Hamilton Bohannon, a dynamic soul-disco singer and drummer whose cult following should be expanded due to his recent inking to Mercury Records; Stillwater, an enticing combination of traditional southern rock and poetic surprises whose first album is due on Capricorn any time now; William Bell, who topped the soul poll a couple of months ago with "Trying To Love Two," and Choice, an immensely successful hard rock aggregation.

Of course there are others, but a few seem most destined to advance beyond loyal local following to a significant

## "THE ROCK MOUNTAIN BAND has developed into one of the southwest's greatest unrecorded concert draws."



# "Despite a healthy local talent market, there is only one record company based in Atlanta proper."

**DARYL RHODES & THE HAHAVISHNU ORCHESTRA, unbounded by the restraints of good-taste, include "I'm In With The Zen Crowd," "Disco Shit," and "Surfin' Shark" within their repertoire of rotten rejects.**



**THE PARA BAND: The Atlanta rock punks' 'pick of the local litter'.**

national audience.

It is significant that the best new bands favor a "southern rock" approach; save for a couple of exceptions like Warm and Fleas Come With the Dog, emerging names in this idiom are virtually nonexistent. Perhaps indicative of the increased cosmopolitan demeanor of this region is the presence of promising bands drawing from such alien inspirations to this locale as the Kinks, Frank Zappa, early Jefferson Airplane, and Flo & Eddie.

Generally considered the most brilliant original band ever to come out of the south, Darryl Rhoades and the Hahavishnu Orchestra are, well...indescribable. But we'll try. The chief protagonist, Mr. Rhoades, is a bearded furry creature whose tunes know about as many sacred cows as a Moslem butcher with a meat cleaver. Backed by a crew of eleven zanies who wear anything from drag to party dresses to Lynrd Skynyrd T-shirts, Rhoades glides around the stage, delivering his wares.

Some of Darryl's better-known material is "I'm In With The Zen Crowd," a knock at the trendy aspects of astrology; "Disco Shit," a parody of guess what; "Surfin' Shark," a lament of a "Jaws" victim sung to the melody of Jan and Dean's "Dead Man's Curve;" and "Ragtime," a Jolsonesque paean dedicated to the menstrual period.

Darryl, his hilarious songs and visually flashy group have received favorable notices in such publications as *Playboy*, *Oui*, *Rolling Stone*, and *Watusi*. However, many of the powers that be at record companies, seemingly more concerned with the fulfillment of highly placed IOUs than, as Darryl says, "looking for talent and doing their job," have thus far raved about the show yet kept those contracts locked away in the office drawer.

"Many of these people say we're 'too visual,' that we can't carry off our live act on record. That's so much bullshit," states Darryl. "Our self-produced single, 'Surfin' Shark,' was one of Atlanta's top sellers last summer." (For a copy of the record send \$1 to: The Hahavishnu Orchestra, P.O. Box 9672, Atlanta, GA 30315).

At press time, extremely recent information indicates a warming of record company interest; yet gladhands do not pay the bills. With a large troupe,

a relatively limited pie is often an insufficient meal. For those reasons, his supportive personnel have often shifted; Rhoades prefers to term it a "weeding out process. Now we've got people who are persistent, it takes years to make it."

In the highly competitive local music scene, there has been an unwritten spirit of competition between Darryl and a smaller yet nonetheless clever troupe known as Thermos Greenwood. Over the past three years, the town's two bitterly competitive alternative weeklies, the *Atlanta Gazette* and *Creative Loafing*, have been kind to one and ignored the other. There has been an unspoken race to see who will get the major record deal first. Freetone Records, an outfit claiming peripheral association with RSO, has issued a funny, catchy Greenwood single called "Who Gave The Monkey A Gun." (Send \$1 to: Freetone Records, 2581 Piedmont, Atlanta, GA 30324). Thermos' live show has drawn a series of mixed reactions. Originally painting their faces different colors, the group has shed the gimmickry and now support a fairly straight stage approach.

On a less visible but similar plane as the Rhoades-Greenwood competition is the relationship between the Para Band and the Fans. Both groups are led by fairly diabolical, complicated individuals; and both may have more recording potential than many better-known bands.

The Para Band is a four-man aggregation with distinct English influences. Their leader, guitarist-pianist Michael Brown is an irreverent soul touched with genius whose insular poetic allegories have proven too much for many Atlanta club audiences, whose "idea of going out," according to a slightly jaded Brown, "is to dance, bump, boogie and put the make on each other."

Brown, a capable instrumentalist, is abetted by brother Fred Brown on an often fluid, stinging guitar; non-relative Steine Brown on cymbal-infused drums; and Mike Noyes on a stalking, throbbing bass. Some of the band's better material includes "Fred," partially a tribute to the father of the Brown brothers; "Lust," which discusses the subtleties of passion, and their tour de force, "Nazi Hunter," an intricate multi-movement tale of a vengeful seeker of former SS men.

Para is fast shaping up to be another so called 'critic's band.' Rock punks, who are more attuned to the word than the audiences in general, all rave about this quartet. Thinking listeners are starting to do the same.

The Fans are another capable Atlanta band. A recent booking at New York City's CBGB's produced a favorable review in the New York Times, record company interest, plus incentive to record their own album at a local recording studio.

"Ekstasis" is the most widely praised tune to come from those sessions. Its sarcasm runs high; leader Alfredo Vilar plunks down some fancy bass runs. Other tracks are enriched by the synthesizer of Michael Green and the guitars played by Kevin Dunn, each highly original musicians.

For our fifth example of Atlanta based rock fare, we turn to the Rock Mountain Band. This quintet is led by one of the south's premier vocalists, Patti Albighese. Her wide-ranging voice recalls the early days of Grace Slick as do the intricately structured and often beautiful compositions. Yet they are not a copy band; in their basic approach to music, lyrics, and stage situations, they exude both originality and fluidity.

Working in a region where cover groups still command the hot club dollars, Rock Mountain has had to work hard for their success. Their main management and booking firm, Emtrec, is the only agent in the area with as much dedication to art as the fiduciary matters. They've developed the group into one of the widest unrecorded concert attractions in the southeast. The act draws audiences in the thousands at campuses locally and similar success has occurred in the Northeast recently as well.

RMB has released a single (recorded at the group's own superbly-equipped studio), "Go To The Woods," b/w "Rebecca," it has been picked up for regional distribution by Heilicher Brothers, a large wholesaler with branches throughout the nation. Many radio stations are playing it.

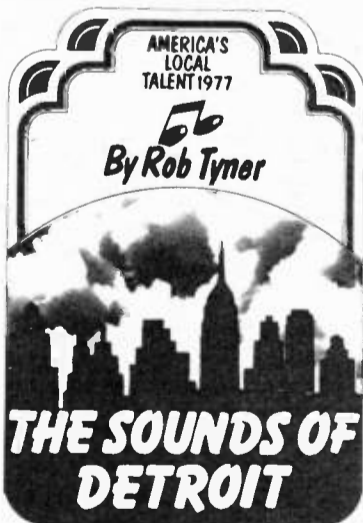
The single provides initial evidence of the considerable musical capabilities involved. Guitarist John Tyler, and an exceptionally innovative keyboardist, Lou Simmons, especially stand out.

(Record is available for \$1 to: Emtrec Music Managements, Bx 47147, Chamblee, Ga. 30340).

Not an ounce of cliché from any of the groups listed above. In these formulaic times, the presence of such a fresh wind is to be warmly greeted.

—Russell Shaw

Russell Shaw, *Performance Magazine's* Atlanta correspondent, also writes regularly for *Downbeat* and *Circus*.



Detroit has been a well-spring of popular music as far back as anyone can remember. In the mid-sixties, the scene was booming with several teen clubs, all jammed to the sweating walls with mods and miniskirts. Billy Lee and the Rivas played the Chatterbox in Allen Park (Billy Lee became Mitch Ryder, and some of the Rivas have become the Rockets). They did "Devil With A Blue Dress" and the fans went nuts.

The British influence gave momentum and the sheer industrial nervous energy of Detroit gave the music its

drive. Bob Seger and the last Herd and the Burning Guitars of Ted Nugent and the Amboy Dukes manifested this drive in no uncertain terms and the audiences loved it. A list of the bands' names would have to include such illuminaries as the S.R.C., Thyme, The Gang, The Up, Woolies, Third Power, The Psychedelic Stooges, The Fogg, The Rationals, Frost, MC5 and hundreds more. This continued until the early seventies hit like a lump of cold oatmeal. The Eastown Theatre closed-down. Motown moved to L.A. While national acts like Rare Earth, Bob Seger and Ted Nugent kept playing music, it was obvious the ship of Detroit was sinking fast.

Last year I co-wrote this section with Lester Bangs and all we could report about Detroit (Destroy-it) was that we were suffering through the doldrums & blah! Shortly after completing that piece, Lester packed up his Ramones tapes and his quart bottle of Nyquil and split for the Big Apple, never again to be seen. Sniff...but that just goes to show what kind of action was happening around here last year. It was truly the Pit of Death. But, so what? Being the Pit of Death never bothered us before. Matter of fact, that's what made the rock and roll so hot. Anything to forget that you live in the industrial slag-heap, right? Well, maybe it's the upcoming spring with its promise of an endless Rock and Roll Summer that's making all the rockers so impatient. Or maybe it's the fact that we just managed to survive the worst Winter in 100 years, but whatever the cause is, I'm glad to report that Detroit is not dead! I do believe that I smell smoke in the springtime air...could it be that the Motor City is beginning to burn once again? It's rumored that Mitch Ryder is coming out again to grace the airwaves with his brand of high potency music.

He's leaving for the West Coast to begin negotiations with several record companies. His reasons for getting back into this business are purely musical, and his standards are high. He said, "Rock and Roll is absolutely an American invention and a very powerful force, both politically and economically. And it is just not a teenage experience. I always thought that when you grew up you'd have to abandon some of this crazy lifestyle. You want to grow up but you don't want to dump Rock & Roll, so you make the music mature with you. You get more and more serious about the music...But when you look at the face of it, you can't be serious about Rock & Roll. This is the musician's dilemma."

Mitch is a singer's singer, and is primarily interested in making records, and if his past performance is any indication of his new work, it should really be dynamite.

Meanwhile, some alumni of Mitch Ryder's Detroit Wheels are also making waves here. They comprise the Rockets. Drummer Johnny B. and guitarist supreme Jimmy McCarty form the core of this hard-rock unit, and are joined by John Fraga, Marc Marciano, keyboards and Dennis Robbins on guitar. They dynamically back up the powerful vocals of Dave Gilbert. Recently finishing their first album, produced by veteran Don Davis at the World Famous United Sound Studios in Detroit, the sextet also finished a two-week stint at a East Side Detroit Rock bar called the Red Carpet.

They jammed the joint with serious get down mobs including Iggy Stooze and David Bowie, who were in town to play a concert at the Masonic Auditorium. Todd Rundgren has also been there on several occasions, hanging out and digging the Rockets. I guess it's the band's straight-ahead, relentless groove that brings the stars out at night.

One of the darlings of the club set here is Holy Smoke. Says Troy Blakley, their agent, "They do constantly incredible business and turn over big crowds with their Aerosmith-style of hard rock." Steve Starks, their drummer counts the MC5 and Detroit in general as their major influence. Featuring Chuck Miller on whiz-bang cyclotron guitar and Rick Craven on lead vocals, their sound is hard, tight club rock. John Fronti also churns up some smoke on guitar, and they are also aided by handsome Johnny Harrida on bass. Drummer Starks, an articulate spokesman said that "For the last two or three years, the scene has been subsisting on AM bopper hits, but maybe this emerging Detroit thing will make the music change and get more creative and heavier." The act has been together for nearly three years and started out as a five piece, switched to four and now, with the addition of Rick Craven on vocals the fivesome's sound is solid. Their stage act remains very intense.

Ann Arbor, mythical spawning ground for midwest talent, has provided us with one of Michigan's most dependable and durable units in the Mojo Boogie Band, built around the considerable vocal talents of James Tate, a singer of rare sensitivity and taste. Providing the driving impulse for the group's r&b sound is "Brother" J.C. Crowford, on drums. They combine the "big-beat" sound of the middle-fifties with blues and hard rock. The band has just completed its latest recording at Michigan's Glen Arbor Roller Mills Studio in the far north of the State and the product is an EP that is a regular tour-de-force. It includes an antique Robert Johnson cut called "Stones in My Pathway," two originals titled

"Ball-Buster," and "Get Down," and a tune entitled "One More Drink for the Boys in The Band." Their producer, George Daly, whose credits include dealings with Sly Stone and Dylan, joined with manager Joe Kerr to form Pyramid Associates, the company that handles their business. The line-up includes Bill Lynn on guitar, Don Backus on keyboards, Doug Stroughton

## "The '77 models of Detroit Rock look good in the showroom...."



**Holy Smoke, hot off the Detroit rock assembly line.**

on bass, J.C. Crawford on drums and Jim Tate on guitar and lead vocals.

There is a really close relationship between Mojo Boogie and another act from A2 called Struttin'. Fronted by Lorna Richards, the wife of Bill Lynn from Mojo, this white funk act started in cabarets, but their sound and intense stage presence blew them out of that circuit and into the serious boogie-down clubs in and around Ann Arbor.

The A2 scene has given us the Sonic Rendez-vous Band, comprised of Fred Smith of the old MC5 and Scott Morgan of the Rationals, and Gary Rasmussen of the Up, and Scott "Rock Action" Ashton of the Stooges, who are beginning to make noise locally after several years of putting up a good fight.

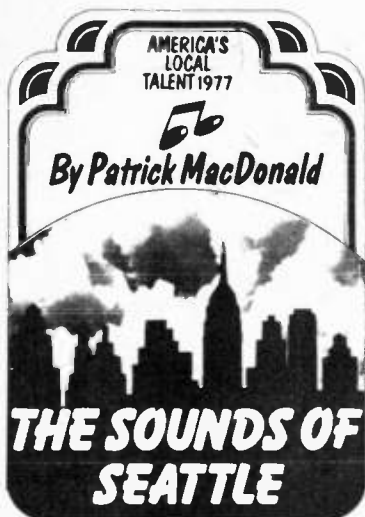
With the rise of punk rock, there seems to be a healthy interest in hard rock beginning again. The Ramones recently did a club right in my neighborhood and it was packed with the black leather crowd and reminded me of Detroit's golden days. And, here in town there seems to be the beginnings of a parallel development with the bands like the Grit Kids, but only time will tell. The Ramona Theatre is doing a concert in late April with the Ramones headlining, and also on the show will be a group called the Toys. They rehearse at the Ramona, which is an old-time ritzy movie house with an ornate lobby and a gigantic stage. The Toys have been together for about a year and a half and are managed by Keener-Clark Inc., who run the Ramona. The Toys are hard rock with an eye to the A.M. charts and their tune list includes rockers like "Tailsqueezer," and "Hardly Love," and "Lightning."

Other acts that play around here are White Wolf, Salem Witchcraft, Zooster Muggsy, Flirt, LaMarr Loud and Rockout, Jett Black, Lightning and a cast of thousands.

The 77 models of Detroit rock look good in the showroom, but only some torture tests on the proving grounds will tell the true tale of their performance. But, they sure got some nice flashy chrome on their fenders.

—Rob Tyner

Rob Tyner is a contributing editor of Creem.



Seattle musicians have devised various ways to combat the continuing onslaught of disco, which has put many of them out of business over the last couple of years.

The most exciting development has been the emergence of a whole new style of dance music that has taken over many of the city's clubs. It's an Afro-Cuban-Salsa hybrid that's based on pulsating rhythms that almost force you to dance when you hear them.

As near as anyone can tell, it all began with Dumisani Maraire, a Rhodesian who came to the University of Washington to teach ethno-musicology. One of his classes was a workshop in African instruments and his students were required to play in an ensemble. They gave recitals on campus that soon became so popular they had to be moved outside.

Down on Pioneer Square, the heart of this city's nightlife, an enterprising owner looking for something new to fill his empty club booked Dumi and his students. They were an immediate success. Soon, Dumi quit teaching and with some of his students started Dumi and the Minanzi Marimba Ensemble. Now they're solidly booked all over the Northwest.

The ensemble plays only marimbas, all imported from Africa and capable of an amazing variety of sounds. Other groups use steel drums and percussion instruments of all kinds, along with the

## Seattle's most exciting development is the emergence of a new style of dance music —An Afro-Cuban-Salsa hybrid.



standard guitar and drums. Most of the groups are entirely acoustic, which allows them to play in the parks and at parties as easily as in a club.

Among the other groups in the genre are Papaya, Tropical Rainstorm, Upepo, ULA, Obrador, Ankora and the Sundance Rhythm Band. They play at the Bombay Bicycle Shop, where it all started, as well as the Pump, Central, Rainbow, Pioneer Banque and other clubs.

Like most cities these days, Seattle is also experiencing the Punk phenomenon, with all kinds of young bands springing up all over the place.

A local equipment dealer says he's selling more and more guitars, basses and drum kits than ever before, despite the fact that fewer musicians are working. He attributes it all to Punk.

"A kid will come in here who's never played a guitar in his life and buy a \$500 or \$800 guitar and a \$100 amp, have a band formed before nightfall and do a concert the next weekend. I love it!"

The Punk phenomenon has not produced any great bands as yet, but it has done one important thing locally for the music business: revitalize the small concert. Punk bands have been setting up their own shows in small halls around the city. The concerts are cheap, fun, and unpredictable, and they've put several small, almost abandoned halls back into business.

Local punks were given a big shot in the arm recently when Iggy Pop, Punk's founding father, dropped in unexpectedly on a couple of them, the Telepaths and the Meyce, while they were practicing at the Ballard Apartments, a rundown building in one of the city's oldest residential districts. In town a day early for a concert with nothing to do, Iggy was lured there by one of the Telepaths. He stayed a long while and even jammed. The bands involved are still high from the experience.

Among other Punk bands here are Uncle Cookie, which has presented several well-attended concerts. They also put out a magazine called The Original Optimist, which is full of in-jokes and Heart has been working on its next album for several months at the Kaye-Smith Studios here and the band has been very visible locally, dropping in on concerts, clubs, and parties, and showing up on local radio and television shows. It's given local bands a strong if-they-can-do-it-so-can-we attitude.

Gabriel has recently released its second album on A.B.C. The band has a very commercial pop sound that could make it. Dan Bono, a singer and keyboard player who's been on the local scene for years, is talking to Mercury. And Cathy Chamberlain, a transplanted Seattleite living in New York, has a new album on Warner Bros.

But most of the recordings are by local bands for local consumption. Papaya, Bighorn, Reilly & Maloney, Linda Waterfall, Onyx, and a number of other bands and artists have cut singles and albums locally in recent months.

Bighorn remains one of the city's biggest rock bands, but their drawing power is limited to the two big taverns that still deal exclusively in pop

**Seattle's New Bossa Nova Blitz: DUMISANI MARAIRE [above] unleashed Rhodisian rock rituals throughout the northwest by way of PAPAYA [2nd from top] and UPEPO [below].**



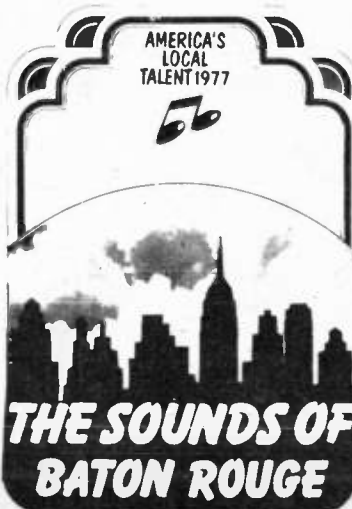
rock—the Aquarius, the city's largest, and My Place. Only a couple of the similar-type rock bands manage to survive anymore, but those few do fairly well.

"We're making more money per week than ever before—we just got \$3,000 for one week, not bad for a local group—but we're working fewer weeks," a manager says. And the territory has enlarged. Northwest groups play from Oregon to British Columbia, Canada, and from Washington to Montana. Among the others that have a good thing going are Child, Randle Rosburg, Gabriel, and Kidd Agricola.

But while those few bands make money, most of the others starve, waiting for live local music to come back again.

—Patrick MacDonald

Patrick MacDonald writes about pop music for the Seattle Times.



We list Baton Rouge separate from New Orleans for one reason only. The Jeff Pollard Band. Or, Jeff Pollard's Baton Rouge as they may be known in the near future.

Already one of the most important concert acts throughout Louisiana, parts of Tennessee and Southwest Texas, The Jeff Pollard Band have been together in their current configuration for just over eighteen months. Initially starting as a back-up unit for New Orleans' 'Gatemouth' Brown, the act toured parts of Africa and has two LPs in the can with 'Gatemouth'.

The band presently is: Jeff Pollard (guitar, vocals), Leon Medaca (bass—and acting manager/booking agent/spokesman for the act), Rod Roddy (keyboards, vocals), David Peters

(drums, percussion) and Bobby Campo (flute, flugelhorn & percussion). Actually, three members are from Baton Rouge, the others are from nearby Alexandria and Lafayette, Louisiana.

Long associated with area talent, members of the JPB have worked with John Fred, Potliquor, Goatleg, The War Babies and numerous other regional Louisiana favorites over the past several years.

The sound of The Pollard's is, in Medaca's words, "Funk-rock". Something akin to The Eagles, vocally and The Allmans musically. They're strong players and inspired lyricists. Screen Gems Music has already locked-up publishing on the band.

As yet not signed with a record label, several majors are bidding for options on the act as this is written. Also, scouting the act for management is Bill Roberts & Bill McEuen's Aspen Recording Society (management for The Nitty Gritty Dirt Band and Steve Martin).

Baton Rouge has for many years promised to deliver an act that would be able to transcend regional status and The Jeff Pollard Band—or Jeff Pollard's Baton Rouge—should be the first to do so.

**Baton Rouge's—The Jeff Pollard Band.**



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

### The Sounds of The Cities 1977

The Sounds of The Cities is an annual feature inside the pages of Phonograph Record Magazine and appears each May. This series is compiled and edited by Martin Corf.

Special thanks to all the contributing writers and photographers and to Michael Barackman for his assistance in the creation of Sounds of the Cities, 1977.

We gratefully acknowledge the following industry people, without whose help, belief and support of America's local talent, this series and certainly many great artists would not be possible:

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Mr. Bill Ham  
Mr. Leon Huff  
Mr. Ken Kinnear  
Mr. Steve Leber  
Mr. Huey Meaux  
Mr. Willie Mitchell  
Mr. David Moorhead  
Mr. Jerry Moss  
Mr. Willie Nelson  
Mr. Steve Plesser  
Mr. Steve Popovich  
Mr. Ed Sciaky  
Ms. Bonnie Simmons  
Mr. Phil Walden  
Mr. Iv Zuckerman



Before I begin this month's column, I want to thank those of you who've called and written, congratulating me on the last two installments of Pipeline. However, since I've already begun this month's column, it's now too late.

Brilliant as those columns may have been, they have created a problem for me. As last month's Pipeline was a lengthy overview of the entire punk-rock renaissance, and the one before it devoted to only one album [the legendary After The Lovin by Engelbert Humperdinck], I find myself hopelessly behind, review-wise, on the rest of the albums which came out during those two months. I'd like to use the next paragraph to catch up, if I may.



**MARCH:** Only good album released during the entire month was Blondie [Private Stock]. Everything else was horrible.

**APRIL:** Similar to March with one exception—no good albums were released, period.

Now that we're all caught up, let's move on to the current crop. I've got a lot to say this month, plenty of revelations and insights.

For example, were you aware that *The Idiot* (RCA) is not a description of Iggy Pop? Rather, it describes anybody who spends six bucks on this album looking for the great Iggy of the Stooges days. He's nowhere to be found on this David Bowie-produced effort. Bowie's production is so 'low,' that poor Iggy was buried alive under it. Speaking of which, how does a faker like Bowie deserve to produce an artist of the

caliber of Iggy Pop, in the first place? It's a question I've raised several times recently, and I always get the same response: people yawn and walk away from me...

Most people remember Betty Wright for her great "Clean-Up Woman" of a few years ago. While she was excellent (especially with windows and those hard-to-reach corners), Betty Wright was even better. Now she proves it on *This Time For Real* (Alston/TK). Collectors take note: a decade from now the special promotional/DJ copies of this album will be over ten years old! Stock up now...

England Dan & John Ford Coley literally came out of nowhere last year (nobody had ever seen them before and the people they claim are their parents deny



**Idiot Action-Wayne** County (NYC's #1 DC5 fan), plays 'back-up' for Iggy as only Wayne can.

terrific new album out which I've covered in this month's review section. *But don't read it until you've finished this column!* There are still many more insights to come...

Cecilio & Kapono are unquestionably the biggest thing to come out of Hawaii since pineapples, and I think they're every bit as good. Of course, I hate pineapples, so you can imagine how I feel about their latest, *Night Music* (Columbia). If I sounded like they do, I wouldn't come out in the daytime, either...

Anybody remember John Lodge? He was the guy who traded his life on easy street with the Moody Blues to set up residence on *Natural Avenue* (London). Far be it for me to say his decision was a mistake, but the other residents of *Natural Ave.* aren't happy about it one bit. 'For Sale' signs have been going up on both sides of the street since the day the album came out. People aren't keeping up their

lawns, nobody's putting their garbage cans back in the garage after trash day...in short, the whole neighborhood's going to hell. But does John Lodge care? I guess not, because he's already planning to make another album.

Ever since Boz Scaggs' "Lowdown" became a big hit, people have been asking who played that sizzling guitar part on the song. Even Boz Scaggs (who was wandering around Harlem asking passers-by what a 'Jones' was while "Lowdown's" backing track was being recorded) wanted to know who it was. As usual, *Pipeline* has the answer. It was Les Dudek, whose new album has just been released. Since I took a vow not to criticize albums by artists who are relatively new—no matter how terrible they are—I will *Say No More* (Columbia). But with Dudek's album and a new one by Hall & Oates' guitarist Stephen Dees, *Hip Shot* (RCA) we could be seeing the beginning of a new trend of back-up guitar players emerging from the shadows of their more-illustrious employers. If Dees is an example, I certainly hope not. Actually, *Hip Shot* (with Daryl Hall's co-production) isn't all that bad, but I had been led to believe that Stephen Dees was actually Rick Dees' older brother and the one who was responsible for Rick's musical brilliance. Expecting something surpassing the excellence of Rick's "Disco Duck," you can imagine my disappointment upon learning the two weren't even related! "Stunned" is the only word that comes to mind, and it's going to create a considerable delay in my finishing this column if I can't get any other words to come to mind....

## Blondie Chaplin



Fortunately, Blondie Chaplin's new album snapped my mind back. An ex-Beach Boy member, Chaplin was no doubt influenced by the genius of Brian Wilson. How else would you explain his choice of an album title? With the infinite variety of possibilities available, he managed to find a title that not only fits him perfectly, but would sound faintly stupid on anyone else's album: *Blondie Chaplin* (Asylum). On the basis of this record, I would say that Chaplin is an artist to be carefully watched. Anybody crazy enough to leave the Beach Boys to make an album as dull as this one is liable to do anything!

# PRM REVIEWS

## Mink DeVille: Jack Nitzsche Unleashes New York's Finest... Fresh from the Street.

MINK  
DeVILLE

MINK DeVILLE  
Mink DeVille  
Capitol ST 11631

By CRAIG GHOLSON

*Walking up 8th Avenue late one summer night, I glanced up just in time to see a young Spanish head peer around an opened second floor fire escape door.*

*"Yo... Hey man, will you hold this TV while I lower it down?"*

*"Ok," I said, as the face pulled back and the door closed. It took me at least two minutes to realize that repair shops weren't open at that hour, that even if they were, a rope pulley was a less practical method of transport than the stairs, and that basically I was a stool-pigeon in the open. But what really cinched my walking away was the realization that I'd never get to watch the TV if I helped. Street-wise, I wasn't.*

Mink DeVille's first album places them in much the same situation as Blondie. Both groups are working within recognizable musical genres, are proficient at what they do, and have assimilated their influences well. Whereas Blondie is rooted in American and British middle-class pop, the Mink's music is steeped in Hispanic and black, urban, lower-class rhythm and blues. In both instances, although they are well-schooled, these influences sometimes totally dominate the content.

This decided dominance of influences especially affects "Spanish Stroll." The song catalogues three characters from the Lou Reed cast of street casualties: 'Prissie Mr. Jim,' a Puerto Rican hijacker named 'Brother Johnny,' and 'Sister Sue,' who apparently is involved in fire and water rituals. To complete this Latin walk on the wild side, the chorus is replete with colored girl-sounding oohs. The fem vocal is pure Reed parody and within the butch context of the other tracks, a little suspicious. Even in the beginning of their career when Mink DeVille played the Fulsom

**"The songs deal with romance that blossomed and wilted on fire escapes and stoops: Real West Side Story material... Willie DeVille's voice is the best young white lead to emerge in years"**

**—Craig Gholson**

Street Barracks, surely the San Francisco club's S&M clientele didn't let Willy get away with that Nancy voice after all, it was a murder in the shower room that closed the joint down.

Producer Jack Nitzsche would be the perfect choice to score the soundtrack for such a scene. Since the inception of his career—as Phil Spector's arranger—Nitzsche's musical direction has manifested itself in frighteningly schizophrenic ways. On one hand,

he has produced some of the schlockiest orchestral arrangements on record; "Hairy Flowers" on the *Performance* soundtrack, for instance, or the strings on *Harvest*. On the other hand, he has been involved in some of the rawest and most demonic tracks ever singed into vinyl; "Sister Morphine," "Memo From Turner," and Neil Young's "Look Out Joe." *Performance*, made under Nitzsche's direction, is the most tortured, anxiety-ridden, paranoid, combustible, tension-inducing, amphetamine-nerved album in existence. Even when Nitzsche seemingly functioned as a back-up musician, as on "Sister Morphine," the extremely sinis-

ter and ominous tone of the song was pure Nitzsche—not merely a result of his piano playing.

Until he agreed to produce Mink DeVille, Nitzsche's contact with such rock and roll destruction seemed to have scared him away from active participation in rock, although his interest in demonic forces and relative insanity continued with his soundtracks to "The Exorcist" and "One Flew Over The Cuckoo's Nest."

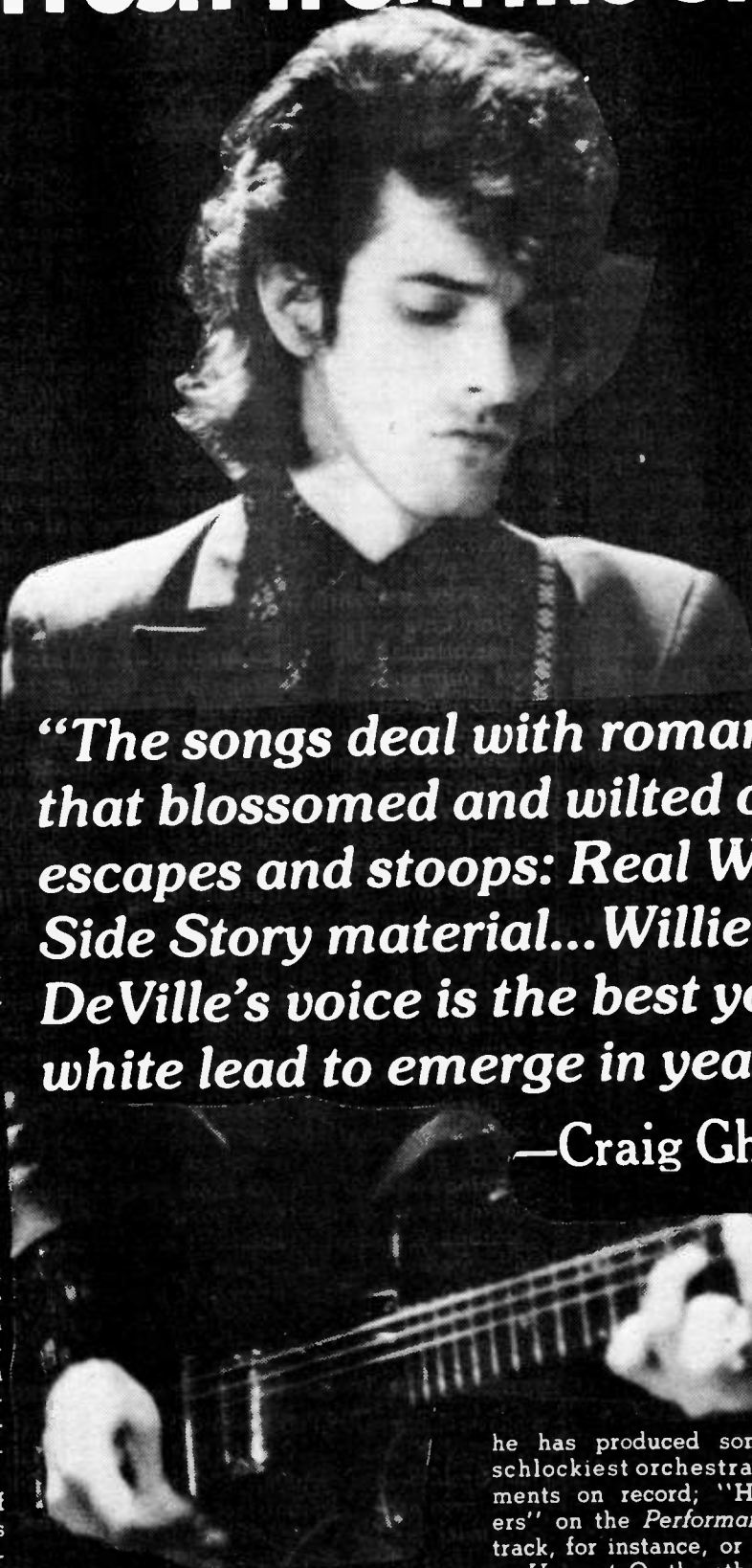
Nitzsche's production on *Mink DeVille* is masterful—raw enough to keep its east village edge and yet smooth enough not to sound shoddy. Mercifully, there are no strings. And though Nitzsche's Phil Spector experience combined with Mink DeVille's R&B roots might lead one to expect some 'wall-of-sound' experiments, wisely there are none. The music has a modern ethnic New York feel to it. There is a rose in Spanish Harlem and Mink DeVille; basically it hybrids between black blues, Spanish rhythms, and Caucasian rock.

All the songs on *Mink DeVille* deal with romance that blossomed and wilted on fire escapes and stoops, real "West Side Story" material. In these neighborhoods, romance supplies all the entertainment, excitement, and escape values. Willy DeVille's "Venus of Avenue D" is quite a different woman from Tom Verlaine's "Venus DeMilo." Verlaine's 'Venus' is an idea, an ethereal concept, airy and untouchable. DeVille's 'Venus' is "good enough to eat," her high heels and tight red dress spinning heads and causing talk in the back rooms.

The majority of titles were written in the studio. Of the two covers, Willy brought in a reworked version of the Crystals' "Little Boy," entitled "Little Girl," and Nitzsche delivered "Cadillac Walk," by Jim Martin, former guitarist with Southwind. What is absent in the album, but present in live performance, is Mink DeVille's brand of reggae; their cover of Bob Marley's "Small Axe," or their own "Change Will Come."

Willy DeVille's voice is the best young white voice to emerge in years, and the band supports that voice without ever letting him cheat while sustaining a strong identity of their own. Jack Nitzsche provided the perfect atmosphere—languid and sensuous, yet hard and explosive.

*Street-wise?* Mink DeVille put the hood in neighborhood.



# THE MANY FACES OF

The faces you don't always see, but the people behind them are like your best friends. DAVE BROWN and the Beatles. GARY CHASE and Fleetwood Mac. MIKE McKAY and Led Zepplin. HOWARD PAGE and Boz Scaggs. KELLY SAUNDERS and Rod Stewart. JERRY STRIDER and Santana.

Keeping you company at 8 a.m. or 8 p.m. by making music happen in your life. Music. It's better than talking. It's feeling.



plays the kind of music  
you want to hear



# Blind Date

## with FLO & EDDIE

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

### CACOPHONY IN THE UK '77

Flo & Eddie Meet  
The New Wave

Edited by KEN BARNES

This month Blind Date is a little different. We thought (and by we I mean myself; Flo & Eddie had no choice in the matter) that it would be interesting to let our dispassionate duo confront the worldwide wave of grass-roots (no reflection on Warren Entner) hard rock, commonly lumped together as "punk rock." "Are you sure we're not too old for this kind of music?" queried Flo hesitantly. Have no fears, said I; anyone who knew Warren Zevon when he was still Lyme is definitely a survivor of the first "punk-rock" era and thus eminently qualified to pass judgment on the current brand.

However, when Flo & Eddie actually encountered the new music, particularly the harsh, crude, political music arising out of England's economically depressed New Wave, for whom the enemy is anomie (or is it the NME) (there's a song in there somewhere), the virulence of their reaction was startling. A mixture of anger, bewilderment, contempt and possibly just a bit of fear, Flo & Eddie's comments make for a novel perspective on punk rock. We changed our usual methods a little—instead of playing the records sight unseen so Flo & Eddie can guess the artist's identity, they were identified in advance. Their comments are being printed relatively intact, and we expect a bit of controversy. See what you think.

### CHRIS SPEDDING & THE VI-BRATORS—*Pogo Dancing* (RAK-UK only)

In introduction, let us say that what's good for us might not be good for others depending on your political beliefs or age—or if you've ever blown a guy.

Yeah! This is Rodney's disco music. This is glam, English glitter stuff—this isn't punk! This is Mud. No, Mud's hipper than "Pogo Dancing." Chris Spedding was in the Wombles? He's got the Mott the Hoople vocal down. But I don't like it. What's it about? They hop up and down? That's punk? It's the dance of the pop revolution? Amazing. That's not a punk record—it's a punk exploitation record. Was it a big hit like "Disco Duck"?

### THE STRANGLERS—*Grip* (UA-UK only)

Kraftwerk overtones. The drummer's name is Jet Black. I'm telling you, man, Sky Saxon could come back now. These guys are freaking out. You get a drum machine and a synthesizer, you can make one of these records yourself. Lots of Eno here. This is not the real mainstream of punk either. If you notice on the sleeve, these are older guys, just like Chris Spedding. These guys look like Freddie & the Dreamers... after a bad STP trip. They use the old Velvet Underground basic drum riff—one, two, cha-cha-cha. "Walk On The Wild Side" with synthesizers. That is not a punk record—punks, don't buy it!



"You're not a punk without a Sex Pistol's record. ...It seems the idea is to get old people to hate you again—anyway you can."

### SEX PISTOLS—*Anarchy In The UK* (EMI-UK only, withdrawn)

Heavy two chord action. I always like it as a record. I realize that it's causing a lot of problems. I'm surprised that a major company put it out without bothering to listen to it. It's an OK record. You're not a punk without the Sex

Pistols record. It seems like the idea is to get old people to hate you again—anyway you can. Hit them, kick them, run them over. It's got to the point of ultra-violence, maybe. They all think they're potential Max Frost & the Troopers out there. But you're really not, kids; might as well get it out of your systems. London is on the verge of anarchy anyway.

### THE DAMNED—*Neat Neat Neat See Her Tonite* (Stiff/Island—UK only)

Interesting cover on this album. Oh my god. Zappa is just around the corner again. It's just like "Absolutely Free." I don't think so. This is worse than any of it so far. Way under the Seeds, quality-wise. I don't understand. Is this the right speed? They made this in one take and the LP must have cost them \$2500. They couldn't have spent any money on it. They're right, they are Damned. Maybe the idea of punk rock is to assault the ears with something so horrible that you hate the band responsible. C'mon, man, that's awful. That's sort of how the Leaves used to sound, but not as good. There's no flavor to it at all. There are no leads. That is not a professional record. The Ramones are much more sophisticated. I hate them.

### THE CLASH—*White Riot/1977* (CBS—UK only)

This one's gonna be hard to hear the lyrics? You've got to take into account the fact that these records are English and sound very strange to the American ear. But what language is that? It's like some of these punk-rock guys don't even have the energy to sing the words to you, they're just talking at you and if you can't get it, the hell with it. Great attitude for music. CBS put this out? This is two chords—but the bass player can't seem to find them. I like that little Kraftwerk bass line. This is a much more cultured punk record, even if the recording is primitive. I can't believe what I'm hearing!

"1977"? It's interesting that every punk band still does the first two Kinks songs, "You Really Got Me" and "All Day And All Of The Night," or variations thereof. Now there is a punk who can still do it with class. Just because Ray's older doesn't mean he's any

less of a punk. Goddammit, you know what pisses me off? Everything! That this is successful! (Actually a moot point). The point is not to be able to sing. The Fugs did this 10 years ago. (Sing) "Dirty Old Man," (a vintage Fugsong). That's all this is—but worse! The Fugs were punks. I hate the Damned.

### ELVIS COSTELLO—*Less Than Zero/Radio Sweetheart* (Stiff/Island—UK only)

Elvis Costello! That's great! "Louis Louis." A little Springsteen, a little Band in there. How can you tell anyone about someone named Elvis Costello and hold your head high? What makes him a punk? All right, he's a credible artist with a little thought to the song. But still, in the wide range of things, if Elvis Costello rolled in with the month's releases as a whole, I don't know if I'd rate him very high. Compared to some of the other trash we've just had, it's fantastic. I like Elvis Costello. The B-side is the side. Great voice. Definitely the score of the month. Go out to your local distributor and tell them you want the latest from Elvis Costello.

### COUNT BISHOPS—*I Want Candy/Little By Little* (Dynamite—Holland only)

From Holland but they're British? A new wave group that records old wave songs. You know what's great is you can make records for \$150. Recorded with the Exalto-Mobile—that's somebody's Buick, right? Doesn't anybody care any more? They do amusing songs? Amuse me. That's the way the Crossfires (Flo & Eddie's pre-Turtles band) sounded, but we were 16—and better. Come on. That's a high school band. I can't believe this. They should listen to real punk music—Barry McGuire, P.F. Sloan... They think they're punks—they're wimps!

### LITTLE BOB STORY—*I'm Crying* (Chiswick—UK only)

This is the French approach to punk? This whole month is just pissing me off! Little Bob Story... what's wrong with his face? He looks like Paul Williams through a funhouse mirror. They record all these bands on 4-track? Two-track. Right from the cassette. Oh my God—this is the Leaves doing "Hey Joe." You didn't buy Todd Rundgren's "Faithful," and yet people will stand still for "I'm Crying" by Little Bob Tasmanian and his Midget Squirrel Frogs. Are you kidding? I can't stand this shit. Get this off my turntable. I'll break it!

Will Flo & Eddie break a record nationally? Will they shatter all records in the current punk-rock scene? Stay tuned next month when the dyspeptic duo tackle American new wave rock.

DO YOU  
KNOW  
WHAT A



IS??

IT'S **DAVE BROWN** STARTING YOUR DAY WITH SOME SIMON  
AND GARFUNKEL... **GARY CHASE** KEEPING LEON AND ELTON'S PIANO PLAYIN'  
AT LUNCH..... **MICHAEL McKAY** ROCK'N ROLLING IN THE NIGHT WITH  
THE WHO AND AEROSMITH... **HOWARD PAGE** WITH PETER FRAMPTON AND  
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# Country Sides

By JOHN MORTHLAND



## The Bob Wills Legend Perpetuated:

Not only is Bob Wills still the king, as Waylon would have it, but he's quite possibly more popular now than he ever was in his heyday. Then, western swing was limited to the southwest as a live music, and few records got national airplay. The current western swing revival is reaching all over the country.

24 Great Hits by Bob Wills and His Texas Playboys (MGM MG-2-

5303) is a re-issue of Wills' sides from the late Forties and early Fifties. It doesn't measure up to *The Bob Wills Anthology* released several years ago by Columbia, which controls many of the choice Wills' sides, but it's better than most recent Wills' re-issues. Side four, in particular, provides a superb cross section of Wills' music. "Cross My Heart" features some brilliant steel and

piano, and Johnny Gimble shines on "End of the Line." Unfortunately, the album excludes some of Wills' most exceptional MGM sides ("Hop, Skip and Jump Over Texas," "Blues For Dixie," "Warm Red Wine," "Texas Blues"), and doesn't bother to supply much in the way of recording data and personnel.

As a bandleader, Wills was a strict disciplinarian, much like James Brown—his musicians practiced until they learned the songs cold, and they were expected not to make mistakes. One result is that years later, they can still play those tunes together with barely a rehearsal. I recently saw them do so in Fort Worth, and *The Late Bob Wills' Original Texas Playboys Today* (Capitol ST-11612) is further testament. A couple of these musicians didn't actually play with Wills; the former Playboys are getting quite old, and three have died in the last year. But those that remain comprise a surprisingly sprightly band, with "Gambling Polka Dot Blues," "T-U-L-S-A Straight Ahead," and the delightful "Party For the Old Folks" highlighting the set.

Asleep at the Wheel keeps the spirit alive today. *The Wheel* (Capitol ST-11620) is the unit's best album to date. With the exception of one traditional fiddle tune, the material here is all original. LeRoy Preston is surely one of the strongest of the new

country writers; he walks a fine line between traditional and progressive, like Willie Nelson. Chris O'Connell sings his shuffle "When Love Goes Wrong" beautifully; ditto for "I Wonder." Preston takes lead vocals on "I Can't Handle It Now" (the most mainstream country song here), the rockabilly spoof "My Baby Thinks She's a Train" and "Somebody Stole His Body," the latest in a long line of death songs he's written—this one neatly disguised as gospel music! Ray Benson does his usual jive with "Am I High," and has a classy waltz in "Red Stick." Now up to 11 pieces, the Wheel is hotter and more jazz-oriented than ever, with the two instrumental numbers providing plenty of solo space.

With *Honky Tonk Music* (Capitol ST-11614), Tucson's The Dusty Chaps establish themselves as contenders on the same circuit. If anything, they are more eclectic than the Wheel, but they combine their various influences seamlessly. They even have a couple of ranchero numbers, as well as a near-ringer for the country Byrds in "Fast Song." "Invisible Man" shows off their own brand of western swing. Their most glaring weakness is Peter Gierlach's vocals, but this music is spirited enough to overcome that easily. And I'd love to hear a soaring pedal steel duel between the Wheel's Lucky Ocean's and Ted Hockenbury of the Chaps.



They call themselves Southside Johnny & The Asbury Jukes, and they grew up right here on the street.

There's a special meaning to their kind of street life—the simple joy of letting everything go and shaking the night away.

And if you really love to move to music, nobody's going to tell you how to do it. What really counts is that you are moved.

Which is why Southside Johnny & The Asbury Jukes are one of the fastest rising rock and roll bands in America. And why their new album, "This Time It's for Real," is one of the musical gems of 1977.

**"This Time It's for Real" Southside Johnny & The Asbury Jukes. On Epic Records and Tapes.**



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# SOU JAZZ

Soul & Jazz Record Magazine  
May, 1977/Issue #38

**Thelma  
Houston  
& The Motown Mix**

by Marc Shapiro



by Tom  
Vickers

# Teddy PENDERGASS

# Teddy PENDERGRASS



## Harold Melvin & The Blue Note's Dorian Gray Hero a Secret No More

By TOM VICKERS

Last year when Harold Melvin and the Blue Notes went from waking up everybody to breaking up with themselves, it left Teddy Pendergrass, the group's lead singer, in a strange situation. Pendergrass' gruff-baritone had powered the Blue Notes into the Top Ten charts with hits like "Bad Luck," "The Love I Lost," and "If You Don't Know Me By Now," but because the group was attached to Melvin's name, everyone thought he was the lead singer. And Melvin did nothing to dissuade people, feeling he was receiving the recognition he deserved after twenty years as a Blue Note.

But Pendergrass, who has an ego as big as his voice, was miffed. Here he was, one of the most distinguished voices in soul music, yet no one knew his name. Aside from the lack of recognition, Teddy wasn't getting any richer. Sure, he was receiving a weekly salary from Melvin, and his share of the royalties, but there was a definite problem when you applied the equation of talent times effort equals money. Teddy was not getting his due, in terms of both money and recognition, and he was bothered.

Last year, I interviewed Pendergrass in his manager's offices

on Philadelphia's Broad St., a block away from Gamble and Huff's hit factory. Teddy had just left the BlueNotes and taken half the group with him. Melvin had quickly reformed the BlueNotes with lead singer David Ebo taking Teddy's place, but now there were two groups of BlueNotes out on the road, and a lot of animosity between the young upstart and his founding father.

Their separation became a generational battle of egos. "It got to the point where we couldn't work on the same stage together," Pendergrass said in a righteous huff as gold jewelry flashed from his wrists and fingers. "The reason is that I'm trying to think 1976-77-78, and he's still thinking 1950 when the best group in the world was the Flamingoes. Most of the kids out on the street don't know who the hell the Flamingoes are. If you want to go back to being the Flamingoes, then that's where you need to be."

But it wasn't where Teddy needed or wanted to be, so he struck out for greener turf (as in dollar signs). While both groups' future recording plans were in jeopardy, there was a minor battle going on at Philadelphia International to see which group of BlueNotes would remain on the label. At first there was a lot of

pressure on Teddy to get back with Melvin. Kenny Gamble, head of Philadelphia International, was an old friend of Melvin's. "I'm sure if Harold asked him to try and get me back, Kenny would push it," Pendergrass had confided. "But I also think that Mr. Gamble is a smart enough business man to know where the strength is, and if I don't want to go back, don't pressure me about it, but let's try and work out another deal, 'cause I'm not going back."

He never did go back, and apparently Kenny Gamble had enough business and musical sense to insure that Teddy stayed with his label. Melvin's contract was up for renewal, and reading the situation, he took his BlueNotes to ABC Records, where they recently released the inferior *Reachin' For the World* L.P. Meanwhile, Teddy continued touring with his BlueNotes until it became obvious that he was

[Continued on next page]

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## The triumph of Dexter Gordon: an American hero comes home at last.

The return of the legendary Dexter Gordon to the U.S. was one of the cherished musical events of 1976. In *The New York Times*, Robert Palmer wrote, "Mr. Gordon has re-established himself as the living master of the tenor saxophone... with some of the most accomplished and stirring improvisations heard here in recent years."

Fortunately, Dexter's memorable engagement at The Village Vanguard was recorded and is now available as a special two-record set.

In a five-star down beat review, Chuck Berg raved, "Homecoming" will stand as one of the landmark albums of the '70s... it stands as a new plateau in Dex's career and, for us, as an opportunity to share in the workings of one of the great hearts and minds of improvised music."



"Homecoming—

Live At The Village Vanguard"

The spectacular return of Dexter Gordon.

On Columbia Records and Tapes.



## DAVE BROWN

LIKES TO GET PEOPLE  
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MAJOR AND ALSO WORKED  
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DAVE LOVES THE

MORNING SHIFT. "THERE'S

SOMETHING ABOUT THE MORNINGS THAT'S UNLIKE ANY OTHER SHIFT. YOU THINK ABOUT THE PEOPLE THAT  
YOU ARE WAKING UP AND YOU GOTTA GET EM GOING. THINKING ABOUT THAT GETS ME GOING." DAVE  
CAN WAKE YOU UP WITH GREAT ALBUM CUTS, INTERVIEWS AND STORIES ABOUT ROCK STARS AND  
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## Teddy Remembers Harold: "I can't deal with a guy who drinks three fifths of Courvoisier per concert evening"...

Gamble's choice. Though many of the major companies were bidding for his services, either as a solo or with the group, Teddy returned to Philly International. In what some may consider a cold-hearted move, he left his BlueNotes behind, and signed his contract as a solo artist.

Now after the year of hassles, litigations, and negotiations, Teddy's back with a take-charge confidence and style. He's more relaxed, glad the problems have been resolved, and ready to go out and show the world just who the real Teddy Pendergrass is. His first Philly Int'l album, simply titled after his name, has been released, and he's singing with more melody and passion than ever before. "That's the problem you have when you're dealing with a group," Teddy said while surveying downtown L.A. from his hotel suite on a recent swing through town. "I had to shout to make myself heard. I don't like to shout, I like to sing."

And sing he does. Pendergrass has a voice that grew up on gospel, so the shouts and screams he was forced into with the BlueNotes carried a raw urgency. But now, there's less shouting, more singing, and his voice cries with the same urgent edge. With just the right combination of sex and soul, Teddy may well become the next in a long line of black male superstars including Sam Cooke, Marvin Gaye, and Al Green.

The 28-year-old Pendergrass is from Philadelphia by way of North Carolina. He was originally the BlueNotes drummer before Harold noticed his voice, gave him a suit, taught him the choreography, and brought him up front. In the four years he was lead singer for the BlueNotes he became immersed in the orchestrated backbeat of the Philly Sound. That's where he wants his music to stay, and that's where this album is.

Recorded at Sigma Sound with the famed Philly studio band MFSB backing, Pendergrass's debut is one of the most consistent albums to be released from the recently cooled off Philadelphia stable. Using Gamble and Huff as the main songwriting emphasis, plus the added talents of the Whitehead, McFadden, Carstarphen team, the lyrics are optimistic, positive preaches that characterized the formula used with Melvin's BlueNotes. "Somebody Told Me" is the album's standout cut, and though it rings of Kenny Gamble Bible-totin' philosophy, Teddy's delivery makes it believable. "I Don't Love

You Anymore" is another ear grabber with an uptempo backing which matches perfectly with Teddy's vibrant delivery.

Now that Pendergrass is in control of his career, he also plans for his live shows. A tour is planned for the summer, but Teddy wants to get away from the carbon copy image most Philly artists project. "I'm going to use some props, not on every tune 'cause I don't believe in that, but to highlight certain tunes," Teddy explained. "I'm trying to change this music around and give blacks a new look, a bigger look. Rather than just straight up singing song after song, I've got things carefully formatted to create a certain image that's effective."

Pendergrass has successfully done one of the hardest things to do in the anonymous world of black vocal groups with his breakaway. After one of his shows last year, he complained backstage, "The people who were here tonight knew my name, and the people who weren't thought I was Harold Melvin." Now there's no more room for mistakes and misrepresentation, and Pendergrass will either make it on his own, or not at all.

After this year of headaches was there any animosity towards Melvin? Last year, Teddy had some not so nice things to say about the man who initially gave him a chance and then struggled to keep him down. He prefaced his remarks with, "I'm not trying to say anything bad about him because he's a hell of a guy, I dig him." On a personal level, yes, but on a professional level he went on to say, "I can't deal with a guy who drinks three fifths of Courvoisier per concert evening. I can't deal with him when he starts throwing glasses and tearing up hotel rooms. I don't want to get carried away, but he started separating himself from everybody, started getting a different dressing room."

A year later, the star is firmly placed on Teddy's dressing room. Both Teddy and Harold realize the bottom line is money, which is being held in escrow until the legal snares are solved. In an imaginary conversation with Melvin, Teddy says, "Cool it with the egos. You can't get the money without me, and I can't get it without you. Do we want the money? Well, let's walk to the bank together." Then he confides with a wink, "He's tried to get it, sometimes I've tried to get it. It don't work. When you got six digits in the bank, they won't give it to you."

# NOOOO! I AIN'T GONNA BUMP NO MORE WITH NO BIG FAT WOMAN!

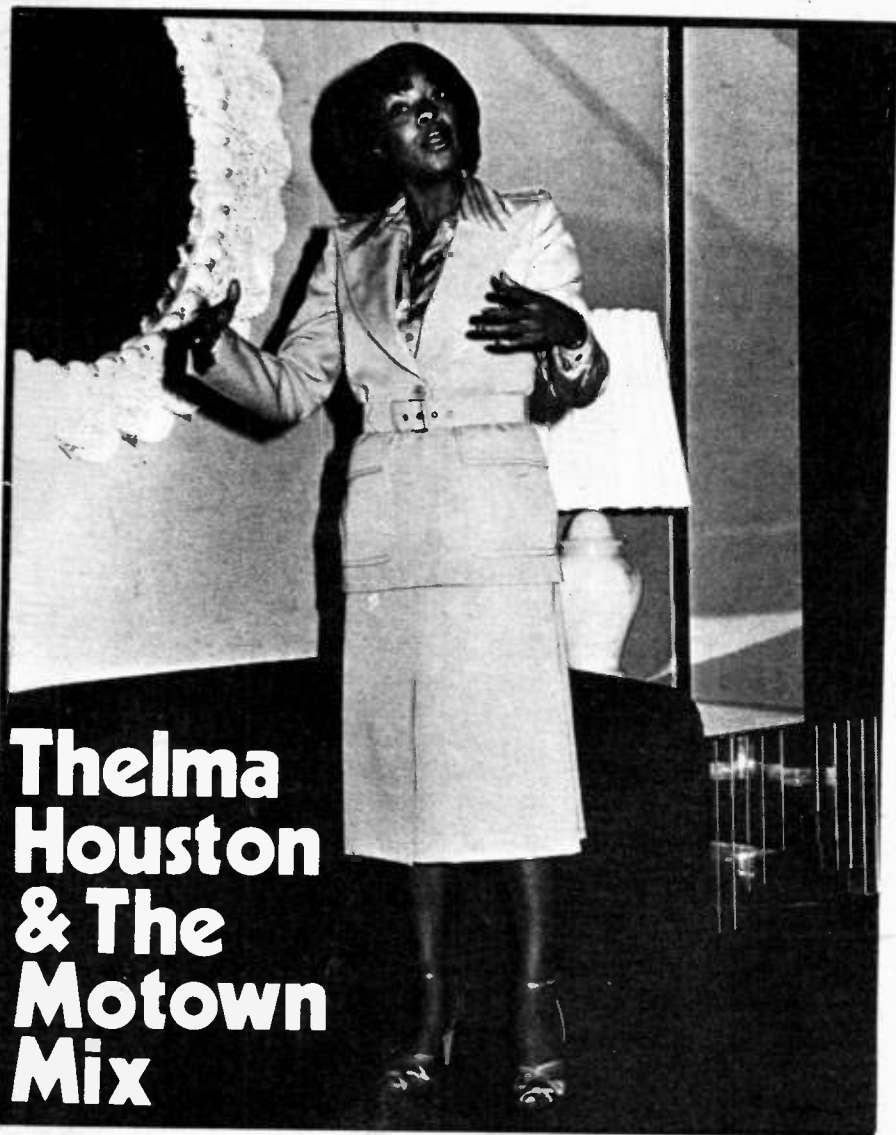
And you can't make me.  
I learned my lesson.  
And I got the bumps and  
bruises to show for it.  
"Bumps & Bruises." That's my  
new album on Epic Records  
and Tapes. It features Joe  
Tex's (that's me) hit single,  
"Ain't Gonna Bump No More  
(With No Big Fat Woman)."

**JOE TEX  
BUMPS & BRUISES**

including:  
Ain't Gonna Bump No More  
Be Cool (Willie Is Dancing With A Sissy)  
Hungry For Your Love/Jump Bad! We Held On



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## Thelma Houston & The Motown Mix

"If your art is accessible, then you work a lot."

By MARC SHAPIRO

"I've been doing this professionally since 1969 and this is the first big hit I've had," affirmed Thelma Houston. "It was deliberate. Motown wanted me to have a hit, but not half as bad as I did."

Houston's explanation of the success of "Don't Leave Me This Way" bounced off the Motown office walls with obvious relish. The elation stood out in her wide, expressive eyes. Ever since releasing an album of all Jimmy Webb songs eight years ago, many have regarded Houston as a more than common artistic talent. But it's taken a less challenging, disco-influenced song to prove her worth on a mass level. Despite the blatant commercial intentions of the song, Houston's first chart action in three years is the choicest bit of move music to be trotted out this year.

Granted, Houston's gospel-tinged vocals backed by a typical though effective rhythm section could easily qualify as yet another link out of the disco sausage factory. But the diverse nature of her *Anyway You Want It* LP reveals anything but a pop music hack. Houston asserted that this diversity makes her more than merely the latest one-shot disco moaner.

"Just because 'Don't Leave Me This Way' is a hit, I hope people aren't expecting me to get up

onstage and do fifty-five minutes of disco," she sighed. "Sure the record was broken by the discos, and I'm grateful for that. But I don't want to be typecast as just a disco singer."

"What we did with this last album is put a bit of all kinds of music on it. I've been doing that type of thing all along. There are some really dramatic soul songs, a couple of blues numbers and some gospel."

Houston's proficiency at a wide variety of vocal licks had its beginnings in a highly musical childhood. Gospel proved early on a strength that led her to her first recorded effort as part of The Art Reynolds Singers. Subsequent touring with that group turned what had been a passing fancy into a life-long occupation. After performing regularly at Los Angeles area nightclubs, Houston garnered a recording contract from ABC in 1969. Then came the acclaimed Webb album, and some singles recognition with a cover version of Laura Nyro's "Save The Country."

Houston signed with Motown in '72 and plugged along, hitless for two years until "You've Been Wrong For So Long" jolted the R&B charts and earned her a Grammy nomination. Interspersed between hit singles, Houston had added her distinctive touch to movie soundtracks (Nor-

[Continued on next page]



## DEXTER WANSEL'S WHAT THE WORLD IS COMING TO.

It started with Kenny Gamble and Leon Huff hearing Dexter's keyboard style. Pretty soon there were people like The O'Jays, Archie Bell, Billy Paul and Teddy Pendergrass listening.

When Dexter Wansel's first solo album "Life on Mars" happened, the real crowds started. They followed Dexter on his sold-out tour with Billy Paul and Jean Carn, and they came away wanting even more.

And here it is: "What the World Is Coming To." It's a brilliant musical mix of beat, beauty and brains combining progressive ideas with the best of Philly's writers. Travel with Dexter Wansel, and you're in good company.

"What the World Is Coming To." New, from Dexter Wansel. On Philadelphia International Records and Tapes.



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SOUL & JAZZ SINGLES



By JOE McEWEN

From our Soul Correspondent: On a recent evening we traveled to the home of a friend of ours who keeps us abreast of current affairs in soul music. Our friend is both a fan of the music and a collector of records, and he keeps his 45 r.p.m.'s piled neatly in his living room. A quick glance through one stack showed him to be a fan of Solomon Burke and the Magnificent Men, and though we were anxious to hear records by both, our friend reminded us that we had been invited over to hear several of the latest soul music singles.

"Right now this is my favorite," said our friend, slipping the first single on his turntable. "It's the new Marvin Gaye, called 'Got to Give It Up.' Marvin's falsetto is so soft sometimes you can't even hear it, but what's great about the song is the groove. Listen," he said, snapping his fingers. We opined about how it sounded quite different from other recent Marvin Gaye singles he had played us because there were no strings and

only one horn. "That's right. And even you can't always make out all the words. I've deciphered the first few lines: 'I used to go to parties/And just stand around/Because I was too nervous to really get down.' A lot of people can relate to that," he said, nodding his head. We hastened to agree.

Our friend is a copious collector of soul music trivia and carries a fondness for soul heroes of the Sixties. "Major Lance has a new record on Columbia that's kind of nice. It was recorded in Chicago, Major's home and has old-fashioned, Mayfield-type horns." We liked the song, but were quickly informed that "it probably won't be a hit." Too bad, we nodded sadly. "That's the problem with all these big labels grabbing up acts left and right," began our friend. "If you put out a big pile of records, a lot will get overlooked. Epic, which is the other half of Columbia, has just released a Jimmy Ruffin single called 'Fallin' in Love With You' and another one by the Soul Children." Our friend played both for us. He seemed to really like the Soul Children record. "The Jimmy Ruffin is an ok Philadelphia, uptempo record. I mean you can dance to it. But the Soul Children still have the deep gospel feeling and you don't hear that much

[Continued on next page]

"WATER BABIES."  
NEW MUSIC FROM  
MILES' PAST.

This was the group. Herbie Hancock, Ron Carter, Wayne Shorter, Tony Williams, Chick Corea, and Dave Holland. As individuals, they became the leaders in the music of the '70's. But together in one band—in Miles' band—they were making music for all time. Later, Miles would plug-in to send his electrified message around the globe. This was the group that grew up lean and alive and spoke in a chorus of whispers.

MILES DAVIS  
WATER BABIES

including:  
Capricorn/Sweet Pea/Two Faced  
Dual Mr. Tillman Anthony/Water Babies



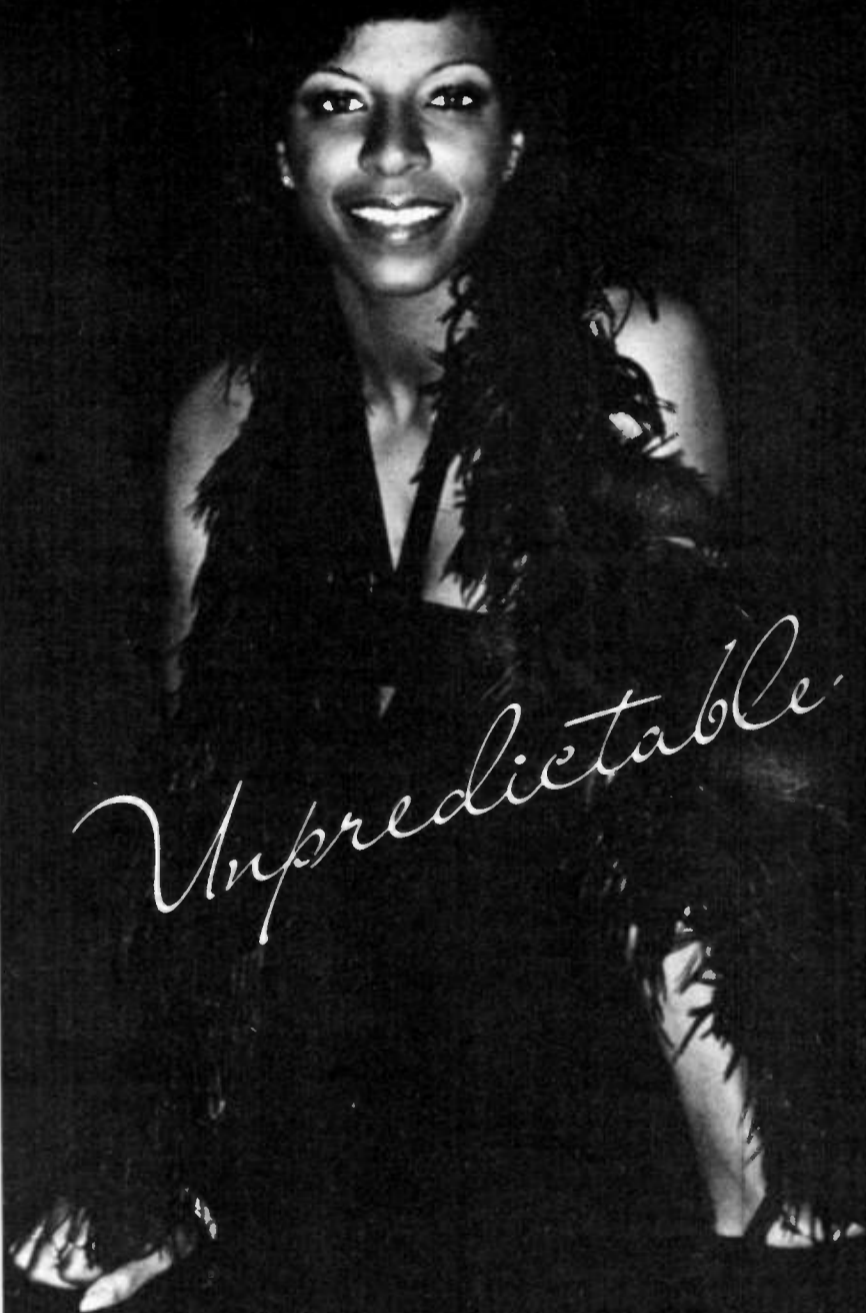
"WATER BABIES" FROM THE FATHER  
OF THEM ALL, MILES DAVIS.  
ON COLUMBIA RECORDS & TAPES.



PRODUCED BY TEO MACERO

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Natalie Cole



Unpredictable

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.



Capitol



**Thelma**

man Is That You and bingo Long Travelling All-Stars and Motor Kings) and acting roles in "Death Scream" and "The Seventh Dwarf."

According to Houston, her varied schedule has gone hand in hand with what can best be described as freedom of expression carried to an infinite degree.

"I've been described as a textbook vocalist. Now that can be misleading in that it makes me out to be a step by step formula singer, which I'm not. I don't adhere to any real disciplines when it comes to singing a song. You'll never catch me getting up at six in the morning to do four hours of vocalisimos.

"The sense of freedom and unstructuredness in my singing comes from my early training in gospel. Gospel, by its very nature, allows the singer to play around with the structure of a song in order to get the right emotion into it."

The sense of newness that permeates Thelma Houston's music also extends to her per-

forming stance. Most performers would groan slightly at the prospect of supporting a Top Ten single with a three-month long headlining tour. But for Houston, the prospect of one-nighters is anything but a drag.

"I'm excited about going on the road. I've been doing this kind of thing since 1967, but I haven't really worked a lot. It used to be a couple of weeks on the road and six months sitting around doing nothing. But that's good because now that I'm getting to go out on a major tour the excitement will still be there.

"And because the excitement is in it for me it will also be there for the audience. You know, the most important thing you can communicate to an audience is that you're having a good time. When the people out there know you're really into what you're doing they pick up on the vibes and get excited too."

The conversation closed with, Thelma waxing realistic on her ten-year climb to the top. "Nobody deliberately sets out to struggle for ten years before suddenly making it. But I think, because it has taken me so long, I've learned things that will help keep me on top. It boils down to being an artist and striving to get your art across to the public. If your art's accessible then you work a lot.

"And for an entertainer that's what it's all about."

#### SOUL & JAZZ 45's (continued)

anymore. Anyway, neither will probably do much, because Epic is just too big and puts out too many records.

"For awhile I was really down on Miami soul," our friend said, quickly changing subjects while shuffling through his pile. "But I like a new record by some guy I never heard of on Drive Records. Here it is, Rocky Mizell. It's called 'Hey Sexy Dancer'. It's sort of a cross between 'Rock Your Baby' and 'Clean Up Woman.' This is really good," our friend said, and he played it three more times. We admitted that the record was not without some charm.

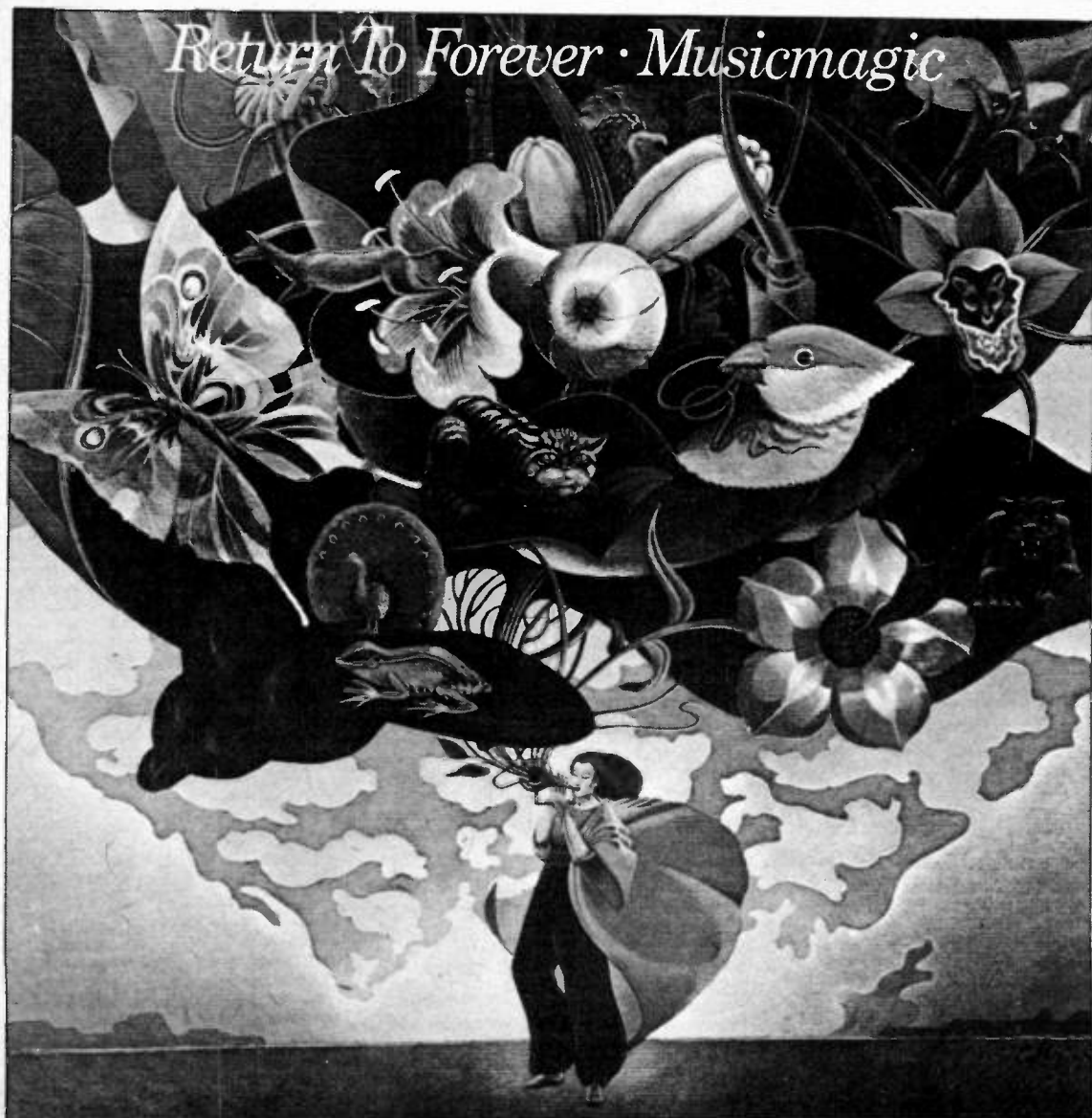
We noted a record in the pile by Betty Everett and remembering a record by Betty Everett from our past called "It's in His Kiss," were curious to know what she sounded like now. "This was my favorite for about three days, which means it's pretty good," said our friend. "It's called 'Prophecy,' except they spell it wrong on the label. Anyway, it's a song that Lamont Dozier wrote for the last Margie Joseph album. Betty's version is a lot faster and better." He played both versions for us and we agreed that the new Betty Everett single was better. We especially liked the part where she keeps repeating "The writing on the wall babe" and we made a note to listen for it on the radio.

Our friend also seemed excited

about a new song from someone named Rance Allen. "He used to be in a gospel group called the Rance Allen Group. I guess now he's just by himself because there's only one name on the label. When I first saw the record I was upset. The label said the record was produced by the Mizell Brothers, who are producers of what I call mass-produced jazz. You know, Donald Byrd, Bobbi Humphrey and all that kind of stuff." We added our own distaste for that kind of stuff. "vowed to go home and play a Sonny Clark album to erase the bad thoughts.

We looked at the wall clock and realized it was getting late. We asked if there were any more good soul singles we should know about. "Well, I like the new Cissy Houston record, 'Love is Something That Leads You,' a ballad, and Paul Kelly's 'Standing on the Positive Side of Life.' He's always been a favorite of mine. Also 'Love Makes the World Go Round' by Papa's Results. Dave Crawford produced it. A nice new version of an old song."

We said thank you to our friend and made an appointment to come back again and hear some more soul singles. On the way home we heard a new single by a group we remembered from the past, Sam and Dave. We wondered why our friend hadn't played their version of the Beatles "We Can Work It Out." We were happy to hear they were still making records.



## MEET THE MAGICIANS.

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Produced by Chick Corea.  
Co-produced by Stanley Clarke.

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# Soul & Jazz Reviews

Ralph Towner

Diary



DIARY  
Ralph Towner  
ECM 1032

By RUSSELL SHAW

One does not relate to a Ralph Towner album with references to licks, technique, or even theme. Towner's seductively pensive playing has a way of hushing the analytical part of the brain, while simultaneously activating the part of the medulla that puts pictures in the mind's eye when certain configurations and tonalities are issued.

Leader of Oregon, an acoustic jazz quartet with pronounced Indian influences, Towner has nevertheless found time to pursue an active solo career. Sometimes,

these recorded efforts are done as duets with other musicians; witness recent collaborations with vibraphonist Gary Burton and guitarist John Abercrombie. As would be expected, these excursions reveal more of Towner's highly individualistic musical attitudes as opposed to his work in the foursome, which is saddled with pacesetting and occasional arrangement duties.

The unaccompanied Towner provides a complete realization of his ultimate potential; that as a crafter of myriad moods and sound textures. His main instrument is the guitar; a hushed, muted classical axe whose voicings border on reticence. Despite an abundance of dexterous ability, needless pyrotechnics are avoided. You'll never find Ralph resorting to the endless one chord, rapid variations which have plebianized the acoustic contributions of John McLaughlin or Larry Coryell. Instead, he's more likely to be on a surreal, understated cloud, strumming for onomopedic effect, picking only to enhance special moments when emotional vividity is craved.

On *Diary*, Towner is also heard on an exceptionally lyrical acoustic piano. Here, his stock in trade seems to be whispered, background piano rolls, heavy use of the foot pedal, with an occasional arpeggio-laden right handed lead ride. Both ivory and fretboard

coalesce smoothly. The necessary overdubbing is done with a sense of taste rather than gimmickry.

Although much of this material has not been heard before, two works emanate from Towner's days with the Paul Winter Consort, an Oregon-type group with a cult following in the early seventies.



HYMNS SPHERES  
Keith Jarrett  
ECM-2-1086

By COLMAN ANDREWS

Keith Jarrett is certainly to be commended for the determination with which he attempts to expand his repertoire. He uses his popularity carefully, almost humbly; he keeps it in check and trades it for the chance to do something unusual—solos, duos, string pieces, even vocals (earlier in his career). Now, of all things, he has recorded a two-record solo recital on Karl Joseph Riepp's

"Trinity" pipe organ—a massive Baroque instrument at the Benedictine Abbey in Ottobeuren, West Germany.

The music is uncharacteristically austere; it is almost as if Jarrett were slightly intimidated by the age or implications of the organ. It is much less playful, much less circular, much less intense, than his solo piano music is. There is a kind of clean religiosity about it, rather like a simplified version of Messiaen. (It is not impossible that Jarrett has listened to *Les Corps glorieux* or *La Nativite du Seigneur*.)

The two hymns, in fact—"Hymn of Remembrance" and "Hymn of Release"—could probably be slipped into a contemporary church service of some kind and not raise an eyebrow. The former, especially, is conventional in form and very plain harmonically. "Spheres," a nine-movement piece which takes up the greater part of the two discs, is more complex, more interesting, and more spiritually evocative, but it is difficult to shake the feeling that Jarrett is taking the whole thing far more seriously than it deserves to be taken.

This is a finely-crafted album with moments of great thoughtfulness and calm, but it is strangely flat as a whole. Jarrett is a competent, relatively unsophisticated composer of serious music; he is a great jazz pianist.

## Maynard Ferguson's "Conquistador." His victory is your reward.

Ever since Maynard Ferguson burst upon the music scene with his inimitable big band sound, he's continued to redefine the boundaries of progressive music with each successive album.

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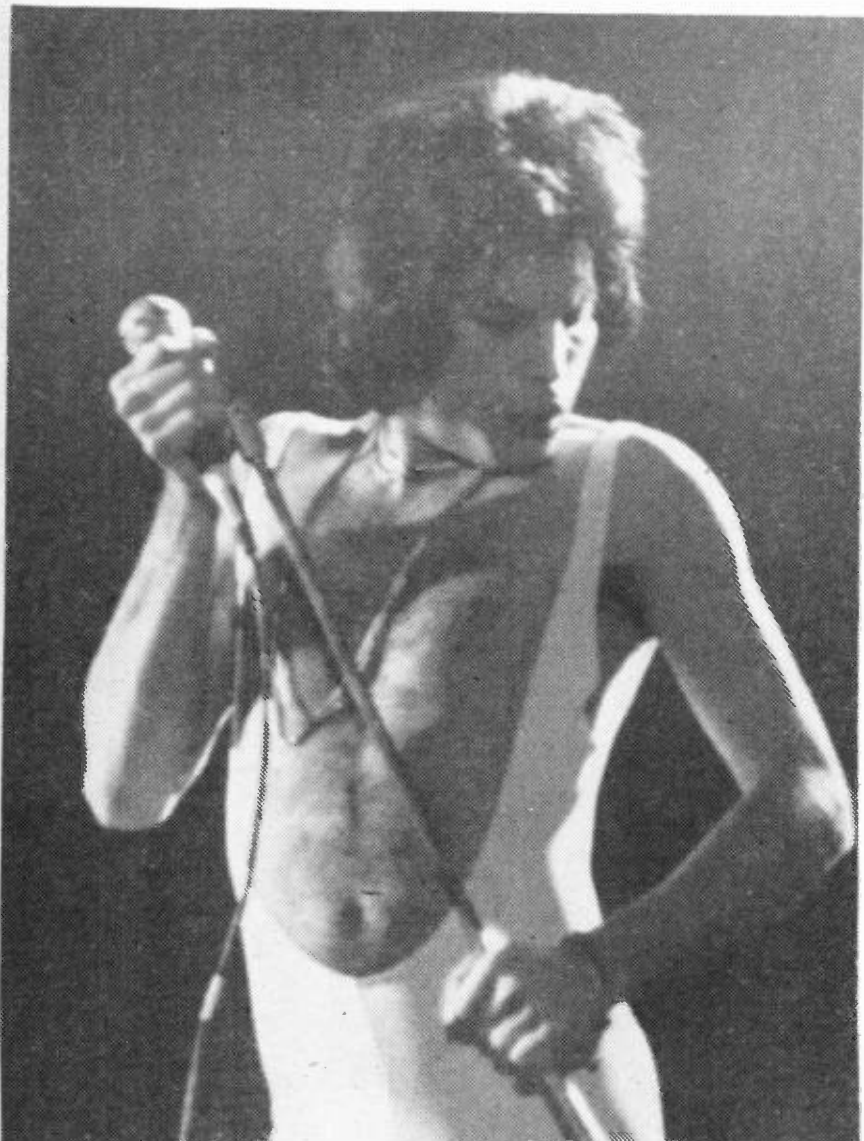
Produced by Jay Chattaway.



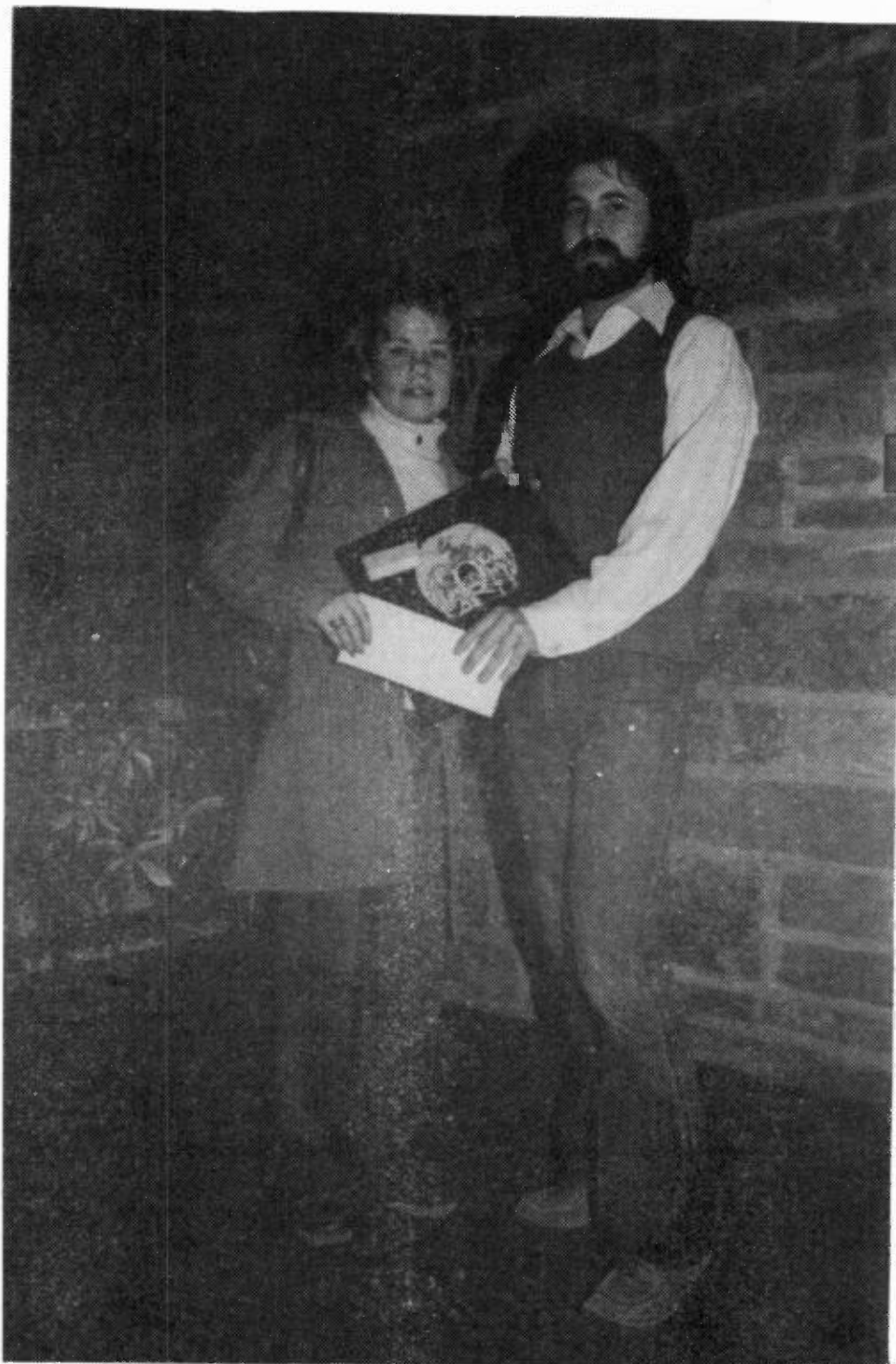
# HAGERSTOWN HIGH SCHOOL SENIOR WINS DAY AT THE RACES

When 17 year old Sally Porter won a pair of tickets to see Queen at the University of Maryland, she qualified for a trip to the Indy 500, but was one of the last people to hear she had won the contest.

Sally spent the night with girl friends at Maryland, but couldn't convince them to make a midnight trip to a car in a nearby parking lot so she could hear the winner drawn on radio. Sally learned she had won on the way back to Hagerstown the next day.



Freddie Mercury of Queen at Cole Field House

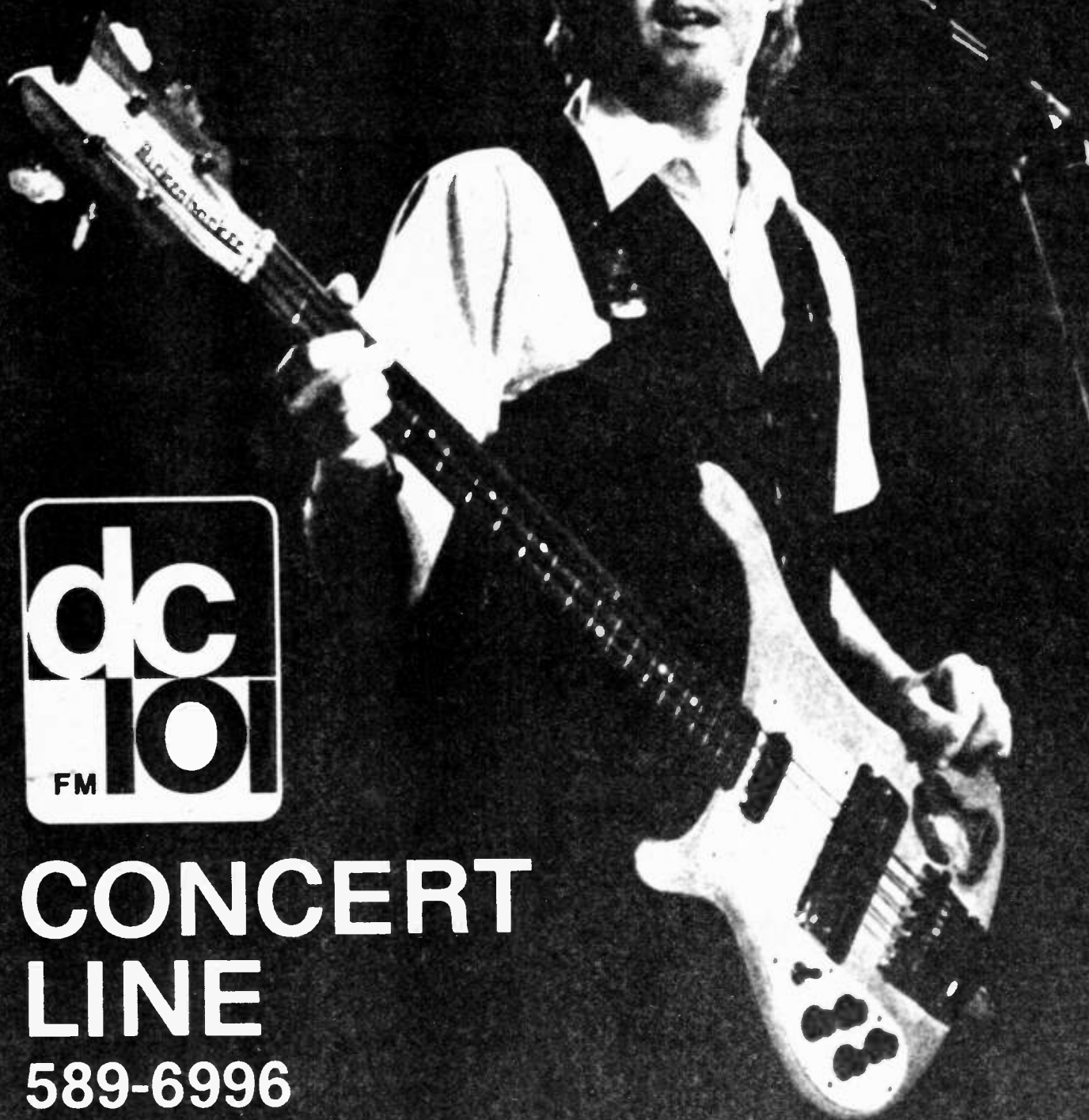


Program Director Dwight Douglas presents Sally Porter with airline tickets for two to Indianapolis, tickets to the Queen's Ball, Festival Parade, Reserved seats at the Indy 500 and hotel accommodations.



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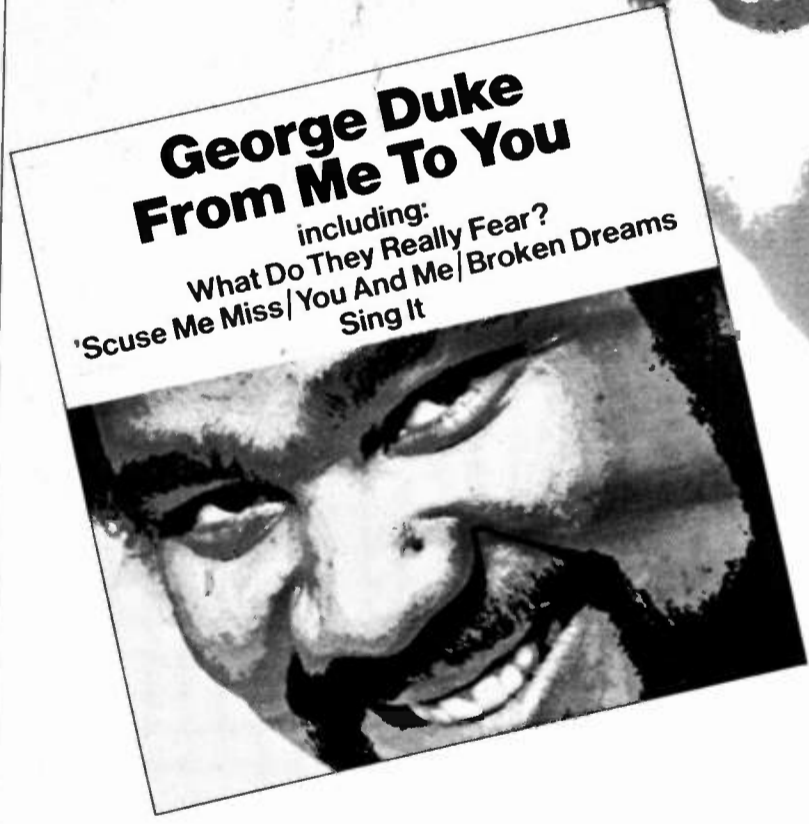
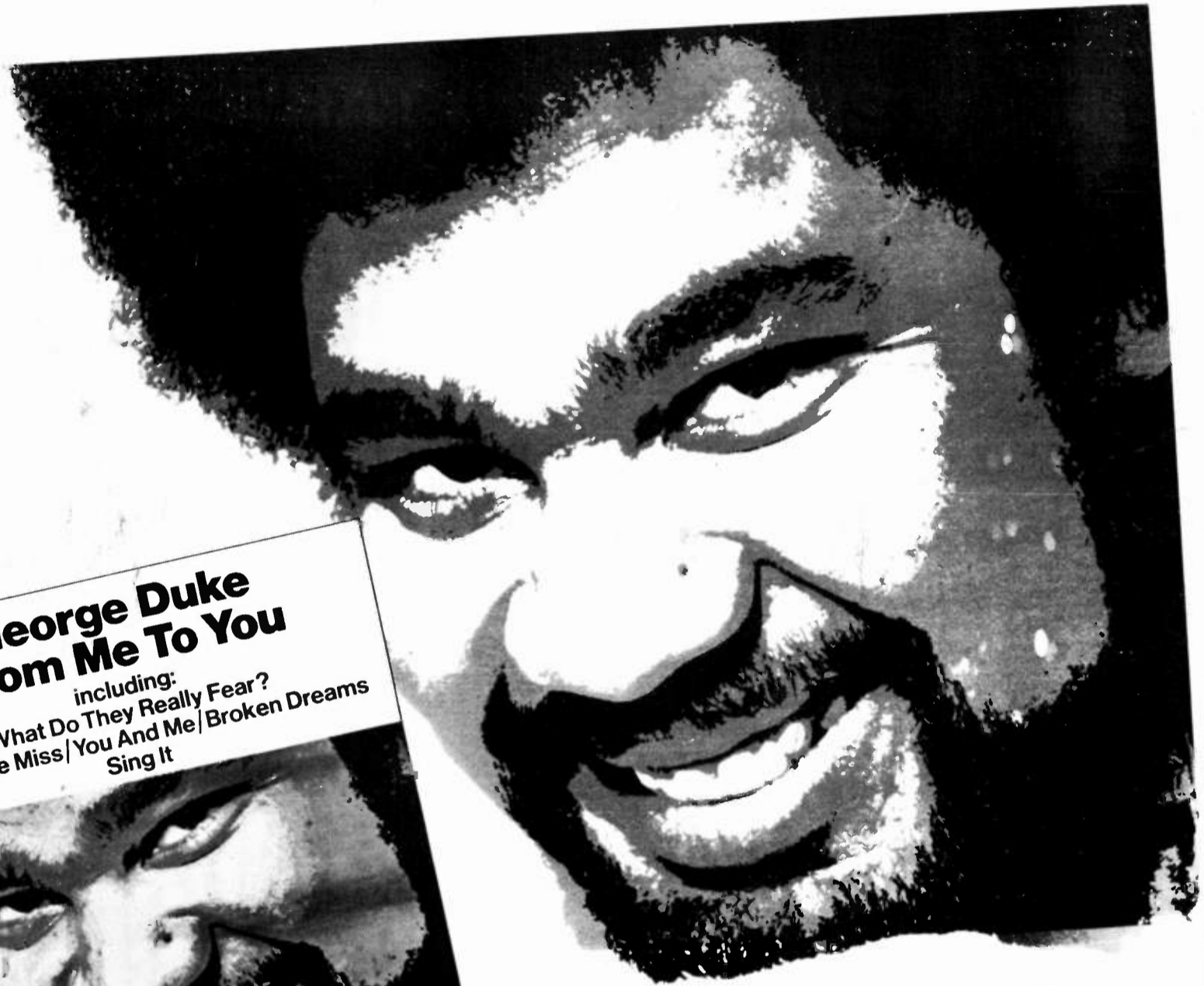


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The only thing that stays the same in George Duke's new world of music is his tireless imagination. From his keyboard control center, he leads a new band that's footloose and free, with a beat that stays tight while the music unwinds. And all the excitement George Duke gave to the Cobham-Duke Band and the Mothers of Invention, he's now giving directly to you.

**George Duke. "From Me to You." His debut album on Epic Records and Tapes.**

Produced by George Duke for George Duke Enterprises, Inc.



# Dave Mason is an island.

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Dave Mason is one of the handful of true originals.

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In addition to the immensely popular "So High (Rock Me Baby and Roll Me Away)," the totally new "Let It Flow" album contains five new Mason-penned tunes, musical support from members of Dave's sensational touring band, and a few new directions that are guaranteed to raise a few eyebrows.

It's all got the Dave Mason sound and feel...and flow.  
The one that stands alone.

"Let It Flow," including the incredible "So High (Rock Me Baby and Roll Me Away)" On Columbia Records and Tapes.