

PHOTOGRAPH

RECORD MAGAZINE

JUNE, 1977
Issue #79

LA Mystery Men
Invade Air Space War

Steely Dan

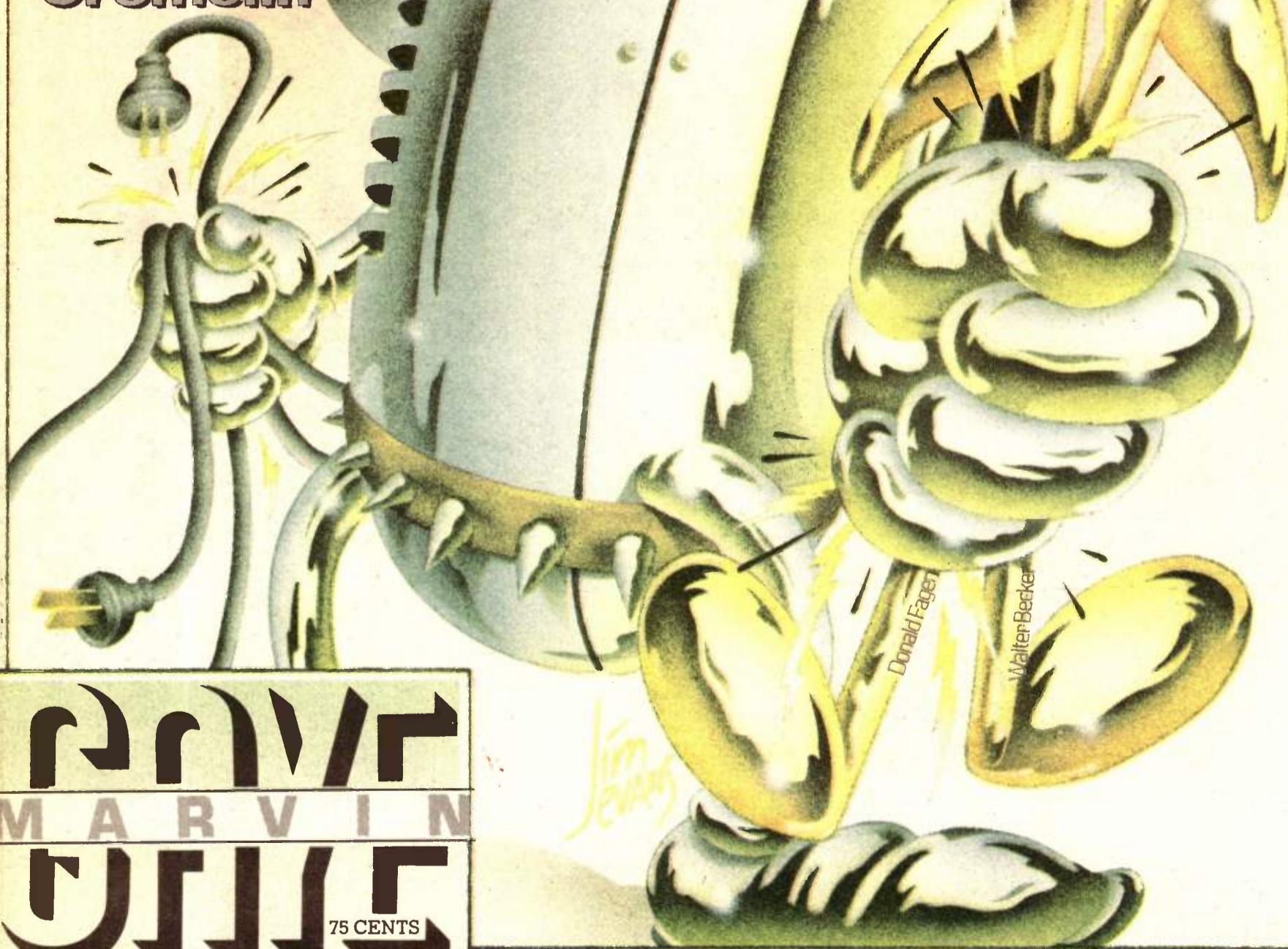
Rock Technology

from
The Master
Cylinder

By
Richard
Cromelin

Beatle
Fiction!
Beatle Myth
Realized

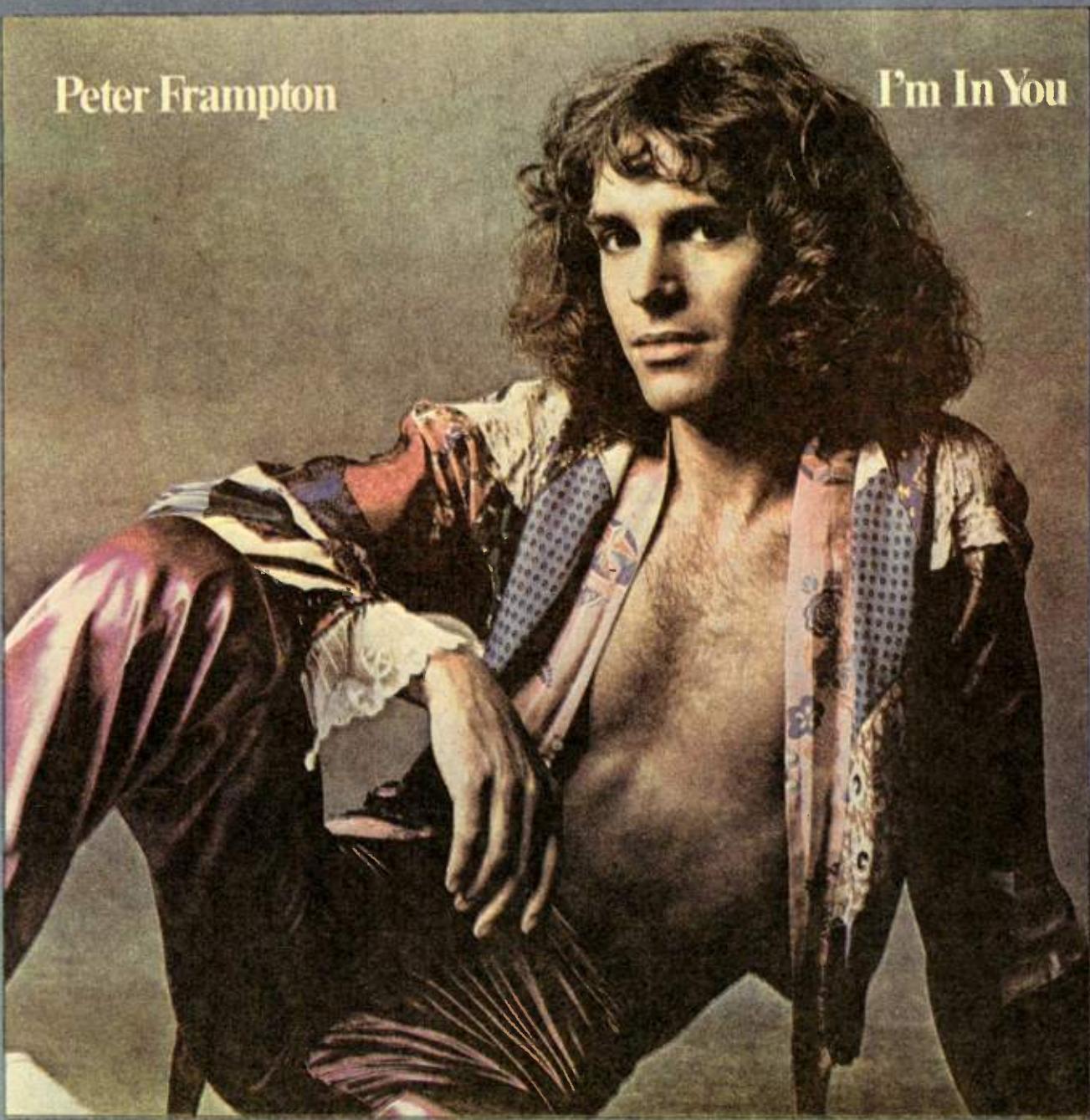
By Martin
Cerf



PHOTOGRAPH
M A R V I N
G R I L L
75 CENTS

Peter Frampton

I'm In You



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Phonograph Record Magazine is now into its seventh year. When we started, way back in September, 1970, the publication—like a then developing contemporary music/programming format on FM radio—began as an experiment. Half a dozen years on and

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

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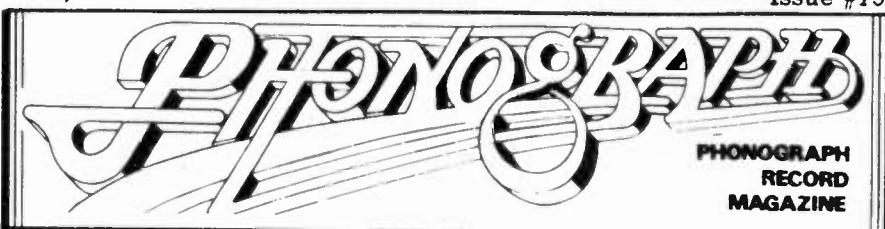
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QUINCY JONES
PRODUCTIONS INC.



June, 1977

Issue #79



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Walter Becker and Donald Fagen are Steely Dan. They don't have a manager, they don't tour, they don't cater to AM, and the only image they have is of aloof, reclusive rock misfits who'd rather play with machines than with fellow humans. Actually, things ought to change: Their visibility will soon increase with the July release of *Aja*, their sixth album, and the first Steely Dan tour in three years. And they are definitely *characters*: Guesting on Richard Cromelin's KPFK-LA radio show, Becker and Fagen reveal the men behind the metal.

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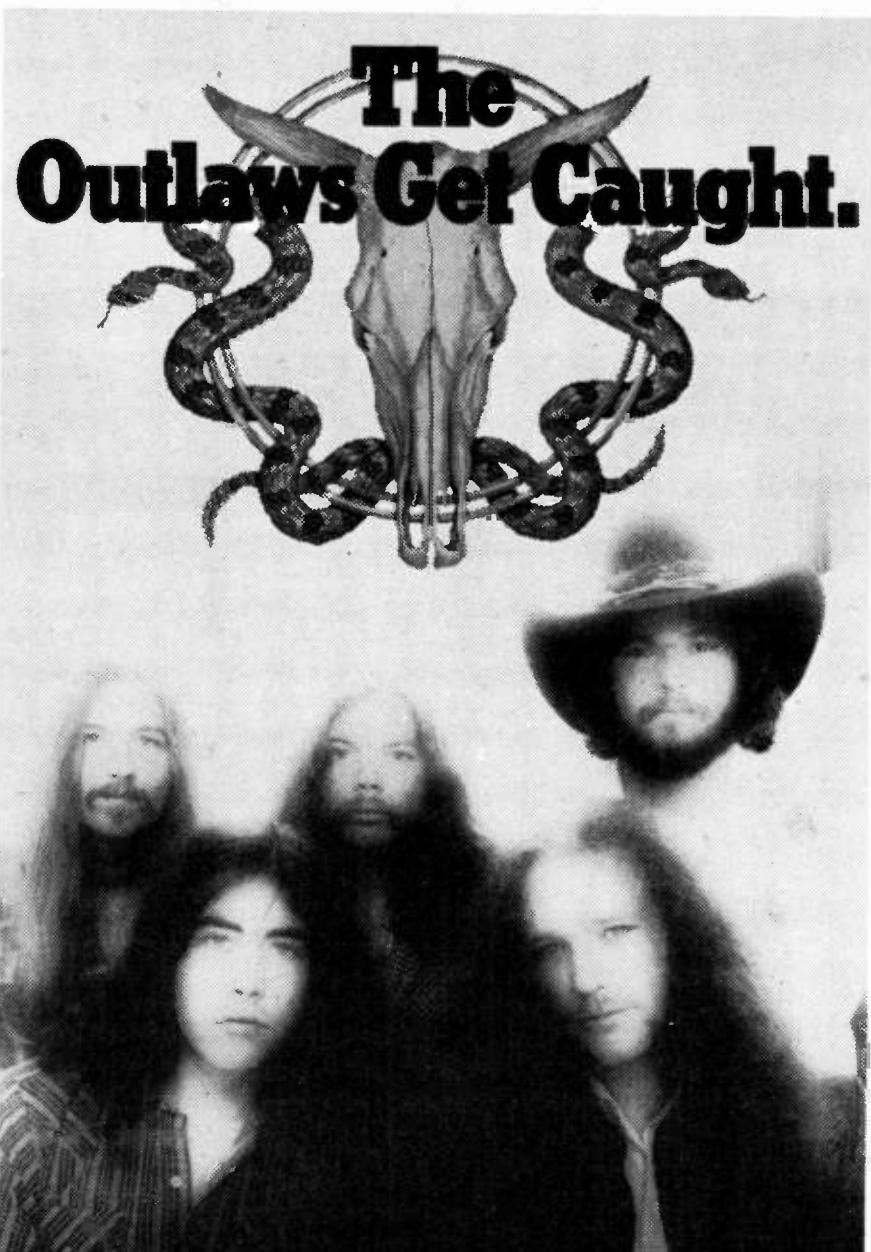
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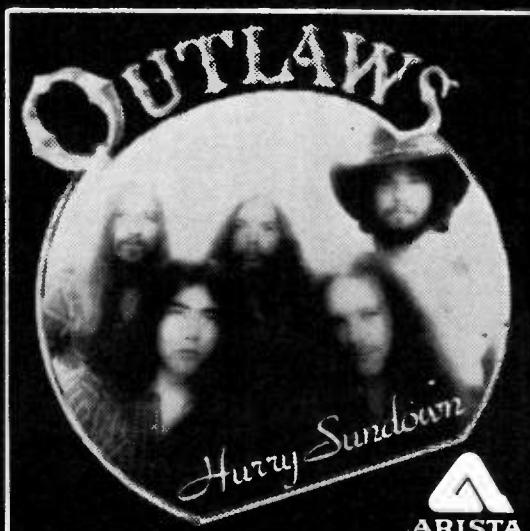


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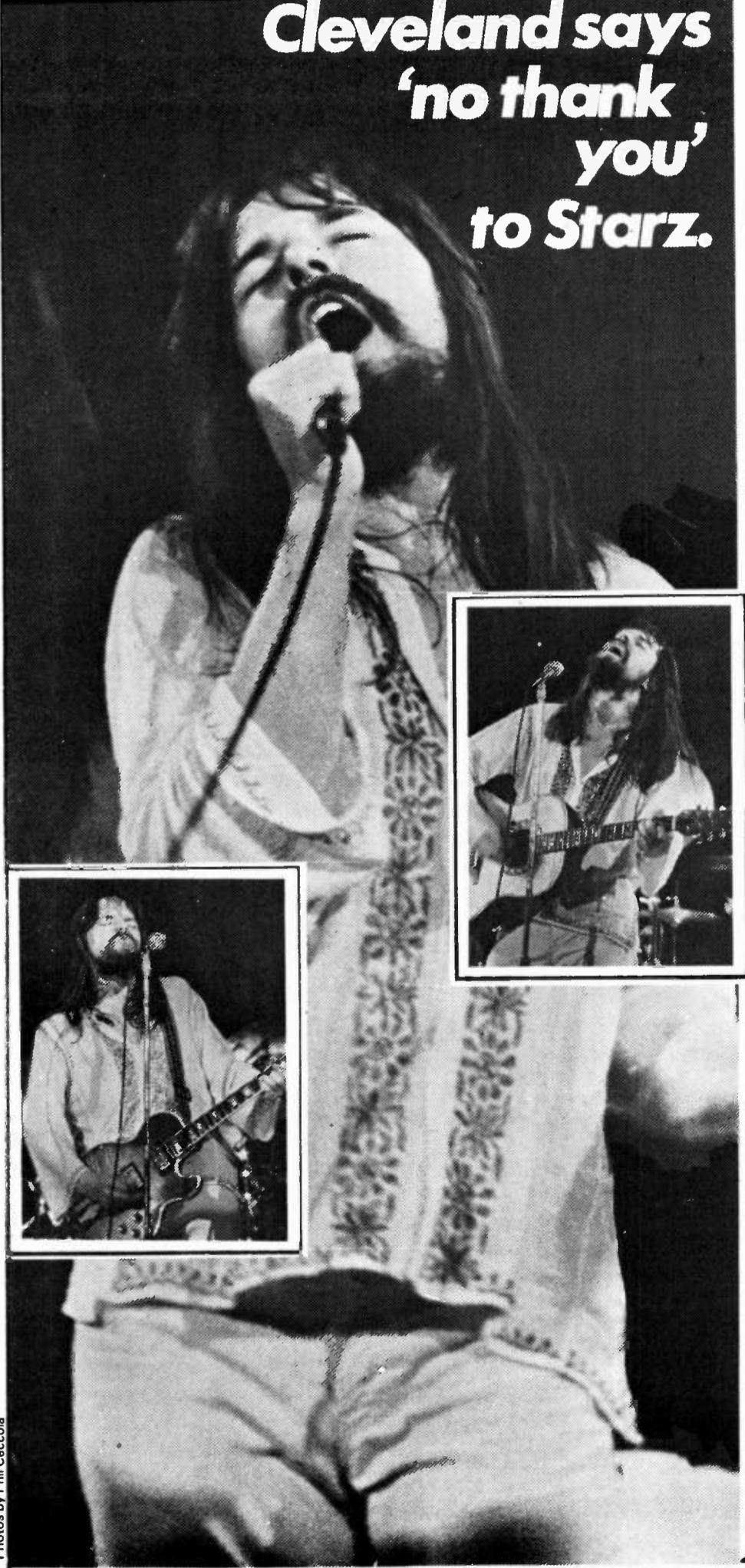


'77 will be the year of the Outlaws.

On Arista Records

Performances

**Cleveland says 'yes
please' to Bob Seger...
Cleveland says
'no thank
you'
to Starz.**



Photos by Phil Ceccola

BOB SEGER
Starz
Public Hall
Cleveland, Ohio

By ANASTASIA PANTSIOS

Bob Seger's history and personal style are unpromising material from which to fashion rock and roll image. How much indigenous glamour could there be in an extremely long-haired, 30ish hippie-type rocker from Michigan who dresses down, like an urban factory worker. What future would you have predicted for an act that worked the mid-west club circuit to death for some fifteen years?

There isn't anything in Bob Seger's music that provides for flashy 'instant-identity,' either. He just mingles ageless rock staples with strong, unsentimental ballads. Seger delivers this material to an audience in a warm, ragged-voice, backed by five pieces. Seger is no soap-box rock star. But he has managed to convert his 'plain-folks' platform into a genuine rallying point behind which millions now find themselves totally 'into.'

The stage show opens on "Rock and Roll Never Forgets" an autobiographical confession that admits the time passed while denying the possibility that anyone is 'too old' to rock—an appropriate statement for *this* survivor.

Last year's *Silver Bullet/Live* Seger was the first legit national hit LP in terms of sales. Previously, his popularity was decidedly regional. Also in '76, he officially achieved super-star status back home in Detroit when he headlined Pontiac Stadium to 65,000 locals. Interestingly, only days later, just a few hundred miles further 'round the Lake (Erie), he opened for "two headliners" in Cleveland. (The Cleveland music scene is no longer dictated by Detroit's standards as it was during rock's first two decades.)

Seger's popularity has unquestionably transcended those binding regional ties forever. Headlining Cleveland's 10,000 seat Public Hall to capacity is a vivid sign of the times. It's ironic—or logical (depending on the viewpoint) that Seger presents the same fare live in concert today he offered up yesterday at the local clubs and bars when you couldn't give away seats to see Seger live.

Seger is direct and shuns all rock-concert gimmickry—the light show and fireworks display are "strictly out," says Bob—"Gonesky, Jake". Seger presents live on stage "Himself". Excitement is created through the material, tension realized by sheer dynamics and perfect pacing. He's got that rhythm and it's right on time.

"Rock and Roll Never Forgets" leads the people into all phases of his musical life—from classy covers of Hawkins' "Mary Lou"

and Tina Turner's "Nutbush", through his own "Beautiful Loser," other ballads, and those fantastic rockers, "Ramblin', Gamblin' Man" and "2 + 2 = ?". We really do need this guy.

"Night Moves," Seger's first national hit single, is the first encore. When the audience asks for more, he delivers "Get Out of Denver," a rocker in the grand Chuck Berry tradition. They were pleased.

However, that's not exactly the verdict Cleveland's tough juke box jury reached for Starz.

Seger works with rock's most basic hardware, assembling some of its most worn parts into a customized tuck-and-roll job that is, when finished, an original. Starz too, invoke the Rock Postulates but they're not familiar with the new math and no matter how hard they try each time, when the group adds two plus two it inevitably comes up three. It's one sorry act folks. (Stay home—spend those Starz dollars on Eric Carmen's new records.)

Starz *really* suck. I mean, how dare they bring this incidental crap to a *Cleveland* stage—surely they didn't think they'd pull anything over on Cuyoga County rockers—regarded as this nation's most educated, discriminating and trendsetting ears (eyes and mouths too). Starz music has that tainted 'already ran,' spent-stench permeating the poor fellas' every nuance on stage (and off no doubt). The act's hyped 'stage-smartz' is just a choreographed parade of dirty laundry—the worst concert stock-footage rerun anywhere. You know the stuff—maliciously long drum solo, fireworks, even the dreaded illuminated 'group logo.' Starz live adorn rock's pastiest costume jewelry and it comes off so cheap that it cries for release. Kill them.

Lead singer Michael Lee Smith's 'crowd raps' are simply embarrassing, pitifully over-rehearsed dogma. Included are such standards as "Let's Make Cleveland The Rock and Roll Capitol of The World Tonight—How 'bout It Brothers?" And of course the ever popular "Is Everybody High Out There?—I said—Are Ya All High In The Back Row...?" It's so low.

Insult finally meets injury, head on, when the audience must watch this Smith-fool, up there on stage. Aging and, uh, overweight, writhing belly undulating inside disgustingly skin-tight red satin fabric which all too accurately traces his anatomy. "He's icky"—One of the fourteen-year-old chickies in the row behind us sized up Mickey's maximum sex-quotient.

Seger may be aging, and it's no secret he too lacks a Frampton-frame, but he doesn't force the issue—He'd never ever 'wear a dress' or do anything out-of-character on stage or off. This is the sobering difference between the Starzes and the Segers of this world.

HEART

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HEART'S NEW ALBUM IS "LITTLE QUEEN"
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VICIOUS DIRT, RUMORS and SCANDALS from HOLLYWOOD Rodney Bingenheimer

"If it's trendy,
I'll print it!"

Good summer, dearest boys and girls. The New Wave is upon us, and we're not talking surf music, either. Now everyone knows what "punk" means, what with **The Damned** having conducted class at The Starwood last week. Your Prince arranged crash pads for the boys at the respective homes of Sex Pistols' lookalikes Tomata and Gear (of the Screamers) and Backstage Pass's Marina Del Rey and Jenny Shores. The two nights at The Starwood were, let me say, historical. Naughty boys and girls threw bottles and ice onstage, and The Damned did not appreciate: Drummer **Rat Scabies** attacked people with drum sticks and manager **Jake Riviera** leaped onstage and screamed what "a bunch of fat Californians" everyone was, "driving their Cadillacs," and how "Gene Vincent died for your sins but not the band's." (Whatever else you say about this Cadillac-driving Californian, you can't say "fat.") Meanwhile, bassist **Captain Sensible** couldn't resist stripping his green nurse's dress and white pantyhose. It was quite a scene with all the flashing away at Sensible's very naked presence.

Afterwards, Yours Truly escorted the boys to a place where some of the "rich and fat" meet — in my luxurious black Cadillac did we travel to Beverly Hills in-crowd hang-out, Dr. Munchies. The boys weren't impressed. Then to

Canter's, known for its late-night going's on and as being the creative grounds of young Frank Zappa. The evening ended with a very trendy cheesecake and bagel fight.

While in town, The Damned were given much valuable air time on KROQ's one and only "Rodney-On-The-ROQs" radio program. **Blondie** also came down and it was love at first bite between Damned lead singer **Dave Vanian** and that yum-yum **Debbie Harry**. Runaway **Joan Jett**, in her own unique way of showing affection, engaged Rat Scabies in a beer fight. You know what they say — the best part is always the making-(up).

Speaking of **The Runaways**, the girls left for their debut Japanese tour, and upon touching down in Tokyo, faced 1500 Japanese girls ripping at each other to get at Joan's leather

jacket and Cherie's blonde locks — this was Beatlemania. Every show sold out, the girls sneaking into and out of concert halls, Monkees-style. For the TV shows they filmed, laundry trucks were used as transportation and protection. Joan herself was quite pleased to hear that idol **Suzi Quatro** was tying the knot with band member **Len Tuckey**; all The Runaways were invited to the wedding (no jam session, however). Busy, busy little girls: After Japan, The Runaways will hook-up with **Alice Cooper** for the Canadian leg of his tour. (Hot poop: The Runaways are auditioning bassists — you know the qualifications.)

All the little girls and their sisters in L.A. have been raving about the sensational **Babys**, who are now living here. Baby **John Waite** and I visited Cherie in the Encino hospital — very chic for a

hospital — where she was resting.

Keyboardist/rhythm guitarist **Michael Corby** managed a Cheap Trick on me when he called my radio show to announce my home phone number on the air. Phones, phones, ringing for days and days... My phone hasn't stopped ringing yet. (Now now children.) When the next Babys album — produced by in-crowder Ron Navison — is finished, the boys will tour Japan, where they're already a hot item. Hmmmm, maybe Rodney should make a goodwill visit there.

Another rave is **Cheap Trick**, from Chicago (we shall overlook), who came to our fair city for some recording and gigs. A few nights at The Whisky provided the boys with some live tapes they might use on their upcoming August release — My voice on introductions, of course.

Your very own Rodney is coming out of the artistic closet to make a very important 45 RPM record — yes, the New Wave will never be the same after "Let's Just Be Friends"/"And Then I Kissed Her," produced by **Danny and David Kessel**. **Phil Spector** shall be there in divine presence. Lots of castanets and maracas, believe me. (If you boys and girls want your very own copy, watch out at Bomp Records or send \$2.00 care of this lovely magazine.)

And if a Rodney record isn't enough, look out for my silver-screen debut in **The Adventures of Pedro** and the Man, starring **Cheech and Chong** and

produced by **Lou Adler**. The film features lotsa local talent, including the Berlin Brats, the Quick, Milk 'n' Cookies, Dils, The Whores, Mumps, Juice (an all girl band), Louie Louie, and a cast of thousands. Everyone is a star, the proverbial **Beach Blanket Bingo** of the '70s. Oh yes, go see **Sparks** in **Rollercoaster** — it's a real thriller, and while Timothy Bottoms does a great acting job, Sparks really steal the show.

Kim Fowley has returned to the streets — the Hollywood streets — to organize a showcase of all new local punk talent. This prime meat includes Zeros, Juice, Dils, LaRue, Germs, Screamers, Zippers, Weirdos, Backstage Pass and The Wildcats.

Random Rodney: Watch out for the debut **Van Halen** album on Warners. Also, Mick Ronson look-alike **Steve T.** (yet another Fowley find) hits the studio for Salsoul's Dream Records label; **Zolar X.** has hitched up with Motown's new Love Records. **The Sex Pistols** have signed with Virgin Records in England, but there is no American label yet.

Who'll be the company brave enough to take on "God Save The Queen (She Ain't No Human Being)" for American release — Is there something that Pat Siciliano can do?

The sun is starting to come up, boys and girls, and if Rodney is to play Rodney, I must get some zzzzzzz's immediately. But, before I beg leave, let me leave you a little reminder: Now that school is out, **Do Party**, my dears.

(left) **Don't mess with the upholstery, guys: Rodney & The Damned go tripping.** (center) **Hey, watch that hand! Rodney strokes Debbie Harry.** (right) **Rodney before molesting Babys John Waite & Michael Corby.**



Brad Elterman



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—Van Morrison

"When he finally makes another record that meets his stringent standards for release, buy it. If he comes to your town, go see him. Van Morrison can make even a sour critic believe, for a few hours at least, that music is everything."

—Timothy Ferris, Penthouse



BS 2987

On Warner Bros. Records and Tapes



Burton Cummings' Hard Rock Rebound

By KEN BARNES

Burton Cummings is destined to be a solo star, if he isn't classifiable as one already. His first single apart from the Guess Who, "Stand Tall," went gold, and his debut album sold very well, with a tour that drew out new fans as well as the old Guess Who faithful.

However, despite all this, widespread media coverage, an intensely committed label, and Richard Perry's agreement to continue behind the boards, Cummings has still been somewhat uneasy. "Stand Tall" was a slow, contemplative ballad, and much of the first LP was in a similar vein, giving the impression that he'd gone off his rockers. Cummings worries about being typecast as a middle-of-the-road song stylist cut from the mournful Manilow mold (a problem facing Eric Carmen as well).

Under no circumstances did Burton Cummings wish to be bagged as a balladeer only. His live show, backed by a torrid band, with pounding pianistics and a whole lot of shaking by the man himself, proved him to be a rocker at heart. Now on his second album, significantly titled *My Own Way To Rock*, Cummings goes out of his way to prove it on vinyl.

He established his credentials early with "Never Had A Lady Before," an uptempo keyboard workout rocking straightforwardly with a flavorful undercurrent of modern funk, to interesting and infectious effect. "Charlemagne" is probably the standout Cummings rocker here—upbeat, off-beat, and somewhat mysterious, sung with the consummate assurance and mastery of nuance that makes him North America's premier rock stylist. "My Own Way To Rock" is a powerful piano pummeler which affords Cummings plenty of room to testify a tribute to his rock & roll heroes, but something's wrong. Cummings could well be the best piano rocker since the golden days of Jerry Lee, Little Richard and Fats Domino, but you'd be hard-pressed to prove it with the cottony, muted instrumental sound texture here.

Cummings wisely does not forsake ballads entirely, and while "Gotta Find Another Way" (co-written with recently reconciled ex-Guess Who teammate Randy Bachman) is not especially memorable, there are two standouts. "A Song For Him" is gorgeous, with just the right dash of over-production, resembling the stunning recent work of Jimmy Webb ("The Highwayman," among others). And "Timeless Love" is even better, adapting the three-chord litany of the 70's, the

"Sweet Jane" riff, to ballad pace, and overlaying lush harmonies and a heartwarmingly beautiful melody—a high water mark for Burton's balladry.

"Come On By" is apparently an unreleased Bob Seger number, the heaviest rocker in the set, and a sly and nasty enticement.

The most impressive cover, for sheer bravado if perhaps not for longterm listenability, is the Righteous Brothers' "Try And Find Another Man." This isn't the Spectorized Righteous Bros.,

this is the brash blue-eyed soul duo just up from Orange County who idolized Ray Charles (as does Cummings) and wailed with "Little Latin Lupe Lu," "My Babe," and the present bluesy, big band-styled opus. Cummings's vocal performance is a knockout, as he takes both individual parts (his high-register Bobby Hatfield is better than his Bill Medley) and doubletracks himself to fashion a masterful recreation of the Righteous Brothers' sound.

Unquestionably, Burton Cummings proves that he's got his

own way to rock on this strong, versatile album. But circumstances outside his control are again conspiring to brand him an MOR artist. "Never Had A Lady" was picked as the single, but radio stations weren't ready to accept even a moderate rocker from Cummings, and so the ballad B-side, "Timeless Love," was promptly given top billing and is showing up somewhat better. Stay tuned for Cummings's next album to see if he can escape the dread pitfalls of the ballad box and rock a while longer.

Alex Chilton: The Big Star of New York's Underground



By MITCH COHEN

Chapter three in the adventures of a bona-fide, under-acknowledged rock hero is currently in progress. At the moment, the story is mostly taking place in the lower regions of New York City, but with some more exposure, a little luck and a recording contract, Alex Chilton will be able to spread to urban and rural areas throughout the U.S.

Chilton has been in the spotlight before; first as a key member of the Box Tops, who racked up a short series of hit singles and yet never scored very high either in all-important image (try to conjur up a mental picture of the group and you'll see what I mean) or in hip/critical acclaim. Following the dissolution of the B.T.'s, Chilton went on to Big Star. Despite two albums of irresistible pop 'n' roll in the mid-sixties Anglo-influenced tradition, Big Star reaped but a file full of rapturous press clippings. Being on the Memphis-based Ardent label, distributed by the beleaguered and now-defunct Stax Organization, didn't help any.

Undaunted, the eternally boyish Chilton has once again formed a group around his singing-com-

posing-guitaring talents. Like the second edition of Big Star (after the departure of co-leader Christopher Bell), the Alex Chilton Band is a trio: guitar, bass and drums. No frills, no fuss. In the brief but viable tradition of Big Star, the new outfit plays bright, bouncy and clever rock music with a decided inflection of the period that is now more than a decade behind us. The reaction, at least among the taste-makers of the Big Apple, has been encouraging. They've been making their way up the flourishing bar circuit, debuting at the Lower Manhattan Ocean Club, opening for Talking Heads at CBGB, and swiftly working up to a headlining spot.

Chilton's band is continuing the music from where it left off in 1974. The biggest chunk of the set was devoted to Chilton originals, some of the not-too-distant past and others surely destined to be part of his recording future. "Way Out West," "Back of a Car" and "September Gurls," all from Big Star's second LP, *Radio City*, sounded even tighter and snappier than their recorded versions, and the newer songs, including portions of Chilton's EP "Singer Not The Song" on ORK Records

(get it while you can, by mail from Disconnection, Box 544, NYC 10019), showed the intelligence, humor and economy that have always been found in Chilton's compositions. He's still got the adolescent woes, concerns and attitudes: his opening song was about suburban riding-around boredom. There's not a thing to do, so every week they do the same nothing. Or he's hung up on a girl who's stringing him along. Or, in a burst of Who-derivative bravado, he's singing about "shakin' the world." The closing number, "My Rival," describes his reaction to a blue-eyed 5'5" punk who stole his girl away. The only time the set sagged was on a rock ballad comparing his girl to "a little fishie swimming around in a bowl"; this kind of whimsy is best left to Jonathan Richman.

From Box Tops songs like "Cry Like A Baby," to later things like "I'm In Love With a Girl" and "When My Baby's Beside Me," he's been a guileless teenage sentimentalist, also covering songs by the GrassRoots and the Monkees ("I'm A Believer"), but this night he passed those up and made his penultimate song a conversational, affectionately sloppy version of "Wouldn't It Be Nice." The tricky melody threw him a little, but the spirit was intact. The set's other two "oldies" were a short 'n' flashy "Walk Don't Run" and, perhaps inevitably, "The Letter." Chilton's new version is a surprise: In the hands of his new band, it comes across less gritty, more Byrdlike, with a completely refurbished vocal and concise guitar solo.

Alex Chilton, a veteran of the rock wars, has returned with a presentation and material attuned to today's pop-hungry audience. As always, however, an image-identity problem holds him back; with proper exposure, he should capitalize on the mid-'60s pop renaissance that's burgeoning in local scenes around America. It's only fair that he assume a starring role: After all, if it wasn't for pop enthusiasts like Chilton in the first place, there'd be no such music worth reviving.

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The new album from Supercharge.
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In Search Of Punk Action: Roger Daltrey Cocks His Sex Pistol

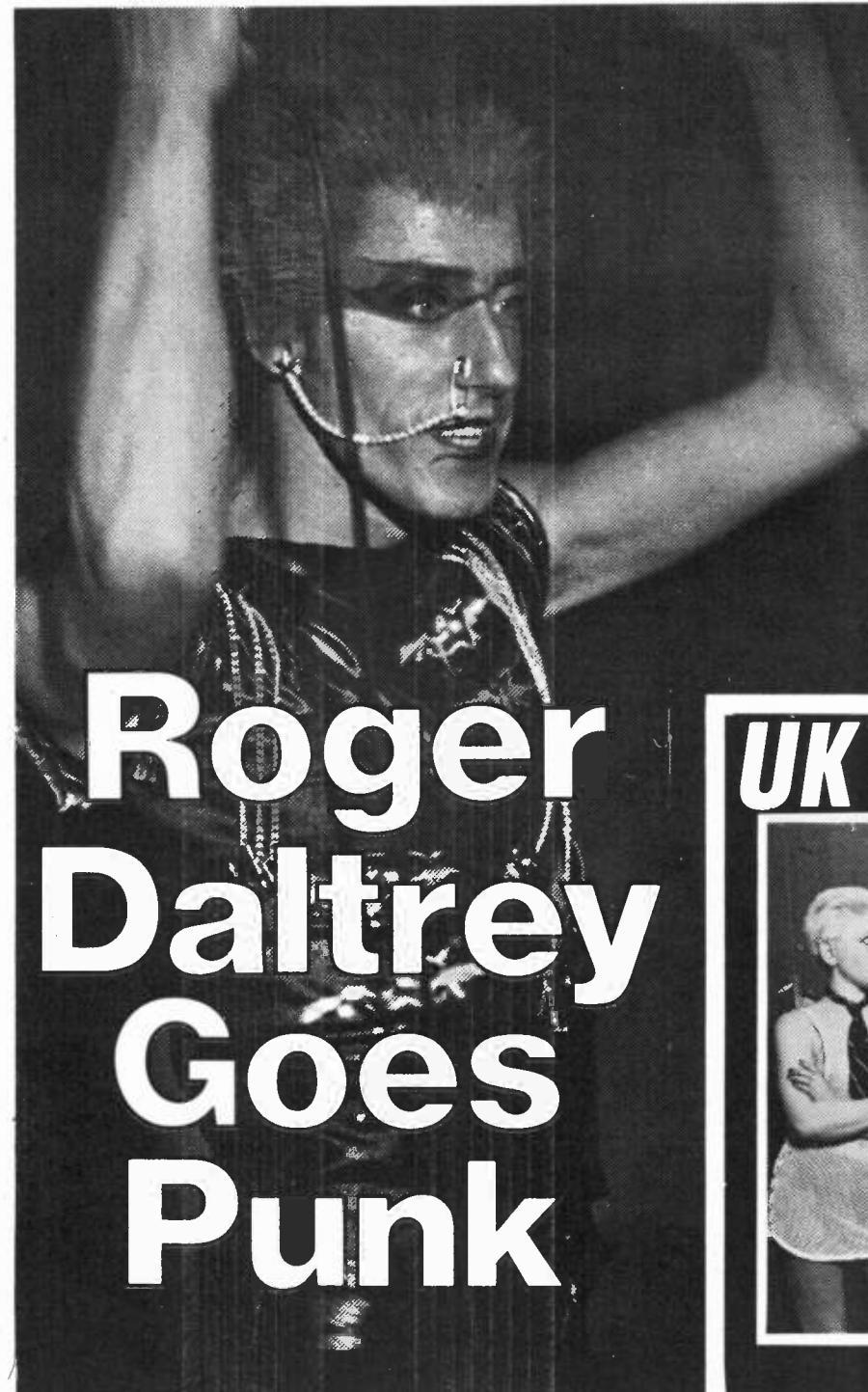
By BOB FUKUYAMA

"I like punk. They're going through what we went through. Things have changed but the things that made me angry as a kid make me angry now. It baffles me in a way because they're exactly the same as we were, but I like it...If I was 19 now, I'd have a safety pin through me'ead...The punks are just kids off the street and the music is exactly the same as we were doing—good rock and roll energy. I think it's great."

—Roger Daltrey, *Melody Maker*
4/30/77

So Roger Daltrey has stuck safety-pin-in-nose and foot-in-mouth for the punk movement. Nothing especially surprising, considering Daltrey's preeminence as rock's original punk. But how does this public affiliation with the new generation of London and state-side punks relate to Daltrey's current personal/recording situation?

What with the low-profile and lack of product that has typified The Who for the past year-and-a-half, Daltrey's superstar status has somewhat dimmed, and, if I were a cynic, I'd be tempted to say that his current outspokenness is an attempt to capitalize on his traditional identification as punk symbol. He definitely wants a piece of the action, going so far as to pose for photos in the punk fashion popularized by the Sex Pistols and the like—safety-pin-in-ear, short-hair, bla-bla. You'd think that maybe it's a goof, but then, Daltrey has never been one to condescend to, or parody, his fellow age/philosophy mates.

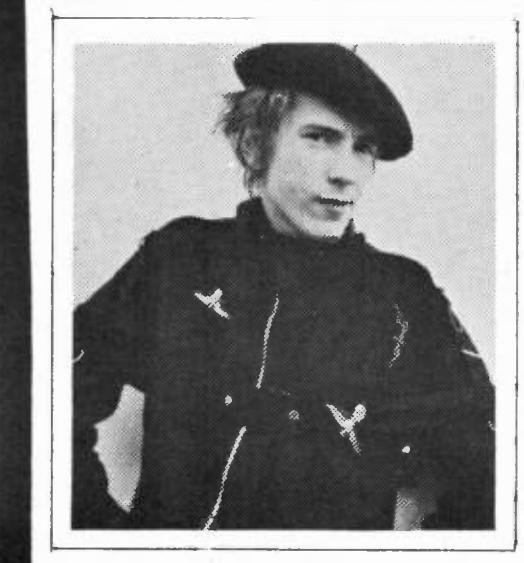


Roger Daltrey Goes Punk

UK Punk Fans



This Is Punk...



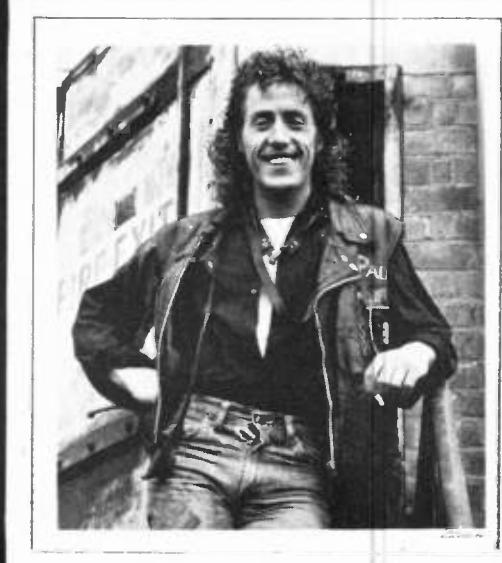
Johnny Rotten/Sex Pistols

& This Is Punk



Wayne County

Is This Punk?



Roger Daltrey

Superficially, his latest (third) solo album, *One Of The Boys*, gives evidence of Daltrey's punk reawakening—the title track, penned especially for Daltrey by Steve Gibbons, is the most angry statement-in-song Daltrey has made in years. Considering that the last Who effort, *By Numbers*, was critically praised for revealing that The Who were adjusting to old age gracefully, "One Of The Boys" seems to anticipate a turnaround—there's even the classic "My Generation" stutter to emphasize the punk outrage.

*He speaks with a terrible stammer
So he don't have much to say
But he can spit further than any punk
So nobody gets in his way
He knows his generation
Like he knows his A.B.C.*

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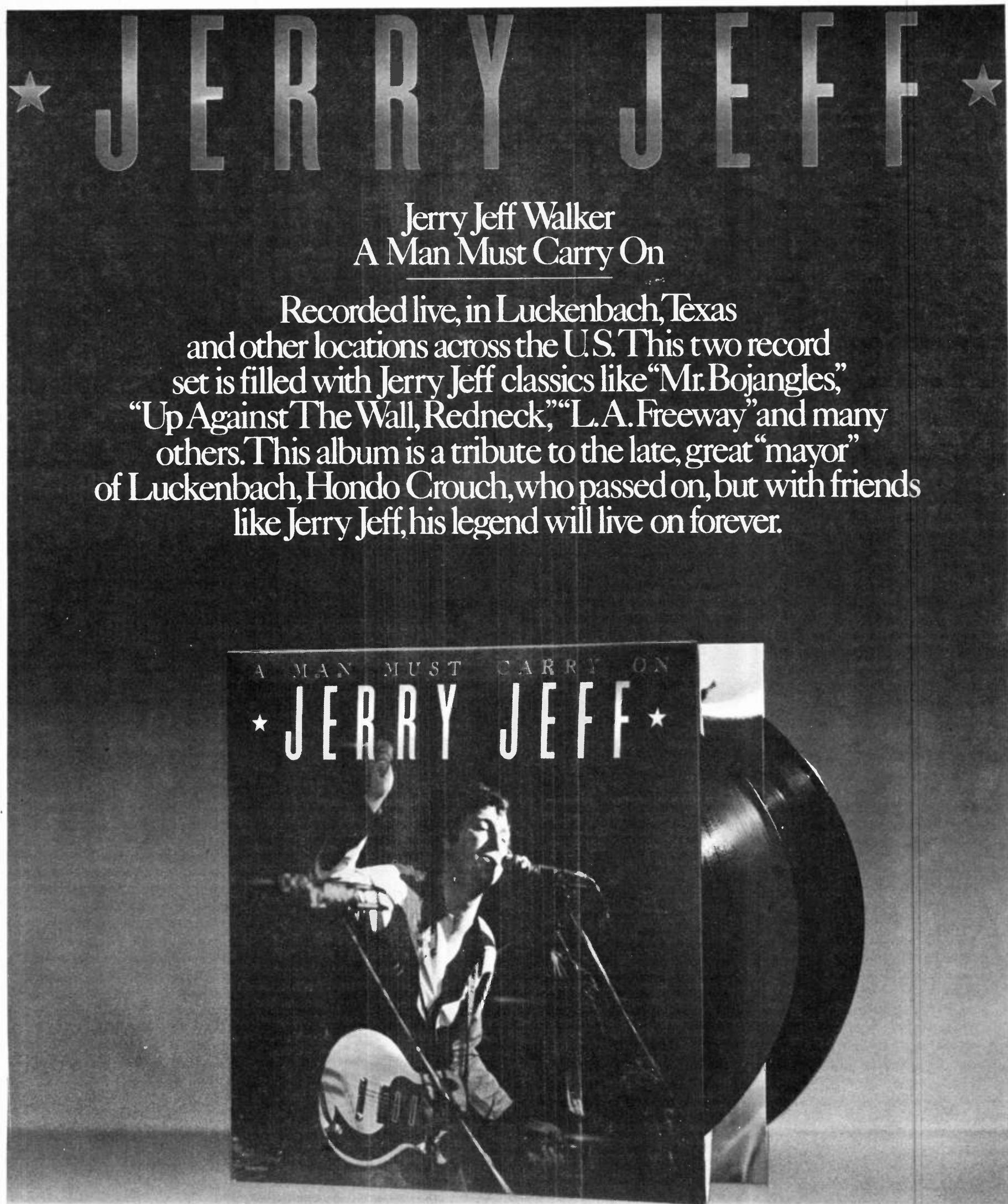
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MCA RECORDS

Jimmy Webb

Ten Years After 'Phoenix' He's Still Looking For Hit City

Henry Diltz

By TODD EVERETT

Jimmy Webb is the still-under-30 composer who appeared from nowhere nine years ago with a spate of pop hits including "By the Time I Get to Phoenix," "Up, Up and Away," and "MacArthur Park." Many were recorded by Glen Campbell and Webb's protégés, the 5th Dimension. Webb became extremely wealthy within a very few years' time; the awards cluttered their house he'd bought in suburban Encino (the one he'd built the recording studio in, so that he wouldn't have to go all the way into Hollywood to cut his demos); and the songwriter who'd been touted as the Irving Berlin of his era suddenly decided that he should record his own material. There were a number of albums, none sold, and Webb all but disappeared.

There were, of course, rumors. Stories that Webb tried to dispel recently, as we met to discuss his current state and current album, *El Mirage*.

"...Drugs?" He completed the sentence, his eyes answering the question. "Let's just say that it's impossible to travel in certain, uh, circles without being exposed to a certain amount of drugs." He appeared quite anxious to get on to something else, blurting out "In any case, I'm through with all

of that now."

(Webb, who'd once been skinnier than an English guitar player, had gained enough weight during the disappearance that he might have been confused for the reluctant Beach Boy. Nowadays, he's shedding the excess with commendable swiftness.)

Webb did not totally disappear between the years of 1972 (when his last of three Reprise albums, *Letters*, was released) and today. He'd spent a lot of time sail-planing, he said, and a fair amount of it recording. There were albums for others. Earlier, he'd produced hit singles and albums for such as 5th Dimension, Richard Harris, and Thelma Houston. There was an album for the Supremes, and one with Glen Campbell. Both were commercial failures. Infrequently, Webb songs would pop on albums—notably, "The Moon is a Harsh Mistress" and "It's a Sin (When You Love Somebody)" on one of Joe Cocker's periodic comeback attempts.

Of the outside productions, probably the one of most interest to rock fans is the one that Webb did with the Supremes, *The Supremes* (Motown M756L). The album contains a number of Webb originals, plus the ancient Bobby Lewis hit "Tossin' and Turnin'," Joni Mitchell's "All I Want" and a



Webb indicates difficulties with Supremes lead singer Jean Terrell as being one of the reasons for the album's lack of success. Motown was apparently so confused by Webb's un-Motown production that they added an additional, house-produced track at the beginning of the album.

Webb recorded a fourth album on his own, *Land's End* (Asylum SD 5070), released in 1974. It was greeted with the same lack of wide-scale interest as his previous efforts.

Webb's reputation had been earned as a pop songsmith. His melodies and lyrics were the kind that could be recorded by any of a number of somewhat-interchangeable, middle-of-the-road performers. Superior lyrically and musically they had a universality that's absent from the work of sensitive singer-songwriter types like Joni Mitchell or late-period Neil Diamond. Unlike those two, though, Webb enjoyed the role of chameleon; the only way that you could tell a Webb song for sure was to look at the credits on the record label. Other than having consistent quality, there was no common thread.

Yet here was Webb, in his early twenties, suddenly showing frustration that he wasn't being accepted by the hip elite. Determined to be taken seriously—acceptance by his banker clearly wasn't enough—Webb decided to expose himself to the world. The world, at that point, didn't care. They wanted more "Wichita Lineman." And Webb's singing voice didn't help the situation, though on selections like "Love Hurts" (on *Letters*), it could hardly be more suitable.

"Ask anybody!" Webb's voice rises, really for the first time in the conversation. "Ask Art Garfunkel. Ask Joni. Ask Linda Ronstadt. They all think that I'm ready. And if they think that I should be making hit records, why shouldn't the public be ready to accept it?"

And so, here's *El Mirage*. Produced by George Martin, the man who brought you the Beatles, polished America, and most recently struggled to bring Neil Sedaka once and for all out of the Fifties.

"I eventually discovered and accepted," says Webb, "that trying to produce yourself is like asking a psychiatrist to analyze himself. Once I came to that conclusion, George Martin was really the only producer that I would seriously consider."

The album contains a selection of new Webb songs, plus an odd blast or two from the past. Of the new material, possibly the most commercial, and the one selected as a single, is "If You See Me Getting Smaller, I'm Leaving." It's already been cut, by Waylon Jennings. "I sent it straight to

"Art Garfunkel, Joni, Ronstadt... They all say I should be making hit records."

heretofore-unknown gem ascribed to Harry Nilsson, "Paradise." The tune later turned up in a version by the Ronettes on one of the recent British issues of unreleased Phil Spector sides; the version was remarkably similar to Jimmy's—or Webb's faithful to the lost Spector master—and Spector had suddenly received co-composer credit. Was Webb familiar with the Spector record?

"As far as I knew," he explains, "it was a Nilsson song. Of course, Phil has a habit of putting his name on his hits...as to the two records sounding similar, no, I'd never heard Phil's version. I suppose that there was something inevitable about the arrangement; two good minds coming to the same conclusion."



"Who's a punk?"

*He's the kind of kid
That don't get invited back
for Sunday tea
He's a face in the mirror
That may give you a fright
But he's alright.....**

But an audition of the album in its entirety reveals that the title track represents only one side of Daltrey. As with the first two Daltrey LPs—*Daltrey* and *Ride A Rock Horse*—much of the material has been contributed by Britons long-associated with the social Daltrey (Gibbons, Paul McCartney, Murray Head, David Courtney, Tony Meehan), and the introspective Daltrey that only surfaces on these solo efforts (Philip Goodhand-Tait, Colin Blunstone, Andy Pratt). If only because he knows how to select material especially suited and suitable to his own range of emotions, temperament and overall career goals, Daltrey must be commended—but, in the end, we have a jig-saw puzzle of which only one small part is Daltrey the punk.

So how do you reconcile the killer punk of "One Of The Boys" with the country crooner of "Single Man's Dilemma" (written by ex-Zombie Blunstone), the distanced, weary-of-rock wars adult of "Satin Lace" and "Doing It All Again"? (The latter two, along with "The Prisoner," are the first songs Daltrey has ever written for release, here in

collaboration with co-producers Courtney and Meehan.) Daltrey presents so many faces on this record—most of them mature—that his older age, and not punk-ness, becomes the focal point. If we're to take this album seriously, we cannot, at the same time, take his current punk identification seriously.

One Of The Boys fails because it doesn't establish a clearly-defined self-identity for Daltrey, that is, apart from The Who. Emotionally speaking, covering Goodhand-Tait (twice) and Steve Gibbons almost requires a Jekyll-Hyde duality. Add to all this the confusion caused by Daltrey's current involvement with the New Wave, and you get the impression Daltrey himself doesn't know what he wants, let alone what's best for him. There is nothing more tragic than an original who later must resort to self-parody in order to reassert his originality.

In any event, because Daltrey has made it perfectly explicit that he does not feel any pressure to break off from The Who, that, indeed, his destiny is tied to the group as long as there officially is a Who, there should be no reason for a drastic image renovation—surely, growing old in the context of an institution such as The Who shouldn't be so hard. Daltrey looks forward to getting together with the boys for the next Who album, and indicates that the band is shooting for a late summer

rendezvous that would hopefully lead to an early winter release and concurrent concert tour. (Before then, in August, Pete Townshend's album with Ronnie Lane will be issued.) Otherwise, Daltrey has in mind a film based on the deplorable conditions in the British prison system, and is feverishly writing and assembling material for yet another solo LP.

Roger Daltrey's over-reaction to the punk phenomenon is, essentially, justified: Considering all the recent attention directed at the

punk bands of London, people have somewhat forgotten that it was The Who who were largely responsible—more so than the rebellious, but nevertheless middle-class Stones—for demonstrating that the British Invasion wasn't all Beatles and good, clean fun, that there was room for the punk element, and of the working-class variety. But Roger, that was your generation—these punks, with all due respect, would rather do it themselves.

*©1977 Towser Tunes, Inc.

Henry Diltz

him, a tape of the version on my album. He'd cut 'MacArthur Park' twice before; always said that it was really a country song." "Smaller" may well have been written for Jennings, what with its references to steamy, endless one-nighters and a fellow named "Willie."

There's a version of "Mixed Up Guy," a Webb tune that had been a fine record and only semi-hit for singer Joey Scarbury in 1971. Webb at last sings "The Moon is a Harsh Mistress," ("Jim Price has been looking for some songs for Joe..."), and "Christiann No," a song that appears on Glen Campbell's current album.

"I'm the one who first played 'Southern Nights' for Glen," comments Webb. "It's good to see him taking control of his records again; I think that he'll prove to be one of the great singers of all time. In a class with Sinatra, Tony Bennett, those guys."

There's a version of "P.F. Sloan," a song that first appeared on Webb's debut album, *Jimmy L. Webb: Words and Music* (Reprise 6421). The song is a tribute to Sloan, the commercial songwriter ("Where Were You When I Needed You") who turned serious ("Eve of Destruction"), recorded a couple of unsuccessful solo albums, and disappeared.

Webb sings it again, with a last verse slightly altered to account for the passing of the Nixon era. Regardless, the point remains clear:

*You know, he turned the corner all alone
But he continued, yes, he continued singing.**

Webb's back in the business, full-time. He just returned from Muscle Shoals, and work on Art Garfunkel's new album. He was in London, working with Campbell and a huge orchestra, for a concert and "live" album at the Royal Festival Hall. He controls his own song publishing at last, and is seeing that the tunes get to the artists.

"Publishers do maybe 9% of the work, and then take 50% of the money. There's going to be a revolution in that area soon, and it begins with the education of the songwriter."

And, Webb intends to continue singing. The voice hasn't changed that much; there's still the Oklahoma twang, and the less-than-perfect-pitch.

"I've got George Martin for a producer, and a record company that's really behind me. I'm really trying to make a hit. If that fails...then I might reconsider."

*"P.F. Sloan." Words and music by Jimmy Webb. ©1970 Canopy Music, Inc.





John Lodge's "Natural Avenue" has taken him from bass player/vocalist/writer with The Moody Blues to the highly successful "Blue Jays," and now, a superb solo debut album—"Natural Avenue."

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Blind Date

with

FLO & EDDIE.



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

Edited by KEN BARNES

Welcome to Part II of Flo & Eddie's elegant, punctilious assault on New Wave rock & roll. Last month, our diplomatic duo was moved to the point of apoplexy by the sound of the English "punk rock" bands—the Sex Pistols, the Clash, the Damned, and so forth. When asked if they thought upon reflection that any of the British new wavers would hold up over time, they said, "Sure. I think the Sex Pistols will hold up. In fact, I heard they were about to hold up their third label for a million bucks without even putting out a record!"

This month a scattered assortment of American New Wave Punks feel the wrath generated by Flo & Eddie.

PASTICHE—"Flash Of The Moment" [Derelict Records]

I hate this month already. What the hell is Pastiche? Are they in tune? This is Boston rock & roll, huh? How does this guy tell his Mom that he's "Mr. Curt"? Is she Mrs. Curt? Oh my god—I hate this band more than the Damned, because they actually try. I can't stand punk rock music any more.

BIZARROS—"I Bizarro, Nova" [Gorilla Records]

Maybe we're just too laid back for this. I keep asking for the highs to be turned down when I listen. I remember my Dad used to ask for that a lot—before I moved out! Where's the drummer? I'm telling you, Haight-Ashbury is right around the corner. You kids want to live like slobs again? The Bizarros. Makes me puke. How many of you out there are taking this seriously. It's the Velvet Underground—every group, no kidding.

POP—"Down On the Boulevard/I Need You" [Back Door Man Records]

"I Need You." Interesting that every punk group does Ray Davies songs, when the Kinks were not punks at all. Ray was doing aristocratic snot rock. This is snot rock, too, but that's beside the

point. Not bad really, a lot of Eric Carmen overtones. They're trying for hooks and choruses and bridges and guitar breaks—all they need is a producer. You can call us, guys. Pop is the tops so far.



MARBLES—"Fire And Smoke" [Ork Records]

New York rock? This isn't punk at all. This is more like the Left Banke. This is also pop music in search of a producer. Maybe we should put our phone number at the end of this column. There are all kinds of things wrong with the production, but I like the song. I would play Marbles. I haven't since I was eight years old, but...Maybe that's why punk rock isn't a good word for this. New Wave is better—but they should get a permanent.

ALEX CHILTON—"The Singer Not The Song" (EP) [Ork Records]

Alex! How would you classify the former lead singer of the Box Tops as new wave? Maybe this is "old new wave" or something. Alex! How could you? What would you call this? He's gone from the most polished pop production to complete artlessness. What's happened to his voice? Where is the production? This is unbelievable. As Paul Peterson once said, he can't find his key. Sad. Let's start a contest. Send in four box tops and try to rescue Alex's career.

PRIX—"Girl/Every Time I Close My Eyes/Zero" [Ork Records]

These are guys who produced and played behind Alex Chilton? They should be ashamed. How do you pronounce it? The obvious way? It could be "Pree," I guess. But once you hear it you know it's "Pricks". Terrible production—"duophonic?" That sounds like us. This isn't bad at all—they're going for a Big Star sound and almost getting it. I like the songs. Turn it over. Well, I liked the songs. That bass is definitely out

of tune. This is the "FM side"? Well, the "AM side" is pretty good anyway. It Prix my curiosity, at least. There's something to appreciate. But poor Alex!

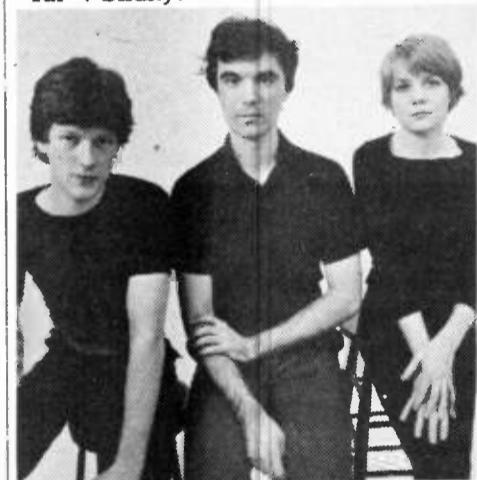
SEEDS—"Falling Off The Edge" [GNP Crescendo Records]

Sky Saxon is back? Is he a punk or a farmer? His basic message to the world is "be good to dogs"? Wait—this is old stuff! Seeds outtakes and unreleased material? This is great! This is what it should sound like. Sky Saxon really couldn't sing any better than any of these new wave people, but there's so much more feeling. I don't want to sound like one of those people who doesn't like anything unless it's ten years old, but this is really better. Where is Daryl Hooper when we need him? Jan Savage is on some reservation somewhere, probably. This album just came out? Why? Is Gene Norman still around? His son did it? Everyone should get it and listen to it.

ROKY ERICKSON—"Bermuda" "The Interpreter" [Rhino Records]

This sounds like Eric Burdon. Gene Pitney. Roky Erickson? Former lead singer of the 13th Floor Elevators...more old new wave. They were good. (Reads picture sleeve): "I am an alien. I am from Mars. I have even had it

notarized." No comment. It's really sort of tame stuff. It's uptempo, sounds like a bar band. I don't believe he's from Mars. If you're from Mars, what's your Zip Code? Is it "Roky" or "Rocky" (sings) "They call me Mr. Pitiful". Shaky.



TALKING HEADS—"Love Goes To A Building On Fire" [Sire]

These guys can't possibly make it. They're too clean! This sounds like a Jo Stafford record. Sparkish. Honeycombs—"Have I The Right". They should do "Have I The Right." They did "1-2-3 Red Light?" Well, this is a cute record. They do have a melody. They play a drum fill, they have horns...a lot of Tommy Jones in this band. That's great.

Boston's Best: Live At The Rat

"Live At The Rat"—Various Artists [Rat Records]

This is Boston's equivalent to the CBGB's anthology. We don't want to make enemies here. We're just waiting to be turned on. Maybe this one is the one. Would the Damned play at the Rat? Who's this group—Susan? This could be late Nuggets. I love this. My favorite album. This is great. Susan has some imagination. They do "Ride Away" by Head Over Heels.

Third Rail—this would be a good representation of punk rock

in America today—at its best. DMZ—my favorite. This is what I imagined punk to be. This is more Ramones-oriented. The Real Kids—I like this! I want it in my car! At least this is real, guys—not affected punks.

Marc Thor—what a WIMP! I like this, too. I can't wait to go to Boston. You've got to be out of the mainstream to create—you're talking to two experts on THAT! Everyone should have this album. Best of the month—Live At The Rat. But why isn't the Jess Rodent Band on it? Never mind—get it.

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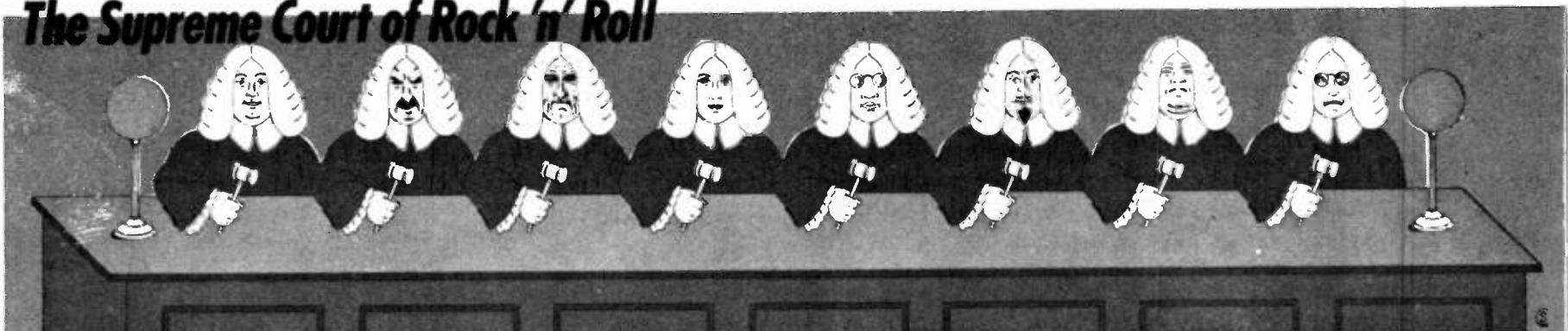
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GREG SHAW'S JUKE BOX JURY

Wildfire

"Here Comes Summer" (Casablanca)

Every year about this time, somebody remakes this 1959 Jerry Keller classic; it's the kind of song that lends itself to any change of style without losing its simple message: there have been surfing versions, heavy British renditions (The Dave Clark Five's is a little-known gem) and I could easily hear it done punk-rock style ("Here comes summer, I'm so bored, leave me alone..."). What we have here is a fascinating combination of the DC5's heavy sound and the kind of neo-Beach Boys harmonies we've learned to expect from the redoubtable Jack Stack-A-Track, who co-produced this fine waxing with Scott Shannon, one of the bona-fide heroes of the power-pop movement. What all that boils down to is a delightful record—and even better is the B-side, "Weekend Love", which may be the heaviest bubblegum record ever made.

Aside from The Ramones' "Sheena," Wildfire's "Here Comes Summer" and a few other noteworthy New Wave recordings, this month has been notably unexceptional. Some good releases, but it's getting harder for me to exalt the merely-good when the standards of greatness have risen so dramatically in the underground scene. I think that very soon, if more groups start making records as good as "Sheena," we're going to see a drastic change in the content of AM radio and the policies of record companies as to what's worth releasing and what isn't—because most of what's coming out today has nothing to do with 1977, it seems to me.

At any rate, there are a few discs which deserve at least passing mention. "Hard Ride" (Capricorn) is the latest by Rabbitt, an excellent new band whose "Something's Goin'

Wrong With My Baby" should have been a hit. Anybody who likes Dwight Twilley should watch out for this group. Blue is a group that had a couple of albums out in the early '70s, composed of former members of Marmalade, and in the era of Big Star and the Hudson Bros., they ranked right up there. Now they've been rediscovered by Elton John, who produced "Capture Your Heart" (Rocket 40706), and it's not bad, although there was better stuff on their first LP. Still, it's nice to have 'em back...

Pezband makes an excellent 45 debut with "Baby It's Cold Outside" (Passport) and if you've ever missed the Raspberries, worry no more. Jaguar is a new group and their first single is "Daisy" (RCA), a fine pop rocker that makes me want to hear more. Roger Cook is no newcomer, but he is to the Capricorn label, where "What's Your Name, What's Your Number" is his first. He's done better, but he's done worse,

and there's never enough good pop to go around. Interesting, too, to watch Capricorn take on more and more British acts. Shows a survival instinct if nothing else, but I think there's a lot else; namely good taste...

You can always count on the Boones (Pat's kids) for a worthwhile pop tune, and "Hasta Manana" (Warner Bros) is no disappointment. This may be the first stateside cover of an Abba song...I always knew Rough Diamond would be as much a travesty as you'd expect any band led by a guy thrown out of Uriah Heep to be, and I was right. Their first outing is "Rock 'n' Roll" (Island) and need I mention that nothing about the song, the treatment, or the group has anything to do with said musical style? Does anyone really care about this kind of dross, I wonder?

Latest by the Beach Boys is "Honkin' Down the Highway" (Reprise) and it's from the album, nothing special. Newest by Rick

Dees and his Cast of Idiots is "Barely White (That'll Get It Baby)" (RSO), and I really hope this follows "Disco Duck" to the No. 1 spot, because it's the kind of record everyone who will buy it so richly deserves...

Gene Pitney's back with a cover of a Bay City Rollers tune, of all things: "Dedication" (Epic) is quite listenable in addition to whatever whimsical qualities its very existence might impart... Same might be said for Lou Christie's version of "Spanish Wine" (Midsong Intl.), the enchanting original of which was by Chris White on CBS not long ago. Since that wasn't a hit, I sure hope this will be. Newest by Ron Dante (that "Sugar Sugar" guy) is "How Am I to Know" (RCA), a pleasant but ultimately dispensable pop ditty...hey, Duane Eddy is back! His first in at least 2 or 3 years (on these shores; in England of course he's had a big hit or two since then), is "You Are My Sunshine" (Elektra), and it's about what you'd expect, except for the intrusion of some slightly unnecessary vocals (who buys a Duane Eddy record to hear vocals?)...

And that seems to be it. Really, the best singles are coming out in England, where the charts are full of groups with names like Clash, Jam, Chelsea, Eddie & the Hot Rods, Count Bishops, etc. Maybe we'll get some of it here eventually, and also maybe some of America's new underground bands will be heard, but until then you've gotta seek it out, though it's well worth whatever trouble it takes.

I regret there's not really room here to review all the local singles that come in, though exceptional ones will still be noted. However, anyone who writes to me at P.O. Box 7112, Burbank, CA 91510 can receive information about the Bomp Newsletter, where I cover all the latest underground/new wave happenings, and you can also request a catalog of new wave records which will be sent to you free.

See ya at the discotheque-a-go-go.....

Ramones

SHEENA IS A PUNKROCKER [Sire]

Not to be confused with "Judy Is A Punk" or "Suzy Is A Headbanger" or any other previously-released Ramones track, this is an all-new recording that, by the time you read this, will probably be #1 in England. Nothing radically new here, except that the boys sound a lot looser, more confident, less controlled—they're taking a few chances, Joey with his vocal cords and Johnny with his power chords. The rhythm guitar is practically inaudible, serving merely at a background noise level, while there's an over-dubbed lead guitar part lifted right from Eddie Cochran. The end result is a real pop record, I think the first 100% successful pop/rock synthesis yet produced by the New Wave. Take away the rhythm guitar and you've got "Little Honda" by the Beach Boys, down to Joey's "Go!" at



the start. It took the Beach Boys a couple of tries before they struck home, and now with this record the Ramones have their own "Surfin' U.S.A." It's the best summer song I've heard since 1965, possibly, and I speak with the authority of one who lives within an hour's drive of Redondo Beach...

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The Pinocchio Theory/Rubber Duckie



DIIONNE WARWICK TRACK OF THE CAT

Includes Once You Hit the Road
His House and Me



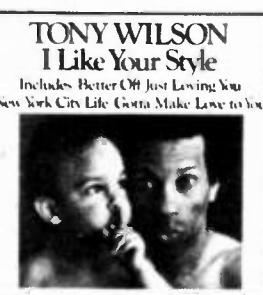
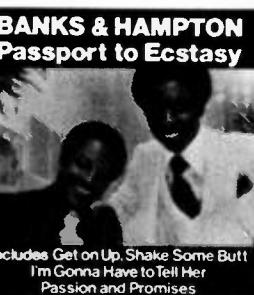
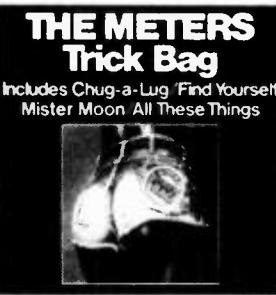
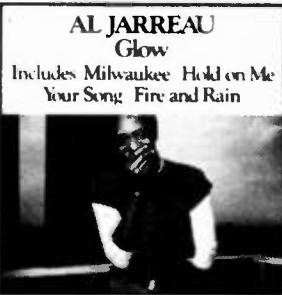
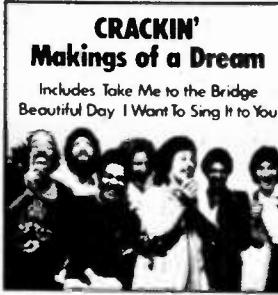
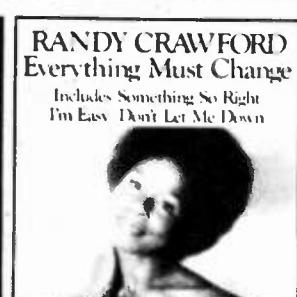
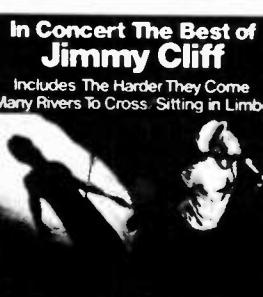
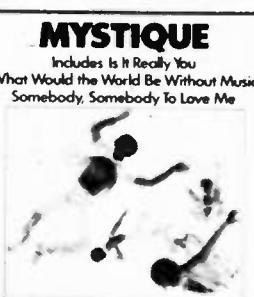
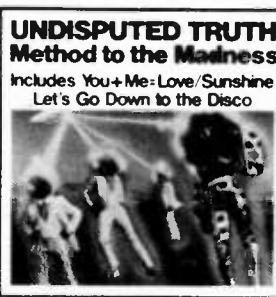
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CURTIS MAYFIELD Give, Get, Take and Have

Includes: This Love Is Sweet
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I'm sure you are all familiar with Future Scientists. Operating in every sector of government, these are the groups of brilliant men and women who concern themselves with matters such as energy and economy problems in the year 2000. They predict (with amazing accuracy) what our needs and desires will be, and they devise methods to solve these problems. Less well-known is the fact that groups of Future Scientists have long been at work in the business field, as well. Virtually every major industry has its Business Future Division (or "BFD" as it's commonly referred to), and the record industry is no different.

I have a friend (or I should say, *had* a friend) who has worked in the Futures' Division of the record industry for the past sixteen years. Fifteen years ago, for example, at a BFD meeting in Zurich, Switzerland, he predicted the success and prevalence of cassette and 8-track tapes as an alternative method for consumers to enjoy music. Five years ago, he told me that record companies would soon be releasing singles on LP-sized discs, which nowadays is a common practice (especially with disco music). And, just today I read in a record industry trade publication that Casablanca Records' president Neil Bogart claims that by 1980 we'll be able to purchase singles that are the size of nickels. Jeff told me about this three years ago!

The goal of the record business, like any other, is expansion. This has created a problem for Future Scientists, who have discovered that, according to the present birth rate, the worldwide market for recorded music will peak in the year of 1982. The only way for the business to grow after that is for it to expand the variety of ways for consumers to purchase music.

(Some of these plans may seem ridiculous and/or unbelievable, but remember that cassette and 8-track tapes seemed costly, ridiculous, and unbelievable fifteen years ago.)

1978—*Videodisc*: Both RCA and MCA have complete systems ready for public consumption which will allow you to view the artist performing his record on your TV set, in addition to

listening to him on your stereo. Several companies are in the process of putting together complete Videodisc catalogs on their biggest sellers.

1981—*Telephone System*: Only four years from today, you will be able to dial a certain number on the telephone and, depending on the code you had dialed, be able to hear the music of your choice over the telephone (which, of course, can be wired to your present stereo hookup). You receive a monthly bill from the phone company (which then pays royalties to the various record companies) for the music you've "used." With the bill comes a catalog of 'phone numbers' for the latest releases.

1983—*Parking Meter Music*: If you've ever had the unpleasant experience of waiting in your car while your wife or girlfriend takes forever to finish shopping (all the while baking like a Swanson's TV dinner in your Chevrolet), this one's for you. Every parking meter in metropolitan areas will be equipped with a detachable speaker (like the kind they have in drive-in movies). Like the drive-in speakers, they hook into your window. Unlike drive-in speakers, they not only play music but also, for an additional 25 cents deposit into the parking meter, blow gusts of cold (or hot, in the winter) air into the car so that you may wait in splendid musical comfort. Unfortunately, users have no specific

ROCK 1992

Shock Rock

SHIPPER

control over the kind of music piped in, but there will be different formats at different parking meters. One will have Top-40, another will be progressive, still other meters will have Country music or Middle Of The Road (middle of the curb, actually, in this case). Music formats will be rotated on a monthly basis or at the discretion of the mayor of the city.

1986—*The Parrot Method*: It was determined at the BFD Zurich Seminar that since the audience for music will have leveled off five years from now, expansion cannot occur unless ways are found to sell music in other places besides record and department stores. This finding led to the creation of the *Parrot Method* (and the *Sofa System* described later). Probably the major discovery of the Zurich Seminar was that common, ordinary parrots (yes, *birds*) if exposed to a particular album constantly during the first four months of their lives, will be able to reproduce the entire album note-for note throughout the remainder of their lives. This means, for example, that you could buy the new Fleetwood Mac album (in 'bird' form) at any pet store in America. Or, you could buy two Fleetwood Mac-trained parrots and have the album in stereo! Yet to be worked out is the problem of what to do with the parrots after you've tired of the album. (They can't be retrained.).

1990—*The Sofa System*: In the ever-increasing need for more and different types of stores to sell music in, you'll be able—thirteen years from now—to purchase your favorite albums in stores that formerly only sold furniture. Hidden inside the upholstery of special sofas and chairs will be small tape players which are triggered by a simple "on-off" switch (which looks like an ordinary sofa upholstery button). It's just a matter of hitting the button which, by the same remote control method used in today's TV sets, sends the taped music directly into your present hi-fi system, which picks up the signal and sends it through your speakers. The "snob-appeal" factor is the big one here, say BFD planners. You'll be able to purchase, say, the latest Boz Scaggs release in 'Album,' '8-Track,' 'Cassette,' or 'Three-Piece Sectional Sofa.' What status conscious socialite could bear to buy the new Hall & Oates release on 8-Track tape or in album form if their neighbor across the street has it in 'Reclining Chair'?

1992—*The Injection Method*: By 1992, not only will you be able to get your music at pet stores and furniture showrooms, you'll also be able to get it from your family doctor at the same time as you get your routine check-up! Although the *Injection Method* has thus far only been attempted on animals,

Cont'd. on Pg. 34

STEVE MILLER

He's the Gangster Of Love and The Joker and he Flies Like An Eagle.

Now he's written a

BOOK OF DREAMS



Includes Steve's Hit Single,
"Jet Airliner"

Produced by Steve Miller for Sailor Productions





STEELY DAN

Even in the days when Steely Dan was a finite rock band of relatively normal constitution, leaders Walter Becker and Donald Fagen insisted that it was more a concept than a group. By expanding the lineup for Steely Dan's '74 tour and then dissolving it altogether, Becker and Fagen followed through dramatically on that premise. Subsequently, concept transcended group, and from *Katy Lied* onward the duo (with regular assistance from producer Gary Katz and guitarist Denny Dias) has comprised the creative core of Steely

Dan—writing, arranging, performing and, not least, hiring the appropriate musicians for their sessions.

Without the pure rock 'n' roll impetus of such original members as Jeff Baxter and Jim Hodder, the Steely Dan sound evolved into a flexible, jazz-informed brand of pop music. This second phase of Steely Dan hasn't yielded the hit singles of the early days, but its integrity, imagination and mystery have cemented the loyalty of a discerning audience that is substantial enough to support Becker and Fagen's peculiar muse in the style to which she's accustomed.

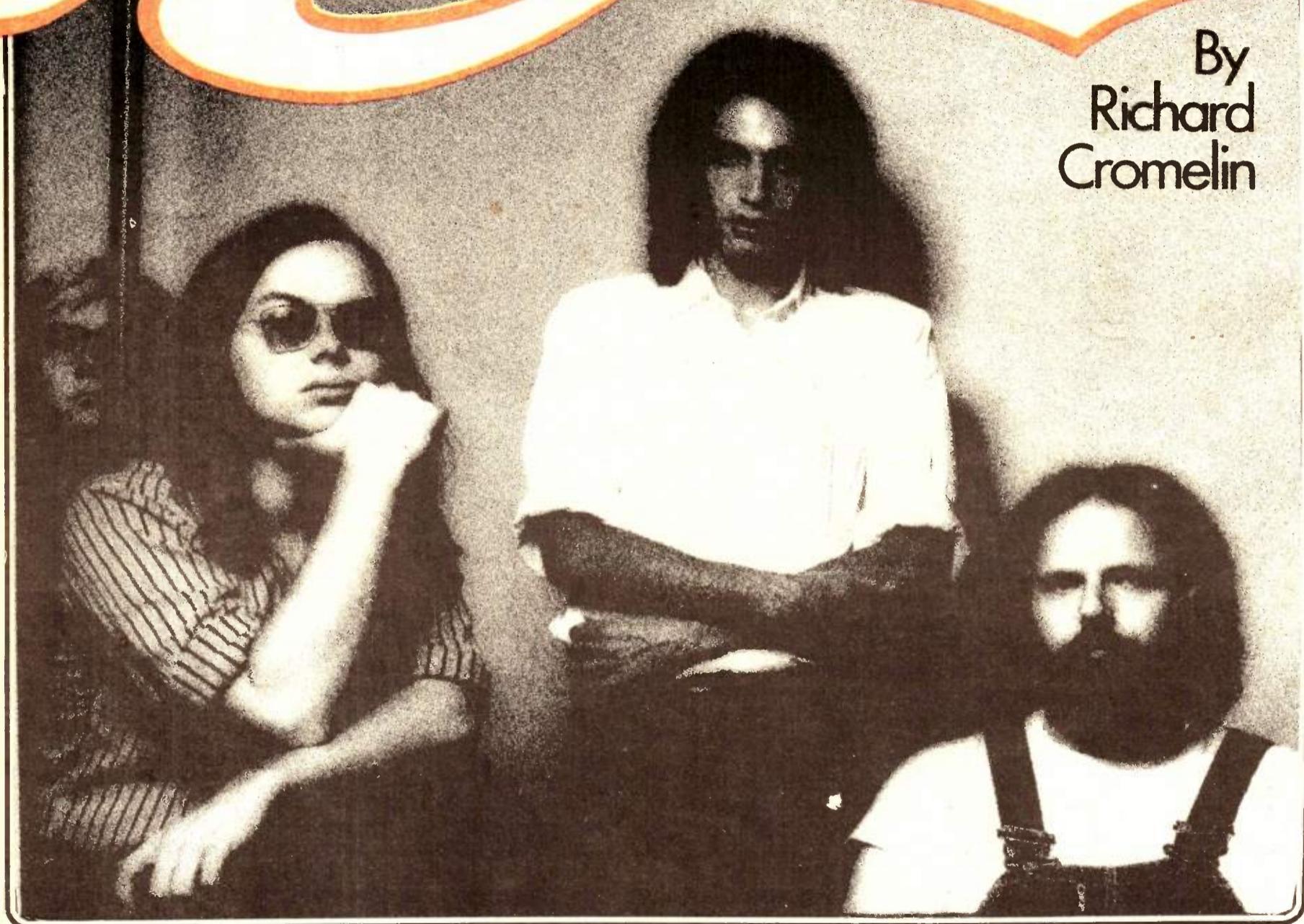
Katy Lied and The Royal Scam furthered the Steely

Dan mystique, as the fostered increasing repop literature, whose social realism of "Do Charlemagne," the e fantasy of "Bad Sneak Altamire," the trend Divorce" and "Every

As a non-group, the manager to promote a care about. Rumor re Fagen had engaged Ir Eagles and Boz Scagg

Steely Dan

By
Richard
Cromelin



Walter Becker

Donald Fagen

Denny Dias

adened musical format
ment of Becker and Fagen's
nge soon encompassed the
Take Me Alive" and "Kid
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Steely Dan doesn't have a
reer that its principles don't
tly had it that Becker and
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n preparation for raising

their habitually low profile, but in fact they retained him only to do some contractual wrangling. Nor do they go on the road once a year to affirm their existence, and they don't design their music in accordance with the standards of AM radio.

All of which has given them the image of aloof, reclusive sorts, a view based in fact but exaggerated somewhat in the retelling. Actually, their visibility will soon increase with the arrival of *Aja*, their sixth album, and with the first Steely Dan tour in more than three years.

When they emerged from the recording studio upon completion of the new album, Becker and Fagen

couldn't wait to scoop up some musty jazz records from their Malibu lairs and hurry to listener-sponsored radio station KPFK in North Hollywood, where they were grilled late one Saturday night by the author, by Melody Maker's West Coast correspondent Harvey Kubernik, by one Captain Midnight, the station's resident all-night man, and by a host of ordinary citizens armed with the powerful combination of telephone and FM radio receiver. The following (into which has been intricately woven some of Fagen's earlier, off-the air observations on the new album) is extracted from that evening's symposium:

Photo by Norman Seeff

Steely Dan

Excerpts from a Teenage Opera

RC: What say we start off by reliving your days of glory?

BECKER: Well, that would be fun.

[Play: "Do It Again," "Rikki, Don't Lose That Number," "Reelin' in the Years"]

RC: Those were the days, eh? Hit after hit, just like the Four Seasons or something.

FAGEN: Yeah, well. We used to play with the Four Seasons a lot. Well, not with the Four Seasons. We used to open for them a lot when we were with Jay & the Americans — the white Drifters. Of course the Eagles are the new white Drifters.

RC: How long did you play with Jay & the Americans?

BECKER: As long as we had to... Yes, we did record with them. We recorded a record of theirs called "Capture the Moment," which was banned in Washington, D.C., which ended its meteoric rise to hitdom... It had a line in it that went, "Capture the moment, the joyful explosion that we've just shared." It was a dirty song, it was in 3/4 time, it should have been banned.

RC: What was life on the road with them like?

FAGEN: We were very well protected.

RC: By? From?

BECKER: From other human beings.

FAGEN: Well, there were these large Sicilians that used to follow us around and make sure everything was going smoothly.

BECKER: Jay had a more than adequate following in the organized crime society.

FAGEN: You looking for a beating, fella? Huh?

RC: You played bass and piano, respectively?

BECKER: Well, you're looking at us the wrong way for respectively, but yes.

FAGEN: Respectfully... I played respectfully because I had this little RMI electronic piano.

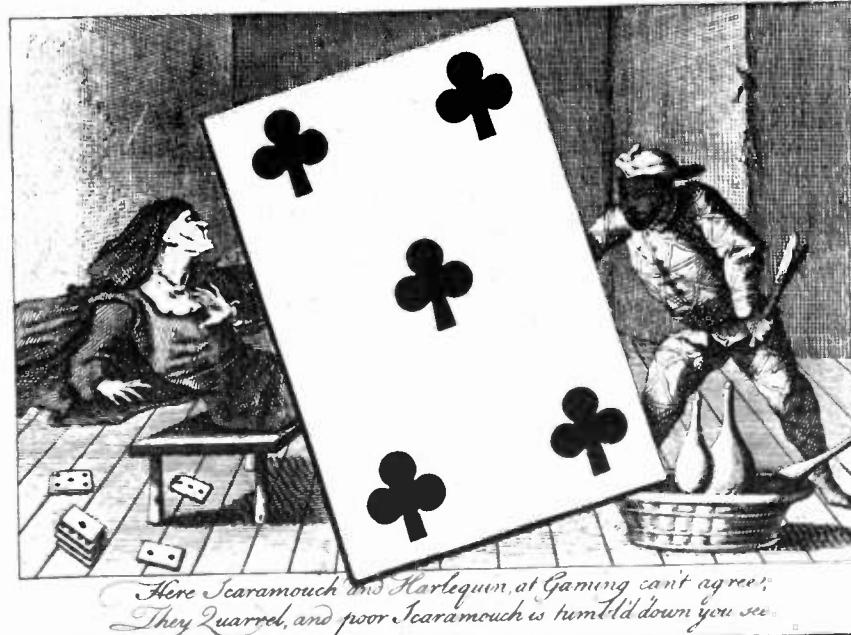
BECKER: Was it your idea to make clicking noises on the keyboard?

FAGEN: Yeah, I thought that sort of enhanced the show... And when we kept modulating up a half-tone it used to throw them a little bit, but they got used to it.

KUBERNIK: What kind of wages were you earning?

BECKER: At one point we were earning \$100 a show, and then a person who I fear to defame publicly took over the management of Jay & The Americans. He was also Sly Stone's manager I believe at that

"Everything you ever wanted to know about Steely Dan but didn't know who to ask."



by Walter Becker
& Donald Fagen
as told to
Richard Cromelin

time. He was known as "Gimme a receipt," and he cut our wages in half, the whole rhythm section, so then we earned \$50 a show or \$200 a weekend, whichever was more.

RC: Jay Black is the one that used to call you two the Manson and Starkweather of rock 'n' roll, right?

BECKER: He did used to call us that, yeah.

KUBERNIK: What did you call him?

BECKER: Mr. Black... We never found out who was Manson and who was Starkweather... The real Starkweather was a popular mass murderer of the 50s, who went on a killing spree with a machine gun and his girlfriend, respectively. He was the Texas Tower of his day...

RC: So you've finished an album that was supposed to be out soon?

FAGEN: It was supposed to be out months ago.

RC: But now it's not going to be out until July or August, so all those Steely Dan fans are deprived for another two months.

BECKER: Steely Dan fans, we like to think, are probably the ones that can keep it up the longest.

FAGEN: Of course we don't have to worry about that — you notice the phone isn't exactly buzzing. We tell you, we like to keep our audience small. We're small businessmen.

CAPT. MIDNIGHT: We have a call. You're on the air.

CALLER: I'd like to know if you're ever going to go on tour again.

FAGEN: Well what do you think?

BECKER: Wait a minute, this guy didn't do anything to hurt your feelings. Just take it easy on the guy, alright?

FAGEN: Hey, I'm just in a hostile mood tonight, what can I tell you?

BECKER: We're planning to go on the road in



Donald Fagen

September.

CALLER: What kind of instrumentation are you planning to use?

BECKER: Full instrumentation... No tubas and none of those Wagner bass things with the ladder, but everything else. We'll have at least four keyboard players. I think you're gonna like it.

CALLER: Is Denny Dias going to be playing with you.

FAGEN: If we can get him off the floor.

CALLER: Will you be using two lead guitarists this time?

BECKER: At least two lead guitarists.

CALLER: How about the Doobie Brothers —

FAGEN: How about those Doobie Brothers? Have you seen that guy Mike McDonald? I saw him on TV the other day, he was great. He made the rest of those guys look like a bunch of bums.

BECKER: Hey, what about Granny Baxter?

CALLER: I think you guys ought to take some of the credit for the resurgence of the Doobie Brothers.

BECKER: I will take absolutely none of the blame and contumely for the resurgence of the Doobie Brothers.

'Aja', Steely's Next:

"Less melodrama, more erotic, lyrically simple because people are dumber today"

FAGEN: I could use some contumely right now...

KUBERNIK: I'd like to add that the stint with Becker and Fagen prepared Mike McDonald and Jeff Baxter to play with Dinah Shore at the Century City Hotel.

BECKER: I'd like to further add that the stint with Becker and Fagen has prepared Mike McDonald and Jeff Baxter to enjoy whatever it is they're doing even if it is playing with the Doobie Brothers... Actually, Mike McDonald did sing on the upcoming Steely Dan album. I've never known him to do anything but a fine job...

CAPT. MIDNIGHT: Thanks for the call... You're on the air.

CALLER: Hello, is Donald Fagen there?

FAGEN: More or less. What's the scoop, kid?

CALLER: Donald, I'm wondering, what do you think of drug abuse?

FAGEN: Drug abuse. What do I think of drug abuse?... Actually, I'd like to defer to my partner who I think can answer that question from a point of more experience.

BECKER: I'm in favor of victimless crime as opposed to victimized crime. Does that answer your question?

CALLER: More as it comes to music, mixing the two.

FAGEN: Mixing drugs and music? I think that's called an African cocktail.

BECKER: That's called an L.A. speedball, and the important thing is not to eat that. Thank you.

RC: We've played the hits, now we're going to play the flops.

[Play: "Show Biz Kids," "Black Friday," "My Old School," "Kid Charlemagne"]

CAPT. MIDNIGHT: Let's take another call.

CALLER: Beautiful... Are you guys very popular in Europe, or how's the situation there?

FAGEN: The situation there is actually pretty bad. The Common Market you know is —

BECKER: Is that a multiple choice question?

FAGEN: No, we do have a following in "Yorp" — that's how we say it.

RC: I understand your audiences there were in virtual awe of the Steely Dan prowess.

FAGEN: Except for the guy who kept doing a cruel parody of my features in front of the stage in Leeds. He was mimicking my every gesture, that sort of thing.

Steely Dan

BECKER: Well I thought that was totally in keeping with the nature of the performance.

FAGEN: Yeah, it did increase my paranoia, which naturally increases the polish of the performance...

CAPT. MIDNIGHT: Thank you. Next call, you're on the air.

CALLER: Hi. Who played the guitar solo on "Kid Charlemagne"?

BECKER: I was waiting for that one. Larry Carlton.

CALLER: That's what I thought. Ok, who played the guitar intro to "Don't Take Me Alive"?

BECKER: Ah, now you ask too much, my friend.

CALLER: Oh, you don't give that information?

BECKER: Larry Carlton.

CALLER: That's what I thought.

BECKER: Hey, if you know all this stuff why are you calling up and wasting precious airtime? Why don't you call Larry Carlton if you're really interested?

CALLER: Would you answer a couple more for me? How about "Gold Teeth"?

BECKER: Larry Carlton.

CALLER: Ah ha. How about "Katy Lied" (sic)?

BECKER: That was Larry Carlton.

CALLER: How about "My Old School"?

BECKER: That was Larry Carlton too.

CALLER: Far out. OK, thank you.

BECKER & FAGEN: Larry Carlton.

BECKER: Larry Carlton, if you're out there listening I'm sorry about all those lies I just told about you.

CAPT. MIDNIGHT: Next call.

CALLER: Hi, whatever happened to Jeff "Skunk" Baxter?

FAGEN: Jeff "Skunk" Baxter since leaving the Steely Dan organization has become a full-fledged rock 'n' roll star playing with the world-renowned Doobie Brothers. I'm ashamed of you, sir, for not knowing your rock 'n' roll history.

BECKER: If you really want to know what happened to Jeff "Skunk" Baxter, when he was 17 years old he was working in a guitar shop and he was working on some woodworking tool and his hand slipped and his head got caught in a vice - v-i-c-e, vice.

CALLER: What does he do besides play hot licks?

FAGEN: What do you do besides call Jimcrack radio stations in the middle of the night?

BECKER: Hey, they're cutting you off. Sorry, buddy.

[Play: "Dog Eat Dog," from: Becker and Fagen's soundtrack to the underground film, You Got To Walk It Like You Talk It]

BECKER: ...They've brought us down here to humiliate us by playing these old albums. But I couldn't be prouder of the cut we just heard, called "Dog Eat Dog," which I'm informed Ted Nugent did a copy of, whoever Ted Nugent may be. Now, if we play any more Steely Dan records, we're going home. I mean I'm going home,

and I have the only car, so he's coming with me...

Now I would like you to read the inscription on this Miles Davis record and then play the second cut on the first side.

RC: This says, "To my dear friend Walter, who suggested to Miles that I play block chords - Victor Feldman."

BECKER: Right, and we're gonna hear "Seven Steps to Heaven," this is Radio Free Steely Dan, Walter Becker -

FAGEN: And Donald Fagen.

[Play "Seven Steps to Heaven"]

CALLER: Hello? I'd like to ask how you hire a lighting designer.

BECKER: Are you a girl?

CALLER: I'm a girl.

FAGEN: Gee, our female demographics are really low, I'm glad you called.

BECKER: Well we've got this English guy named, uh, Jimmy Johnson, is that his name? Are you in this line of work?

CALLER: I'm interested in how it works.

BECKER: Hey, listen, I just happen to have the board up at my place. You could come up and run your fingers over it if you like.

CAPT. MIDNIGHT: Are you 18?

CALLER: Yes, I'm 19.

BECKER: Perfect. According to Muddy Waters that's perfect.

CAPT. MIDNIGHT: How

long have you had this lighting guy?

BECKER: We fired him in 1974. We don't need many lighting guys in the studio.

CALLER: Do you prefer studio to live performance?

BECKER: Well, you can't get as much audience into the studio. On the other hand the live performances take place in bigger halls.

CALLER: Do you ever perform intimately?

BECKER: I performed intimately before dinner tonight. What kind of question is that?...

[Play: Davis, Mingus, Steely Dan miscellany: Navasota, Terry Boylan's Alias Boona, and the first Steely Dan single, "Dallas"]...

RC: While we're into all this jazz, I'd like to ask why you didn't just start a jazz group. What made you want to get into pop?

FAGEN: Well, we're not good enough. We can't play that fast, see, so we had to start a rock 'n' roll group.

RC: So Steely Dan was a great compromise?

FAGEN: You might say that. We know our limitations, let's put it that way...

CAPT. MIDNIGHT: We have a phone call here.

CALLER: OK, this is for Donald Fagen - that's the keyboardist, right? After Chick Corea left Miles Davis he recorded two albums in Oslo called *Piano Improvisations* Volumes I and II. Are you familiar with them?

FAGEN: No, but the Captain here is. I trust that they're absolutely wonderful.

CALLER: ...Also, how about playing some Cecil Taylor?

Q: Why is Steely Dan so hot in Europe?

A: We're homosexuals!

BECKER: Cecil Taylor can't play at all as far as I can tell, but I hope he's not listening.

CALLER: Well I'm listening and I think that's a terrible thing to say.

BECKER: Are you Cecil Taylor? Is this Cecil Taylor I'm talking to?

CALLER: No, I'm white.

BECKER: You're who?

FAGEN: Get this guy off the air.

BECKER: Hey, you're cancelled.

CALLER: I waited 20 minutes to —

RC: Tell us about the album you've just finished.

FAGEN: It's called **Aja** (pronounced "Asia"), which is the name of a Korean colleen if you will. We started it about a year ago. These things take a long time.

RC: Why?

FAGEN: I don't know. I guess maybe we were too leisurely about the pace, although it seemed like we worked very hard on it.

RC: If everything is planned out and arranged in advance —

RC: How about the lyrics this time?

FAGEN: It has no social significance. I think we're steering a little bit away from melodrama. The tunes we ended up with are in a somewhat lighter vein than the last album. There's some basically erotic material — not heavy breathing or anything, but... It's possible that the lyrics could get sparser and simpler, because people don't read anymore and they're a lot dumber than they used to be. It's always a challenge to fit certain lyrics to some kind

there was a show in Philadelphia once where a former lead singer of ours did sing an entire set a half-tone flat. And as if this weren't enough he did see fit to split his pants.

FAGEN: I thought it was a hell of a show.

BECKER: It was a hell of a show until they taped his pants up, and then it was just flat. Oh, we got a phone call?

CAPT. MIDNIGHT: I think we've got a gentleman of European persuasion on the phone. You're on the air.



BECKER: We're refunding your \$25 subscription to KPFK, your 20 minutes is being refunded...

RC: What's wrong with Cecil Taylor?

BECKER: I don't know. That's between him and his psychiatrist, and Mr. White who just called in.

FAGEN: We could really explode some avant-garde myths here tonight. You know, there's a lot of jazz that's really terrible that seems to come out of New York mostly. You know, guys playing the inside of the piano and so on — not to take away from the guys who are good at it, but there's a lot of stuff that people tend to think is good just because it's out of the sewers of New York...

FAGEN: Right, you'd think it would be pretty quick, wouldn't you? I don't know. It's hard to play, we throw away a lot of stuff, we do a lot of stuff over, and it takes a long time.

RC: Any new approaches?

FAGEN: We fooled around for a while with digital-click tracks, which is a method used quite a bit to make records that are supposed to be metrically perfect. But we decided the tunes we had weren't suitable for that kind of treatment, so we went back to our tried-and-true method, which is basically go into the studio and have a bunch of guys play, and that worked out pretty good.

of music or write some music that will most successfully express a lyric idea. The trick is to distill it and concentrate it so you have as few lyrics as possible...

RC: What was your most disastrous show?

BECKER: Our most disastrous show was somewhere in North Carolina. Remember the show you wanted to go home after, when the truck arrived 2 hours late?

FAGEN: No, but I remember the one where I plunged a speaker screw about three inches into my skull getting onto the stage and bled through the set. It did give a sort of grand guignol effect.

BECKER: They thought it was part of the show. And

CALLER: (thick accent) Speaking of live gigs, is Still' Dan planning to have a live album in the near future?

FAGEN: We've been thinking of perhaps recording on our next tour.

CALLER: Could you play something off the new record?

FAGEN: We already did... Those European persuaded gentlemen are really acute on their discography.

RC: Why do they like you so much in Europe?

FAGEN: We're homosexuals...

[Play: Bill Evans Trio, Beach Boys, Steely Dan, Charlie Parker, to sign-off.]

A New History of the Beatles

Beatle Fiction!

Los Angeles Times—
Tuesday, January 28, 1979

Paperback Writer

A New History Of The Beatles

by Mark Shipper

By Martin Cerf

BeatleFiction. It's so simple so obvious, it's amazing no one's thought of it till now. What, short of the re-grouped Beatles, could be more logical to Beatles Torch Carriers than *Paperback Writer*? What, indeed, could be more real for Beatles fans than BeatleFiction?

There's a new book, *Paperback Writer* by Mark Shipper, that's subtitled "A New History Of The Beatles." Shipper not only has

provided us with yet another reason to relive the Beatle-Myth, but in the process examines a heretofore untouched dimension of the fabled story. Beatles history as told by Shipper is much more fun than the truth anyway.

Shipper's rendition of the Beatles Phenomenon begins with the earliest recollections of the group and goes beyond the now legendary first break-up in the summer of 1970. *Paperback Writer* is the medium that finally allows us our Beatles-reunion, even suggesting what history will say of the ultimate release of that new Lennon - McCartney - Harrison - Starr album and subsequent tour. (That which millions have prophesied these past seven years).

A disclaimer in front of the book explains that *Paperback Writer* is a work of satirical "FICTION." Shipper wants to be certain the reader will have every opportunity to know exactly where he's comin' from at the outset—not that it isn't crystal clear from the text, anyway.

Shipper says the book is in no way intended to be taken as truth, and while much is based on reality, he warns that all events, conversations, and so forth "ex-

ture, and with a vengeance. His exalted *Flash Magazine* of the late '60s is remembered now as one of the underground period's "underground" texts of new thinking. A genuine rock artifact, the *Flash* legacy has been perpetuated by a generation of rock historians.

'Shipperisms,' or the unmistakable Mark Shipper style of writing on rock, is found everywhere today. The latest issue of *The Boston Phoenix* features a James Isaacs take-off on Mark's *Pipeline* column, itself a parody of the record review as serious work.

Shipper draws on humor as his primary source of inspiration. He's a very clever fellow and his ability to play with words in the rock vernacular makes even the most banal rock subject-matter a potential Shipper theme.



Mark Shipper, 27, has for over ten years produced some of rock's most sarcastic, most bizarre, most ridiculous, most incredible writing. He's responsible for some of the most entertaining moments ever captured in print on rock society. He's credited by media insiders as one of the first to lampoonize post-British Invasion rock cul-



isted only in my imagination." He even dreamed up the book's many great visuals, the ads and mock-features which are as much a part of his work as the words.

In a personal footnote, Shipper thanks the Beatles for their *real* contribution to rock as he sees it: "You understand—far more than

all those who have vainly attempted to follow in your footsteps—that *fun* is what makes rock 'n' roll great." He concludes, then, it was *fun* that provided the inspiration behind his creation of *Paperback Writer*. And it's a funny book.

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THE BEATLES

(*'I Want To Hold Your Hand,'*
'She Loves You,' etc.)



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Dodger Stadium
Saturday, August 2
8:30 P.M.

Tickets go on sale Monday morning, July 16, at all Liberty, Mutual, and Ticketron agencies and the Dodger Stadium box office, 2425 Stadium Way.

PLEASE NOTE—Due to a change in scheduling, the special ticket order form in the Beatles' "Get Back" album will not be honored. No tickets are available by mail.

An ad from the Los Angeles Times 'Calendar' section, July 15, 1979.

One example of the book's brilliant screenplay-styled conversational text is set after the Beatles' grueling 34-city American tour in August, 1966. At tour's end the boys are bummed, that is, everyone except George who remains cool, calm and collected on the heels of riot-rid- dled one-nighters that made babb- bling wrecks of John, Paul and Ringo.

Ringo asks "What are you taking George? Let me have some of it, mate?"

George then swears he's clean, no dope for him anymore. "I'm meditating," George confesses. "I learned it from Maharishi Mahesh Yogi. It's the natural way to serenity and tranquility."

John doesn't understand what George means when he explains to meditate is to think a certain way. "You don't think about anything, the idea is, to clear your head completely, and to do so you must repeat your personal mantra...over and over and over and over."

Meanwhile, Paul is still perplexed and begs of George, "What's a mantra?"

George looked at him as if he were a small child. The ignorance of the Western world? Would it

always be his (George's) cross to bear?

Paul's frustration with this guru stuff peaks at this mantra biz.

"So what's your mantra?" Paul said mantra like it was a word magicians use before revealing the rabbits from under hats.

George shot him a look that made Paul feel as though he'd asked George about his grandmother's sexual preferences.

"I can't tell anyone my mantra. You're never, under any circumstances, supposed to reveal your mantra." George was as serious as any of them had ever seen him. They couldn't stand it.

"Well, excuse me for living," Paul said snottily.

Paperback Writer closes in early 1979 as CBS is about to ship millions and millions of the new Beatles album, *Get Back* (the first LP to ship "uranium").

The riotous 'inside-scenes' that depict interaction among key company execs as they make ready the impending Beatles album— said to be the most important release in record business history so far—is simply hilarious and somehow sad, too. Here Shipper's text reads like the music industry's answer to *Network*.

They Changed The Face Of Pop Music Forever.



The Beatles. Get Back.
Their first new album in nearly a decade.
On Columbia Records and Tapes.



Columbia Records' advertising department goes back to Beatles' first album in headline for "Get Back" album ad.

The Dallas Morning News
September 1, 1965

George Harrison Quits Beatles

TONIGHT'S PERFORMANCE DOUBTFUL

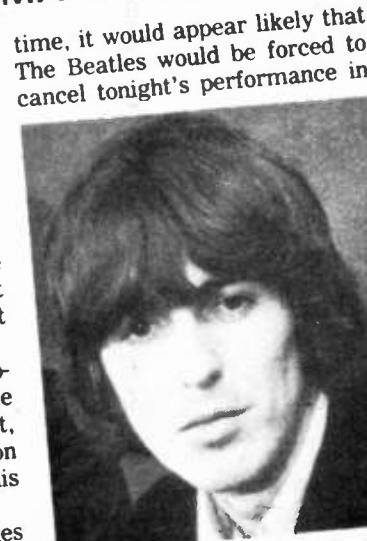
ST. LOUIS (AP)—Beatle guitarist George Harrison announced today that he has left the world-famous rock and roll quartet, in protest over fellow-Beatle John Lennon's statement that the band is "bigger than Jesus Christ."

Harrison, in St. Louis to visit relatives, said that if he were to remain with The Beatles, it would constitute an endorsement of Lennon's remarks.

"It's the strongest possible protest I can make, and I must make it because I am a Christian first, and a Beatle second," Harrison told reporters at the St. Louis Airport.

In Dallas where The Beatles are scheduled to appear tonight, manager Brian Epstein acknowledged Harrison's departure but refused any further comment, stating that he would address himself to the issue at a press conference planned for 11 AM at the Dallas Fairmont Hotel.

Although unconfirmed at press



EX-BEATLE HARRISON—A Christian first, a Beatle second.

Dallas, as well as remaining concerts on their American tour, including San Diego, Los Angeles, San Francisco, Portland, and Seattle.

Shipper does not dismiss post-Beatles history as after-the-fact as most musicologists do, and instead treats with equal affection the foibles of soloists Lennon, McCartney, Starr and Harrison. The following is a hysterical account of John & Yoko's meeting with Sonny & Cher.

"What could John Lennon possibly have in common with Sonny Bono?" was the prevailing question in September, 1971, when *Rolling Stone* broke the story. Many things, it turned out. Both wives had long, dark hair, both had silver Rolls Royces, and both used Ipana toothpaste (a brand that had been off the market for several years). Bono had a huge stockpile of Ipana and many felt this was the basis of Lennon's initial attraction. They were mistaken.

John and Yoko were, at the time, undergoing treatment with psychologist Dr. Arthur Jamoff, creator of "Primal Scream" therapy. This school of thought subscribed to the belief that we all

walk around with too much pent-up emotional baggage, too much rage. Keeping it inside only caused pain, Jamoff felt. The answer was in screaming—as loudly and as often as possible. After a primal scream, a person could find, they said, a sort of serenity not possible outside of meditation or Valium.

There were problems for Lennon in the early stages, however.

"It's difficult for me to scream, Arthur," Lennon told the doctor on his second visit.

"Difficult? Why?"

"I don't know. I guess it's hard for me to get worked up enough. I mean, I've conquered the world already. My every desire is catered to by a loving wife and a staff of 20. What in the hell am I going to get upset about? That they're taking two million dollars from me in taxes this year? It still leaves me with two mill for myself."

"What you need," Jamoff told him, "is something that can make you scream. Between now and next week, see if you can find something like that and I'll work on it from my end, as well."

Lennon found it that very night, completely by accident. While

changing stations on his hotel TV set he stopped at *The Merv Griffin Show*. Sonny & Cher were on the screen, Cher singing her heart out, Sonny silent and stone-faced behind her. Lennon remembered them as teenybopper idols in America a few years earlier. They were on the downslide of their career (before their 1972 comeback).

Lennon turned around to Yoko. "That Cher has some voice. She's still got it, all right." Then something strange happened. Cher went silent, and Sonny began singing solo. Lennon reflexively covered his ears, but it was too late. All of a sudden, to both Yoko's and his own surprise, John began screaming, louder and harder than at any time since he sang "Money" onstage in Hamburg nearly ten years earlier. Yoko was terrified. So was Lennon, in fact, until he realized it was only his peculiar reaction to Sonny Bono's voice. He and Yoko both arrived at the same conclusion simultaneously. They were overjoyed.

"That's it!" Lennon exclaimed. "That's what I need! Sonny Bono! I've got to call the station."

The following is Shipper's vision of the critical response that the Beatles' reunion album

He learned that this particular Griffin show had been taped two months earlier and that Sonny & Cher were currently working the lounge at the Flamingo Hotel in Las Vegas. He finally reached Bono there:

"Hello, Sonny. This is John Lennon."

"John Lennon?" said a startled Bono. "Of The Beatles John Lennon?"

"Yes. Yes indeed. Yoko and I just saw you on *The Merv Griffin Show* and you were great. We'd like you to visit us this weekend at the house we're going to be renting here in L.A. Can you make it?"

"Make it? I'll leave now and walk if I have to! Wait'll I tell Cher! Here she is now. Cher! You'll never believe it. This is John Lennon on the phone and he wants us to come over to visit him and Yoko this weekend in L.A.!"

"John Lennon?" John heard Cher ask from the background. "Of The Beatles John Lennon?"

"That's right, honey. I told you I'd get us back to the top." Then to Lennon: "Say when and where, John. We close out here tonight anyway."

will inevitably get: A parody of the Rolling Stone style, it represents the only outside

RANDOM NOTES

"My aides will contact you and give you the complete details. See you soon, Son...oh, Sonny! Hold it! Don't hang up. Is it true—funny, all of a sudden I remember reading this somewhere—that you have an enormous stockpile of Ipana toothpaste in your house? It is? Do you think maybe you could bring a couple tubes with you? I'll make it worth your while..."

As he hung up, Lennon could hardly believe his good fortune. Primal screams whenever he wanted them and Ipana toothpaste!

After the ads, the hype, the media coverage, what about the actual substance of the historic Beatles reunion LP? Shipper

Rock Makes Strange Bedfellows Dept. (A Continuing Series)—Following up on a tip that Yoko Ono was recently seen with Cher (yes, of Sonny & fame) we contacted John Lennon at his Benedict Canyon estate, hoping to get a bit more light shed on this incredible story. Turns out that John and Sonny have become inseparable in recent weeks. A possible clue to the attraction: Sonny Bono has what insiders describe as the world's largest cache of Ipana Toothpaste, the well-known brand marketed in the 1950s and 60s, but no longer being manufactured. During the past few years, superstar enamel has become so enamored of the fabled toothpaste, that status-conscious socialites have been known to pay as much as \$75 per tube! Remember, you read it here first...

reveals the new lyrical bent of the Beatles, quoting from "Yoko's Going Broke-O."

They won't sell her art
At the supermarket
They claim it is a joke-o

This has to stop,
Quite soon, I fear, for
Yoko's going broke-o.

They don't buy her bags,
Don't buy her blintzes,
Don't buy her milk bottles
in the snow-ko

Perhaps they'll change
When they get the news
that

When they get the news that
Yoko's going broke-o.



Beatles: They Should Have Known Better

Get Back
The Beatles
Columbia PC 39999

By Meyer Dindapast
T

HE BEATLES ARE back. And I think we all wish they'd stayed away.

To comprehend the magnitude of the tragedy that is *Get Back* we must first sound the depths of the depression and disillusion establishing the ambience of the late 70's. The decade that began so pregnant with hope, peace at last, the restructuring of sexual priorities, the ultimate fulfillment of the individual—has long since turned barren, as the neo-Puritan revival, the Surinam war, and the ever-mounting shortages choke off the last vestiges of consciousness from the early

70's cultural awakening. All the while, our music followed the same despondent descent Bowie dead, Mitchell a Park Avenue socialite, Simon occupying his seat on the Stock Exchange, with only Frampton, Scaggs and the renascent Peter Noone left to carry the experimental torch of the 70's.

We needed the Beatles back. When The Beatles died as an entity, the 60's died with them. At every crucial juncture in that crucial decade,

The Beatles spoke to us, confirming what we knew to be true in our innermost hearts—first the celebration of our youthful exuberance ("She Loves You," "I Want To Hold Your Hand," "I Feel Fine"), then simultaneously articulating and quelling our incipient doubts ("Help," "It's Only Love," "Mr. Kite"), and finally directing our idealistic movement with pithy, surefooted grace ("All You Need Is Love," "Revolution," "Let It Be," "Maxiwell's Silver Hammer"). With out The Beatles, the 70's soldiered bravely onward for a space and a time, but their return was long overdue. Oh, how we needed The Beatles back.

We needed a great Beatles album. We needed it more than we knew, needed it to crystallize and focus our long-suppressed rage so long diffused in vague, inarticulate frustration, needed it to point the way upward from our seemingly infinite vortex of cynicism and despair. We needed The Beatles to give us hope anew. And they blew it.

Instead of exorcising our demons, The Beatles placate, even pander to them. The rampant cynicism of "Maybe I'm Amazed," "I'm Not (It's None Of Your Business)", caustic as a Brechtian libretto though it is, is in the last analysis appalling empty, devoid of the essential sympathy informing earlier monuments like "Glass Onion" and "And Your Bird Can Sing." John's "Please Freeze Me," at first appears to offer a clever cryogenic escape route

I wanna live forever
Don't wanna die like everyone else
So when no time comes
Please freeze me
And put me on the shelf

But by the time the song's protagonist is awoken, "a brand new man with brand new fears/ In a fresh world with no cares, no prayers, no Sonny's and no Chers," the listener is overwhelmed with the bitter realization that the future road this

global village will travel is doomed to be an even bleaker street than the one down which we currently plod.

The sense of enervating ennui pervading the album is not lightened by the trivial pie-in-the-sky Pollyanna panegyrics of "Hold On To A Dream." That sort of simplistic cant was suitable for "Can't Buy Me Love" and other songs of an ineluctably more naive era, but rings hollow today, especially when followed by "Yoko's Going Broke-O," a pointlessly spiteful diatribe against the Philistinism of America's major art dealers and museums (surely this target was forever skewered by the brilliant social satirist Harry Chapin in last year's penetrating "Painting By The Numbers").

Similarly, the intent of "Gilligan's Island" is clearly inspirational in tone, but the actual perception has just as clearly gone awry.

Bob Denver Jim Backus
Each day they attack us
With laughter fun and truth

It is difficult to imagine what possessed the once-insightful Lennon & McCartney (this is the team that wrote "Mean Mr. Mustard," damn it!) to focus on such a woefully inane mass-entertainment shuck as "Gilligan's Island" as a well-spring of hope, particularly when most informed observers would agree that an infinitely more suitable source follows immediately afterward in most

major metropolitan television markets. I speak, of course, of "Leave It To Beaver." As for George Harrison's two compositions, "Disco Jesus" and "Bring The Captain In To Kneel (At The Altar)," the less said the better. Harrison's own reservoir of spiritual creativity has obviously long since dried up, but after masterful distillations of the religious rock of ages like "My Sweet Lord," "Ding Dong," and "Crackerbox Palace," it's at least understandable that the vein has been exhausted. It's Lennon & McCartney's artistic failure that is at issue here, and somehow it comes as the supreme irony to discover that on this hollow facade of an album only "Almost Cut My Hair," written by David Crosby almost a decade ago, expresses any semblance of the essential defiance and pride with which The Beatles originally inspired a generation. David Crosby, according to reliable reports, has recently been reduced to driving an old Rambler to state fairs and carnivals, showing slides of his past career highlights. It is indeed a pitiful new kind of Crosby, Stills & Nash, but in his own sene way David Crosby's fidelity to the muse of rock & roll is greater than that of the once-illustrious Beatles. Better they allowed us to cherish our reminiscences of the glorious Fab Four of yore than tarnished them with such a hopeless sham. A final love letter to The Beatles: Get back where you belong—to our hopes and dreams, and our memories. May they rest in pieces.

Paperback Writer

A New History Of The Beatles

by Mark Shipper

Paperback Writer by Mark Shipper will be in the local book stores sometime this summer, and will also be distributed in most major local record and tape outlets.

Paperback Writer is also available by mail order. Send \$5.95 to: Marship Publications, P.O. Box 3555, Los Angeles, CA 90028.

RECORDS

NEIL YOUNG American Stars 'n Bars

Includes Hey Babe
Bite the Bullet Like a Hurricane



American Stars 'N Bars
Neil Young
Reprise MSK 2261

By BUD SCOPPA

Superstar-turned-cult-attraction Young has thrown a change-of-pace by serving up a tasty platter of palatable musical morsels. Long considered the godfather of agony-rock (for a while there, it wasn't uncommon to hear him sing of homicide and various other illegal acts), Young is literally "all-smiles" throughout the bulk of this collection of self-penned tunes, recorded with long-time associate Crazy Horse (that's the band Crazy Horse) plus a big-name special guest or two.

In typically cryptic fashion, Young has given the album a title—*American Stars 'n Bars*—that makes one scratch one's noggin in regard to said title's possible meanings. Furthering this itchy dilemma is a double-front-cover package, one side evoking uplifting thoughts of our "purple-mounted majesties," the other affording us a rare glimpse of this stimulating artist's unique perspective on things personal. Credit here must go to multi-faceted designer/thespian Dean Stockwell (of *Dunwich Horror* fame); nice one, Dean.

Getting into the album is no problem this time, thanks in part to the presence of songbirds Linda Ronstadt and Emmylou Harris right on the opening tracks of side one 'n two, respectively. The first side of the LP is of-a-piece: laid-back and loose, somewhat in the manner of the big-seller *Harvest* (Young's most commercial offering to date), with Neil playing the part of a gregarious country gentleman throughout. The sway of fiddle (Carole Mayedo) and peddle steel (Ben Keith) and the sweet warbling of Ms. Ronstadt and fellow-songstress Nicolette Larson provide a pleasantly countrified base for Young's mellowest batch of tunes in some time. "The Old Country Waltz" sets the side's lilting tone, which Neil subsequently enhances with country-rock gems like the Tex-

Mexically beauteous "Hold Back the Tears" and the yearning cowboy's lament, "Saddle Up the Palomino" (the latter of which these emblematic lines are taken from):

*I wanna lick the platter
The gravy doesn't matter
It's a cold bowl of chili
When love lets you down
But it's the neighbor's wife
I'm after*
*Saddle up the palomino
The sun is going down*
*The way I feel
This must be real
Oh-oh-oh....**

All is balmy till we arrive at the closing track, "Bite the Bullet," which rocks with the abandon we've come to expect from Young/Horse. That track sets us up nicely for flipping over the disc, after which we discover that Mr. Young has not entirely departed from the dark 'n desperate vein he mined on recent critics'-classics *Tonight's the Night* and *Zuma* (3/4 of the side's tracks, as a matter of fact, were recorded at around the time of the aforementioned LPs). "Star of Bethlehem" (a duet with the previously mentioned Emmylou) would give you a severe case of willies were it not as pretty as it is troubled. On the equally pretty 'n haunting "Will to Love," Neil is directly responsible for every sound except the snaps and crackles (which were created by the play of flames on a log in the singer-songwriter's Malibu fireplace).

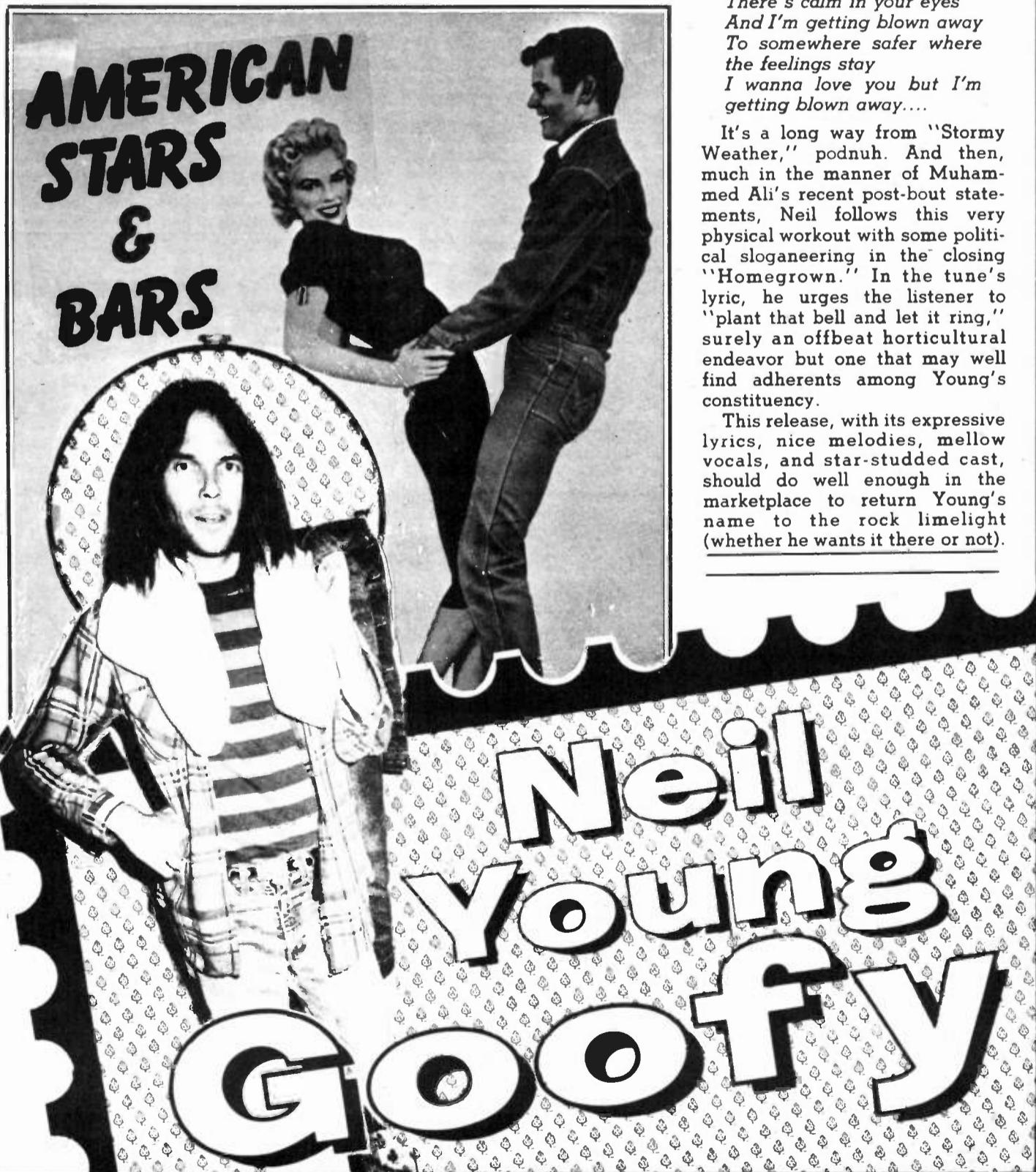
Speaking of fire, this reporter bets you haven't heard Young's raging electric guitar blaze any brighter than it does on the eight-minute + "Like a Hurricane" (the high-point number of last year's terrific concert tour). Working out ferociously over the seamless string synthesizer of Horseman Frank Sampedro, Young completely disregards the traditional axe-soloist's routine: instead of making that guitar talk, he makes it howl in wall-shuddering waves of piqued distortion. You gotta figure that by the time ol' Neil finished this take, he'd not only raised some blisters on his fingers, he'd also busted the *shit* outta his instrument.

And, true-to-form, Young has performed this savagery on a song that is fundamentally a love ballad(!), albeit one embellished by descriptive language that may have been borrowed from his local meteorologist:

*You are like a hurricane
There's calm in your eyes
And I'm getting blown away
To somewhere safer where
the feelings stay
I wanna love you but I'm
getting blown away....*

It's a long way from "Stormy Weather," podnuh. And then, much in the manner of Muhammad Ali's recent post-bout statements, Neil follows this very physical workout with some political sloganizing in the closing "Homegrown." In the tune's lyric, he urges the listener to "plant that bell and let it ring," surely an offbeat horticultural endeavor but one that may well find adherents among Young's constituency.

This release, with its expressive lyrics, nice melodies, mellow vocals, and star-studded cast, should do well enough in the marketplace to return Young's name to the rock limelight (whether he wants it there or not).





801 Live
Eno, Phil Manzanera et al.
Polydor Deluxe 2302044
(Import)

By BUD SCOPPA

I'd wager that the market for import albums is sustained primarily by fanciers of various

Lots of odds and ends this month, most of it pretty discouraging. I'd like to think, for example, that *O! Waylon* (RCA APL1-2317) is just something Waylon Jennings had to get out of his system. On first listening, it sounds like his most introspective album yet—long on personal commentary, short on the larger-than-life image-making that's been his staple. That is certainly the gist of "Luckenbach, Texas (Back to the Basics of Love)," the hit single that turns out to be the most mundane thing Waylon's recorded in years.

After that first listening, though, the album begins to sound just plain portentous and self-indulgent, the cries of a man who's painted himself into a corner and is now trying to bluff his way out. It's full of in-group references, as though Waylon has finally come to believe all his hype, and when he does examine his recent huge success and the effect it's had, all he can come up with to say is that Being Famous sho am difficult. There's not a meaty song on the album, and arrangements are clever for the sake of being clever. This is also, sad to say, his fastest-breaking album ever.



Talk about self-indulgent: consider Jerry Jeff Walker. As the pet nut in a town (Austin) which has spawned more than its fair share of eccentrics, he doesn't have to put out at all. He need

Eno & Manzanera Get Kinky

exotic genres (Kraut-rock, pub-rock, punk-rock, zen-rock, bla-bla-bla). Some of this import-only stuff is pretty intriguing in an offbeat way, but for the most part it's easy to imagine why your favorite cult items from abroad never get picked up by American labels.

The 801 band was (rumor has it) put together for the purpose of playing one concert (which was recorded and released as *801 Live*) and disbanding immediately afterward. Roxy Music guitarist Phil Manzanera and the prolific Eno are the only familiar players in this sextet, but all six 801s

sound great throughout this ICBM of an album. Unlike other live albums, *801 Live* has been toyed with (by Eno, of course) during the period between the recording and the release, so it's hard to tell at times what's directly reproduced and what's "treated." But that's the point, I guess, and part of the fun, too, especially when the applause at the end of "Baby's on Fire" metamorphoses into the jet noise that becomes the intro to the next track, "Diamond Head."

Most of the material is drawn from the recorded work of Manzanera and Eno, but the rendi-

tions (especially "Baby's on Fire") are without exception or question more powerful than the original recordings. The 801 band also brilliantly recharges the album's two rock classics, the Beatles' "Tomorrow Never Knows" (re-titled "T.N.K.") and the Kinks' "You Really Got Me." Through the course of its 47 minutes, *801 Live* hurtles along like the aural embodiment of the Loop at Magic Mountain, rarely allowing you enough space to take a deep breath. The most manic of the 801 crowd has to be drummer Simon Phillips; he hits those heads with the fury of a Chicago cop in a nightstick fantasy—it almost hurts. Actually, the rest of them sound pretty deranged, too. This album may have been dreamed up as a conceptual experiment, but it plays like *Demetrius and the Gladiators Versus Godzilla and the Roller Derby Dolls de Uranus*.

mindless technique overwhelming everything.

There is one piece of good news. George Jones has re-cut his best known songs with a hot band and even-handed production for *All Time Greatest Hits, Vol. 1* (Epic KE-34692). Titles include "The Race Is On," "My Favorite Lies," "Window Up Above," "She Thinks I Still Care," "White Lightnin'," the great "Walk Through This World With Me," and "Why Baby Baby." I think the best George Jones records were the Sixties UA sides, and some of the new versions here can't touch 'em. But by and large, Jones has improved as a singer with age. What's held him back in the past is that he often doesn't have solid material to work with, and that's no problem here since all these songs are certified honky tonk winners. Most of them will also be new to rock fans, so if you want to see why many of us country fans consider Jones the greatest singer alive, this is an ideal place to start.

Country Sides

By John Morthland



merely show up, the more wasted the better, and he's got it made. So he does, on *A Man Must Carry On* (MCA MCA2-6003), his two-record homage to Luckenbach avatar, the late Hondo Crouch. Jerry Jeff has coasted a long time on the basis of one song ("Mr. Bojangles"), one enjoyable-but-overrated album (*Viva Teralinqua*), and his rep—but this sprawling album might test the patience of even his most ardent fans. Jerry Jeff's vocals are a rough, washed-out mumble, and the best cuts are simply covers of songs by other writers who did them better first time around ("Honky Tonk Music," which he got from the Dusty Chaps, is one). Much of one side is taken up with some jerkwater poetry by one Charles John Quarto, who must also be some local hero cuz he sure doesn't make it on talent, and the best thing about the whole package is the Lost Gonzo Band, which has left Jerry Jeff since their cuts were recorded.

The Vassar Clements Band (MCA MCA-2270) is the dullest of the bunch, if only because it offers so little variety. Here we have a humdrum band chugging right along facelessly while the fiddle star plays mostly high, fast, shrieking solos on top. It is all to no apparent end, a classic case of

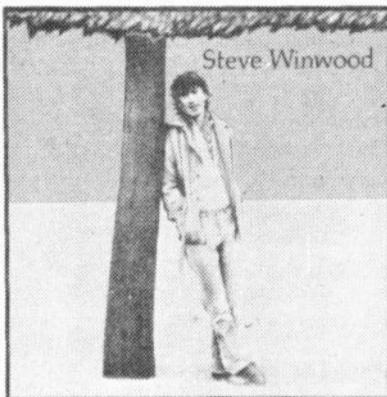


Cont'd. from 22

the results have been so successful that it's possible we'll see this system in operation before 1992. Basically, it works like this: your doctor inserts your favorite record (just the vinyl album itself, you keep the cover) into a special distilling machine which "squeezes" the music out of the vinyl (much like orange juice is squeezed from an orange). The pure musical essence is captured in a sterilized test tube, and a chemical (benzo-peroxide) is added. It's then ready to be injected into your arm just like a penicillin shot, and the entire album plays inside

of you for up to two full weeks! (Depending on the dosage.) The BFD is extremely excited about this method, but they have expressed concern about certain "music junkies" who might misuse it by going to more than one doctor and—in an attempt for some sort of "high"—mix more than one album into their systems. Fears have already been expressed about the possible brain-damage that could occur if the *Ramones Leave Home* album was accidentally shot into a system already injected with Joni Mitchell's *Court And Spark*, for example. Despite such drawbacks, look for this method to be a big one.

These are but a few of the innovations you can expect from the record business in the years to come. Speaking for myself, I can hardly wait!



Steve Winwood
Steve Winwood
Island 9494

By MICHAEL TEARSON

With apologies to (recent) Van Morrison, it turns out that Steve Winwood is the most convincing rhythm 'n' blues/jazz-shouter among the white, the otherwise and the fey. This is not news: Since Spencer Davis Group days through Traffic, Blind Faith, Traffic (Reebop, et al) again, and 76's Go, Winwood maintained his standing as our most distinctive Anglo rocker. However, Steve's been gone a long time (Go notwithstanding) and hence qualifies this as a very important release. Conclusion—if this is the time, then certainly this is the record.

The album opens with "Hold on to me while you're falling," which serves to illustrate a personal confidence that surfaced just occasionally in Winwood's post-*Low Spark* work. This is, after all, Winwood's first solo album, the first released outside the "group" or other alias: Winwood now appears self-assured enough to call his own, his own. The young punk of "Gimme Some Lovin'" is a little older now, and apparently, more mature...and so it reads Steve, not Stevie, thank you.

Winwood hasn't gone the self-righteous way of McCartney (*McCartney*) or Fogerty (*Blue Ridge Rangers*), that is, his record is not a totally self-serving excess. "Midland Maniac" is the only track penned exclusively by Steve. There are four collaborations with Jim Capaldi, one with Vivian (Bonzo Dog) Stanshall. Also,

there's plenty studio help from ol' reliables like Willie Weeks, Andy Newmark and such.

Following the decidedly up-tempo "Hold On," Winwood shifts tracks with his concession to the still-trendy disco dance fetish: "Time Is Running Out" is simultaneously hot and rhythmically fun, consequently, it's the most likely to sizzle summer airwaves through August.

The LP's obvious *significant* title, "Midland Maniac," is an autobiographical compact of Winwood's musical rearing—the Alex Haley rock treatment, 'nother words. Self-revelation that serves both to educate and motivate listener and artist alike; the appropriate close for side one. Amen.

Winwood invests 'Maniac' with uncanny good cheer, in the process recalling *Low Spark's* "Many A Mile To Freedom."

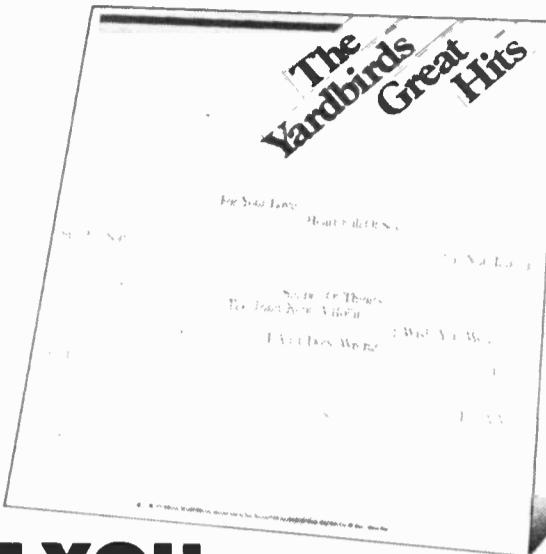
*Pouring out my song to you
Hope you get it and I know
you do.*

However mellowed, Steve continues to experiment, uniquely fusing African, Latin and other *Third* and *Fourth World* rhythms. The bottom line? It's only rock 'n' roll, and we do like it.

"Vacant Chair," co-written by Bonzo Viv, opens side two with peak Traffic enthusiasm—and mind you, we're not complaining the celebration. Then, the incredulously brooding "Luck's In" follows and is absolutely alien in an album brimming with non-stop optimism—Winwood's voice is punched to soulful advantage, accented by Newmark's slashing cymbals.

Winwood isn't breaking new ground with his official 'first solo,' but assessing the real estate he has founded the past dozen years, the only frontier left to Steve is space, anyway. Remember, this catharsis-chronicling that's goin' 'round these late '70s in fact hasn't been altogether good medicine for '60s rock prodigies. With respect to Van's recent disaster, people, Steve Winwood should be considered a most welcome return to reality.

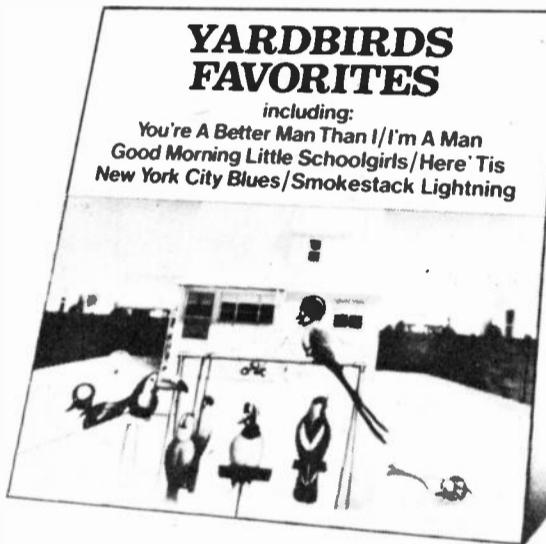
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**IF YOU
DON'T KNOW
THE YARDBIRDS,
YOU DON'T KNOW
ROCK AND ROLL.**

**YARDBIRDS
FAVORITES**

including:
You're A Better Man Than I/I'm A Man
Good Morning Little Schoolgirls/Here 'Tis
New York City Blues/Smokestack Lightning



They started out in 1963, playing London blues clubs. By the time they broke up in 1968, they had become one of rock's keystone bands. Like all genuine legends, they weren't fully appreciated until they were gone. At one time or another in their career, the lineup boasted Eric Clapton, Jeff Beck and Jimmy Page, three of the greatest lead guitarists ever to plug into an amp. They created high-energy blues-rock, paved the way for heavy metal, were innovative and much-imitated. And it's almost impossible to find one of their original records.

Now the music of the Yardbirds is once again available, on two newly-released albums, "Yardbirds Great Hits" and the very specially priced "Yardbirds Favorites." All their classic hits—very special, hard-to-find songs—even some live material.

The Yardbirds. If you loved them then, have another listen—you knew a great group when you heard it. If you missed them the first time, you owe it to yourself to catch up.

**The Yardbirds:
rock giants. On Epic Records
and Tapes.**

Heart's 2nd: *The Wilson Sisters Celebrate Zeppelin*

Little Queen
Heart
Portrait JR 34798

By KEN BARNES

If any doubt still existed about Heart's big-league credentials, the first notes of "Barracuda" should dispel them forever. Roger Fisher slams into a bonecrushing guitar riff, frosted over with nimble harmonics; Ann Wilson spits out the first lines, and they're home free.

Back in Seattle before they had a recording contract, Heart used to play the Led Zeppelin songbook backwards and forwards, and with "Barracuda," the apprenticeship is over. Ann belts it out passionately, Roger's playing is imaginative, tasteful, and power-packed (he'll be a monster soon), and the overall impact is enough to make Page & Co. look over their shoulders—somebody might be gaining on them.

"Barracuda" is the obvious standout on *Little Queen*; it's also the single and might even be a hit. But it's by no means the only attraction. Heart's first album, which came out of nowhere to become the AOR/FM radio sleeper smash of 1976, was an infinitely

promising but inconsistent debut, with two absolute stunners in "Crazy On You" and "Magic

context is unique among the current collection of first-rate female singers.

gestions of "Stairway To Heaven" in the guitar work and limber vocals of "Love Alive," echoes of "Battle of Evermore" in the ringing mandolins of the "Sylvan Song"/"Dream Of The Archer" suite (which with its lyrical medievalism and uncannily Plant-like vocal intonations also taken into account is a truly haunting LedZep revenant).

Getting off this overextended Led Zeppelin obsession here (which really isn't as overwhelming as I've made it seem, and irrelevant in that Heart's material sounds fresher than most recent Zep anyway), Heart prove they can go their own way, too. The aggressive, sexy rocker "Kick It Out" is a prime example, and I'm impressed by the passionate, stately bridge on the title track, too. Side Two is on the thin side (the long, meandering "Go On Cry" being a particular disappointment), but *Little Queen* stands up as a strong album. Apart from "Barracuda" there doesn't seem to be another "Crazy On You" or "Magic Man" here, but *Little Queen* is an assured second step forward for an undeniably important and exciting new mainstream rock band.

Man" plus a lot of also-rans and maybe-next-timers. *Little Queen* is much more consistent, and the first side in particular is a thorough delight. Ann Wilson is a phenomenon—she sings with power and passion (and a certain wistful appeal as well), and her ability to pull it off in a hard-rock

When I interviewed Heart last year for *PRM* and learned of their Led Zeppelin roots, the idea of a female-fronted band playing that sort of music fascinated me. It still does, because all through the first side of this album (besides the obvious "Barracuda") I hear other aspects of Zeppelin—sug-



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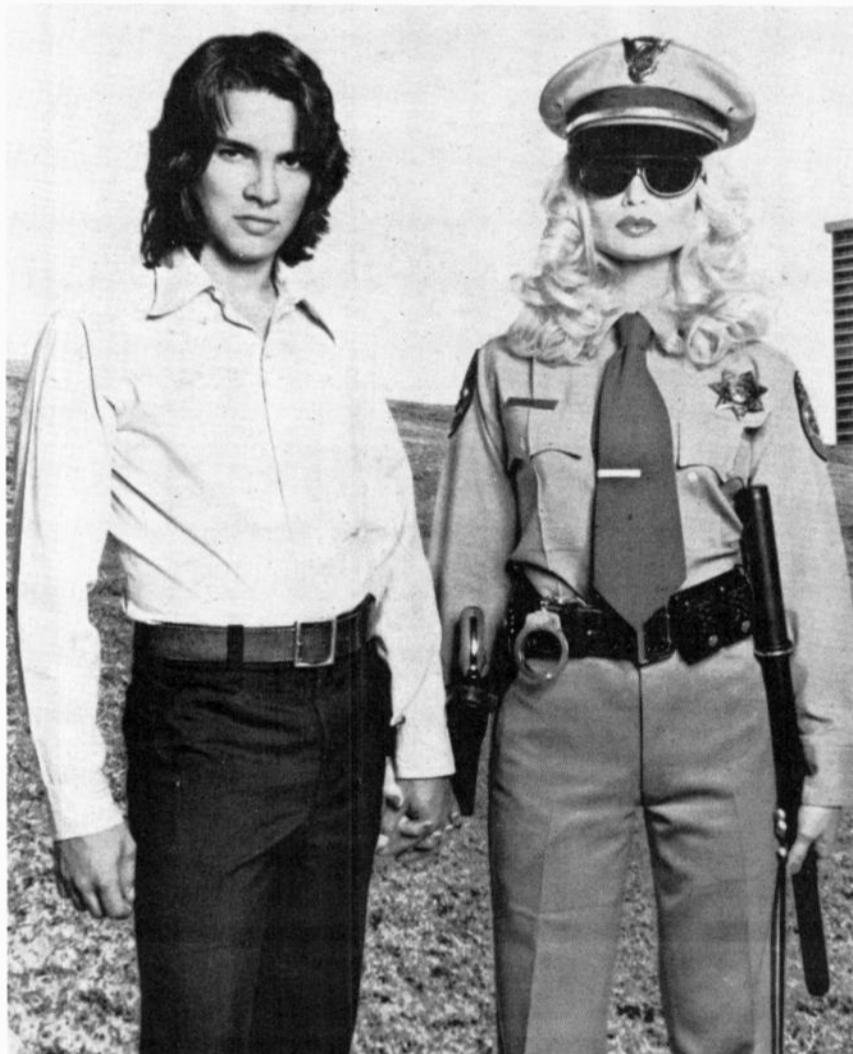
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Meet Reggie Knighton (the one on the left).



With a debut album like "Reggie Knighton,"
he won't be new for long. On Columbia
Records and Tapes.

Little is known about Reggie Knighton. And what is known is probably untrue.

But Reggie sure does have his own sense of what makes a great (not to mention memorable) rock song. And he knows how to surround himself with people who are on his own special wavelength (members of Boz Scaggs's band and Little Feat provide Reggie's musical backdrop).

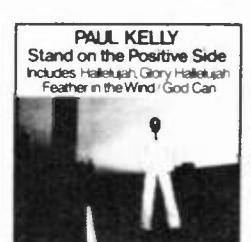
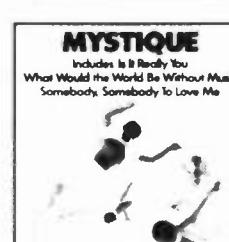
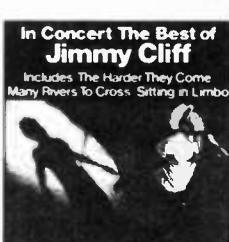
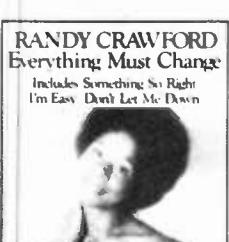
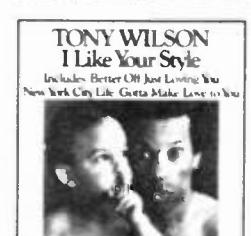
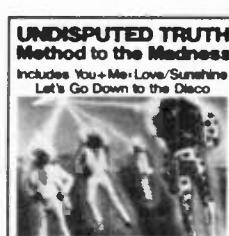
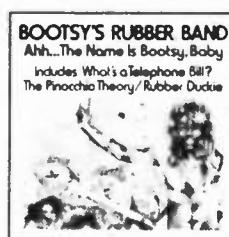
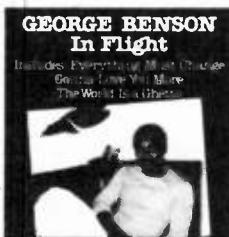
Listen to "VD Got to Idi" or "Girl From Pluto" or "All Night Long" or "Tricentennial Woman" or "Drug Dealer" or "Jenny" or anything else you please. You'll get the idea.



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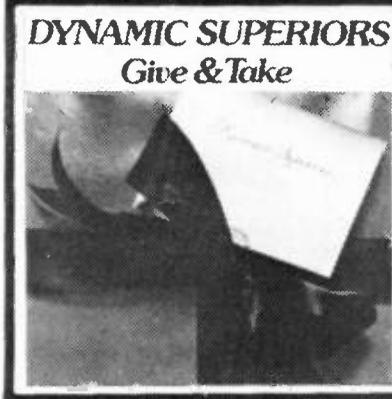
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Give And Take
The Dynamic Superiors
 Motown M6-879S1

By RAMON HERVEY

The Dynamic Superiors have been on the racks for some time, seemingly while the mass exodus of home-grown aggregations, the young Jacksons, The Miracles, and The Temptations, finally subsided.

Like most other vocal-produced groups, The Dynamic Superiors are at the mercy of the creative geniuses or blunderers behind them. Their earlier recordings were blemished by signs of obligatory commitment—the obvious shuffling of writers and producers who have been inclined to salvage only minimal samplings of the group's innate talents.

Of their three previous Motown recordings, the Washington based group of 12 years could only muster one notable single, "Shoe Shoe Shine," culled from their second album, *The Dynamic Superiors*. The set was produced by Nick Ashford and Valerie Simpson, who did a creditable job, although the album went virtually unnoticed.

You Name It, their last album, was ill-attended by staffers Hal Davis and Michael Sutton, who were unable to secure a commercial niche for the group.

Give & Take is a moderate triumph for its producers Eddie and Brian Holland, the latter who served as the resident mentor. The Hollands have long been the company's "clutch men," and those to turn to in distress. Their song repertoire surpasses any of today's 'soul' luminaries, including Gamble & Huff. They have inscribed the bulk of the material along with a number of friends, principally Harold Beatty, standing in for Lamont Dozier.

The musical content is gratifying without a surplus of redundancy or gorged by over-production. There is an amplitude of up-tempo numbers, evenly spaced between more impoverished ballads that don't quite fit the frantic style of lead singer Tony Washington.

The apparent indulgence in the music is accented by the supportive cast of Gene Page on horn and string arrangements, and McKinley Jackson who implemented the

Soul & Jazz Reviews

RECORDS

rhythm arrangements. Jackson has provided potent rhythm backdrops for the group's adequate harmonies, and really piles it on, on what is the most impressive track, "Nowhere To Run."

The track opens with an infectious congo solo by Bobby Hall Porter, clever echo improvisation, hand-clapping, tambourines, and later builds into a driving and thumping 9:07 minutes of funk. The track is also garnished by strategically well-placed horn insertions and whining synthesizer, slightly inflicted by tastes of Billy Preston fingering.

It is the most danceable tune in the set, and should prove to be a gold mine for the disco fanciers.

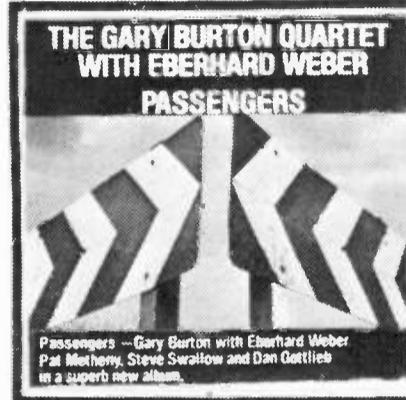
No credit is given specifically to musicians for each track, but throughout the set they are commendable. Bass by Scott Edwards, Henry Davis and Tony Newton is heavy-handed, while percussion, which is plentiful, by Bob Simmitti, Jules Wechter and Gary Coleman, are high points, as well as the thumper James Gadson.

"All You Can Do With Love" is less rhythmic, but is a bouncy up-tempo tune reminiscent of Leo Sayer's "You Make Me Feel Like Dancin'." Washington's high-octave sweetness is more suited to this cheery setting. His limitations are more vivid on ballads like Stevie Wonder's "All In Love Is Fair" and "You're What I Need," which he performs emotionally but not controllably.

Washington's vocals are unrestrained. He is constantly on the fringes of an endless falsetto and his variation and depth are well hidden. As the centerpiece, he is distinctive, but lacks the velvety smooth quality of leads like Eddie Kendricks and David Ruffin.

The Hollands have restored harmony to the group, but could have mediated more time from Washington. Washington does carry the group vocally, as no other voice is prominent or powerful enough to single out. A key to the group's commercial acceptance would seem to be a finer vocal blend within the ensemble.

This set, for its generous offerings of danceable funk and disco delight should bring the Dynamic Superiors out of the closet. "Nowhere To Run," is tailor-made for AM drenching and should have some cross-over appeal.



Passengers
Gary Burton Quartet
 ECM 1092

By RUSSELL SHAW

At their best, Burton's recordings have had a harmonious flow to them, dreamy and mellow. His quartet is a perfect vehicle for his well-known four mallet technique, considerable use of echo devices, and sophisticated compositional sense.

For some rather hazy reason, this album fails because there seems to be a constricted development of ideas that should proceed smoother. "Claude and Betty" is a perfect illustration in point, a weird exercise in semi-connected minor chord tonalities.

"The Whopper" is too top heavy on bass due to Steve Swallow's uncharacteristically narrow scope plus the sitar-like, annoying clanks of guest bassist Eberhard Weber.

The inclusion of Weber on these recordings is a drastic mistake. His central leanings and strengths are in directions quite different from those of the quartet—semitonal lines, chaotic filagrees. With his various German groups, Weber has crafted some intricate tapestries, yet the net result here is an interruption of the basic melodic strengths of the Burton group. On the relatively unconvoluted "Sea Journey," Weber does show a team spirit; his forthright plucking accentuates the cymbals of drummer Dan Gottlieb quite effectively. Yet on other tracks, he constipates.

And what of Burton? On many cuts, he is decidedly economical, with tasty, yet brief rides. A dreamy tour-de-force on "Sea Journey," his only substantial contribution, leaves one listening to the Towner or Corea collaborations for a definitive sampling of his encyclopedic abilities.

DEXTER GORDON
HOMECOMING

Live At The Village Vanguard

including:
 Gingerbread Boy/Little Red's Fantasy
 Fenja/In Case You Haven't Heard/Backstairs



Homecoming [Live at the Village Vanguard]
Dexter Gordon
 Columbia PG 34650

By COLMAN ANDREWS

Dexter Gordon's tenor-playing is very warm, but not in a wispy way; he plays with great energy, but he never verges on the hysterical. There is a remarkable evenness to his tone, which, were it less well-rounded, might sound flat. But it isn't, so it doesn't.

Homecoming is a live album, recorded in New York in December of last year, with Gordon playing with the Woody Shaw-Louis Hayes Quintet (minus their regular reedman, Rene McLean). Although a steady stream of Gordon LPs has appeared in recent years—Gordon himself has been largely absent from the U.S. since the early 60s.

Fortunately, Gordon sounds in top form here—which he certainly did not the last time I heard him in person, in Italy in the early 70s, when Johnny Griffin (!) blew him off the stage. It is amusing at first and then starts to get slightly annoying to hear the ease (almost helplessness) with which Gordon's long solos quote from other works. But that is a minor quibble—and he certainly does weave these quotes into his other ideas quite handily.

This is a two-record set, and the tracks include "Round Midnight," a Jimmy Heath tune called "Gingerbread Boy" (not one of Heath's most notable works), and a number of originals by Gordon, Shaw, and others.

Shaw plays well, but I've always found his sound to be a bit too fragile, especially considering the short, punchy little figures he sometimes plays. His co-leader, Louis Hayes, is relaxed and precise, and bassist Stafford James fits in easily to the atmosphere. Ronnie Matthews is a good, strong, funky pianist, whose only major flaw is an over-fondness for humorless, Oriental-like chording. (I wish, incidentally, that Prestige would reissue Matthews' classic *Doin' The Thang* LP, with Freddie Hubbard and Charles Davis, the latter being one of the great under-rated reedmen of the 60s.)

direction of more rounded acceptance. People like Lou Rawls and Rita Coolidge began covering Bell's songs.

But it remained for 'Born Under A Bad Sign' to bring Bell world-wide acceptance. A multitude of musicians (not the least of which were Albert King and Cream) turned Bell's bluesy ode into a standard rivaled only by the bar band classic 'Goin' Down.'

At the height of his musical career, Bell dropped away from music and, for the next 2½ years, immersed himself in other creative areas. Bell took to the stage in an acting capacity; performing in summer stock productions at The Academy Theatre in Atlanta. He continued his songwriting and got his feet wet in production of other people's records.

Finally, in 1976, Bell did another about face as he returned to recording and performing. What with his new found interests and the never ending supply of songwriting royalties coming in, you've got to wonder why Bell chose to return to music.

"It really boils down to liking what I'm doing. If the whole entertainment thing was a stone drag to me, sure I'd be happy to kick back and let the money from my past efforts keep me going. I really like doing this and that's why I'm back."

Bell's comeback effort, 'Tryin' To Love Two,' has been viewed as pretty blatant in many circles. The glossy, mildly disco beat. The lyrical allusion to bigamy. It all seems like a pretty safe bet. A safe bet, maybe. But Bell deems it anything but dishonest.

"In a way 'Tryin' To Love Two' was deliberate but I don't feel I sacrificed the integrity of the song just to get a hit record. I figured it was a good song that tells a story and that has a catchy melody. So I recorded it and put it out there. I didn't say 'well disco's in so I think I'll record it with a disco beat.' I recorded the song the way I perceived it to be. I didn't cop out."

"Besides I'm too truthful a performer to compromise myself. I give an audience 101% all the time. I feel an audience deserves that. It's the same with my songwriting. I write songs about life and truth. There's just no bullshit music in me. And, despite what everybody tells you, truth is what an audience wants. People can identify with truthful things. And identification between an audience and performer is what William Bell is all about."

The conversation returned to Bell's flying in the face of the sure formula of today's soul music. Nothing profound on the state of the art was forthcoming. Just a silent mime of a man cutting his own throat and this final reply:

"I just like to stick my neck out a lot. Sometimes I stick it out too far and get it chopped off."

"But so far I've been lucky."

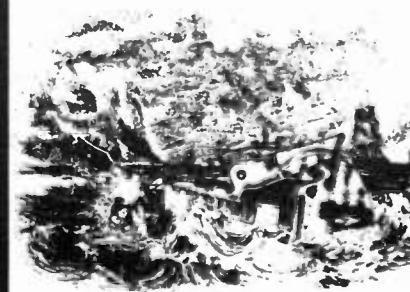


BE TOUCHED.

As one of the West Coast's leading session players, guitarist Lee Ritenour spends hour upon hour, day after day, bringing life to other people's music.

So what's he brought to his own new album? Ten of the most experienced fingers in the business. And a selection of songs that say "be touched" by his youthful energy.

LEE RITENOUR



Captain Fingers.

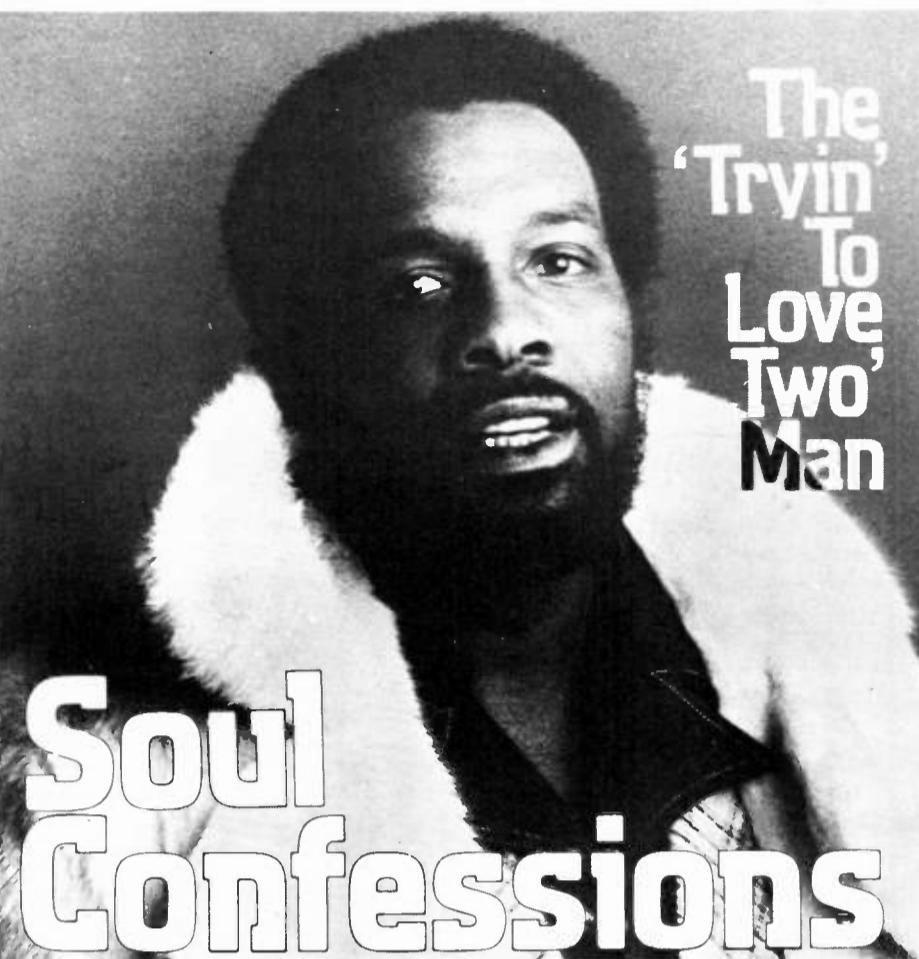
Now you can enjoy the wonder of Lee Ritenour first-hand. "Captain Fingers." Get your hands on a copy. On Epic Records and Tapes.

WILLIAM BELL

By MARC SHAPIRO

William Bell looked at the *Cash Box* review and laughed. It's not that the review was negative. What trade review is ever negative? It's just that the review had cited Bell's follow-up to 'Tryin' To Love Two' as a cinch "add" on all the R&B lists. Seeing as how Bell's 'Tryin' To Love Two' is already in the upper reaches of the national pop charts (as is his album *Coming Back For More*) the review should be dismissed as a short-sighted attempt at pigeonholing.

Bell's introspective demeanor and overall subtle approach to his music further contrasts the pre-conceived ideas most people have about 1977 soul served up by black hands. You'll never catch him in six-inch platform heels jumping dead on the double bump. His soft-sell approach to soul and blues, pays no mind to



the current raucous R&B scene.

"Yes, there's a subtleness in my music and, in a way, it's a deliberate kind of subtlety. With *Coming Back For More* I was trying to stay within the realm of a contemporary sound and, at the

same time, avoid being another disco or R&B sexist act. In order to make an impression I had to try and do something out of the ordinary. I mean here I was just getting back into the business after three years away from it and

nobody really remembered me. So I had to come up with something that had an immediate identifying quality, that was pleasant to the ear and that had some kind of contemporary ring to it. Now that may seem like a hell of a lot to accomplish with what was, in essence, a debut album but I think all the elements I was looking for did come together."

Bell's resurgence is the latest point in a career that has been marked by an intense workman-like attitude. And so it seems strange when you realize that the career of William Bell is the direct result of an impulsive move.

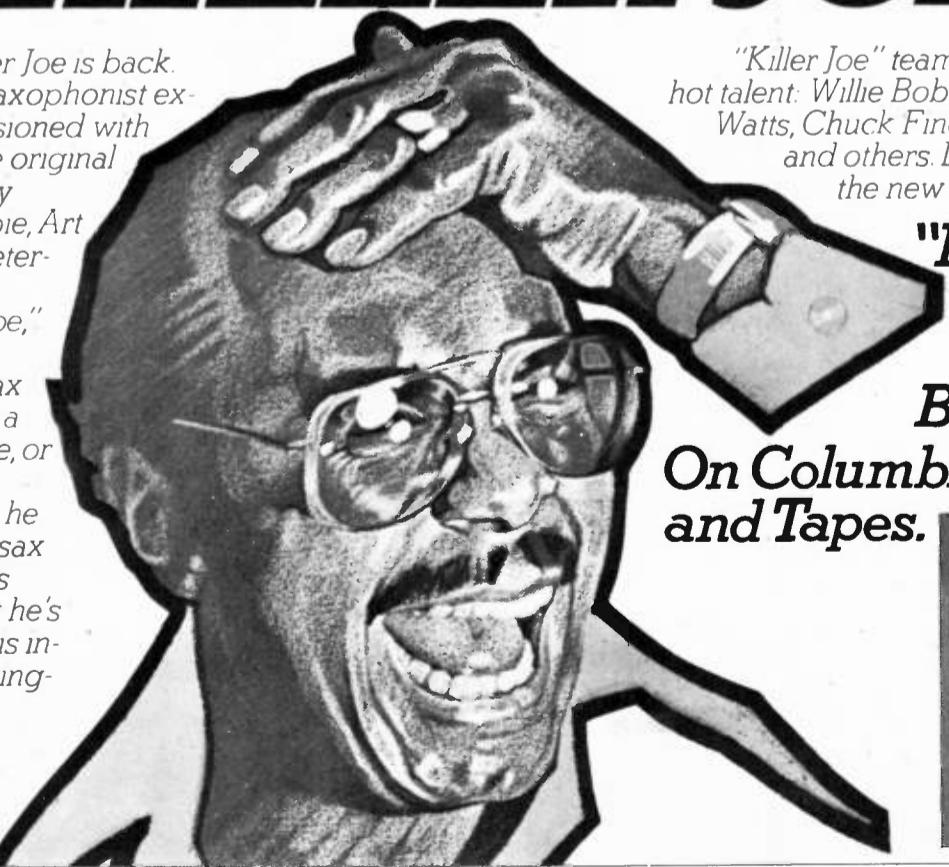
"It really was an accident," said Bell. "I was in high school at the time and there was a talent contest being held in town. Up until that time I had done some singing in church choirs but I had no desire to become a professional performer. Anyway, some friends dared me to get into the contest. I took their dare and, subsequently, won it. The prize turned out to be an audition with Satellite Records (later to become Stax) and, two years later, I finalized my contract and began recording for them."

The ensuing years saw Satellite's signing of Bell to be a fruitful one as the likes of 'Everybody Loves A Winner,' 'A Tribute To A King' and 'I Forgot To Be Your Lover' made Bell a fixture on the soul charts. At this time Bell's abilities as a songwriter also began to make moves in the

GET 'EM KILLER JOE!

The original Killer Joe is back. Benny Golson, saxophonist extraordinaire, who sessioned with Art Blakey (one of the original Jazz Messengers), Ray Charles, Dizzy Gillespie, Art Farmer and Oscar Peterson, is breaking new ground with "Killer Joe," his new album.

Benny's sweet sax has sweetened many a session, a movie score, or an arrangement. On "Killer Joe," not only is he featured on soprano sax (for the first time in his recorded career), but he's giving Disco music his infectious, rhythmic, swinging soul.



"Killer Joe" teams Benny with some hot talent: Willie Bobo, Stanley Clarke, Ernie Watts, Chuck Findley, George Bohannon and others. Dance to it, move with it, the new "Killer Joe."

"Killer Joe," from the eminently talented Benny Golson. On Columbia Records and Tapes.



SOUL & JAZZ SINGLES



By JOE MC EWEN

Without a funk or soul correspondent this month (both claim travel fatigue), we went to our local soul radio station and picked through a couple of piles of brand new singles. Here is a consumer guide from our random selection. It's a mixed bag to be sure.

PERCY SLEDGE

When She's Touching Me
Capricorn

What a surprise and, alas, what a disappointment. A Dave Crawford-production that not so ingeniously borrows the melody from Candi Staton's "Young Heart Run Free," while sporting a mix that has the hi-hat boosted above all else. Dismal.

EMOTIONS

Best of My Love
Columbia

Punchier than almost anything on *Flowers* and very brassy, "Best of My Love" (thankfully not

the Eagles song), didn't hit home with the first listen. Subsequent playings have found our affections increasing.

JB's
Music for the People
Polydor

Who would have ever thought that it would deteriorate to this? If you like wilted lettuce and two-week old spaghetti, you'll love "Music for the People". File under limp.

JACKIE MOORE
Make Me Yours
Kayvette

Bettye Swann's original is what I call an untouchable, a record so captivating that it defies reinter-pretation. Still, Jackie Moore's version is pretty true to Swann's though perhaps a shade faster. Kind of nice.

PERSUADERS
I Need Love
Calla

Smokey Scott has a truly tortured and inspired voice. "I Need Love" is slow and doesn't sacrifice any of the old-fashioned vocal group verities for sweetness. Taut, anguished and recommended.

JERRY PERRY
Call On Me
Columbia

Aims for a mid-tempo Marvin Gaye flavor. Ends up non-de-script.

JOHNNY GUITAR WATSON
A Real Mother For Ya
DJM

Watson has carved out his own little niche, one that serves his dry singing and lean guitar plucking quite well. The combination is odd: talking blues and a mix as clean as Ultra Brite.

BEN E. KING and AWB
Get It Up
Atlantic

It's kind of sad that King never hooked up with Gamble and Huff back in the late '60s, ala Jerry Butler. As it is, King's post-"Stand By Me" career has been pretty much of a waste and that's too bad. "Get It Up" is more a novelty than anything else.

OTIS CLAY
All Because of Your Love
Kayvette

I knew it. Somewhere in the pile a record that I would love. Here it is. What can you say about an Otis Clay record with a line like "I go to work on Sunday thinking that it's Monday" and a track that has elements of "Clean Up Woman" and Otis' own "Trying to Live My Life Without You." Why pull punches, "All Because of Your

Love" is a great record. And it's produced by Brad Shapiro. Figure that one out.

ESSENCE
Relax, It's Just Like Dancin' "*Epic*

A Chicago soul group without much personality, but able to create a nice overall effect. The lead singer sounds a little like Russell Thompkins of the Stylistics and this poignantly titled opus should appeal to Thom Bell/Stylistics fans. The hook line is terrific.

EDDIE HOLMAN
This Will Be a Night to Remember
Salsoul

Holman has one of the finest tenor voices ever to emerge from Philadelphia. Unfortunately, his plight is similar to Ben E. King's, simply a case of neglect. His comeback record, one of many, is hard charging (if a little light-weight) Philadelphia soul and while far from his best, it does hold forth the promise of a good album. The single sounds good on the radio.

DETROIT EMERALDS
Feel the Need
Westbound

Sure the song is a classic, but re-releasing it with a new vocal track seems kind of pointless, don't you think?

Great Hands.

In the hands of a master, music can be an energizing and uplifting experience. In the hands of Ramsey Lewis it can be "Love Notes," a new album of great beauty and subtlety.

On "Love Notes" Ramsey gets a very special hand from

another talented composer and keyboard artist. Suffice it to say that he's a wonderful musician in his own right.

Ramsey Lewis has been honored with seven Grammy Awards. When you hear "Love Notes," you'll know why.

Great hands make great music. "Love Notes," by Ramsey Lewis. On Columbia Records and Tapes.

Ramsey Lewis Love Notes

including:
Spring High/Stash Dash/The Messenger
Love Theme From "A Star Is Born" (Evergreen)
Love Notes





By BOB FUKUYAMA

Let's face it, disco music, while fading, is still with us and will be for as long as there persists this present social climate; kids going out to clubs to have fun as participants as much as they are going to halls and stadiums as spectators. It helps when dynamite records like Joe Tex's "Ain't Gonna Bump No More," celebrate said dancehall action, and acts like KC & The Sunshine Band can offer standardized disco-muzak and hit everytime out. But, what with popular music so fragmented these days, and the market expanding to unprecedented numbers, there is room for any and all sorts of pop-rock-soul configurations. And if Mother's Finest, as Sly Stone before them, is a sign of the rock 'n' soul fusion future, then something's happening in radio and records.

To begin with, Mother's Finest startled a lot of jaded and skeptical rock fans last year when they toured with The Who; on first appearance, it seemed a classic case of misbilling—*A black group opening for The Who?*

But, as they proved to a few hundred thousand, Mother's Finest is first and foremost a rock 'n' roll band. In fact, it was perfect that they succeed Lynyrd Skynyrd, who opened for The Who on the '74 Tour; both Mother's Finest and Skynyrd played the Southern circuit—bars on up to halls—for years before establishing themselves as regional stars. As Skynyrd before them, Mother's Finest was Atlanta's biggest local attraction at the time of their signing; they consistently sold out the white-

progressive Electric Ballroom and the black-trendy Fox Theatre. Granted, Atlanta is 50% black, but you still gotta rock to be hot there.

To be realistic, the band has admitted to having problems convincing industry people of their potential marketability—Mother's Finest is an anomaly, a black rock band that often assumes a heavy-metal posture. For pragmatic as well as musical considerations, they enlisted two whites, keyboardist Michael Keck and drummer Barry Borden.

It is this constant pressure to prove themselves, to promote themselves as rockers, that caused their debut, *Mother's Finest*, to be more a testament—"We's blacks playing the white man's music"—than a relaxed set. Titles like "Niggizz Can't Sang Rock & Roll" made sure the audience didn't miss the point: These guys don't want to be mixed in a mainstream black bag.

All this is significant in view of the fact that, while rock 'n' roll has always prided itself on being the music of the wild and reckless, it has never gone to the hysterical extremes that black performers, traditionally, have taken soul & R&B. The white man's idea of getting down to rock has heretofore confined itself to the histrionics of sickies like the MC5, or accepted/acceptable fanatics like Ted Nugent; rowdy, real rowdy, has kept to the ghetto and the black market. Mother's Finest tries to bridge this gap; using rock structure for formal R&B elements, the band is the most important cross-over—indeed, genre-defying—act since the early Sly & The Family Stone.

Their first album served a specific function, and to this extent, it was a successful first step: Declaring loud and proud that they are a rock outfit, Mother's Finest resolved their initial identity crisis. Now, on *Another Mother Further*, the band lets the music speak for itself, minus the overkill.

Recorded in Atlanta, *Another Mother Further* has no traceable sound affiliation at all with Muscle Shoals, Memphis or Miami, the Motown and Philly studios sounding as far away as the moon. The eight songs have none of the formulaic, homogenized smoothness that typifies recordings of black vocal ensembles. Because this is a rock set, it has the spontaneity and rough-shodness that primal rock connotes. And primal it is: As Little Richard was obviously rock, while obviously black, Mother's Finest is a throwback to the days when being a black rock 'n' roller wasn't a contradiction in terms.

Joyce Kennedy's gospel-trained voice scats up and down as if propeled by religion; there is no Motown harmony singing on this album, only the call-and-response shouting of old Chess R&B. Admittedly, Mother's Finest's rock act status is blurred on the four songs ("Baby Love," "Thank You For The Love," "Truth'll Set You Free," "Burning Love") Kennedy sings lead; these sound R&B, almost gospel. But the synthesizer and percussion parts counterpose, and not merely punctuate, the vocals, as if in a rock context. (Like Chaka Khan, Kennedy fronts a band that must struggle against uninhibited vocal venturings.) The rhythm arrange-

ments are aggressive, and do not bend underneath the vocals like a conventionally passive soul track would; rock screams from out behind Joyce Kennedy.

Lead vocals are split between Kennedy and Glenn Murdock, and the difference is great; while Kennedy sings, in the words of Millie Jackson, "too downright dirty to be white," Murdock can be mistaken for a whitey gone black. Murdock's "Piece Of The Rock," in fact, seems like an obvious white-FM selection; the easy soulfulness and guitar-driven bridge should not upset white tranquility in the least. But the lyrics undeniably speak from a black perspective.

*Go on and play your disco music,
Gonna rock and have a whole lot of fun,
Get it, get it, get a piece of the rock,
Give me a piece of yours,
Give me a piece of mine...**

The disco versus rock reference recalls Mother's Finest's first effort, when the band adamantly established their rock identity. And there's "Dis Go Dis Way, Dis Go Dat Way," so that newcomers understand the direction from which the group is coming.

Otherwise, the lyrics are unobtrusively black. ("Put my soul in motion/Caught your love and devotion" does not sound like a white couplet, does it?) Singing is more important here than on most white rock records—a truism, Glenn Murdock and Joyce Kennedy having fronted lounge-show/military-show bands whose only responsibility was to enunciate (American) words—but the rock arrangements define the vocals in the name of rock rhythm and spirit.

As Johnny Guitar Watson's gold record success suggests, black and white audiences will accept black artists not of the Philly and Motown schools of refined anonymity; if Mother's Finest can hit with "Piece Of The Rock," "Hard Rock Lover," "Thank You For The Love," or an edited "Dis Go Dis Way, Dis Go Dat Way," we'll know that rock and soul are both evolving towards a more democratic desegregation. That work left undone by Sly Stone is being carried on by Mother's Finest.

My belief that Mother's Finest is an important act was firmed-up when Bud Scoppa called last week to turn me on to M.F.'s "Mickey's Monkey." He screamed "It's hot!" For many, Smokey Robinson's version has been sacred, untouchable—it was impossible that any mainstream black vocal ensemble, or mainstream white rock band, could ever come up with a rendition that remotely did justice to the original. But then, nobody considered the possibility of the variation-on-style that is Mother's Finest's stock in trade.

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between the sexes in general, and Marvin optimistically hopes it'll give people strength in their own emotional trials as they go through the sexual confusion of the Seventies. As a teaser, he played two tracks from it—"I Need Time On My Side," a heavy groove funk tune with Marvin singing in a Sly Stone voice, and "Hallelujah, I'm Free," an almost hymn-like ballad tracing a marriage from beginning to break-up.

Like **What's Goin' On** and **Let's Get It On**, Gaye's upcoming album (planned for a late summer release) is conceptual. Marvin feels that, "woman's nature is rising, her colors are beginning to show again," and as a result, the war between the sexes is intensifying. "Man is pretty weak to bow to some of the demands of the more radical women of today," Gaye feels. "I'm not chauvinistic to tell the truth. It may hurt to recognize it, but I'm the King and I love you, and you're the Queen. The Queen cannot be King, the Queen must be the Queen, and the King the King, though I probably just lost a couple of million record sales."

Gaye continues, "It's our fault basically. I would say that women are stronger than men today, especially mentally. Men should really get themselves together and become real men again or we will be in trouble. I know that if we're on our jobs a woman can respect that and take her rightful place as a woman, if a man is really a man."

Is that the way it is in his current relationship? "No, it isn't," he replies with a paradoxical grin. "She's caught up in the movement, with the philosophy of it, and I'm rather old-fashioned thinking, and we have some problems in that area." With everything else in Marvin Gaye's life kept in a personal balance, this is where his next philosophical battle may be thought, fought, and heard.

“ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ”

—*Rolling Stone*—

**MUDDY WATERS
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—*New Musical Express*

**"Hard Again."
The Muddy Waters
album.
On Blue Sky Records
and Tapes.**



Produced by Johnny Winter.

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"These are ridiculous times we're passing through"

-Marvin Gaye

together. I'm a very patient man. I know that whatever is supposed to happen in life, I'll have it, as long as I keep my attitudes proper."

He's less pleased with the state of the music business. "I'm not happy with the business. I don't like to put out a lot of records and albums just because record companies want a lot of material in bulk. I want to put out something that says something, something that you can feel. When I put out a record, that to me, is my painting, and it saddens me to see it merchandised."

He's not happy with the compromise business puts on his art. "I think that what I'm basically concerned with," Gaye continues, "is being a true artist, and it's difficult. You have to be intelligent because you will definitely be exploited beyond any reasonable expectations."

Gaye nixed the idea of a joint label with Stevie Wonder because it might upset the balance he has achieved between art and exploitation. "It's very difficult to be show and business. It takes a hell of an artist, and I think my product would immediately show the result of my handling business because I would start having fights with my inner-self as an artist. Having a war with myself, I'd simply be telling a lie on wax." The only concession Marvin will make to the business side of his personality is owning his recording studio. "I have this studio and it's good for me because I can create in it and the vibes are in the walls and in the music. It's of and about music."

In almost the same way, Gaye is, of, and about music. He feels his inspiration comes, "because I have my senses geared to



receive. It doesn't come through me, but to me from somewhere else." Just where is hard to pinpoint. "I have to get a conglomeration of stuff," he explains. "I have to listen to my daughter, watch the kid down the block, watch a fight in the street and try and break it up, see a dance, see a chick that looks great. Then after I get all this stuff in me and feel the beat and pulse of all this, I figure that this is where it is, this is the sound that will do it."

"Got To Give It Up" is definitely the sound that does it, but it is more obviously a dance track than anything Gaye has recorded since "Hitch Hike" in the mid-Sixties. From the loping bass line to the party voices blurring over the instruments and Marvin's whispery falsetto, the tune breathes of funk, fire, and dance.

Yet Gaye doesn't consider himself much of a dancer though he stepped through a mean "Hitch Hike" in the **TAMI Show** movie twelve years ago. "I was the type of person who never felt the dance," Marvin says about his two left feet. "I always wondered what was wrong with my soul that I could never dance, and I'm still having a lot of trouble feeling it. I don't know what I dance, but everybody tells me it's really

dorky. Then a time back, a year or so ago, I began to dance a little on stage. Never before would I dance. I'd just come out and pop my fingers and figure that everybody would think that I chose to be cool, which is always a possibility as long as you don't try to dance. Once they've discovered that you're really ridiculous, you've blown it."

Gaye may feel inept as a dancer, but as a writer, arranger, and vocalist on "Got To Give It Up," the music transcends any nervousness about dance floor jitters. If you're not a dancer, one listen might make you look foolish in an attempt to get down. But what the hell, this is the ultimate song for closet dancers who need a nudge.

Though the tune is included on Gaye's recent **Live** album, it is not a live recording from the London concert as many listeners might think and as Motown might have you believe. Instead, it was recorded in Gaye's studio after he got back home from a Fall 1976 tour and noticed he only had enough material to fill three sides of a projected double album. Art Stewart produced the session, but a new hit and a new studio have awakened Gaye's production urge, and he's behind the board on the current album he's work-

ing on.

"Life's a set of scales. You have to balance or you'll tilt and become lopsided in life," Marvin explains philosophically as the conversation turns to the balance between artist and producer. Leon Ware produced Gaye's last studio release, **I Want You**, and there was talk Marvin wasn't happy with the results. "I produced enough of that so I felt comfortable because Leon was very respectful of my musical knowledge," Gaye responds to the talk. "I can be produced by anybody. I mean I'm not so great that I have to produce me. If you're really a dynamite producer, I will do nothing, offer no suggestions, because I know that is something different."

"I can go to any lengths in working with a producer," Gaye continues as he starts playing with control knobs. "I can do nothing and just be a very producable, controllable artist, giving the producer what he wants and expects. Or I will go from A to Z and take total control."

Does he have any artists he'd like to produce? "Yeah, and I'd let them do their thing also," he explains with a condition. "There are levels of control from A to Z that I'll allow until it starts to affect me creatively. When it starts to affect me in that way, I'll probably cut the project off."

The final struggle in Marvin Gaye's life is that of a highly intelligent, philosophical man living through a period which he labels as, "ridiculous times." Gaye's is a personal vision of the world around him and his relation to it, but with his upcoming album, an even more personal tone is set. It's about his separation in particular and the battle



A COMPLEX, MYSTERIOUS, INSPIRED & STUBBORN KIND OF FELLOW.

MARVIN GAYE INSIGHT · by Tom Vickers

Cruising down the Sunset Strip in the early summer smog and heat, an uncanny commercial-musical synch occurs: An enormous **Marvin Gaye Live** billboard dominating the Strip, stares down at me just as Gaye's summer single "Got To Give It Up" comes grooving over the car radio. I continue driving down Sunset to an anonymous storefront, still bouncing along to Gaye's single, and just as the tune ends I get out of the car, ring a door buzzer, give my name, and walk into Marvin Gaye's recording studio.

"He's always late, but he usually shows up," the secretary assures me as I scan the wood panelled walls decorated with gold albums, pictures and posters. Sure enough, ten minutes later, Gaye breezes through the door. He pulls off a blue Air Force flight jacket, introduces himself, and leads me into his 24-track studio. As he fidgets dials behind the board, rough mixes of his current project come bouncing through the monitors. "I'm working on my settlement album," he murmurs quietly as we listen to a couple of tracks.

Marvin Gaye is an extremely complex man who has somehow figured out a balance for living only after struggling with compromises of his heart, soul, and music. These struggles involve his personal life, his artistic career, and the uncomplementary music industry which surrounds him. He is 38 years old, a veteran of over 17 years in the music business, and currently in the middle of a creative surge. It's not exactly a comeback, because Gaye has never really left the eyes or ears of those who have followed his topsy-turvy career. But now he is reaching for another pinnacle as the

business and personal pressures of his life have smoothed out.

Actually Gaye's personal life is still in a bit of turmoil though moving in a more positive direction. He is currently in the middle of a divorce with his wife of seventeen years, Anna Gordy, sister

"I'm in love with her very much. She's helped me regain my sense of youth, and my spirit and love for my music," he explains as small tears well up in the corners of his eyes. "It's my belief that if you can find someone that you can live with, and who inspires you, it's all for the better."

never could fit into the suave crooner mold the company forced on him. This was further complicated by his mortal fear of performing live after duet partner and rumored lover Tammi Terrell collapsed in his arms during a stage appearance in 1969. Tammi lapsed into a coma, and later died, and as a result, Gaye swore off performing until 1974. Turning away from the stage and into himself, Gaye became a troubled person.

Motown never really understood this, and further didn't understand the personality and artistry of their leading male singer. Gaye has always considered himself an artist while Motown struggled vainly to make him an entertainer. It wasn't until his landmark **What's Goin' On** of 1971 that they began to realize the full scope of his talent. But before Stevie Wonder opened the company wide open, it was Gaye who struggled for artistic control. This led to many well-publicized battles with Motown over the years, and rumors that Marvin and Wonder were going to band together into a custom label deal. But Gaye has remained at Motown, even after original acts like the Miracles, and more recently the Temptations, have been forced to leave.

The problems are now settled, at least for the time being, and Gaye admits, "Motown is probably a better record company, maybe not for some artists, but for me. I would never leave this company because at least they understand me and I understand them. Over the years we've worked out a pretty good relationship," he continues as he pulls anxiously on his one studded ear. "I go nuts one time, and they go nuts the next, and we all still go nuts



of Motown president Berry Gordy. And he is in love again, experiencing a romantic affair with Janis Hunter, a woman seventeen years his junior. Though this new romance has caused an emotional shift, Gaye's newfound love has reawakened the personal rhythm which has made his sound among the most unique in popular music.

Marvin emotionally admits this romantic and career reawakening as he sits behind the board.

Gaye continues as he wipes the small tears away with his hand. "She adds a lot of inspiration to me."

With his inspiration rejuvenated and his romantic battles under control, Gaye has also settled another source of confusion in his career, his constant battles with Motown records. Gaye is not a show biz personality the way other Motown performers, like Diana Ross, or even Stevie Wonder, are. He resisted Motown's star-making machinery, and

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Hard Black Rock
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FINEST**

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~Soul~
Confessions

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