RECORD

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Motels: Hype Or Hip?

By Dan Forte

HOLLYWOOD—"Hey, this one looks great," says Marty Jourard, keyboardist/saxophonist of the Motels.

He hands the color slide of the band to lead singer Martha Davis who holds it up to the window on the ninth floor of the Capitol Records tower. "Yeah," she agrees, "that's beautiful."

Val Garay, who recently became the Motels' manager after producing their latest album, *All Four One*, is next in line. "No, this isn't it," he says matter of factly. "This isn't the Motels. This is the Beach Boys, it's California. I don't think this is how we want to represent the Motels."

"I like it," counters a Capitol publicist. "It's light, it shows the band's sense of humor—like the press bio Marty wrote."

"Yeah," says Garay, peering through slide after slide, "that's another thing we've got to talk about."

Val Garay, who spent most of this year's Grammy awards ceremony onstage accepting awards for his production of Kim Carnes' "Bette Davis Eyes," spent most of 1981 in the recording studio with the Los Angeles-based Motels, producing their third album. In fact, he produced the LP twice. Much in the same way that they had exhausted their list of possible producers before settling on with Garay, the Motels met with virtual-

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NEIL ZLOZOWER

Martha Davis: Sweet in the kitchen, spooky on the stage

Stevie Nicks' Next Solo LP In Progress

LOS ANGELES—Until Fleetwood Mac hits the road in September, Stevie Nicks will divide her time between band rehearsal and sessions for her second solo album. Tentatively titled *The Wild Heart* and once again produced by Jimmy Iovine, the LP is described by Nicks as having "that James Dean/Natalie Wood feeling to it. It's just *Bella Donna* a little more reckless. She's just more sure of herself now, so she's taking a few more chances. There are no holds barred on it. It's real strong and emotional."

The title track, according to Nicks, "says 'don't blame it on me, blame it on my wildness.' It's real blackhearted; it has an air about it that's so intense that it just wrenches your heart." Other tracks include "Belle Fleur," "Violet and Blue," "Destiny" and a ballad about one of Nicks' favorite film stars, Greta Garbo.

Nicks also happens to be working on a book called *The Wild Heart*, which appears to be a combination rock 'n' roll diary and autobiography. "The publisher understood it and I didn't really think anybody would," Nicks relates. "They loved the paintings I've done—lots of hand-painted photographs in oil. Two friends of mine are doing it all in beautiful calligraphy. I write a

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PHOTO: JANET MACOSKA/KALEYEDISCOPE

The Tartan Terror still loves America.

Rod Live Due In September

LOS ANGELES—Rod Stewart's first live album as a solo artist is scheduled to be released September 1. The two-record set, produced by Stewart and co-produced by guitarist Jim Cregan (who also co-produced last year's *Tonight I'm Yours* with Stewart), was recorded at the Los Angeles Forum during four shows in December, 1981, at two shows in southern California in April of this year, and in England in late 1980.

Confirmed song titles include "Sweet Little Rock and Roller," "Hot Legs," "Tonight's the Night," "Passion," "She Won't Dance With Me," "You're In My Heart," "Rock My Plimsoul," "Young Turks," "If Loving You Is Wrong,"

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Inside The Doobies

By David Gans

SANTA CRUZ, Ca.—Something happened between the recording of *One Step Closer* in 1980 and the time early in 1982 when the Doobie Brothers began to plan their next album. It wasn't drugs or musical differences or personality clashes or business setbacks—this band had survived episodes of those things for years. In the end, it was geography and an overabundance of talent that ended the Doobies' twelve-year career.

It's important to note up front that the distance between the band members is far more geographical than emotional. To appreciate, or understand, this fact, one has only to see Pat Simmons' home in the hills above Santa Cruz, California. It's a two-story wood frame house—really a farm house, not a mansion of any sort—situated on 80 acres in picturesque California coastal range with a dense forest nailed to the nearby mountainside.

This is the part of the country from which the Doobies sprang. Today, only Simmons remains here, an original Doobie who in so many ways has never strayed far from home. The other Doobies have drifted south to the band's current base of operations in Los Angeles. "I love the sound, the songs, and the players," Simmons says. "I just couldn't handle the commute. I

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Michael McDonald's Solo LP Ticketed for August Release

LOS ANGELES—Michael McDonald's debut solo album, *If That's What It Takes*, will be released in early August, shortly after the Doobie Brothers embark on their farewell tour.

McDonald gets help in all departments from a host of familiar names. The title track was co-written by McDonald and Jackie DeShannon, while "I Gotta Try" is a joint effort by McDonald and Kenny Loggins, with the latter also contributing background vocals. Another song, "That's Why," features additional vocals by Christopher Cross. Edgar Winter shows up for a sax solo on "Believe In It."

Whew! Anything else? Oh yes, the band. Drummer Steve Gadd, keyboardist Greg Phillinganes, bassist Willie Weeks, and guitarist Dan Parks are featured.

—Vicki Greenleaf & Stan Hyman

Pretenders' Next LP On Hold

LOS ANGELES—If all had gone well, the Pretenders would now be recording their third album in London. However, plans for the new disc have been put on hold in the wake of the June 16 death (from unknown causes) of guitarist James Honeyman-Scott, and the more recent departure of bassist Pete Farndon over what are being called "musical differences" with the remaining members of the band, Chrissie Hynde and drummer Martin Chambers.

Mary Ann Campagna, the Pretenders' U.S. representative, says that word has gotten out that the band intends to audition replacements for Honeyman-Scott, and her office has been flooded with phone calls from musicians seeking a job. "It's not that they won't be seen," Campagna says, "but it's really too early. It's upsetting, morbid, really. Kids were calling up the day after Jimmy died."

Campagna went on to say that no one connected with the group is even thinking about resuming activity at present. "Everybody is so shaken up, their minds are blank. He was a real good friend of ours as well as a great guy, You can't even think of replacing someone like that, at least not right away."

—Susanne Whatley

Bad Co. Finishes New LP

NEW YORK—Bad Company's *Rough Diamonds*, the band's first new LP since 1979's *Desolation Angels*, is finished. This much is for certain. When it'll be out is anybody's guess. Due to an inordinate amount of time spent mastering the disc, even Swan Song Records is shying away from giving an exact release date. It's possible, according to a source at the label, that *Rough Diamonds* could be in the stores by late July (meaning, as you read this), or it might be out by August, or . . .

Rough mixes indicate Bad Company is moving away from its standard British blues-rock towards what can best be described as a "funky" sound. "Cross Country Boy," "Old Mexico," "Tie The Knot" and Mick Ralphs' "Kickdown" are all more rhythmically-inventive than the group's previous uptempo efforts, while Paul Rodgers checks in with "Electricland," a pure funk ballad. Only Rodgers' "Painted Face" and Boz Burrell's "Nothin' On The TV" are in the classic Bad Company mold.

Rod Stewart: Live In The USA

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"I Just Wanna Make Love To You," "Tonight I'm Yours," "Stay With Me," "Do Ya Think I'm Sexy?", "Tora Tora Tora (Out With the Boys)," "Gasoline Alley," "Maggie May," "I Was Only Joking," "Sailing," and "I Don't Want to Talk About It." The last two songs, not included in his shows during "Le Grande Tour of America and Canada," were recorded with Stewart's old band in England, in 1980.

Elsewhere on the Stewart front, a representative of the singer's organization denies a published report that Stewart is planning to move back to England with his wife and children "to get away from violence in the United States." Stewart's $50,000 Porsche was taken away from him at gunpoint on Sunset Boulevard in Los Angeles recently, and shortly after that incident a friend of the Stewarts, movie agent Maggie Abbott, was robbed outside her home. "It was a terrible experience for her," Stewart is quoted in regards to Abbott, "and after being robbed myself, I have the feeling that violence in America is getting worse." While not denying its accuracy, Stewart's representative said the singer's statement, published in the *New York Times*, was an "off-hand remark" made while he was still upset over the two incidents.

Rumors also have been circulating that members of Stewart's band had quit rather than sign statements saying that they would never write about their experiences while working for the singer. A series of articles in the British paper *News of the World*, written by a former Stewart employee named Tony Toon, recounted tales of Stewart's allegedly fierce jealousy of Mick Jagger (Toon claims Stewart dated Bianca Jagger only because he wanted to embarrass Mick), his frequent assignations with women other than his wives and steady girlfriends, and other "road gossip," under headlines such as "Secrets of the Tartan Terror."

Stewart's representative acknowledged that the band members were asked to promise in writing that they'd never rat on Rod, but denied that anyone has left the band.

—David Gans

Nicks' Album In Progress

Continued from page 1

page every night. I just jot down what's happening. You wouldn't believe the thousands of pages of stuff that I have. I'll get to say everything I ever wanted to say."

Christine McVie is also scheduled to begin work on her next solo album come November. Concerning the oft-debated future of Fleetwood Mac in light of these projects (Lindsey Buckingham and Mick Fleetwood also have solo LPs in the works), Nicks says, "It'll just depend on how understanding everybody is to everyone else's needs. If everyone is understanding, thoughtful, sweet and kind, then it could go on forever. If everyone isn't, then that could cause a big argument."

—Vicki Greenleaf & Stan Hyman

TOP 100 ALBUMS

1 **PAUL McCARTNEY** *Tug of War* (Columbia)
2 **ASIA** *Asia* (Geffen)
3 **HUMAN LEAGUE** *Dare* (A&M)
4 **VAN HALEN** *Diver Down* (WB)
5 **STEVIE WONDER** *Original Musiquarium I* (Tamla)
6 **THE CLASH** *Combat Rock* (Epic)
7 **RICK JAMES** *Throwin' Down* (Gordy)
8 **WILLIE NELSON** *Always on My Mind* (Columbia)
9 **TOTO** *IV* (Columbia)
10 **THE ROLLING STONES** *Still Life* (Rolling Stones)
11 **QUEEN** *Hot Space* (Elektra)
12 **HEART** *Private Audition* (Epic)
13 **THE MOTELS** *All Four One* (Capitol)
14 **.38 SPECIAL** *Special Forces* (A&M)
15 **ROXY MUSIC** *Avalon* (WB/E.G.)
16 **JOHN COUGAR** *Amerian Fool* (Riva)
17 **BLONDIE** *The Hunter* (Chrysalis)
18 **VANGELIS** *Chariots of Fire* (Polydor)
19 **LOVERBOY** *Get Lucky* (Columbia)
20 **THE GO-GO'S** *Beauty and the Beat* (IRS)
21 **KANSAS** *Vinyl Confessions* (Kirshner)
22 **RICK SPRINGFIELD** *Success Hasn't Spoiled Me Yet* (RCA)
23 **SQUEEZE** *Sweets from a Stranger* (A&M)
24 **THE ALAN PARSONS PROJECT** *Eye in the Sky* (Arista)
25 **ELTON JOHN** *Jump Up!* (Geffen)
26 **SCORPIONS** *Blackout* (Mercury)
27 **SOFT CELL** *Non-Stop Erotic Cabaret* (Sire)
28 **JOAN JETT & THE BLACKHEARTS** *I Love Rock 'n' Roll* (Boardwalk)
29 **ALDO NOVA** *Aldo Nova* (Portrait/CBS)
30 **RAINBOW** *Straight Between the Eyes* (Mercury)
31 **THE POLICE** *Ghost in the Machine* (A&M)
32 **J.GEILS BAND** *Freeze-Frame* (EMI America)
33 **FRANK ZAPPA** *Ship Arriving Too Late . . .* (Barking Pumpkin)
34 **RAY PARKER JR.** *The Other Woman* (Arista)
35 **PAT METHENY** *Offramp* (ECM)
36 **MARSHALL CRENSHAW** *Marshall Crenshaw* (WB)
37 **THE GAP BAND** *Gap Band IV* (TE/Polygram)
38 **LAURIE ANDERSON** *Big Science* (WB)
39 **PATRICE RUSHEN** *Straight from the Heart* (Elektra)
40 **HAIRCUT ONE HUNDRED** *Pelican West* (Arista)
41 **RY COODER** *The Slide Area* (WB)
42 **A FLOCK OF SEAGULLS** *A Flock of Seagulls* (Jive/Arista)
43 **GRAHAM PARKER** *Another Grey Area* (Arista)
44 **DREAMGIRLS** *Soundtrack* (Geffen)
45 **TOMMY TUTONE** *Tutone 2* (Columbia)
46 **ASHFORD & SIMPSON** *Street Opera* (Capitol)
47 **PETE SHELLEY** *Homosapiens* (Arista)
48 **JUICE NEWTON** *Quiet Lies* (Capitol)
49 **JOURNEY** *Escape* (Columbia)
50 **DAVE EDMUNDS** *D.E. 7th* (Columbia)
51 **JETHRO TULL** *The Broadsword and the Beast* (Chrysalis)
52 **HUEY LEWIS & THE NEWS** *Picture This* (Chrysalis)
53 **BLUE OYSTER CULT** *Extraterrestrial Live* (Columbia)
54 **BONNIE RAITT** *Green Light* (WB)
55 **CHEAP TRICK** *One on One* (Epic)
56 **GANG OF FOUR** *Songs of the Free* (WB)
57 **SPLIT ENZ** *Time & Tide* (A&M)
58 **GLENN FREY** *No Fun Aloud* (Asylum)
59 **XTC** *English Settlement* - (Virgin/Epic)
60 **SAMMY HAGAR** *Standing Hampton* (Geffen)
61 **ALABAMA** *Mountain Music* (RCA)
62 **TALKING HEADS** *The Name of This Band Is . . .* (Sire)
63 **THE STEVE MILLER BAND** *Abracadabra* (Capitol)
64 **THE JIM CARROLL BAND** *Dry Dreams* (Atco)
65 **BOW WOW WOW** *The Last of the Mohicans* (RCA)
66 **THE SECRET POLICEMAN'S OTHER BALL** *Various Artists* (Island)
67 **THE TEMPTATIONS** *Reunion* (Gordy)
68 **QUINCY JONES** *The Dude* (A&M)
69 **SIMON & GARFUNKEL** *The Concert in Central Park* (WB)
70 **CAT PEOPLE** *David Bowie/Giorgio Moroder* (Backstreet)
71 **THIRD WORLD** *You've Got the Power* (Columbia)
72 **ATLANTIC STARR** *Brilliance* (A&M)
73 **CHICAGO** *16* (Full Moon/WB)
74 **THE JAM** *The Gift* (Polydor)
75 **CAMEO** *Alligator Woman* (Chocolate City)
76 **DENIECE WILLIAMS** *Niecy* (ARC/Columbia)
77 **THE O'JAYS** *My Favorite Person* (Phila. Int'l)
78 **TOM TOM CLUB** *Tom Tom Club* (Sire)
79 **GENESIS** *Abacab* (Atlantic)
80 **KARLA BONOFF** *Wild Heart of the Young* (Columbia)
81 **THE BLASTERS** *The Blasters* (Slash)
82 **THE BEATLES** *Reel Music* (Capitol)
83 **QUARTERFLASH** *Quarterflash* (Geffen)
84 **RICHARD PRYOR** *Live on the Sunset Strip* (WB)
85 **STEVIE NICKS** *Bella Donna* (Modern)
86 **DAN FOGELBERG** *The Innocent Age* (Full Moon/Epic)
87 **THE ROYAL PHIL.** *Hooked on Classics* (RCA)
88 **GREG KIHN BAND** *Kihntinued* (Berserkley)
89 **HALL & OATES** *Private Eyes* (RCA)
90 **THE WAITRESSES** *Wasn't Tomorrow Wonderful* (ZE/Polydor)
91 **AL JARREAU** *Breakin' Away* (WB)
92 **THE ROLLING STONES** *Tattoo You* (Rolling Stones)
93 **NICK LOWE** *Nick the Knife* (Columbia)
94 **FOREIGNER** *4* (Atlantic)
95 **THE CARS** *Shake It Up* (Elektra)
96 **OZZY OSBOURNE** *Diary of a Madman* (Jet/CBS)
97 **VAN MORRISON** *Beautiful Vision* (WB)
98 **OLIVIA NEWTON-JOHN** *Physical* (MCA)
99 **SMOKEY ROBINSON** *Yes It's You Lady* (Tamla)
100 **KOOL & THE GANG** *Something Special* (De-Lite)

New Artists

PHOTO ALLAN TANNENBAUM

Laurie Anderson: "I don't care for slogans or messages."

Laurie Anderson's Opaque Pop

By Stan Mieses

NEW YORK—The *auteur* of the year's unlikeliest "rock" album (*Big Science*) at least looks the part: she has short, oddly-cropped hair that would benefit from the use of a comb; full, round and well-defined features that are vaguely Scandinavian; and intensely blue eyes that command your attention as surely as the raising of the theatre curtain.

If there is someting striking about Laurie Anderson's appearance, the same could be said for her current notoriety. Lots of pop culture figures have craved to be recognized as "artists," but few recognized "artists" have expressed any desire to cross over the other way.

"American artists," says Anderson, "are really off in the avant-garde of grants and museums and art magazines and the intellectual elite. These artists look upon pop culture with disdain. I would have hoped that they would participate in their own culture."

After years of work as a performance artist, a medium dominated by intellectual kooks and clever people with one-shot ideas, Laurie Anderson appears ready to participate in her own culture in an important way. The key to her being able to do this was the overseas success of an independently-recorded single, "O Superman." Despite its spacy sound, its oblique lyric and its eight-minute-plus length, "O Superman" went to number one on the English charts, and prompted Warner Bros. to give it a shot on these shores. Now there's *Big Science*, and though it's not a hit in the "bulleting up the charts" sense, it's still a daring, significant record on several fronts: for Anderson personally; for Warners' reputation as free-thinkers and experimenters in a time of fiscal and creative conservativism; and for other artists like Anderson who'll be encouraged to be equally single-minded in pursuing their vision of music rather than resort to formula.

Anderson has her own theory as to why "O Superman" was better received by Europeans than it has been by her own countrymen. "I suppose the reason it did so well in Europe," she relates, "is that it's tied to their attitude towards us as the aggressors, the ones responsible for the installation of the nukes. Anything that addresses power and that stems from fear is their take on us. But it's not really spelled out nor are any of the songs that I do specific in that respect. It's more important to be spatial than didactic. Better to be opaque or airy. There's enough time for you to think about it. I don't care for slogans or messages."

More so than any other putatively "rock" artist, Laurie Anderson must be seen to be understood. The same was once said of Bruce Springsteen, but that's because his albums failed to match the power of his live performances. Anderson's music is, in many ways, explained only in a concert situation. The ephemeral sound of her synthesizers, the cartoon-like special effects on her vocals, and the absence of the standard lead guitar-dominated background ("I'm proud there are no guitars on this album—I find them irritating.") allows the music to rise up and sometimes beyond any familiar territory. In concert, Anderson's compositions take on a density—there are ideas, humor, feelings behind them—when coupled with slides, video and various other props.

All this takes shape in Anderson's own recording studio, located in her lower Manhattan loft. In the studio there's a small window that allows her to see a projection screen on which her visual material is assembled along with the music.

"The songs are so interlocked with the images that it's hard to work without the pictures," she explains. "On the other hand, getting stuck on a song is not so disastrous because the pictures suggest something rhythmic, usually. When I begin to work in here, the destination's unknown. I like to think that the music and the pictures dictate their own physical direction. I am basically a performing artist, so it helps to see things this way. I look upon my recordings as being elaborate documentations of my performance, a way of having something left. None of the parts of my work are meant to exist on their own."

Just as the record and the performance of it are inseparable, so too are Anderson's music and her often-conversational lyrics. In fact, she explains, "the main musical lines are dictated by the language; that's how I structure things. The words wander over a field of stable rhythmic ground. Words are like the bass line, if you turn the song upside down."

Since the release of her album, Anderson has gone from playing art galleries and hip nightclubs to thousand seat-plus rock theatres. Yet the general economy "has made my own condition the world condition.

"I've watched big avant-garde opera companies and big rock bands lose big money on big tours," she says by way of explaining her own *modus operandi*. "I've always traveled with a few cases, a few people and I've learned to get by."

How?

"Always get the next train out of town and get scarce real fast."

American Grandstand

By Dave Marsh

Relics Of Rock Culture

Jurgen Vollmer's photos of the Hamburg-era Beatles (collected in his book, *Rock 'N' Roll Times*), were called by John Lennon the first "to capture the beauty and the spirit of the Beatles." And they are. You know the most famous of them as the cover of Lennon's *Rock & Roll* album; it's the cover here, too.

But *Rock 'N' Roll Times* includes perhaps 50 or 60 more. The focus is on John, George Harrison and Stuart Sutcliffe. Paul McCartney is seen briefly, or in passing; he isn't *studied*, perhaps because he hasn't changed much. And Peter Best is seen but once, and then in the background, as perhaps befits a drummer in that era before Moon and Starr.

But John, George and Stu form a neatly triune expression of what rock 'n' roll had been, what it was then, and what it would become. Lennon evokes the past, his rounded, almost chubby cheeks, slicked-back hair and knowing eyes giving him the guise of a tougher Gene Vincent. George Harrison looks about fourteen (he is, in fact, only 17), and his black leather coat pales in significance next to the shyness of his smile and the look of intense passion and bewilderment in his eyes. This is rock 'n' roll on the verge of waking up to its potential.

"By confronting the squalor and fumbling attempts to beautify it which were the center of the Rockers' existence, Vollmer's pictures honor the irrational, transformative power of rock and roll."

Eerily, it's Stuart Sutcliffe, the Beatle who died in Hamburg, who incarnates rock 'n' roll's future. In Vollmer's photos of Sutcliffe, offstage with his fiancé Astrid Kirchherr, Stu wears his hair swept forward, and rather than the black leather affected by the rest of the band, he wears a double-breasted parka and a scarf. The result is the prototypical Bob Dylan fan of 1966. But the gear would never be so effective if not for Sutcliffe's eyes, hooded and hurt, the psychedelic version of the combat vet's thousand-yard stare.

Thus always, perhaps, with tragic, sensitive boys who fall for arty girls. In this manner, Sutcliffe's relationship with Astrid was a genuine portent, symbolizing the way in which the student intellectual style would gobble up the rocker fashion in the course of the Sixties. In Germany at that time, the arty students were called "Exis," and, writes Vollmer, "The Rockers and Exis shared (a) desire to appear disengaged. It was one point of contact between the two youth camps." Virtually the only other one was the music.

The greatest value of Vollmer's book is its portrayal of the rockers whose culture was wiped out by the new synthesis, in which the student-types were (inevitably or not) dominant. The Beatles photos in *Rock 'N' Roll Times* can't do much more than confirm what anyone who has thought much about the band's origins already suspects. But the photos of the Rockers are relics of a culture wasted and gone—a bit like Edward S. Curtis's photos of the Plains Indians.

This parallel is made more intense when one realizes that Vollmer's photography is part of an approach to youth culture which will become one of the principal factors in wiping out the naive, relatively unpremeditated Rockers style. Indeed, before students started to haunt the taverns, the music the Beatles provided was not much more than background for Rocker rituals. "For the Rockers," notes Vollmer, "the Kaiserkeller was mainly a social place for drinking and dancing and picking up a girl. *They* were the stars. It was their place and the bands had secondary importance."

If one were seeking a definition between rock 'n' roll before and after the Beatles, the sentences above would serve. The photos included in Part Two of *Rock 'N' Roll Times*—all of them of Hamburg Rockers of this early Sixties period—spell out the rest of the tale. The best of them, from the sequence of boys and girls combing and ratting their hair to the final depictions of Rocker lovemaking, are as striking (though more innocent) as Larry Clark's classic study of Okie speed-freaks, *Tulsa*. There is the same sense of poverty so desperate that any gesture of rebellion, no matter how self-destructive, seems a valid alternative; there is the same sense that this very desperation has rendered its victims blind to any effective means of escape.

This is not a description of the Beatles, of course. It is evidence of just how visionary the Beatles—the product of a very similar culture just across the North Sea—were from the very beginning, in their ability to indeed see a productive way out of dead-end working class life. And by confronting the squalor and fumbling attempts to beautify it which were the center of the Rockers' existence, Vollmer's pictures honor the irrational, transformative power of rock 'n' roll. For however impoverished, however stunted the environment, what shines from each and every face here is a grasp of human dignity, a lust for simple self-respect.

The genius of the Beatles was to personify this grasp and lust for the world; the genius of John Lennon was to sustain it in one man. Understanding their art—the glory of the music, the magic of the lyrics—can never grant us more than half the story. The rest is here.

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London Calling

By Chris Welch

Moody Blues To The Rescue

Long before Argentina's surrender was announced, Ray Thomas, flute player and rough diamond of the Moody Blues rang up. "We want to go to the Falkland Islands," he announced.

For a tour, I asked? "No—to FIGHT!" Ray, who sometimes allows his patriotism to run away with him, was intent on flying the entire group to the South Atlantic to take part in any remaining military activity. When it was pointed out that an untrained rock group

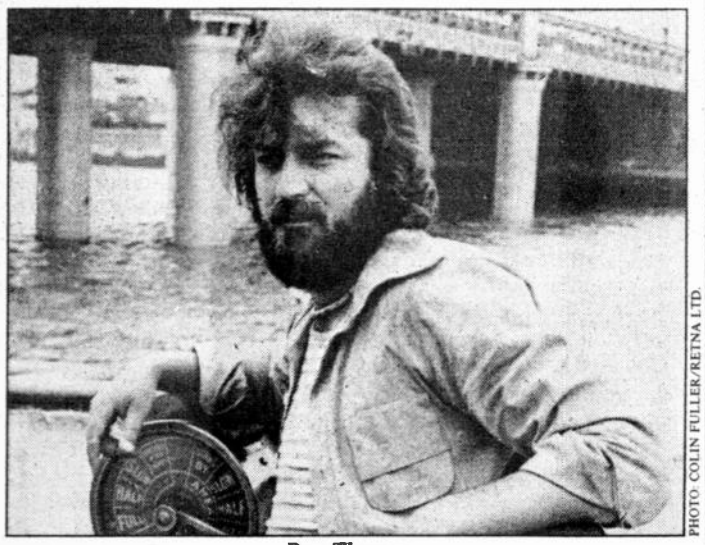


PHOTO: COLIN FULLER/RETNA LTD.

Ray Thomas

of advancing years were hardly combat material, Ray indignantly pointed out that drummer Graeme Edge was equipped with both a Ghurka knife and a microlite aircraft—ideal for commando raids. And Patrick Moraz, the keyboard player, can speak perfect Spanish. "Realistically, we'd like to play a benefit concert for the troops," says Ray. And the best place for that, would be safely at home.

Police On The Punk Beat

The Police started out as an underground punk band (at least they stuck their own posters up and were ignored at the Marquee for several weeks), so their credentials are good for making a movie about the dreaded Anti-Nowhere League. The latter is the band that's been described as "sick" even by U.K. punk critics, and has had their records seized by the police. If nothing else they seem to be ensuring a punk revival, and Stewart Copeland has been busy filming them on the road, touring with the likes of Chron Gen, Chelsea and the De-

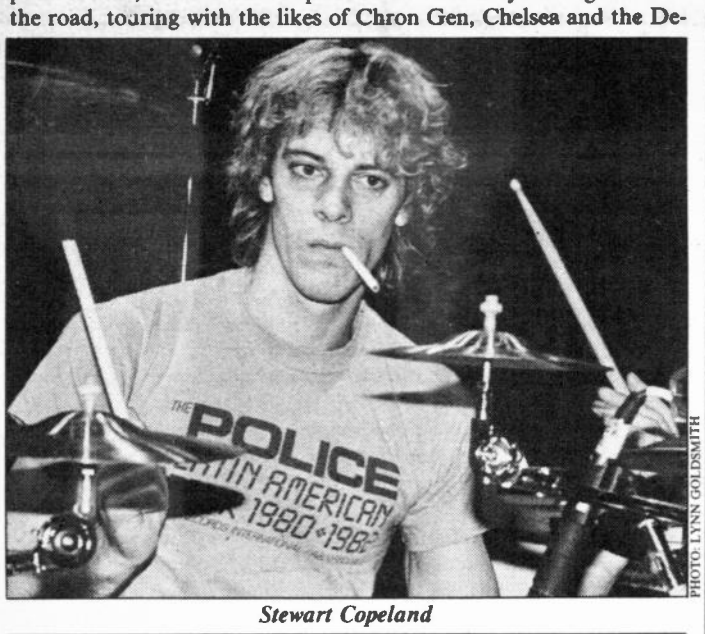


PHOTO: LYNN GOLDSMITH

Stewart Copeland

fects. The final result will be an epic entitled *So What*, the first production by the Copeland Brothers (that's Stewart and manager Miles). Says Stewart: "It's a comprehensive look at the punk scene still flourishing in Britain today. Punk is alive and well as the success of the Anti-Nowhere League Lp shows."

All punks should also take heed of Poly Styrene's fate. She was hailed as the Punk Princess when she led X-Ray Specs and, wearing her teeth braces with defiant gesture, sang of "Germ-Free Adolescence." But then Poly began to believe it was all true. She became convinced she was a creature from outer space, and not just a name check in the weekly rock press. Now she has sought sanctuary and a sort of sanity as a devotee of Hare Krishna. She's given up sex and drugs, and eats only vegetarian food. But she may yet return to music, using it to confront corruption and sin and "the exploitation of young people." Nice to hear our suspicions about the music business confirmed by an unimpeachable source.

Bits & Pieces

Remember all the fuss when Roger Daltrey stuttered "My Generation"? There was a rush to defend people suffering from speech defects who might have felt mocked, if they had ever heard of the Who or their records. Now a group called Toy Dolls has kicked up a row with a song called "I've Got Asthma," complete with realistic wheezes and the line, "I'm choking and my face is blue." Tasteless stuff? Thousands of asthma sufferers thought so when the band played on BBC-TV, and got up a petition to have them banned from playing. But they need not feel aggrieved: the group's lead singer suffers from asthma himself and carries an inhaler to ward off attacks that sometimes smite him in mid-performance . . . Phil Lynott, edging away from Thin Lizzy, has released a solo single, "Together," co-produced with Midge Ure of Ultravox. It presages a new album due in August, as yet untitled. Phil will be making a solo tour of Ireland, Britain and the rest of Europe—his first without Lizzy. But at least one member of the band, unseen keyboard player Darren Wharton, will accompany him.

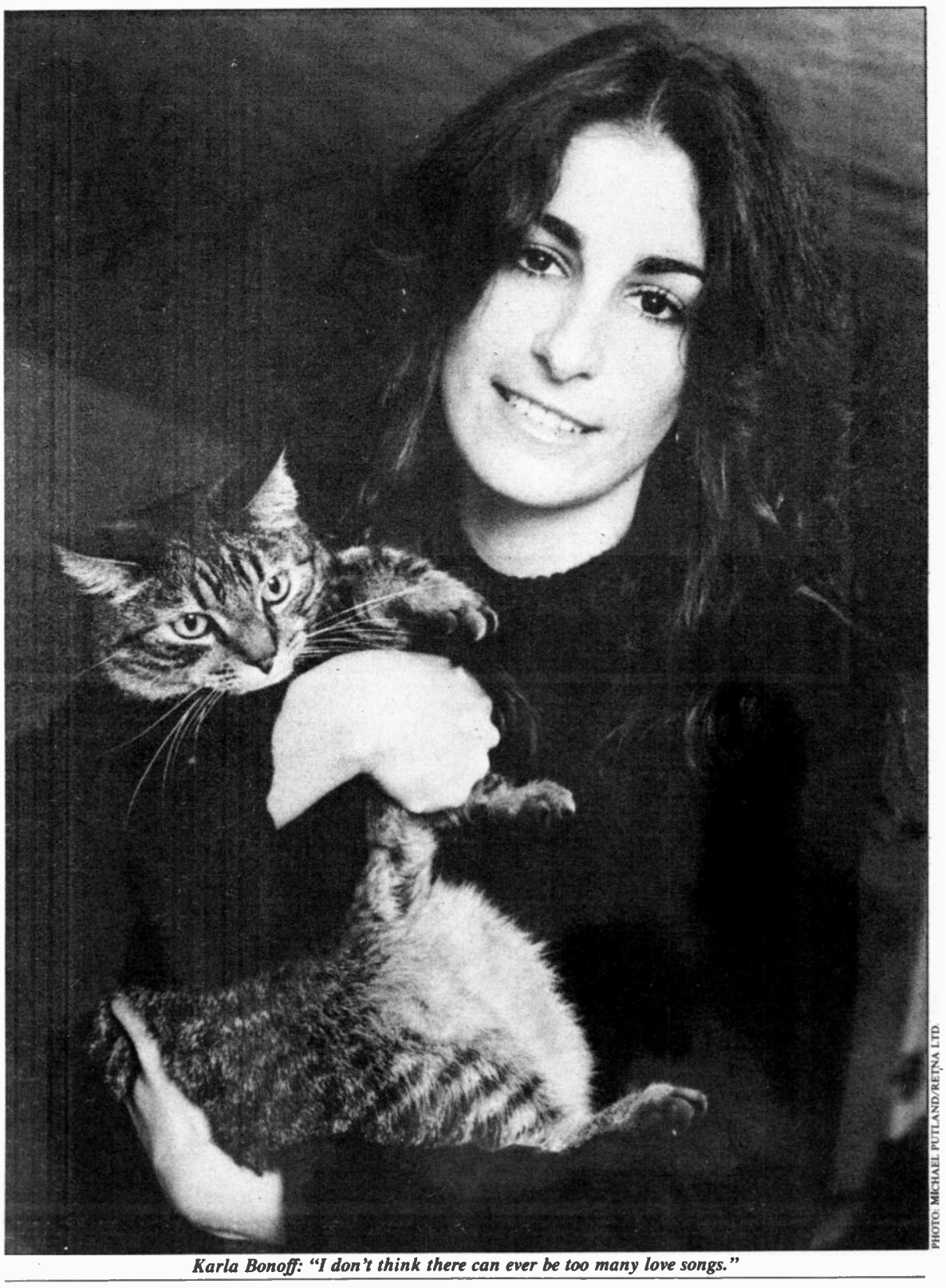


PHOTO: MICHAEL PUTLAND/RETNA LTD.

Karla Bonoff: "I don't think there can ever be too many love songs."

Bonoff Gives Her Love Songs A Shot of Rhythm and Blues

By Michael Goldberg

HOLLYWOOD—Here in Karla Bonoff's house, a mile or two above Sunset Strip, everything is as calm, mellow and relaxed as . . . well, one of Bonoff's laid back songs of love and loss. Letting her cats Tex and Rhubarb out through a sliding glass door, the woman critic Robert Hilburn characterized as one of the last of the "L.A. school of introspective, folk-oriented singers and songwriters" eases into a Spanish-style leather couch.

Throughout her career Bonoff's songs have focused on the ins and outs of relationships, and she is genuinely surprised when people want to know why she writes exclusively about romance and heartbreak. "It seems like that's pretty much the major concern in most people's lives, isn't it?" she asks in her gentle voice. "Even though I care about nuclear disarmament, I don't wake up thinking about it. I *do* wake up thinking about the conversation I had last night with my boyfriend on the telephone. All the greatest songs ever written are love songs. I don't think there can ever be too many of them."

Born and raised in Westwood some 30 years ago, Bonoff was always a fan of love songs and pop music. But it wasn't until the late '60s, when the L.A. folk/rock scene developed, that she was inspired to make a career of music. "I was just swept away by the music scene I was exposed to at the Troubador. I mean I can remember Jackson Browne used to play there on Monday nights. I was sitting up there just crying hearing "Opening Farewell," a song he had just written. At that point, being 16 or 17 and being faced with going to UCLA or being in the music business—there was no question about it."

At 17, against her parents' wishes, Bonoff moved into a house with her boyfriend Kenny Edwards, and two other musician friends, Andrew Gold and Wendy Waldman. The four formed a band, Bryndle, thinking they were the next Buffalo Springfield, signed with A&M, and recorded an album that was never released. "With four different writers and four lead vocalists, the record company didn't know what to make of *that* in 1970." Two years later, Bryndle broke up.

> **"I'd get up in the morning and put on Otis Redding and start washing the dishes–just like a regular person . . ."**

Bonoff continued to live with Edwards, and spent the next five years writing songs and putting them on cassettes. Linda Ronstadt ended up recording three of Bonoff's songs, "Someone to Lay Down Beside Me," "Lose Again" and "If He's Ever Near," on her *Hasten Down the Wind* LP. "It was a real high time for me. That really turned me around. I got a lot of confidence and felt real good about what I was doing."

Signed to Columbia in 1976, *Karla Bonoff* and *Restless Nights* were well-received sets of melancholy folk-rock (even Bonoff characterizes some of it as "rather depressing"), but her new album, *Wild Hearts Of The Young*, kicks off with an upbeat, sensual version of Paul Kelly's "Personally," setting the tempo for a successful fusion of L.A. romanticism and R&B electricity.

Kenny Edwards continues to be an influence and collaborator, though their nine-year romantic relationship has come to an end. A less obvious influence is Eagle Glen Frey, who produced part of the new album, but, due to a falling out with Bonoff, is not credited on the album sleeve. Though Bonoff won't discuss their disagreement, she does credit Frey with reintroducing her to R&B, specifically "Personally."

"To a certain extent I think I exhausted the genre in which I was writing. You want to be refreshed. I'd get up in the morning and put on Otis Redding, and start washing the dishes—just like a regular person will listen to music. I was listening to a lot of R&B, things that had nothing to do with what I'd already done."

You'd think after all these years that her craft would come easy, yet Bonoff still experiences an enormous amount of strain and soul-searching every time she attempts to compose new material. "My songs come from a very personal place. They come from an emotional energy I get when it's something that I care about. I don't sit down and craft them out. I can't do the Carole Bayer Sager/Burt Bacharach thing. I have no idea how to approach that and write something that's good, that seems to have some guts to it. I really think you have to *care* about it to write something that's really going to move people."

Cheap Trick Skates To Glory As Goalie Nielsen Excels

NEW YORK—It was billed as a press conference, but it was more like an ice hockey scrimmage, and there weren't too many shots on net, either. Cheap Trick, the boys from Illinois, weren't going to do any interviews this time around, so before embarking on an extended four-month summer/fall tour in support of *One on One* they came out (late) to meet the third estate; and with photographers clustered around them it went pretty much as you'd expect: the cute guy was cute, the weird guy was weird, and the new guy was befuddled. And where was drummer Bun E. Carlos, rumored to be on his way out?

"Bunny for the very first time cooked his own food," was leader Rick Nielsen's cryptic remark. "He got very violently ill, and he's going back to his normal burger place."

Hey, glove save Rick, didn't even have to go to the stick. Among other key issues not dealt with were the historical sequence of events in which Tom Peterssen, a charter member of the group, quit, the next album stiffed, and Cheap Trick sued their record company, Epic. Nielsen explained that the reason the band had been so low profile of late was because they were sick of answering "the same silly questions about Budokan all the time," while deflecting questions about the litigation, suggesting that it was only a paternity suit, though he did admit that the members of Cheap Trick were signed individually to Epic.

Nielsen preferred to discuss Cheap Trick's latest album, with fulsome praise for producer Roy Thomas Baker. "Roy made us work more, and he was more involved in the project—he never had another deal he had to get to right away. Working with him was fun but harder than the other producer we'd used, because there was more of a musical wavelength with us than say someone like George Martin, who we liked a lot and who's technically great; but he was always thinking about strings and things like that, whereas Roy was thinking more about the songs and what Cheap Trick was all about, unlike Tom Werman who was always trying to impress us and give us *his* sound instead of our sound.

"I mean, what's production? It's nothing difficult, anyhow. Without slighting all the producers around, the idea of a producer is overblown; it's just like a fifth member of the group, not somebody who comes in and waves this magic wand."

When a reporter wondered why Nielsen hadn't attempted a solo album, considering the limited nature of Cheap Trick's format, the guitarist concluded that "the format may be limited, but so is our time. We like to work. A group like the Cars puts out an album a year, tours for a month, and they consider that really grueling; so they have time for a lot of outside projects. Besides, I consider myself more of a songwriter than a guitarist. I'm not like a guitar hero."

—Chip Stern

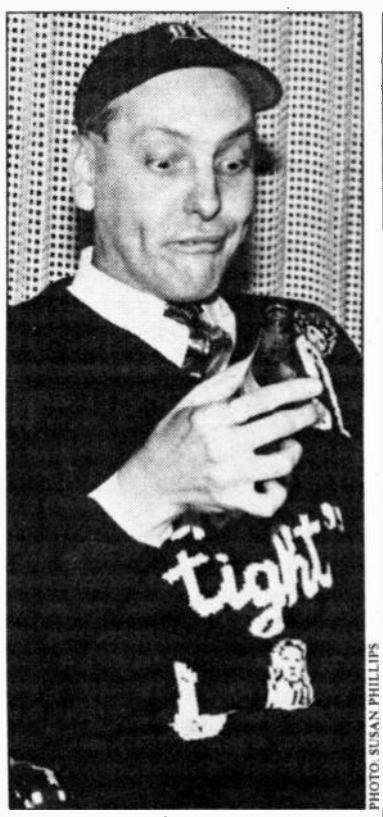


PHOTO: SUSAN PHILLIPS

Rick Nielsen

Styx' Shaw Keeps Low Profile; Band's New LP Takes Shape

NEW YORK—During a break from rehearsals for Styx' next album, guitarist Tommy Shaw returned to his home in Michigan to find himself the object of some affection he hadn't expected.

Michigan State Police, Shaw learned, were in search of two German teenage girls who had made a trans-continental pilgrimage—sans parental permission—with the intention of meeting Shaw in the flesh, as it were. The girls had encamped on Shaw's property for several days before discovering he was out of town. They then eluded police and were last seen heading for Chicago (where Styx was rehearsing in an old theatre that had been renovated for a cost of $6 million), once again in search of Shaw.

"I don't know how they found out where I live," Shaw said, before surmising that "one of the teen magazines in Germany" had printed his address.

On a more somber note, Shaw says Styx' next album will be "quite a bit different than any we've done before," owing to its theatrical nature—a logical outgrowth, Shaw claims, of Styx's previous effort, *Paradise Theatre.*

"I think in a lot of ways *Paradise Theatre* sort of tested the waters," says Shaw. "We were real pleased that an album of that nature was accepted, because it dabbled in theatre. Now we're actually going to do something that makes more of a statement."

Paradise Theatre, it should be remembered, dealt—sometimes metaphorically, sometimes overtly—with the decline of America. Because the album is still in its formative stages, Shaw declines to be more specific, but his words suggest that Styx has resolved an internal problem that cropped up a few months ago when there were differences of opinion "as to which direction the machine is to move in," according to guitarist "JY" Young.

Shaw himself has made a statement of late by trimming his long, blonde locks and keeping out of the public eye. The upshot? "It's worked out real good," he laughs. "A lot of friends don't even recognize me."

—Vicki Greenleaf & Stan Hyman

The Reddings Consider A Proud Legacy

NEW YORK—Question: Should we or shouldn't we?

Subject: Whether Otis Redding's sons, Dexter and Otis III, and nephew Mark Lockett, known collectively as the Reddings, should re-record one of the senior Redding's classic songs.

Answer: Yes, even if the song happens to be Otis' last and biggest hit, the foreboding "Sittin' On The Dock Of The Bay." Released after Redding's death in a December 10, 1967 plane crash, the single went to number one on both the black and pop charts, the only Redding recording to accomplish that feat.

The decision to cut "Dock of the Bay" was not made lightly, however. Over the course of three albums, the Reddings have staked out their own turf with some lively contemporary funk built around Dexter's powerful bass lines. Also, says Otis III, "People would have thought we were trying to capitalize on our father's name, and we didn't want that at all."

As teens, Dexter, Otis and Mark regularly performed in their hometown of Macon, Georgia at a club called New Directions, then owned by their current manager and Otis Sr.'s wife, Zelma. One of the fringe benefits of playing at a local spot, as it turns out, was the occasionally blunt critiques the trio received from their neighbors in the audience. "They would stop us on the street and give us reviews, telling us what we did wrong or right. They're all rooting for us to be good as our father," says Otis.

"It'll be hard to do that," he admits, "but we're gonna do the very best we can. It just makes us feel good to know that after all this time what he did still stands out and that so many still remember him."

—Nelson George

Fripp-Summers LP Finished; Duo To Tour U.S. In October

NEW YORK—Andy Summers is deep inside a chord when I ring his London flat, so there's a sleepwalking quality to his voice, almost like the misty, distant sound of his fills on "Voices Inside My Head." Whatever he was hearing, he wants to get back into it, and who can blame him? After several months of heavy touring with the Police, Summers has just completed a special duo project he began in September with King Crimson's Robert Fripp: an almost Oriental set of electronic tone poems and *paux de deux* tentatively titled *I Advance Masked*, due out September 24 on A&M. Summers' and Fripp's refined psychedelia, polymetric savvy, badgering lyricism and pan-cultural curiosity is light years beyond the meandering excesses of instrumental rock and fusion, as sublime as good chamber music (though a lot louder). Clearly Summers is gratified by his contributions to the Police, yet he's limited by the format.

"Yeah," he admits, "it's a paradox in a way. It's very fulfilling, and even though it's very successful—and you still want to do things with the group—you have to go on and do other things. Otherwise it means you can never step outside of that or grow up, as it were. Those are the kinds of personalities involved in the Police, and that's why the group's successful," he laughs. "Because the people who made it that way want to go beyond it.

"To a certain extent I would say this record is quite different because I think that I have to do a lot more in a duo format, whereas in the Police, even though we're playing all the time, you can leave more space. In a guitar duo you really have to keep working all the time, so that it sounds full. Basically what I think Robert and I have done is evolve a rhythmic way of improvising against each other, without vertical harmonies being present—they're just sort of suggested all the time by the lines the other guitarist is playing.

"I think where we'll really develop is when we get out and actually start doing live dates in the States in October—that'll make a big difference in the way we play together as an ongoing thing. Obviously there's a lot of overdubbing on this album, so we're fleshed out by other instruments. So in a sense, the *real* guitar duo bit is going to be when we play live and we have to start doing it that way. I hope to have this guitar by then that's being built for me by Hamer, an electric with two sets of seven sympathetic strings that I can tune any way I want, so I can use them for accompaniment as well, which may prove to be useful in a live situation." **—Chip Stern**

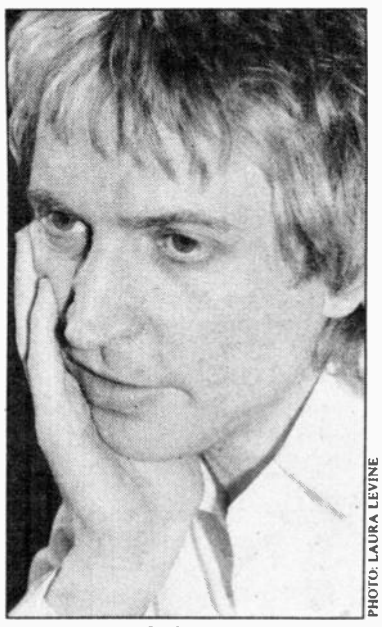


PHOTO: LAURA LEVINE

Andy Summers

Jimmy Hall's Making Noise About A Wet Willie Reunion

NEW YORK—"You'd have to compare it to a relationship you've had with a woman you've broken up with: you go out and find another who's maybe better looking, and another who's maybe better in the sack, but then you realize that it was mighty good what you had going before."

For Jimmy Hall, still waters run deep—meaning that although his former band, Wet Willie, called it quits nearly four years ago, he's beginning to realize that southern rock's most soulful aggregration was ahead of, or at least underappreciated in, its time. Despite releasing two fine solo albums, Hall's thinking more and more of assembling his old mates for another fling.

"We really made some great music together," he says. "Since we broke up, I've had a chance to play with a lot of players. Technically some of them were better than the ones in Wet Willie, but as far as interplay and the combination of people, I still think it was pretty magic what Wet Willie was doing."

Hall isn't spending all of his time trying to resurrect the past, though. His second solo effort, *Cadillac Tracks*, is his hardest-rocking one yet, and Hall's been on the road playing club dates and opening a few shows for the Charlie Daniels Band in support of the LP. In fact, if Hall can talk about reforming Wet Willie—a band of many good records but few hits—it's because of the confidence and experience he's gained while on his own. On the one hand, he's felt freer to explore different types of song forms than he had previously, and he's been encouraged to write more of his own material,.

Hall's also learned to take control in the studio, thanks in part to some assistance from producer Norbert Putnam. "I think we've taught each other a lot," Hall says. "He taught me how to be more of a leader with musicians and a lot of things about arranging."

Hall admits that while he's been impressed with session players' speed and professional attitude (they cut all 11 tracks in five days), they haven't changed his opinion about one important matter: "I still feel like the best way to do a record is to put a band together. You can make a tight record with session players, but I don't think you get that real communication between players, that relaxed feeling."

You mean, like you had in Wet Willie? "We could have something in the near future" is Hall's telling reply. "I've talked to some of the guys and they'd do it in a heartbeat, I believe." **—David McGee**

Marianne Faithfull: Producer

NEW YORK—Mary Magdalene was in the garden/for a tender crack-of-dawn fuck/Jesus Christ, said Jesus Christ/Sometimes even I don't know my luck.

This lyric, from the song "Love Genius," gives one a brief taste of Marianne Faithfull's next album, *Travelling*, scheduled to get underway here on August 1, with a tentative release date of January, 1983.

PHOTO: LAURA LEVINE

Marianne Faithfull

Travelling will find Faithfull involved not only in the songwriting, but, for the first time, in the production as well, on the theory that "an artist has to be able to understand what's going on. These guys are talking in another language, all about EQ and so on. I want to find out what it means."

After finishing the album at Compass Point in the Bahamas in September, Faithfull plans to vacation in Yucatan before embarking on a promotional tour in January ahead of a full-scale concert tour of the U.S. and Canada come next March. **—Mark Mehler**

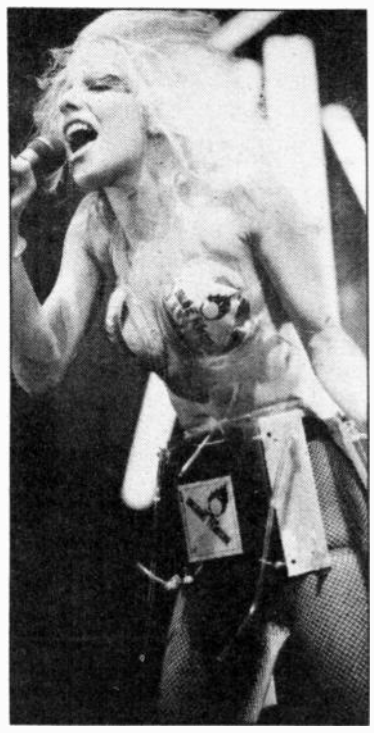
Missing Persons' First Album Will Be A Cricket's Favorite

LOS ANGELES—With their four-song mini-LP having made it to the national charts (with a bullet, no less), Missing Persons—drummer Terry Bozzio, guitarist Warren Cucurullo and lead singer Dale Bozzio—qualify as something more than an L.A. phenomenon. But whatever success has come their way of late, these musicians can safely say they did it their way. Long before Capitol Records came on the scene, Missing Persons issued a slightly-different version of the current mini-LP (featuring the Doors' "Hello I Love You" instead of "Words") on producer Ken Scott's KoMos label (Scott has worked with David Bowie, Supertramp and Devo, among others). The results were impressive: "Mental Hopscotch" was the most requested song of 1981 on L.A.'s forward-thinking KROQ, while another song, "Destination Unknown," reached number one as far away as WBCN in Boston.

What's surprising is that this had to be a do-it-yourself success story in the first place. Missing Persons is hardly a cast of unknowns: Terry Bozzio put in a lengthy stint with Frank Zappa's band before joining progressive English rockers U.K.; Cucurullo also served time with Zappa, in the period following Bozzio's departure. Even Terry's wife Dale, a former model and Playboy bunny, played a character in Zappa's recorded opera, *Joe's Garage*.

For the uninitiated, Missing Persons' music is best described as techno-pop, with simple, accessible melodies laid over thick, intricate textures. There's also a new wave element in the energy and power the band puts across both on record and in concert. Live, the band's dramatic stage presentation—equal parts sci-fi film and tribal ritual—showcases Dale in skimpy, bizarre costumes which she makes herself from plexiglass, plastic tubing, coconut shells and other exotica.

Right now Missing Persons is at Chateau studio in North Hollywood putting the finishing touches on an album due for release in August. Cucurullo describes the LP as "the same but different" from the EP, while Bozzio goes on record as promising it will be as varied and cohesive as the previously-issued set of songs.



Dale Bozzio

Any problems in the studio, Dale Bozzio is asked? She pauses a moment before telling of a cricket who lives somewhere in the studio itself and starts singing along on any tracks recorded after sundown.

It's tough being a new band.

—Dan Forte

Beefheart Gets Past Mama-Heartbeat In Desert

NEW YORK— "Ooooh, the karma of the guitar is really heavy, it'll harm you, man," Don Van Vliet tells me, his warlock eyes glowing wolf-blue like some sort of psychic traffic light. "But dig," he adds in a conspiratorial whisper, "it doesn't affect Jews."

Just the kind of offhanded, napalm non sequitur you'd expect from Captain Beefheart, author of "Dachau Blues;" perpetual legend of rock 'n' roll; American composer, painter and poet; godfather of new wave, punk jazz and what have you. Though his music's been a force of nature since the mid-60s, he's pinballed from record company to record company, even as his ideas about harmony, rhythm, structure and prose have filtered into the '80s mainstream through scores of well-intentioned admirers and harmolodic cousins.

Currently, Van Vliet is working away in his trailer in the California desert, turning down prestigious concerts and TV shows to concentrate on his painting and the music for what could be his most stunning work since *Trout Mask Replica*—*Ice Cream For Crow.*

With Jeff Tepper and manager Gary Lucas forming his Jewish guitar army ("Jews can really play the blues because they understand suffering"), plus bassist Richard "Midnight Hat Size" Snyder and his remarkable new drummer Cliff Martinez, Van Vliet recorded and mixed at Amigo Studios (scene of *Clear Spot*) in May and June with engineer Phil Brown, then began work on a promotional video in the Mojave Desert.

Musically there are two as-yet-untitled cuts which might be mistaken for, er, accessible dance motifs (in some better world than this), while the rest is like a Calder mobile of sound and fury, implying rock's tenacity while completely obliterating bar lines and backbeats.

"I like to use music as an irritant," Van Vliet chuckles, flinching at my comparisons to rock. "We gotta get past that mama-heartbeat, mama-heartbeat," he cautions, suddenly serious. "I don't want there to be another war, you know what I mean?"

— Chip Stern

Ulmer's Next 'Just Jumpin' All Around'

NEW YORK—Blood Ulmer passes through the lounge on the third floor of New York's Power Station, his Carolina country boy eyes at half-mast, all attention focused on the task at hand—the mix-down of his next album, *Black Rock*. The guitarist-composer had rehearsed his band for two solid weeks before coming into the studio to cut nine tunes in a little over six hours with engineer Bill Scheniman.

Blood is feeling decidedly non-communicative, pausing only to say hello and clear the studio so he can concentrate. "They doin' a computer mix," he drawls, "because you can always get back to there after everything else has failed." Some dangerous urban funk emanates from the control room, while out in the lounge Amin Ali and Grant Calvin Weston amuse themselves with takes and parodies of the "typical" white folk on the afternoon soaps. The slang and humor of the Philadelphia street informs their repartee every bit as much as when they're thundering away behind Blood—Ali and Weston are one of the most kinetic rhythm sections of the '80s.

"As far as an R&B drummer playin' this music, there's no difference except you have to learn the concept of the tom-toms," Weston explains. "That's just the *drone* rhythm; it's still the backbeat and 4/4, but harmolodic music adds a personal touch to that—just modulating the cross-rhythms and listening real hard. On *Black Rock* it's not watered down; on *Free Lancing* (released last year) we were being really precise with what goes, but now we're playin' just like it's a live gig, not studio."

"And this time we're co-producers with Blood," bassist Ali adds, "and he's been very open to a lot of our suggestions and ideas. We both added some bass and drum lines, did vocals, wrote lyrics; and I got to write a song. So me 'n' Calvin are gettin' a better insight into the music because of the fact that he's lettin' us do more for it. Not just lettin' it be harmolodic and *out*, but lettin' it be harmolodic and *in*, too. I hope that people can really get to it this time."

"It's like abstract art," Weston concludes, moving his hands swiftly in concentric circles, trying to imply all of the motion and colors he hears. "That's the way it be, just jumpin' all around." **—Chip Stern**

Interview:

PETE TOWNSHEND

BY PAUL DU NOYER

SUSAN PHILLIPS/101

Sects, Drugs, Rock 'N' Roll

Where the river Thames leaves the London grime behind, and winds inside a leafier landscape—just along from Eel Pie island—that's where you find the Meher Baba Centre. And you approach it along suburban streets so posh, you feel like a suspect-burglar just for walking down them.

Inside the Centre sits the man who built it: late 30s, looking fit and well, pale blue eyes, a manner that's friendly, if often intense.

Pete Townshend is guitarist and songwriter of the Who, and his history needs no reiteration here. But whether you like the Who or not, or used to or still do or never did, Pete Townshend is always worth listening to.

Pete takes interviews seriously, and conscientiously; he approaches them with the same professional candor and rigorous thought that he's put into his best songs. But then, he'd argue that that's no more than the music deserves. At a time when the commonest stance in modern pop amounts to a coy giggle, or a hopeless admission of futility, Townshend's faith in the music's potential, and its importance, is as valuable as it's unfashionable.

In a startling, but typically personal, article which he wrote for *New Musical Express* in 1977, he offered this definition of rock:

If it screams for truth rather than help, if it commits itself with a courage it can't be sure it really has, if it stands up and admits that something is wrong but doesn't insist on blood, then it's rock and roll.

That definition can't be all-embracing, obviously: few could live up to its almost impossibly high standards. But for year after year, Townshend has tried, and a damned sight harder than most, to make sense of the beast.

In the following interview, Townshend ranges over a wide variety of topics—sects, drugs and the purpose of rock 'n' roll, to name the most prominent—and comes up with what must be considered his own state of the generation speech. The pauses in his answers represent Pete's attempts to come to grips with his other preoccupation of the session: a gigantic bacon sandwich.

Aside from working on your solo album, what's been occupying your time since the last Who album, *Face Dances*, in March of '81?

A lot of strange things. I started thinking practically immediately about a solo album, because I was really frustrated with the Who album. It didn't seem to do anything or go anywhere, and I couldn't quite work out why. So my first reaction was just to run like shit from the Who because they were confusing me more than ever. And I started producing material for my own record, and I went to New York and to Paris and a few other places, just to change my environment. I was going to form a band.

But of course the first thing I did was tour with the Who in Britain, which I enjoyed a lot. But towards the end of it, my mind started to turn inside out in a way, and I had almost decided to blow the London gigs. There was so much animosity around the band: a lot of us are still at odds about what we want to do. And I don't think what I want to do as a musician or as a performer has really got anything to do with the Who at all.

Anyway, after that, I did cancel a European tour. I just said to everyone I wasn't ready to do it. I didn't really know what was going on in my head, but I could see trouble coming. And I started to work on my own record.

At that particular time, as from early last year, I was getting used to living away from my family, which hadn't happened to me—I've been married for 14 years—so that was the first year it'd ever happened. I was actually living apart from them. It was a mistake, which both my wife and I realize now, but it was something we were trying out. But it didn't protect the kids from my lunacy which I was going through, and it didn't help my old lady, and it didn't help me.

But I did have a fantastic amount of free time. I saw probably more bands last year than I'll ever see in my life. I think I saw about a hundred bands. And I did some traveling, on my own. And I got to grips with a book of short stories which I'd been planning for about a year, and that's about two-thirds done.

And also, towards the end of last year, the band did start to crawl from the darkness, y'know—what are we gonna do next?

A weakness of *Face Dances*, I thought, was that your writing seemed to get increasingly personal, meanwhile you were still using Roger Daltrey as vehicle for your songs. The result was a lack of conviction.

Right. It was very short-sighted of me. It was really with the best of intentions, because I wanted the band to have material that was equally as varied as I would get on a solo album. *Empty Glass* wasn't particularly avant-garde, but it was interesting to me because I was able to do the kind of variety of material that the Who used to do, y'know? On our first two albums we did stuff that ranged from comedy songs through tender love ballads to just general insanity.

And it's not that I want to get back to quite those extremes, but it is nice not to be bound by limitations. Having enjoyed it as a solo performer I thought, well, fuck it, why can't the *band* do it? And the *band* can't do it because they're so wrapped up in their own traditions.

And I think the writing I'm doing *now* for the band has come out much more successfully. I sat round with everybody and I asked them: What do you want to fucking sing about? Tell me, and I'll write the songs. It's a piece of piss! I've been writing songs for 20 years. D'you wanna sing about race riots? D'you wanna sing about the nuclear bomb? D'you wanna sing about soya bean diets? Tell me!

And everyone kinda went, 'Uhhh.' So I said, Shall I tell you what *I* think we should be singing about? So I told 'em. And it actually turned into a debate, in a sense, as to what we really felt we should be doing, as to what our responsibilities were vis-a-vis our position—and this is probably more important over in America than it is here, 'cause in America they're still asleep, know what I mean? But most of all, what was it that each one of us shared, our common ground?

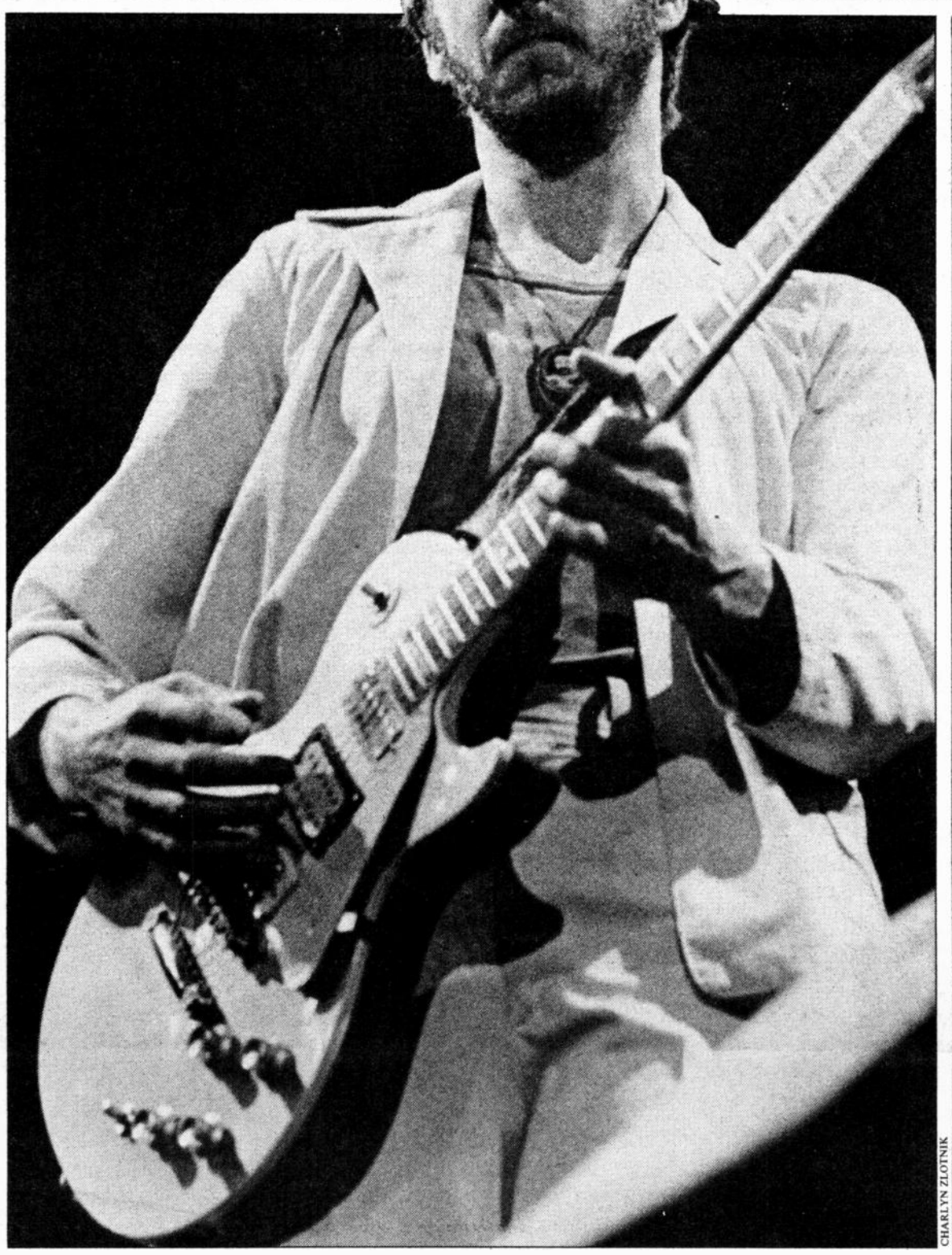
Well, after establishing, quite quickly, that there was very little common ground, we did find that we all cared very deeply about the planet, the people on it, about the threat to our children from nuclear war, of the increasing instability of our own country's politics. There's the fact that we've actually infiltrated the establishment, in a way that younger bands haven't been able to do. It's taken us a long time to do, but now we can see that even the establishment is impotent, it's not just us, and we're really in a danger zone, and not to cry *panic*; panic! but it was something we need to express. Consequently, a lot of material we're doing at the moment is quite anguished.

You've called your new solo LP *Chinese Eyes*. Why is that?

I was struck by a feeling last year, particularly viewed from California, that stardom as they saw it, establishment stardom, and drugs and decadence, *and* the world's power structure, all somehow had this thread going through them. And what it was was people's need to *externalize*—er, this is going to sound like *Pseuds Corner*—to externalize evil, and even power.

In other words, to say, there's fuck-all I can do about it, it's them. It's the Chinese, fuck-all I can do. It's the Japs, or it's Ronald Reagan, or it's Margaret Thatcher. Nothing we can do. It's the police, they're fascists. And in a sense, people's need for people like *me*—either to build up or to crucify, or Strummer or Weller or anybody else who's gone through a similar degree of external examination, and self-examination.

The *need* for that is, I think, the fundamental thing we're suffering from at the moment, in that we've become so media-ised, so used to externalizing everything, that we don't take responsibility for fucking *anything*. And that's really what the



CHARLYN ZLOTNIK

title's about: the heroes and villains all look the same, they're all over there, they've all got slit eyes. I've tried to explain it in the story on the cover, but it's very hard. I didn't want to explain it and make it too pat, 'cause I see it on a thousand different levels.

And you dedicate it to "teenagers in love."

Yeah, that was a last minute thing. Well, it's also dedicated to Meg Patterson, 'cause she got me off junk. And then to my wife and myself, who are behaving like teenagers at the moment. I didn't think I could dedicate the album to The Sex Pistols again (laughter).

One musician you've used is Virginia Astley.

Well, I didn't have to look very hard for her, 'cause she's my sister-in-law . . . I know it was very fashionable last year—and I don't mean this to demean all the genuine female talent—but there was a fashion for rowing a woman in, row in a couple of birds. Do I dare say this, The Human League did it, didn't they? It looked like a row-in to me—a very delightful one, which might develop into something substantial.

Anyway, at that particular time I decided I wanted a band of women. And that was basically because I was fed up with men. I really was. I was fed up with male sensibilities, I was fed up with fighting for everything I wanted, sometimes physically fighting. I was fed up with the macho music press . . . and I was under the misapprehension that maybe if I surrounded myself with female players that a lot of that would recede. I think perhaps *now* that I was just hoping that I'd be able to get what I wanted more quickly.

I *was* keen not to end up with a heavyweight record, to get away from people's preconceptions. So it started off very experimental. When I took the first tracks to New York and played them to the record company—you would have paid money to have seen their faces! I mean, they were just watching millions of dollars disappearing in front of them. 'Cause my last album sold incredibly well in America. I was determined not to be caught up in the commercial machine. I thought, fuck it, do what I wanna do. And then in the end I realized that what I really wanted to do was to sell records (laughter).

There's little point in sitting and writing material, and getting obsessed with whatever you choose to get obsessed with, and then have nobody to listen. And it's quite devastating, actually, how many records you need to sell to get a small amount of feedback, when you're in my position. I used to get more feedback when the Who were selling maybe 10,000 copies of a single, than I do today when they sell about two or three million. I still get about the same amount of mail—no more, no less.

And it's weird. It's the thing I was saying about you becoming more remote. I feel I've been externalized to a great extent, and I've fought against this more than anybody else in this business. I've led a personal vendetta against it. I still get externalized.

I think it's a weakness in me, this need to get reacted to. It's not an inability to deal with "stardom" because that's a completely empty quality. I think I only have to look at Steve Strange to realize that: there's definite charisma there when he's layered with make-up, but still you can go up and touch him, or if you like you can knock his front teeth out. He makes himself that approachable.

When it comes down to it, the feedback I need the most is letters. That's why I try to reply: as people know they *can* get through if they want. I hate this thing of being externalized . . .

One new song, "Uniforms," sounds a bit like "Quadrophenia" revisited, but making your disillusionment with the male gang/youth cult ethos much more explicit.

I really like that song. I wanted to put it out as a single, in time for the Falklands crisis. I think if I see Margaret Thatcher on the TV again talking about "our wonderful boys" with her smarmy voice, I am actually going to be physically sick- . . . but the song doesn't actually criticize anybody that wants to wear a uniform, it just observes it.

I've always been fascinated by people's needs for that, and my need for it, and the way it's inherently wrapped up in rock music culture. Even in America—they think we're very cute with our weekly changes of haircut—*their* uniform has been identical for the last 15 years. What they think you have to wear to a rock concert, I think it's hilarious. It's that uniform you'd wear to ride around in a pick-up truck and shout. That's the way you spend your weekend in California—you get a bottle of beer and you drive past going "Yeurgghh-uh-uh!" Jesus Christ, what a way to spend your childhood.

Also, the reference to coke, which I think is not so much of a drug problem as a problem of uniform. It's something people do because they think they should do it.

I mean, you must have had coke. No? Well I'll tell you, the amazing thing about it is that nothing happens! Nothing. All that happens is if you snort enough of it, at the end of the night you feel fucking awful. And you watch these people putting thousands of pounds' worth up their nose, which really does very little. You'd get a bigger kick ODing on aspirin.

That's why heroin is such a problem in London, 'cause somebody says, Listen, for the same price you're paying for that white powder, try this, and you go, Fucking hell! This works! This is a *real* drug.

The compartmentalising—of people's clothes, of the way they look, into cults, and ideologies, into actual frames of consciousness and social sensibility—is what I find amazing. I know it's often said that just because somebody dresses like a skinhead, it doesn't mean they're gonna kick you as soon as they get a chance. But it *does* start to affect the way they think. A lot of Oi-boys start off fairly innocuously, just interested in the look, and they end up believing that they hate all Pakistanis.

And in the same way, thinking back to the days-of mods and rockers, mods really thought that they hated rockers. And this is the problem, and I still find it fascinating, in a dark way: why it is people do it, why the individual is not more important. And is America different? Of course over there they've got this thing about the individual, haven't they?

Speaking of America, that must be an easier market for an establishment rock band like the Who.

Oh yeah, a piece of piss! I mean, look at Asia (the group): they've just walked over there with all that prefabricated stuff, produced a load of records to the usual format, and they're gonna be number one.

What have you seen which inspires you especially?

Anything that breaks down the traditional rules and regulations that exist between words and music. To me, when somebody like the Fun Boy Three or Bow Wow Wow just completely destroys the established principles of songwriting, and still get success, and still make good records, I find that very exciting. Cause I think, Ah, the *form itself* has been tampered with, has been allowed to grow and evolve.

The standard now is so much better because people have access to small studios quicker, to more sophisticated equipment. They've got a greater amount of material to study, in an academic sense, to decide what they wanna do, what they want to explore.

When *I* started in the rock business, my grounding in music was probably trad jazz rather than rock 'n' roll. A little bit of classical music thrown in on the side, listening to my dad's dance orchestra. And then, suddenly, the "miracle" of rock 'n' roll—in the shape of Bill Haley, and Cliff Richard, and Elvis Presley, who I still don't understand.

I don't call *that* much of an education. Yet rock 'n' roll still got into my blood as a new form. I don't think it was until I heard Chuck Berry that I realized what you could do with words—and how unimportant the music was, 'cause Chuck Berry always used the same song!

But I think now it's evolved to an extent where people can look a long way back. Also the edges of rock have blurred to such an extent that the word "rock" is inadequate to describe the form. You have to start talking about contemporary music.

I think it's a drag that the record companies aren't equipped to deal with it all, 'cause I don't think small labels are the answer. Small labels *are* very exciting—I think that bands like UB40 and the Beat have proved that an artist-controlled label can be good. But it must be a fantastic pressure on them, to do that, and do all the gigs too.

I mean, I run as many businesses as I choose, but if any of them get in the way of my work I shut them down. Whereas if you shut down your record label, you've shut down you own outlet. And I do think other people should be doing that work. The bloody irony of it is, you start your own label off, and the big companies distribute it, they get the lion's share any way.

I think rock 'n' roll is art! I wanna be *patronized*, for the shit I have to go through. I want me million dollars in front, mate! I'm quite serious. I'm not gonna commit to go out and go through all the shit you have to go through—all the actual parading yourself in front of everybody, describing in explicit detail all your hang-ups, the inadequate length of your cock, and your predilection for custard enemas and God knows what else—and not get paid in advance for it!

Haven't you sensed a retreat from taking rock that seriously? A trend to cute, escapist pop which doesn't dare show pretensions to being more than cute escapist pop?

That always happens, doesn't it, when you see really good bands—like Echo and the Bunnymen, Teardrop Explodes, Original Mirrors, who from the Liverpool clique looked to me like they were gonna start a mini-revolution—and to see the Mirrors go down was, for me, acutely painful, 'cause I thought they were glorious, and they just went down through record company apathy. I think what follows then is, it's natural that a few intelligent people like Nick Heyward (Haircut 100) will sort of say, Hang on, if you get too serious in this business they chew you up and spit you out.

But is that to say that Nick Heyward is quite as empty as he seems? He *can't* be. I'm not saying that he wants to change the world, maybe he doesn't. *But you don't get up on stage to just have a good time.* I know that it's too painful and too complex an experience to do twice, just for fun. People don't do it for fun. And if they tell you they're doing it for fun *they're fucking lying*. 'Cause it's not fun.

I mean, how can Nick Heyward possibly, for example, think that the day—and it'll inevitably happen, it happened to the Bay City Rollers and other people working in that tradition—I wouldn't compare Haircut 100 to *them*, but their audiences are similar. My daughter's a fanatical Haircut 100 fan; she's only 13, and she knows everything about them. But, y'know, someone's gonna get crushed in the front row, cave their ribs in. They're gonna bring the little girl back and say, "The only thing she wants before she's taken to the hospital to have her stomach stitched up is she wants the band to say hello to her."

In other words, *there's* the shit you've created. You can't pretend it's not happening: my daughter so-and-so was at your concert at the Hammersmith Odeon and she was unfortunately crushed and blah blah blah. The thing she would like most in all the world is an autographed picture from you boys which would help her to a speedy recovery. That's just one example.

Obviously the other end of the wedge is Cincinnati, where people *died* at the concert.

I *don't* think rock is purely fun. That's too simplistic. I suppose everyone breathes a sigh of relief when you get a period like now. But I suppose I'm waiting to see what happens to a band like Haircut 100, with as much interest as I was waiting to see what would happen to Madness.

I mean, Madness have proved me right: they're about as funny as a fucking funeral these days. "Wel-

Townshend

come to the House of Fun." It's all fun on the outside, but behind it all they're deadly serious. It's quite scary in a way.

But you know what it's like if you work on a music paper, and you get involved in too much heavy stuff for too long and too much futility, and too much frustration. It just gets boring. And in the end you welcome somebody like Haircut 100 with open arms, you think—Thank God!

Is it a burden carrying around descriptions like "Britain's longest-serving honest man of rock"? (*New Musical Express* headline from 1980)

I think this "honest" thing really comes from something else: it comes from an openness rather than honesty. I don't think I'm particularly honest. But *there's nothing about me that I want to keep secret.* I don't think it would help to keep it secret.

I am still very confused about what I should be doing, even in terms of the Who's career. We've sat round and we've decided that we don't want to go on forever—even seeing an end to the band's career in 18 months, at least in live performing. We haven't absolutely decided yet, but we *are* discussing it.

I think the area of honesty that is important about the band—and about life in general—is that if you're gonna sit and do an interview like this, well, you've gotta think pretty clearly about what it is that you want to portray, and what it is about you that people are gonna judge.

I don't wanna do an interview, or go on stage, and hold a load back, hold all the nasty bits back, hold the fact that I get pissed out of my brain—so that when people say they like the Who what they're really saying is they like the "nice" bits of the Who. If anybody likes me, I want it to be because they like *me.* And if anybody hates me I don't want to think, Oh they hate me, but if only they knew a bit more about me they'd think I was wonderful; if they knew how much I gave to charity (pulls face). I wanna be judged for what I am, and that's why I'm as open as I can possibly be.

Mightn't you go too far? I thought on the *Face Dances* album, for example, you were almost making a career out of your vulnerability, trading on your lapses. "Falling over gets you accepted," as the saying goes. It's like the drunk who collars you in a pub, unloading his problems on you.

Yeah, I think, more generally, this is the problem of the drunken writer, isn't it? It's James Joyce, it's F. Scott Fitzgerald, it's all those drunken arseholes. Whether or not I'm fully recovered from a period of drunken writing I don't know. But I've read lots of books about alcoholism in writers, and I have actually accepted the fact that I am an alcoholic. And I suppose now I'm waiting in fear to find out if what I write is any good.

Because, and here's one place I can afford to be honest, my favorite subject is me. If other people find it boring then that's their hard luck, because (*laughs*) I'm determined to keep shoving "me" down their fucking throats!

It depends what you're good at, doesn't it? I don't interpose "me" between the listener and something that I want to get across. And I don't really talk about *my* problems because I think people are interested in my problems. I talk about them because I think they might be archetypal, because they may be general, because they might be things that people can identify with, and that my thinking processes might actually allow people to get a look at themselves . . .

As a postscript to what I was saying about . . . "bubblegum" music, I suppose, music for pleasure—I've got no interest in it. And I've got no interest in doing it. I've got no interest in hiding what I am. If I want to be a private person, and keep all my problems to myself, or to my family and close friends, then really I've got no place as a writer. I should just go into business or something. But it's my ability to get some of those feelings down onto paper, and onto record, and then to *live* with them, in public, and to live with the responsibility of admitting that you're vulnerable—that makes it important.

"You don't get up on stage to just have a good time. I know that it's too painful and too complex an experience to do twice, just for fun."

On the positive side, there's your involvement with the teaching of Meher Baba, which goes back many years now, way beyond the usual faddish enthusiasm for some exotic cult.

Nah, I've 'ad enough of it now. 'E was a charlatan! 'E took me for every penny I 'ad! (laughs)

Where do you think you would be today without Meher Baba?

I don't know if anything would necessarily have changed. I can't say I'm a better person because of him, or otherwise. But the very real feeling of God's presence is what's enabled me to retain a very real sense of humility. It's not a pose that I've adopted and have difficulty keeping up. If I wanna behave like a flash bastard, *that's* when I'm posing.

I actually do feel that I belong to this planet. I do feel that the people I come into contact with are brothers and sisters. I do feel a sense of kinship with people all over the world. And I think that must come from a universal view of creation.

There was a great line in *The Third Man*, one of the Orson Welles films, where the guy's looking down from the whirley-gig, looking at human beings and seeing them as ants. If you suddenly feel yourself to be an ant . . .

Y'see, most people believe that what happens if you become involved in some spiritual pursuit is that you "rise above" everything, that you look *down*. But that's not what happens! And when I hear people who talk about, Oh, I've discovered EST, man! Or—I'm into so-and-so . . . ah, fuck it. Just *go away*. Take your meditation and ram it up your arse.

It's the reverse that counts. It's feeling yourself to be actually a speck of dust. And that starts off by firstly accepting that God exists, so you can get yourself in some kind of perspective. And then accepting that some other man has the power to allow you to feel that . . . the principle of the Guru, or the Messiah. And once you've done that, you're ready.

It's one of the enigmas that we have to face up to: that sure, whatever you or I or anyone else in the British music business says about the state of the world, it's not gonna make that much difference. For fuck's sake, what difference would it make if we asked for all those ants in the Falklands who are being shot to be brought home? Nobody would take any notice. But we do have a responsibility of some sort.

That's why the bits of British music that excite me the most have always been the areas where people take on that responsibility, and deal with it—Paul Weller, Joe Strummer. I still think they're the best human beings. Whether or not they make the best music, whether or not they've got the best bands, it doesn't bother me. I prefer to look at them as being the hub.

And I know it's serious, and it's overt. But to me, that's important. I can't escape from what I feel: that rock demanded a much greater degree of involvement from its audience than existed in the beginning. It *tore* it out of its public. It got them emotionally involved. You went through from your little 14-year-old love affair with the Beatles; you ended up with John Lennon telling you the world's gotta change. And you can't deny that John Lennon, to some extent, did change the world a little bit.

And it doesn't matter how often somebody like Mick Jagger says, Oh, there is no such thing as the rock cultural revolution. It's happened. The world has changed.

I'm not saying that it should be serious. But I think it should be *taken* seriously.

On Stage

The Thompsons' Quiet Fire

By Samuel Graham

LOS ANGELES—Before leaving the stage after his set at the Roxy here on June 3, show opener John Stewart noted that headliners, Richard and Linda Thompson and their band, had been enjoying what Stewart called "some of the best reviews I've ever seen." After hearing the Thompsons perform that night, you get the feeling those raves have been well-deserved.

Thompson, an English guitarist, singer and writer with a catalogue of utterly affecting songs, has a small, intensely loyal American audience, dating from his days as a member of British folk-rockers Fairport Convention through a series of frequently brilliant albums with Linda, his wife. Since the Thompsons had never appeared together here before the current tour, the faithful turned out in force when the duo came to Lotusland for a one-night stand.

The Thompsons used their first set at the Roxy to showcase about half the material from *Shoot Out The Lights*, their first U.S. album since 1978's *First Light*. That strategy can't be faulted; you've got to push the new product if you are to compete in the rock 'n' roll business. And to be sure, rocking numbers like "Man In Need" provided ample room for Richard's guitar heroics (an amazingly deft player, he manages to combine the sting of Robbie Robertson with the string-bending lyricism of Amos Garrett and Clarence White), while a lovely ballad like "Just The Motion" was ideal for the aching purity of Linda's voice. But it wasn't mere nostalgia that kept one anxiously awaiting the next oldie.

PHOTO: EBET ROBERTS

Linda and Richard Thompson

The fact is that tunes like "Dimming of the Day" (a brooding, languid lament sung mainly by Linda, as Richard accompanied on acoustic guitar) and "For Shame of Doing Wrong" (a lover's remorseful plea that featured Thompson's most extended electric soloing of the evening) are thoughtful, poetic, haunting—in a word, *moving*—and as thoroughly English as Dickens or Hardy—by any standard among the best that any pop musician has to offer.

In the first Roxy set, the duo offered just one Fairport Convention song, "I'll Keep It With Mine," a soaring Bob Dylan item from the days when Fairport was fronted by Ian Matthews and the late Sandy Denny. The second set, however, included both "Fotheringay" and "Sloth," two of the old group's most enduring songs. The Fairport numbers were especially welcome in view of the fact that the Thompsons' band included two other ex-Conventioneers, rhythm guitarist Simon Nicol and the extraordinary Dave Mattacks on drums. Along with bass player Pete Zorn, they played with taste and fire—the band's control of dynamics was masterful—and added enough singing along the way to fill out a vocal blend that was often stunning.

The Roches: Still Cute And Cutting

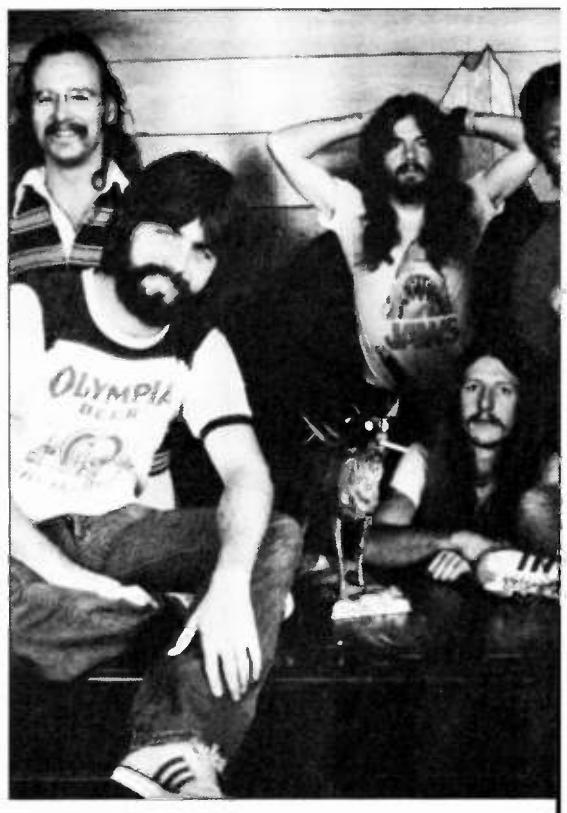
By Stuart Cohn

NEW YORK— It's easy to become grating when you're cute, but if you can deliver an impressive amount of musical and emotional goods while melding jazz, folk and pop in all sorts of fascinating ways, well, you're okay.

While the original songs from the Roches' two Warner Bros. albums were naturally well-received at the Bottom Line, the night's most telling moment (and, on balance, the crowd's favorite) came courtesy of a Bob Dylan song. "Clothes-line Saga" details a few moments in the life of a "typical" family in a typical small town back yard. The question-and-answer conversation is played more for laughs than Dylan and the Band's deadpan version. From the Roches, it's a scary, hilarious piece of singing which captures their fractured-family stage personalities better than any of their own songs.

And those stage personalities seem to get more polished each time out. Maggie, as usual, was regal and removed. She cut loose with some wailing, air-raid siren-like sounds in the last few bars of "Nurds" that reminded me of experimental vocalist and composer Meredith Monk. Terre is still a bit shy; but of the three, she's the only one who ever seems delighted that the audience enjoys the songs enough to applaud; the others take the fans' adulation as if it were something they had coming to them, like sunset at the end of the day. Suzzy was, as usual, a live wire; but sometimes she cut up at the expense of a song.

Maggie seems less self-involved in her new songs, actually taking roles in some of them. One stands out—the title escapes me—about a man who falls in love with an orchestra conductor's wife; he goes from "playing the violin to climbing the walls." It's splendid, as are "Jerks On The Loose" and "Leaving You," with its keening harmonies. These too are cute—and knowing and cut from the cloth of real life. The Roches remain one of our great natural resources.



Four generations of Doobies, starting clockwise from top left: The original quartet of John Hartman, Tom Johnston, Dave Shogren and Patrick Simmons; Doobies in transition, 1975 (from left)—John Hartman, Michael McDonald, Tom Johnston, Patrick Simmons (seated), Tiran Porter, Jeff Baxter, Keith Knudsen; the class of '79 (clockwise from top)—Cornelius Bumpus, Chet McCracken, Keith Knudsen, Patrick Simmons, Tiran Porter, Michael McDonald, John McFee; today's Doobies (from left)— Keith Knudsen, Michael McDonald, John McFee, Willie Weeks, Patrick Simmons, Bobby LaKind, Cornelius Bumpus, Chet McCracken.

INSIDE THE DOOB

Continued from page 1

can't live a normal human existence and be flying from Santa Cruz to L.A. every day, and the band wasn't sympathetic."

As for the overabundance of talent, Simmons notes that as age creeps up, the various band members have begun to assess their careers in more personal terms. "Some of the guys are approaching 40—a time when if you haven't attained certain things you start to think, 'If I don't do something pretty soon it'll be too late.' So everybody who had any ability in writing or producing began to pursue that in addition to their work in the band. And when it came time to think about another album, everybody wanted to contribute more: songs, solos, lead vocals, and participation in the production itself."

Ultimately, what Simmons saw was a too many chiefs-not enough Indians scenario featuring the band at odds with its long-time (indeed *only*) producer, Ted Templeman. "You can't have eight producers on a project. After working with the band through all the different changes, Ted knew who was going to write the best songs, who'd be the best to sing them, and who might be the best person to play a given solo. I could see the conflict coming, and it was part of my reason for leaving.

"After all these years of dealing with labels and drugs and musicians and personalities," Simmons sighs, "it reached the point where it was driving me nuts."

It's damned hard to convince some critics that music remained central through all the trials and triumphs of the Doobies' career, but there are nine albums full of undeniable proof that these boys had more than hundred-dollar bills (rolled up and otherwise) on their minds as they metamorphosed from a ragtag group of San Jose hippies to a big-time pop band that appeals to adolescents as well as middle-aged folk. Consider the hit singles: "Listen to the Music," "China Grove," "Black Water," "Takin' It To The Streets," "What A Fool Believes" and others. Not too many bands can go to the stylistic well as many times as the Doobies did and come up with potable water.

The Doobie Brothers came clanging into the '70s in biker colors (they were beloved by several California motorcycle gangs in their early days), purveying a unique blend of roaring guitar rock, James Brown-influenced vocals, Byrds-like harmony, back-porch pickin' and psychedelic jamming. Tom Johnston's blue-eyed soul vocals and brash, bluesy guitar complemented Simmons' folk and bluegrass style to create a broad musical range, double-clutched by the rhythm section of Dave Shogren (bass) and John Hartman (drums).

"We dumped our jobs to become full-time musicians," says Simmons. "We gave up everything for the gig, no matter how shitty it was. We just wanted to have a good time, play music and *get a record deal*."

Demos cut on speculation led to the band signing with Warner Bros., which assigned the production to staffer Lenny Waronker and his protege, ex-Harpers Bizarre drummer Ted Templeman. It was Templeman's first production gig.

The Doobie Brothers, released March 25, 1971, didn't sound much like the band's live sets. "We played everything we had for Lenny and Ted, and they chose the songs for the album. We were into doing what they wanted us to do; we were fully prostituting ourselves," Simmons chuckles. Despite the acoustic guitar-based sound on most of the record, the basic elements were in place: Johnston's buzzsaw guitar; Simmons' fingerpicked counterpoint straining to cut loose; and the sweet vocal harmonies.

Warners then sent the Doobies out on tour with another of their new acts, Mother Earth. "Neither band was very famous, so there wasn't any giant headliner to blow us away," Simmons recalls. "The people who came to hear (Mother Earth lead singer) Tracy Nelson thought we were a little loud, but we got a good reception in most places. Mother Earth was our inspiration to go on the road and become real, serious musicians."

The band tried to produce themselves on the second album, *Toulouse Street*, and it was almost their undoing. "We really thought we could come up with something original if we put a loose arrangement together, did a lot of coke or whatever, and played," laughs Simmons. "We had some good tracks and some good jams, and we thought we were headed in the right direction. But we were about $20,000 into the project and only halfway there, and Warners didn't care for what we had.

"They were getting ready to dump us from the label, and we thought, 'If only we could get Teddy back.' " Templeman did join the project, but before the band began to re-record the album, a couple of changes were made. "Dave Shogren was having a hard time in the studio, because of the strings he used and the way he played," Simmons explains. "He had great bass lines, but you can't hear them on the album. And he wouldn't try things we asked him to do." Shogren was replaced by Tiran Porter, with whom Simmons had worked in a trio before joining the Doobies.

Inspired by the Allman Brothers, the Doobies added a second drummer. "Michael Hossack and I had started hanging out together after he came around looking for songs for his band," Simmons recalls. "Michael turned me on to the Allmans and I flashed on the concept of two drummers. I thought it would be great for our live thing."

Now five members strong, the Doobies went to L.A. and, under Templeman's guidance, wrapped *Toulouse Street* in relatively short order. Warners released "Listen To The Music" as a single, and it became the Doobies' first hit. Nevertheless, Simmons says it didn't change the basic thrust of the group's live show. "It's a nice song," Simmons offers, "but it's not a heavy rock 'n' roller. Once people started recognizing it, they'd go, 'Oh yeah, I think I've heard that before.' Then we'd do a crazy, heavy rock 'n' roll jam and they went, 'WOW! This is really happening!'

When the band began recording its third album, *The Captain and Me*, "everything was happening: we were working a lot, we'd had good response to the second album both critically and commercially, and the label liked us.

"That's when it all really hit us hard, and it's been that way ever since: tour and record, tour and record, with very little time off. After a tour ended, the writers would start writing, and we'd start rehearsing. We'd work on the songs for awhile. Then we'd show what

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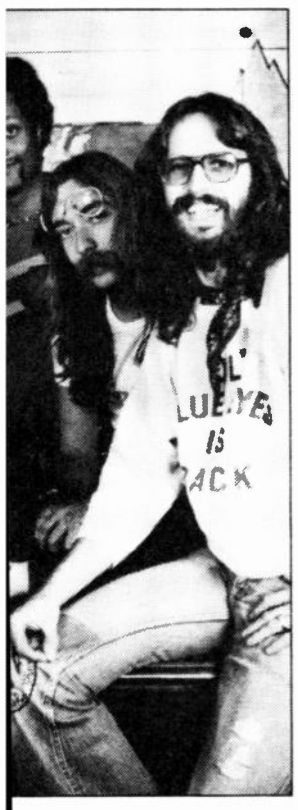

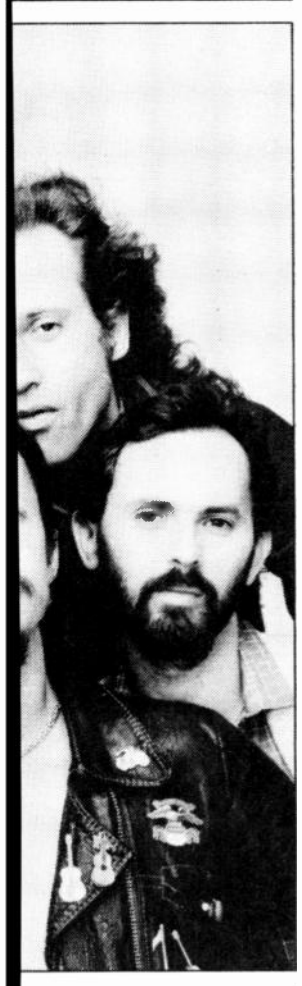

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thought it was just fine." Doobies manager Bruce Cohn subsequently arranged for Bonaroo drummer Keith Knudsen to switch jobs with Hossack. Knudsen remained a Doobie until the end.

Templeman and Hartman had begun to have some disagreements in the studio, and Hossack had been particularly critical of his co-drummer before departing the band. Hartman's response was to develop his skills in other areas. "He learned to facilitate other parts of the band's personality, working with the writers and coming up with ideas that other people wouldn't have. He was an inspiration and he had a good singing voice, too."

As he had on *The Captain and Me*, Steely Dan guitarist Jeff Baxter added parts to the album *What Were Once Vices Are Now Habits*. Baxter started jamming with the Doobies, sitting in at gigs. "He was a real 'have guitar, will travel' guy," says Simmons affectionately. "Our thing could get boring at times, and he was a bright guy with a lot of energy—he kept us from getting stale."

Vices' first couple of singles failed to get much play or sales action. "It bummed us out, pissed us off and disappointed us," relates Simmons. "It's not that the business *failed* us—it's just the way it was. But that's life. We knew we had a good relationship with the record company, and we had a healthy band—good writers and good players. How could we complain? How could we not work on it, refine it, and become better musicians?"

The band's next hit was a sleeper. "Black Water," penned by Simmons, became a regional hit after a DJ in a southern town began to play it regularly. Then a station in Minnesota picked up on the song, and Warners began promoting it nationally. It was the Doobies' biggest-selling single ever and brought Simmons' gentler style of songwriting to the fore for the first time.

Baxter continued dropping in to jam, and it soon became apparent to all concerned that he was having more fun sleeping over at the Doobies' than living at home with Walter and Donald. "We decided to make Jeff a Doobie. He absorbed some of the guitar work, freeing Tommy and me to become better vocalists. Tiran began to sing more; Keith was singing, and so was Jeff. We really stepped up the professionalism of our approach all around."

During 1975's *Stampede* tour, Tom Johnston began falling apart. "It was hard on him being out on the road for three months without touching home; it had a heavy impact on his psyche. He got physically sick, and was beginning to lose touch with reality," Simmons recalls, his voice falling to a near-whisper. "He, of course, didn't think so. He thought he was really together, but he was gone—very nervous, raving, not sleeping for days at a time, eating horrible food and not taking care of himself. We had to tell him to go home. 'Take a vacation, relax—spend some time with the people you love.' He was *dying* on the road."

The band played a few shows without Johnston when the guitarist failed to materialize. "We told the crowds that Tommy was sick, and we could either go on and do the show or give them their money back. Most of the kids cheered and said, 'Do the show!' We had to divide up the guitar parts; I came down and sang Tommy's vocal parts, leaving the high harmonies out because Tiran had a really low voice—but we pulled it off; the kids were great!"

After one such show at the Los Angeles Forum, Simmons encountered "an example of how demoralizing this business can be. The head of promotion for Warners came up to me and said, 'What the fuck are you trying to do, man? You guys are crazy—you should just hang it up and forget it!'

"I almost cried. We were trying to rediscover what we were doing and keep up with the changes. It's not like we'd fired Tommy—we wanted him in the band! And this guy had the audacity to come to me and put it all down. This was the *head* of promotion, one of the big cats in the company for us at the time. It was uncalled-for; I wasn't doing anything to him except making him money, and here he was telling us we were jackoffs for trying to keep our band together."

To fill the gap while Johnston recuperated, Baxter suggested they bring in his Dan associate, keyboardist Michael McDonald, who joined the band in New Orleans and began learning the set. "Mike was wide open to play our rock 'n' roll; he played synthesizer; he had great arrangement ideas, and he had a great feel. He stumbled through a few shows until he felt comfortable, and he practiced a lot on his own getting things straight."

McDonald proved to be more than a substitute. When recording time came around again, Johnston, was ready to play and sing, but he hadn't written many songs. "He didn't play on Mike's songs very much," says Simmons, "but then neither did I—Jeff did a lot of guitar work on *Takin' It To The Streets*." Was Simmons upset that he wasn't participating more in the proceedings? "No, because I was just glad the band was going on and doing something constructive. I was so glad we were making another record. I thought it was all over."

The next tour included Johnston *and* McDonald in addition to Simmons, Porter, Baxter, Knudsen and Hartman. "There were a lot of sides to the band now. Having Mike in there gave everyone a kick in the ass, and it showed us a lot of new directions to go in."

Johnston offered up several tunes for the next LP, *Livin' On The Fault Line*. "We recorded some great tracks of Tommy's but he never finished them. He decided he didn't want to be part of the band.

"We were bummed," Simmons adds. "Tommy was writing some really good tracks—great, uptempo R&B stuff. There are some things we recorded that are really pop—they don't sound like the typical Tom Johnston songs. But he felt the band was strong enough to go on without him."

Johnston's departure was the end of an era for the Doobies. With the band's founder gone, singer-songwriter McDonald literally became the voice of the Doobies. McDonald had the touch: one critic dubbed him "the finest white soul singer around," and fans responded with gusto to his sensitive lyrics, gutsy vocals and dark, bearded good looks. In short, the Doobies' fortunes soared.

McDonald showed his mettle on *Fault Line*, after Johnston pulled out and the band had to come up with more material. Says Simmons: "Michael wrote 'There's a Light' in response to what was going on. *There's a light that shines on all people and pulls them through*. Michael is a very pertinent writer. A lot of his songs are about love, but he writes *to us*, too."

Livin' On The Fault Line, though, didn't fare as well in the marketplace as it did with the band. And the album that followed, *Minute By Minute*, felt like a pure disaster by the time they were through recording it. "It started out good, and then it slowly deteriorated," he laughs. "What was wrong was that Jeff, Michael, Teddy and I were at odds as to how the production should be—what solos should be played by whom, how long they should be, etcetera. So in the end, it's not that we thought it was lousy—we had just disagreed so much through the making of it."

There were difficult musical challenges on *Minute By Minute* that would encourage such bickering—grooves that were new to the rhythm section, guitar parts that were hard to fit in around McDonald's keyboard-based songs, and so forth. " 'You Never Change' was a strange song for Jeff," Simmons says by way of example. "Here was this great session player who'd done all these things without any problems, and he couldn't find a part for himself. Finally, Ted designated a part for him to play. It was really disheartening."

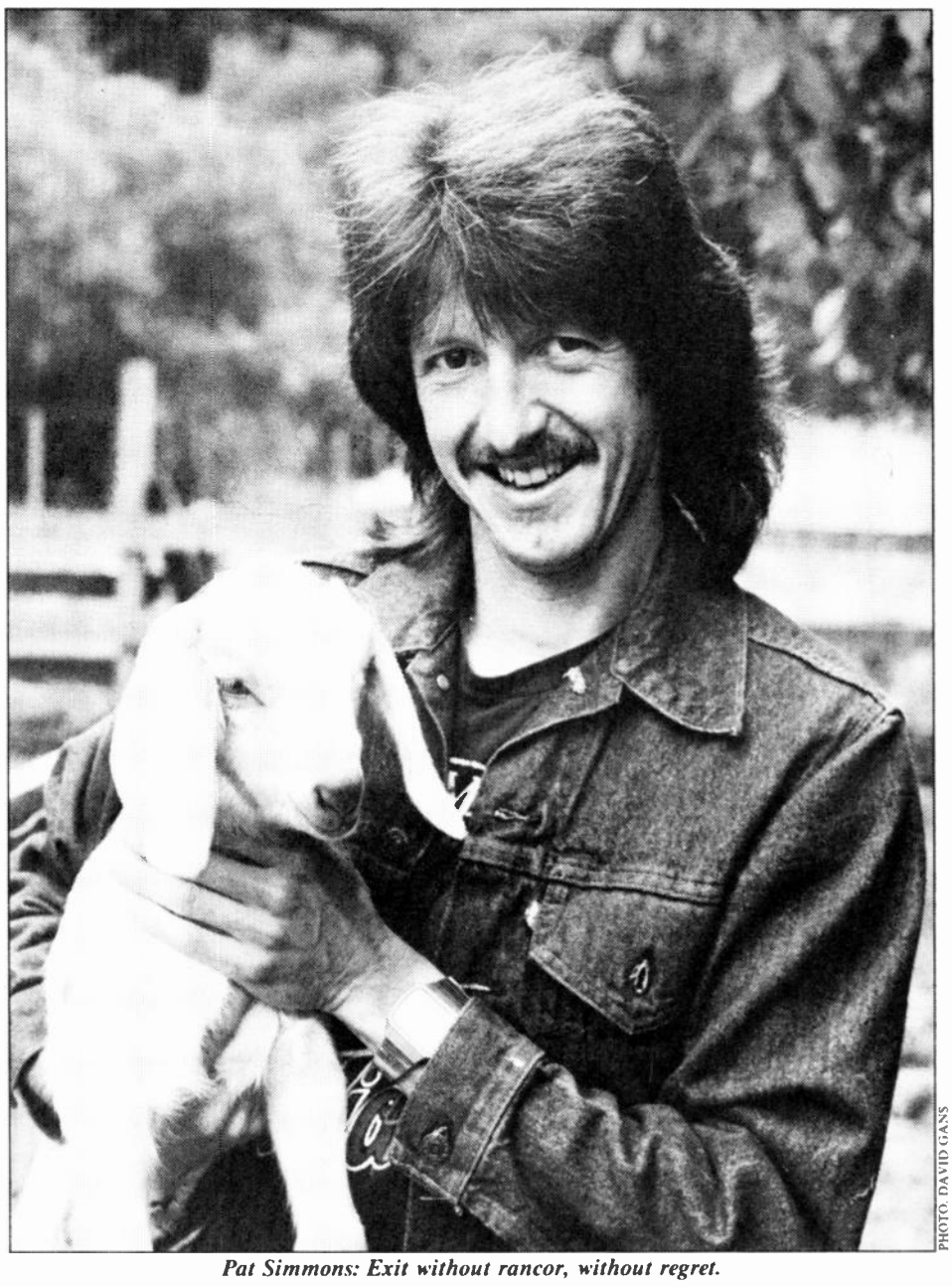


PHOTO: DAVID GANS

Pat Simmons: Exit without rancor, without regret.

But the hardest song to capture, strangely enough, was "What A Fool Believes," the Grammy-winning McDonald-Kenny Loggins composition. Simmons calls it "probably the most untogether track on the album. We'd never done anything quite like it, and we must have cut it 70 times—even then, we didn't think we had it."

For Simmons, *Minute By Minute* was yet another opportunity to play in styles that he'd never tried before. "Like on 'Open Your Eyes.' I've always been a fingerpicker, and on that song I played with a flat pick and did things along with the piano; on 'You Never Change' I played a kind of jazzy solo, whereas before that I'd been into a more traditional blues approach. We had to work around the piano, because that's how Michael wrote—we had to blend in rather than overpower the subtlety of the keyboards."

The tensions that developed during the making of the album—the growing need for each of the band members to take control of his own musical destiny—caught up with the Doobies during an Asian tour around the time *Minute By Minute* was being released in the States. "Jeff and Teddy had been having problems in the studio," Simmons explains. "Jeff likes to play more musically *outside*, and that became a bone a contention. Ted would say, 'Why does everything have to be Miles Davis? Why can't you play Andrew Gold?'

"I would just keep Jeff working until he forgot about Miles Davis and played Andrew Gold. But tempers got short. When it gets to splitting hairs, it never gets right again because there's always an attitude, a look, a nuance that's going to bug you. It may have nothing to do with anything, but it cuts into the music."

Halfway through the Asian tour, the Doobies exploded. "Jeff and Mike had been getting on each other's nerves, and I think John had been uncomfortable for a long time, too. It was starting to tell on him. He wasn't as happy playing Mike's music as he'd been with Tommy's."

In essence, the Doobie Brothers broke up and then re-formed minus Baxter and Hartman. Wind-and-keyboard man Cornelius Bumpus and drummer Chet McCracken were brought in, along with guitarist and-all-around stringsman John McFee—whose previous band, Clover, had forecast the latter-day Doobies' mix of soulful pop, country and rock.

The seven-man Doobies, bursting with songwriting talent, went back to work reinvigorated. "*One Step Closer* was the quickest and easiest album to record of them all. We all brought in songs, and everybody was so anxious to do anything they could—it was *riveted* attention. Everybody was showing up two hours early for rehearsals!"

When bassist Porter asked to be excused from the next tour to deal with a personal situation, the band decided it wasn't practical to give a leave of absence, so he was replaced permanently by session veteran Willie Weeks. At about the same time, Bobby LaKind, who had played percussion on every Doobies album and tour since *Takin' It To The Streets*, became a full member of the band.

But after the 1981 touring season ended, "everyone's commitment to the band began to diminish. They all have other opportunities, and suddenly they don't respect what people have to say to them. I felt that the responsibility should be shared equally—especially when some people are writing and others are basically players. But it was becoming more like, 'You write the song, get it together and we'll come in and be session players.'

"I'm thinking, 'What?! Geez, a year ago you would have killed to play three notes on the album, and now you're saying 'If I like it I'll do it?!' It was very discouraging to me.

"There was no question that these guys were going to be contributors," he continues. "But they began to expect it, and if they didn't get their tunes on, they'd be pissed off. I just wasn't up for playing politics, so I quit. It had ceased to be a band—the Doobie Brothers had become secondary to everybody's outside projects. And I'd been placing my *whole life* second to the band for twelve years.

"I think it's such a pleasure to be able to do *anything* on anybody's album, whether it's the band's or your own," Simmons opines. "Most musicians never get the opportunity to step into a studio. So how can you get upset about whether or not you get to sing a lead vocal?"

By attrition, the Doobie Brothers had ceased to consist of "small-town boys," as Simmons characterized the original band, and now fielded a lineup of seasoned professionals. So what happened to them—and maybe to the whole music industry—is similar to what happened to baseball over the past 10 years: the reading of the fine print became more important than the playing of the game. And that's what finally broke Pat Simmons' spirit.

In the beginning he played second fiddle to Tom Johnston, and in the end he stood in Michael McDonald's shadow; but Pat Simmons may well have been the heart of the of the band all along. He was content to be a solid part of the chassis rather than the chrome, and perhaps that's why he's able to judge the Doobies from a fair distance while remaining so close to them. Without rancor, without regret, he offers the most precise definition of a band that in many ways summed up—rather than sucked in—the '70s: "It was a good band, and I always had a good time. We could play, we wrote good songs, and we could knock the audience out with a good performance. For me to be able to contribute something positive to the overall thing was more important than any claim I could make for myself."

Audio

Hi-Fi Without Fear: Grooving...The Art Of Mastering

By Chip Stern

Mastering is possibly the most critical link in the audio chain, and easily the most mysterious and misunderstood. At this point the music is transferred from an electrical field (tape) to a physical medium (vinyl), and how well the engineers do their job determines in large part how much you're going to enjoy the music—no matter how cheap or sophisticated the music reproduction system.

If you as listeners are baffled by the significance of mastering and its role in the final sound, well, you're not alone; an awful lot of musicians, producers and recording engineers lack a clear concept of what goes down in the mastering process, as their elaborately detailed, two-track stereo mixdown tapes are cut onto a metal based material coated with acetate. This is the first stage in a process not unlike photography, wherein one mirror image after another of the original lacquer's grooves is processed until you arrive at a metal stamper and a vinyl pressing of a record. At this point, when artist and record company receive their first test pressings, a voice awash in pathos may be heard to say—"Why does our recording sound so bad?"

Al Kooper of Blood, Sweat & Tears and *Super Session* fame, worked as an in-house producer for CBS in the late '60s and early '70s, and when I bumped into him recently he had some choice recollections on the vagaries of mastering.

PHOTO: LISA HAVILL

Cutting the master lacquer: the most critical step in the signal chain

"I'd always be amazed at the difference between my mix and the final pressings," Kooper recollects, "so finally one day I went down to the mastering place and I freaked. Here were all these old men with their feet propped up on the desks reading *Playboy* while the cutters were going, just limiting the shit out of everything. I couldn't believe how insensitive they were to rock and roll, and the only guy up there who was really into music was one of the classical engineers; he told me that the way I could retain my recorded sound through the mastering stage was to really respect zero on the VU meter—then I could get around all that limiting. So my next record, I told them to master it without any limiting, and they said they couldn't—company policy. I asked why, and they said because it would damage the cutter heads. So I just pulled the cash out of my pocket and posted a bond to cover any potential damage; we cut the record, and it sure sounded a lot better. As a matter of fact, I just got a copy of Blood, Sweat & Tears' *The Child Is Father To The Man* done as a half-speed master (CBS Masterworks), and, I mean, it's still the original mix, but the difference is amazing—it's the first time I've been able to listen to that album in twelve years."

So there you have it, a real-life horror story from a time before the advent of computerized cutting systems and sophisticated signal processing. Nevertheless, even though the equipment available to mastering engineers has markedly improved the dynamic range and trackability of modern records, the process is hardly foolproof and the sensitivity of the individual doing the cutting can make or break the final sound and balance of a record, as we discovered in speaking to Joe Gastwirt of CBS Mastering Labs, a young pro who has helped preserve and enhance the electric sound of records like Ornette Coleman's *Of Human Feelings*, Miles Davis' *The Man With The Horn*, and Paul McCartney's chart-topping *Tug Of War*.

"A mastering engineer has to be able to listen both musically and technically," Gastwirt concludes, "because when it comes to mastering, Murphy's Law definitely takes effect—if anything can go wrong, it will go wrong, so you have to have everything covered.

"I mean, recording engineers get to play with the instruments, but I get to play with the frequencies. I can screw up a record just as easily as I can improve it—I mean, it's so easy for me to screw up a record, especially if I don't like somebody (laughter).

"There's really no way for some-

one to prepare for a mastering engineer screwing up and ruining the record. Number one, and simplest, is before you even get to equalization, cutting the record with a dull stylus—you lose all your highs. Or over-equalizing things, adding too much bass and covering up all the midrange; then you'll have to cut the record at a lower level and instead of coming off the turntable hot, it'll be dull and muffled. Also, I can take my limiter/compressor/expander and just totally squeeze the life out of the music; have the whole frequency range of a song squashed down within 2 dBs so it sounds like WABC-AM. And if you're not monitoring your oscilloscope to see how much stereo is going on, and what the phase relationships of the two channels are, out-of-phase information will make the stylus go wild. Then again, even if you've done everything else right, if you don't get the master to the matrixing plant right away, since the lacquer is drying all the time, the groove formation is going to change as it contracts; anything over three days is pushing things, because then, even with refrigeration, you'll find pre-groove echo all over the record."

Clearly there are an infinite number of variables in the mastering process, from how to enhance the music so that it sounds transparent and loud, to understanding the limitations of the average record stylus and what information it's capable of tracking and reproducing—which is what Gastwirt means when he talks about listening musically and technically.

"I might get a mixed tape with eight different songs," he explains, "and each one might sound slightly different as far as highs and midrange are concerned; each song might have a different level on it—maybe not meter level, but *apparent level*—and they don't come off the same. My job is to adjust these cuts so they don't sound like eight different songs, but like a record—very important.

"The next step is to cut the master as hot as possible, to get the signal far above the basic floor of noise you hear on vinyl when you put the stylus in the lead-in groove. There's a certain energy level you want on a record, especially a rock record. So the louder you're able to make it, right up to the point of distortion, the better off you are. Now the problem is that different types of turntables will distort at different points; most of your distortion has to do with the ability of your playback stylus to hold a groove. So to take that into consideration, I'll test-skip a record on a cheap-piece-of-shit changer; then I'll listen on three other playback styli to find out what the worst distortion points of the record are, and adjust my levels accordingly. If distortion occurs a little bit on the sibilants, on the *S*ssss, I have what you call a high-frequency limiter (or a *De-esser*) to cut down on the noise, because the physics of a record will tend to make an *S* brighter and stretch it out more; high frequencies are also what build up the most heat on the cutter head so you've got to watch that, but my cutters are helium-cooled, so it would take a lot to burn them out.

"You can also get distortion by running the grooves too close to the center of the record; after six inches in you're near a real heavy distortion area. Producers can compensate for that by putting the hottest songs (the singles) near the beginning so I can cut them with enough level. And producers also need to be conscious of the fact that if there's any *intermodulation distortion* on the tape—which is like an inner harmonic—that'll be a big problem for the cutter to deal with, and in going on to disc it'll increase your distortion dramatically; I have to be very careful not to cut that kind of record loud, because the louder you make it, the more distortion you'll get, especially as you wear your record down. They should also try *not to over-emphasize the midrange* in the mix, because then it's a problem to back that off. It'd be better if they made things less screechy, and let me add midrange to it, if necessary. *Because I can't take away screechiness, but I can sure add it.*

"Besides distortion, my main concern is to cut the grooves as fat as possible, and as close as possible—to save time on a side—yet you don't want any of them to touch, to overcut, because if the grooves overlap, the stylus is going to skip, just like crossing railroad tracks. In the old days, I'd have to stand over the lacquer with a little control knob and listen to the signal before it was happening, seeing how many lines per inch were rolling in; then, if I heard a big bass signal or a high note, I would open up the groove, and then close it down as I was looking into the microscope—and back and forth. Which is why we couldn't cut records as loud and dynamic as we do now, because there's a finite limit to how quickly and accurately a human being can move.

"But now, with the CBS DISComputer, there's a 180 millisecond delay between the computer and the signal reaching the cutter, so it can compensate for signal changes unbelievably fast. If the DISComputer sees a loud passage coming which'll make the grooves cross, it pulls them apart and spaces the next groove away from the previous one—it's real smart.

"So basically what you have happening, is a signal from the tape going through all of my processing and equalization devices. Then it goes into a cutter head amplifier. In the old days you used to have maybe an 80-100 watt amplifier, and if you put in a loud signal it would distort right away. Now we use 600 watts per channel, which gives us a lot more dynamic headroom—this means we can cut a lot more bass information and handle all the high frequency peaks so that cymbals don't come out clipped without any attack. Now because the cutter heads are so sensitive to high frequencies, the RIAA equalization curve takes effect in the cutter amplifier; they came up with that years ago so that the cutters could handle the full frequency range without blowing out—which can be a very costly proposition. The highs get lowered as the signal goes into the cutter head, then got boosted as they pass through your playback stylus into the phono pre-amp on your receiver. This allows you to cut at a decent level and playback at a decent level with plenty of highs.

"The final stage in the signal chain comes at the cutter head. The RIAA encoded signal from the amplifier vibrates a stylus made from a synthetic ruby—exactly the opposite of the way your turntable would playback a record, where the grooves vibrate the stylus and that is converted into an electronic signal which is sent back into the amplifier. I have an advance ball that traces the disc just before the stylus does in order to keep the correct stylus depth; a vacuum pump which pulls the lacquer flat down to the platter; and a vacuum tube which sucks up all the chip carved out of the grooves by the cutter.

"These different frequencies will make different shapes in the grooves—different waveforms. With highs that might be short, jagged, almost sawtoothed movements, while bass will be wide and curvy, with a lot of vertical movement and lateral lines, right? A record like Telarc's digital version of the *1812 Overture* is a good example of groove extremes. There were a lot of quiet passages on that record that they captured by keeping the grooves real close together, than opening them up and making them up to 7 mils deep for the cannon shots. Even a good turntable might mis-track that passage and distort a little because the depth of your average playback stylus is only 5 mils, so it would actually dance around it. So highs don't take up as much room as bass, which might make your grooves go from two mils to four mils deep. I never let my grooves go below 1¾ mils. Too much less than that will make your stylus skip; and if I let them get too jagged from too much level or high frequency information, there'll be a tendency for the stylus to skip or distort, because there's only so much movement it can take."

* * *

Next month this discussion of mastering will conclude with a look at various forms of equalization and signal processing, and how they can enhance the final sound.

Grooving: The way an engineer processes the signal going into the cutter can make or break the sound of a record.

RECORDS

All The Best Cowboys Have Chinese Eyes
Pete Townshend
Atco

By Dave Marsh

Pete Townshend has reached that stage in his career where his new work raises so many peripheral issues—Where are the Who? Are the Who? Why?—that it's hard to get at the music inside. And yet, at least for me (a listener who gave up all pretense of objectivity long ago) Townshend is a model rock artist; if not always experimenting, always seeking, yearning, growing. While *Chinese Eyes* functions within fairly predictable parameters—it does not attempt much that Townshend has not already gone over with the Who or in earlier solo work—it is nonetheless fresh and exciting music.

That is, you're familiar with the guitar lines and the synthesizer riffs, the rhythm patterns and melodic concepts; if you've paid much attention to Townshend (or the Who) over the years, the concerns of *Chinese Eyes* will not surprise you: the obsessions with aging, sex, hypocrisy, fame, fashion, spirituality, illusion and mortality are everlasting.

It isn't entirely fair to say that Townshend is up to nothing new here: "Prelude," the brief transitional piece on Side One, is by far his most successful orchestration, and he takes more chances with his vocals than ever before. But the most striking thing about *Chinese Eyes* is its continuity with the rest of Townshend's work. I don't mean that Townshend is playing it safe commercially; I don't think it matters, because the result is a completely listenable and often invigorating set of songs which get his ideas across as clearly as any record he's ever made. If I am not overly fond of at least one song ("Communication"), the drum sound and some of the more platitudinous spiritual metaphors (not to mention at least one clunky pun)—if, indeed, I find "Exquisitely Bored," his anti-Eagles pastiche, a great concept which quickly grows tiresome—this does little to diminish my appreciation of how much Townshend has accomplished, and how confidently he has done it.

The confessional streak in all Townshend's work since *The Who By Numbers* is now rampant, but the difference between a disaster like *Face Dances*, the last Who album, and the glories of *Chinese Eyes* is the difference between confession as murky indulgence and confession as a method of communication. Maybe Townshend simply feels more liberated working on his own, though "Face Dances, Part 2" is the least coherent number here.

What's certain is that Townshend is now making a kind of music that doesn't have much to do with the Who—it still rocks, but it's more devoted to studio intricacy than interplay among band members. It's also certain that this music is a hell of a lot more interesting, even in its use of the same structures and elements, than the tired stuff with which the Who have toyed lately. If you are looking for an explanation of the catastrophe the Who (on record) has become, it's not in any waning of Townshend's abilities.

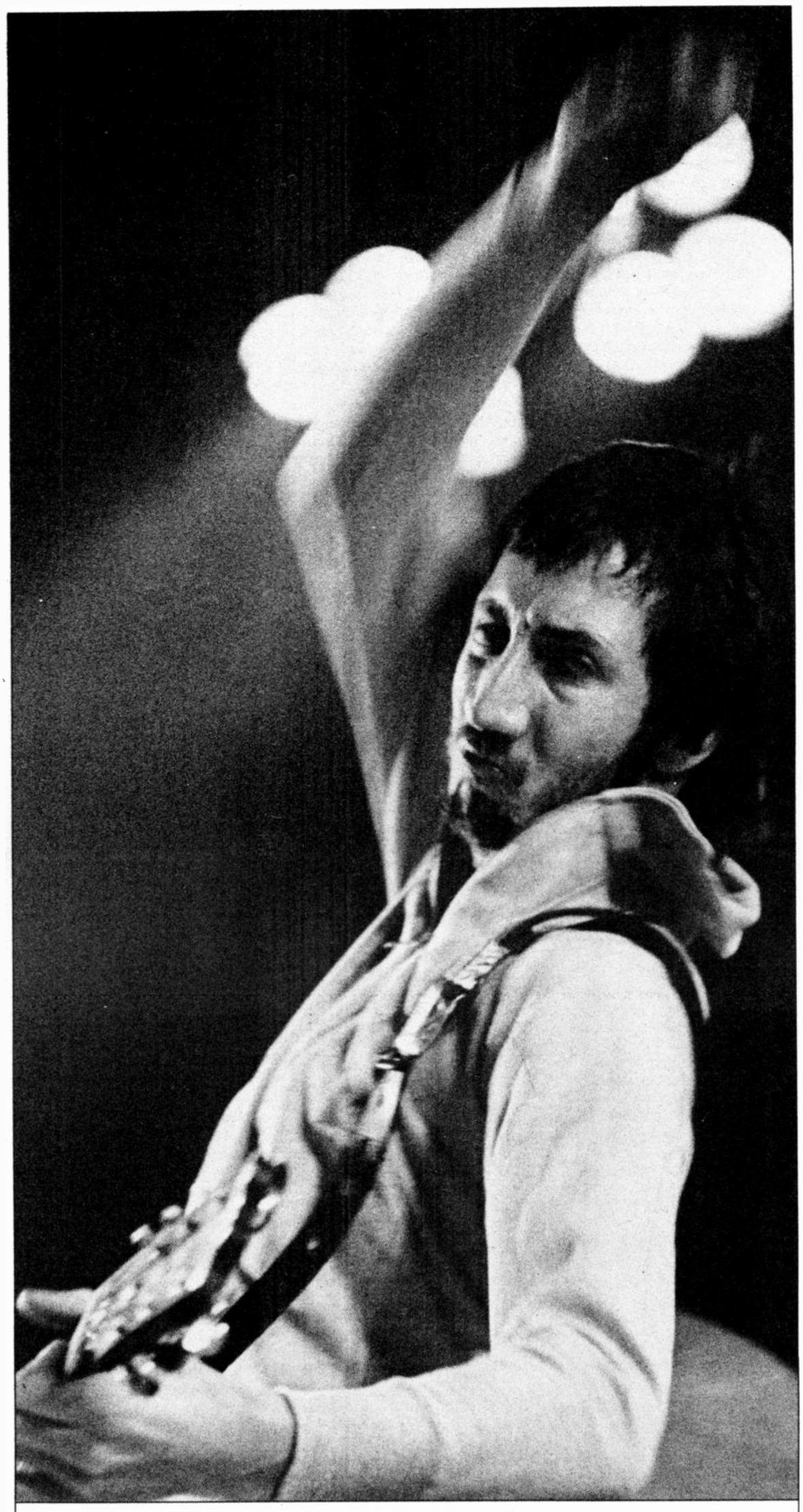


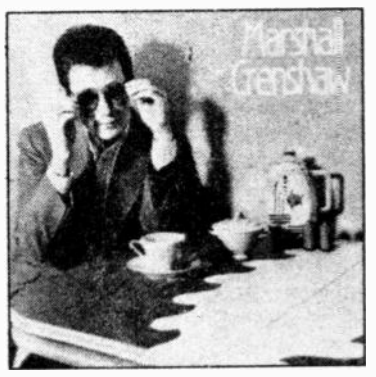
PHOTO: TOM HILL

The Same Old Pete Townshend: Seeking, Yearning, Growing

The best songs here are personal, political and spiritual all at once: "Stop Hurting People," which is perhaps the best and certainly the catchiest of them, opens as a cosmic confession, unfolds as a hymn to Townshend's love and concludes as ambiguously as all of Townshend's best romances. Yet, its chorus—"Stop hurting people"—is suggestive of a political conscience that runs through the album, a kind of left humanism that wants nothing more than to make this synthesis of loves a reality in the here and now. This is a concern that runs through the Baba ballad, "The Sea Refuses No River," the gently chiding "Uniforms," the self-loathing "Slit Skirts"; it even terrorizes "Prelude," with its intimations of death. "Tell me, friend," Townshend asks in a voice about to break, "why do you stand aloof from your own heart?" And then spends the rest of the album trying to discover the answer.

When that detachment breaks down—when Townshend lets up on himself and his failures long enough to dance in the joy of a moment—the result is almost dizzying. When he lets go, whether in an overtly serious "statement," like "Slit Skirts," or in the pop cadences of "Face Dances Part 2," Townshend delivers the transcendence he's speaking about.

Someday, he will make a record in which he is forgiven at the start, and then, the world might quake.



Marshall Crenshaw
Warner Bros.

By Wayne King

Marshall Crenshaw, whose bespectacled, gawky appearance lets him take over from Elvis Costello in the Buddy Holly lookalike sweepstakes, has released what might be the best debut so far this year. Image aside, though, it's Crenshaw's songwriting ability, already demonstrated on recent Lou Ann Barton and Robert Gordon records, that establishes him most directly and emphatically in the Holly tradition.

Take a song like "Someday Someway." With a title as beautiful, as simple as "That'll Be The Day" and a gentle, echoed guitar opening, Crenshaw effortlessly delivers the magical balance of light and hard that was Holly's trademark. And its key line—*"Now after all you've done for me/All I really want to do/ Is take the love you brung my way/ And give it all right back to you"*—recalls the tenderness and commitment of "Maybe Baby" or "Listen To Me." *Marshall Crenshaw* is rife with songs of equal emotional depth as these: "Not For Me," with a bittersweet evocation of love's strains; "Brand New Lover" and its plea for romantic salvation; "Cynical Girl" 's search for a girl who's "lost all illusion and is worldiwise." What seems like the typical post-power pop obsession with love in all its variety comes off instead as a devotion to a classic form and style not unlike the early Beatles (who, it should be remembered, thought of themselves as mere Crickets imitators at one stage).

Crenshaw, however, has a ways to go before he can be considered an expert record maker, as was Holly. The flaw here, and it's hardly a minor one, is in the production; but perhaps that's not the artist's fault. Producer Richard Gottehrer may be responsible for the changes made—none for the better—in Crenshaw's sound in the year since he released a single on the independent Shake Records. The force of an acoustic guitar, adding rhythmic power to that disc's "Something's Gonna Happen," is never matched by the LP's often-thin mix. Part of the problem is the lack of separation between the lead and backing vocals, or in some weird cases ("There She Goes Again" and "I'll Do Anything") between lead vocal and drums. While it's obvious that Crenshaw and company (brother Robert on drums, Chris Donato on bass) are no power trio, surely a three-man lineup would have a greater rock foundation than what the production allows. Some change of pace in the basic texture is needed or called for. Since "Cynical Girl" 's glockenspiels almost imply it, maybe a slow, Spectoresque string section could have been added to the middle. Something's needed that would show a little more thought behind the controls than simply wondering how high to turn up the echo.

Such objections pale, though, in comparison to the artistry Crenshaw displays at virtually every turn. His most important contribution (and one that seems so necessary to rock in these days of blustering macho sensibility) may well lie in his ability to convey feel-

ings of vulnerability and caring in a way that is neither smarmy nor sentimental, but simply human. English pop critic Nik Cohn, in a rare instance of historical myopia, once described Buddy Holly as a softening (thus corrupting) influence on rock's direction during its infancy and as the patron saint of wimps. That same mistake shouldn't be made with Marshall Crenshaw: on the evidence of this one record, the man has a flair and style that can never be in too great a supply.

Throwin' Down
Rick James
Gordy

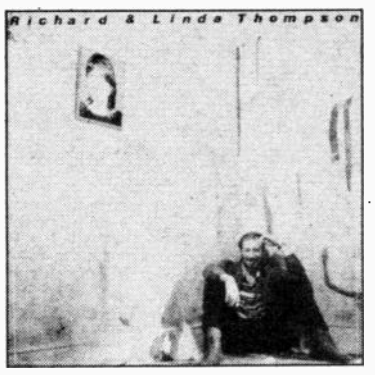
By Vince Aletti

It would be impossible for this album not to fall in the shadow of last year's Rick James LP, the hugely successful and remarkably accomplished *Street Songs*. Not only was it one of the year's best albums—and one of the very few black records to break into the top 10 on the pop LP charts in these conservative times—but *Street Songs* was also an important leap forward for James, a culmination and distillation of the promise and spunk of his first four albums. He'd always had an identifiable sound—dense, churning, punched-up "funk & roll"—and a gaudy gimmick in his oversexed Slick Rick persona—but *Street Songs* proved James had content worthy of the form, substance plus sensation.

Throwin' Down is more of the same (it's a very good album) but not quite enough (it's a disappointment). James reworks his standard riffs, musically and lyrically, and they jump, they snap, but they rarely take us by surprise. You couldn't really accuse Rick James of playing it safe here, but his wildness has become increasingly predictable and his Slick Rick pose seems less brilliant self-invention and more self-parody or merely self-promotion (One wonders if perhaps James isn't more in thrall to this character than his audience could ever be.). Now that Prince has taken up a position at the farther edge of funk rock, with a persona even more outré and original, James is beginning to look and sound a bit . . . mainstream. The volatile mix of raw sex and angry social comment on *Street Songs* helped to obscure this, but there's less of both on *Throwin' Down* and we're left with lots of energy and big fun but very little risk-taking.

The only pointedly political song here is the crackling, horn-driven "Money Talks," a rambling, good-natured swipe at Reaganomics that suggests some dark consequences ("What will be the deal in the end/ If to live we got to steal") but never draws blood. His love songs cut deeper but not by very much. "Happy," a passionate duet with Teena Marie, only hints at the explosive possibilities this combination realized in the last album's scorching "Fire and Desire," and its references to the "problems" of "trying to be a rising star" are hardly endearing. "Teardrops" is rather more touching—and James has a wonderfully expressive voice for this kind of emotional workout: alternately overwrought and intimate—but he blows it when he sings, *You know it takes a very, very special kind of man/To admit to his woman he's been wrong*. Flaunting one's sensitivity seems immodesty of the worst sort.

Of course, boasting, flashy immodesty is one of Rick James's principal attractions, and he comes across best here when you don't have to take him seriously, when he's pumping and strutting and rapping to the girls in "Dance Wit Me," "Hard to Get," "69 Times," and "Throwdown." None of these songs breaks new ground for James musically, but they're all irresistibly high-spirited entertainments and prove he can toss off some of the best dance tracks around with effortless regularity. There are highlights here—a torchy sax solo by band member Danny LeMelle and liquid vibes from Roy Ayers on "Dance Wit Me," two cute lines from Grace Slick (!) on "69 Times"—but, again, no surprises, just solid, tightly-crafted . . . well, what *would* you call this stuff? Post-disco funk? Rock & soul? Pop music? Whatever, I give it a 90, Dick, cause it's got a good beat and it's fun to dance to. Anyone with higher expectations had better bide their time.



Shoot Out The Lights
Richard and Linda Thompson
Hannibal

By Christopher Hill

In G. K. Chesterton's study of Charles Dickens, he retells a story that Dickens told to explain his art. Lingering in the lounge of one of London's hotels, Dickens noticed the words "Coffee Room" painted on a glass window. Being inside looking out, he saw the letters reversed to read "mooR eeffoC"; instantly, the mundane label was transmuted into a mysterious cryptogram, a phrase from a lost language. Just so, Dickens' art was a view of life from that angle which makes the most ordinary into the extraordinary and singular. It's a realm of the imagination where the British have always felt at home. Richard and Linda Thompson are ambassadors from that land. Their new album, *Shoot Out The Lights*, presents this vision at its most compelling and accessible.

Where their last album, *First Light*, flirted disappointingly with folkie cliches, this one is quirkier and tougher than ever. With two-thirds of the original Fairport Convention, the Thompsons have fashioned a new kind of folk-rock. Richard's lead playing gives the album its distinctive sound. He brings together a plain-speaking, folk-influenced style—the medieval modalities of Fairport Convention—and basic rock licks and progressions. The result is bracing. A rolling, Buddy Holly rhythm is made to sound like quiet desperation on "Don't Renege On Our Love." On the title cut, he takes a standard lead break, shatters it to bits, uses a fraction of the pieces, and produces music that sounds like it's raining sheets of metal.

The Thompsons' musical style is paralleled in their themes and lyrics. With jewellers' eyes, they pick out revelatory nuggets of real life, polish them into significance with their humane mysticism, and secure them in picaresque settings. The method yields wonderful songs like "Man In Need." The hero—like the protagonist of Springsteen's "Hungry Heart"—is driven from home and family by a spiritual need, an appetite the Thompsons take to be basic and humble as any other hunger. But, unlike the Springsteen song, the sardonic merriment of the chorus and the lead break prevents us from taking *this* seeker too seriously. He may be a clown, too.

Linda's lullabye, "It's Just The Motion," offers comfort by affirming a meaning behind events. Yet that meaning is conveyed by life's bumps and buffets, not visionary insights. "Walking On The Wire" describes a failing romance in terms of grubby realities—"I wish I could please you tonight/But my medicine just won't come right." Linda's voice is a paradigm of the Thompsons' outlook—husky and weary, but possessed of an otherworldly sweetness.

"The Wall of Death" is the album's credo. Shimmering chords and an easy rhythm suggest resolution. But what is Richard asking? "Let me ride on the Wall of Death one more time." It's the Thompsons' favorite thrill-ride, and on one side of the Wall the carnival goes on. On the other side—who knows? But Richard and Linda know that you've got to at least dangle a leg on either side. Then the "mooR eeffoC" effect comes into play, and nothing's ordinary anymore. The message comes through brilliantly clear on *Shoot Out The Lights*.

Genuine Houserocking Music
Hound Dog Taylor
Alligator

Magic Sam Live
Magic Sam
Delmark

By Cary Baker

Magic Sam and Hound Dog Taylor (both now deceased) were "special" bluesmen. While Hound Dog's romping raggedness might have remained universally-endearing for years to come, Magic Sam might by now have been selling records in numbers commensurate with B.B. King. In lieu of such revelations, we should give thanks for these recordings.

Taylor, whose influence on George Thorogood and others of his ilk is immeasurable, was never cited for his technical virtuosity. His scorching rawness and tendency toward wrong notes were practically a calling card, seldom a bane. *Genuine Houserocking Music* is a compilation of previously-unreleased studio outtakes that documents much of what was good, and bad, about Taylor's approach. As a reminder that raise-the-roof boogie wasn't born with Thorogood, the LP provides shining examples like "Fender Bender," "Gonna Send You Back To Georgia" and covers of "What I'd Say" and "Kansas City." Second guitarist (Hound Dog never employed a bassist) Brewer Phillips takes the lead on "Phillips Goes Bananas," in probably the raunchiest rhumba ever. Even by Hound Dog's standards, some tracks included here should never have left the takeup reel. The laboriously slow instrumental "Blue Guitar," for instance, illustrates that Hound Dog's frequent defense against musical virtuosity was lightning speed.

Although Magic Sam, trailblazer of Chicago's West Side blues sound, boasted nowhere near as legendary a live show as Taylor's wang dang doodles on the South Side, Delmark's two-record set captures a remarkable artist at some peak moments. The first of the discs was recorded on a portable Sony in 1963 at Chicago's long-defunct Alex Club; the second was recorded under marginally more ideal circumstances at 1969's Ann Arbor Blues Festival.

The mid-'60s were a dry recording period for Sam, who persevered by having a "lot of doggone fun every Friday and Saturday" with a rock-solid band that included ace saxmen Eddie Shaw and A.C. Reed. Though recording quality is beneath primitive—these tapes, of course, were never intended to see the light of day—this serves as a splendid random sample of the spirited Chicago club scene of the day. As Sam breaks into a sweeping version of Junior Wells' "Come On In This House" and a pair of rugged instrumentals—hamming it up between songs for some visitors from out of town—one can practically turn back the hands of time to a simpler day. This was an era unfettered by blues festivals and revivals.

The improved audio quality of the Ann Arbor Festival disc is mitigated by a performance that, while energetic, wasn't what it might have been. Magic Sam reportedly arrived at the Festival site minutes before showtime without a drummer, and managed to hoodwink veteran Sam Lay into sitting in at the last minute. Despite this makeshift trio performance, the Magic Sam style comes into focus in the soaring vocals and lyrical, descending guitar lines of "All Your Love" and "You Don't Love Me." And if Robert Johnson's original version of "Sweet Home Chicago" predates Sam's career, you'd never know it wasn't his own by the crowd's response.

Still Life
The Rolling Stones
Rolling Stones Records

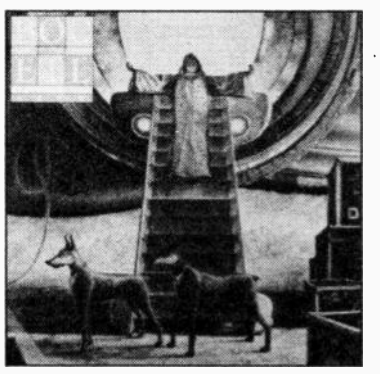
By Wayne King

The new live record by the Rolling Stones is a souvenir of last year's crassly commercial American tour, and nothing more. It does not attempt to encapsulate the band's history, or to make claims for their greatness. It is simply a brief chapter in that peculiar triennial tale called "Stones Storm States."

No live set could ever be heard over the chorus of hosannas that critics — so indiscriminating towards the Stones with their judgment as to render that word meaningless — have serenaded them with. What *Still Life* proves, though, is that the Rolling Stones long ago vacated the throne as best live band. The Who, at peak, were always more dynamic, even charismatic (they never butchered Eddie Cochran, either); Bruce Springsteen and the E Street Band have long since earned a greater piece of the rock through the sheer scope of their efforts. The Stones always retained an exalted position through studio work; endlessly boiling down the essence of their approach until you figure it's evaporated. Certainly nothing on this album comes close to matching the impact "Start Me Up" made as a single.

Perhaps *Life*'s modest stance, that of forty minutes of music recorded in concert, is understandable since no one-record package could sum up all the facets of their career. Perhaps it's just as well they didn't even try, since what is presented is confusing enough. Why, for instance, two Motown cover versions when Motown is clearly not their style and never was? Do they no longer connect with the blues as before; or did *Love You Live*'s perceived failure banish the blues from commercial consideration? Or did they assume that their young, white audience could accept no other forms of black music than '60s soul?

Maybe it's just that by releasing tepid renditions — although "Just My Imagination" is performed much better than *Some Girls*' flat reading — they can successfully lower expectations again. It hardly seems beyond the crafty Mick to release a record of unexciting but passable product so that the next comeback can be just as eagerly anticipated. Maybe it makes everything easier; even jet-setting pop idols must work better when not tripping over worshippers.



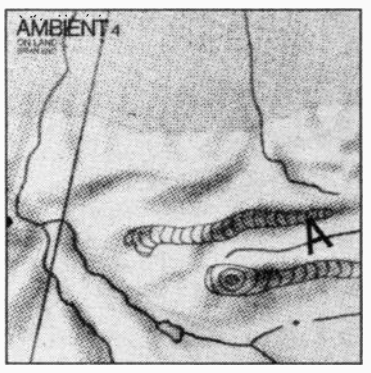
Extraterrestrial Live
Blue Oyster Cult
Columbia

By Christopher Hill

Question: *Quo vadis* Blue Oyster Cult, Sandy Pearlman's great joke? As of *Extraterrestrial Live*, their second live document, the answer is just about where they were on their first album. That is, a self-conscious, melodic, graceful heavy metal band. At one time BOC threatened to form some new creature out of these seeming contradictions. Now it's apparent that this is not the band that will forge metal into a rapier. In part, BOC's problem is its audience. To keep the fans they've cultivated, the members of Blue Oyster Cult are now forced to play ironic roles with absolute conviction.

But you can't knock the value of BOC albums, and this one's no exception. The playing, as always is tight, inventive and enthusiastic—especially on a song like "Hot Rails to Hell," which they've now been playing for over a decade. Buck Dharma's rave-up break is as wildly careening yet precisely guided as ever.

But in the end, the story is told by Eric Bloom. As vocalist and frontman, he's as forced and false as when the band was playing high schools in 1972. While one could excuse that as jitters then, a different conclusion is demanded now. As musicians, they're about as good as rock has; as conceptualizers, they've pulled off one of rock merchandising's great coups; but as artists, Blue Oyster Cult have finally chosen not to mean very much.



Ambient 4/On Land
Brian Eno
Editions EG

By Chip Stern

If you accept David Byrne's dictum that "heaven is a place where nothing ever happens," then the slow, aquatic haiku on Brian Eno's latest new age easy listening album must certainly qualify as some sort of revelation.

What seems to fascinate Eno is the notion of the drone, an almost pre-natal concept of the pulse, in which the listener floats suspended in amniotic fluid with infrequent electronic occurrences marking a new breath or a distant heartbeat. It is Eno's near-pathological fascination with obscuring *any* groove that allows the listener to trance in or totally detach from this music.

The first side perfectly captures the image of some amphibious creature emerging from the swamp amidst synthesizer washes and electronically processed frogs. Side two quickens the tempo somewhat, with synthesizer overtones bubbling to the surface of languid, vocalized long notes, more like reposing than composing. Any connection to "rock 'n' roll" must be deemed tenuous—*On Land* is not about big beat but no beat, and one has to wonder when Eno will apply this Zen approach to more overtly rhythmic material.

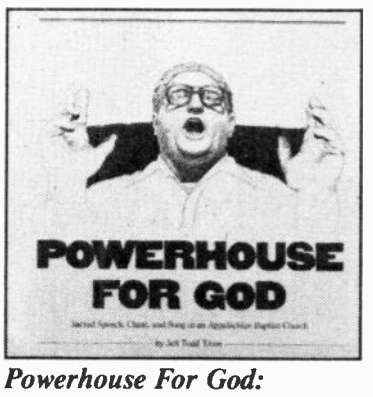
Live It Up
David Johansen
Blue Sky

By Wayne King

Since the breakup of the New York Dolls—those glitter/glam/fag queens and true punk precursors, with their calculated outrage and amateurism—David Johansen on his own has been a hard-working journeyman with almost populist tendencies. Grasping for a larger audience, he has not sold out as much as tried to buy in — taking a very creditable track record and exchanging it for some success by paying his dues (for instance, touring with Pat Benatar). The release of a live album would seem a perfunctory, logical step then. Like most such records, it does serve as a collection of standards for those unfamiliar with him; only two of the originals here were not on a promotional live disc from four years ago. What separates *Live It Up* from the usual unthinking release is the number of cover versions and their range, all performed with the purpose of giving definition and resonance to Johansen's artistry.

The point where American rock in the '80s meets its roots is in black music from the '60s. Johansen's own music has that foundation, and to prove that his work can and should be judged in a broader perspective, he has surrounded his originals with such classics as the Ronettes' "Is This What I Get For Lovin' You?", the Cadets' 1955 novelty hit, "Stranded In The Jungle" and "Build Me Up Buttercup" by the Foundations. The establishing of context, so rare for the usually unambitious genre of the live album, is finally realized by the renditions of the Four Tops' "Reach Out (I'll Be There)" and, most especially, a medley of angry urban anthems by the Animals of Eric Burdon.

The stylistic confusion that could have resulted is negated by the heavy, unified approach of the band. In fact, the sound of the recording is the most important part of this process; it is full and powerful, up to the task of equalling Johansen's booming voice. The only drawback to all of this is that it may have been in vain. Perhaps one more studio album, attempting the same synthesis, could have prepared a bigger audience for him; after all, what was the last live record that established anyone?



Powerhouse For God: Sacred Speech, Chant and Song In An Appalachian Baptist Church
Jeff Todd Titon
'The Fellowship Independent Baptist Church, Stanley, Va.'
The University of North Carolina Press

By Dave Marsh

Now that the gospel influence is flooding back into the central currents of pop music, espoused by everyone from Bob Dylan to Dimples Fields, *Powerhouse For God* has a timely feeling. At the same time, there could hardly be a more timeless collection of American music and culture than this two-record set, the result of five years' study of a nonconformist, fundamentalist church in the Virginia mountains.

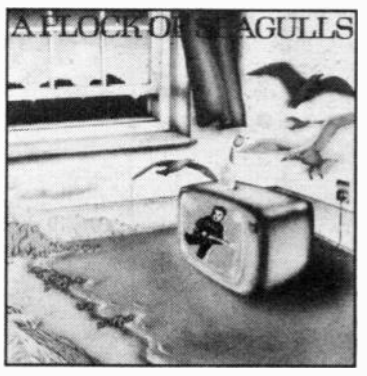
It's impossible to convey in a short review the richness and depth of commitment expressed in the sermon, testimony and oral history presented here. Suffice to say that the Fellowship Church worshippers, from minister John Sherfey to the smallest children, express an integration of religious belief and everyday experience that is not only rare but difficult to imagine in a high-tech, media-centered world.

Brother Sherfey believes that when he preaches, he becomes an open channel (powerhouse) for God, who speaks straight through him. This is a fundamental Pentecostal concept, but Sherfey's rolling, huffing, ecstatic cadences are utterly convincing, transcending notions of "vulgarity," primitivism or the exhibitionist cliches of "Holy Rollers." As Sherfey preaches, he testifies (something that the rest of the congregation also may do) and as he delves into his testimony—his true statement of the power of faith in his life—his cadences grow more and more musical.

When Sherfey actually sings, the effect is even more overwhelming. Anyone who has ever wondered how Elvis Presley could reconcile his passion for blues with his love for hymns should hear the gorgeous a cappella rendition of "Precious Memories" on side two. Leading a trio, Sherfey (who's a match for Presley as a hymn singer) powers the song with his resonant, rolling baritone voice in a performance that renders most other contemporary sacred singing, even Al Green's, timid by comparison. For that matter, Sherfey's appearance on record is a momentous occasion in American folk music, certainly rivaling in importance the rediscovery of Skip James in 1964.

Taken together, the documentary material and the music on this album are something more than the usual folkie ancestor worship or celebration of the obscure. *Powerhouse For God* reclaims an important part of the American musical tradition; it is quite literally true that rock 'n' roll would have been no more possible without the sort of traditions invoked and replenished here than without the blues itself.

(*Powerhouse For God*, two records plus an extensive booklet, is available for $15 from the University of North Carolina Press, P.O. Box 2288, Chapel Hill, North Carolina 27514.)



A Flock of Seagulls
Jive/Arista

By Wayne King

For anybody not attuned to the trends of trans-Atlantic DOR (dance oriented rock), A Flock of Seagulls might as well have stepped right off a flying saucer. First, there's the look, which could have been drawn from the fashion page of a Kraftwerk fanzine—one glance at the back cover will have you thinking that they've already been enshrined in Madame Tussaud's Wax Museum, so lifeless is their pose. And then there's the sound: all machine-precise drumming and android vocals. The excitement is reined in by the computerized, clockwork arrangements; everything is subservient to the sonic texture (it's hard not to describe this music in technical terms) and, most importantly, the beat. If classic rock 'n' roll has something to do with creating tensions and breaking through them, then the relentless droning of songs like "DNA" and "Modern Love Is Automatic" don't exactly qualify.

So why is it that I keep playing this record? For one, it's so damn catchy. Somehow, the English scene produces three or four acts every year who debut with hook-drenched, original sounding stuff, although the whys and wherefores are inscrutable. Maybe it's the natural result of being weaned on charts that juxtapose the Stray Cats and ABBA, Sheena Easton and Haircut One Hundred. It takes your standard bar band about three or four decades to come up with anything as snappy (a funny word amidst all this Brave New World talk) as what the 'Gulls lay down here. What really keeps my interest, though, is a belief that somewhere in all this there may be a rock band waiting to get out. But like fellow Liverpudlians Echo and the Bunnymen—whose innate strength is handicapped by the Merseyside art school mentality that's already crippled compatriots The Teardrops Explodes—Flock's obeisance to fashion could make their next effort strictly for the birds.

Renee Geyer
Portrait

By Charles Paikert

If history has taught us anything, it's that there is no shortage of white people who think they can sing soul music, nor is there a lack of pretty boys and pretty girls who get recording contracts but can't carry a tune. This is by way of warning you—or, rather, urging you—to not be put off by Renee Geyer's pretty face. This year's model turns out to be close in spirit to Bonnie Raitt and Lou Ann Barton, and in many ways every bit as believable. So what if she's beautiful? It's the soul that counts, and that's the prettiest part of her.

The whole setting is really impeccable—if you can imagine Aretha Franklin on a Ry Cooder album you'll get the idea. In fact, the exquisite playing by the fine musicians here (including William "Smitty" Smith on organ, Johnny Lee Schell on guitar, Ian McLagan on keyboards, Bobby Keys on sax and Bobby King, James Ingram and Vanetta Fields on backing vocals) pushes Geyer to more impassioned performances and inspires her to go them one better.

There are a few times when Geyer trips up and puts in a false inflection or two, but mostly her smokey, superbly-controlled vocal phrasings ring true. By the third song on side one, the woman's really *there—feeling* the song, not just singing it; her husky voice, hurt yet confident, goes down like fine old whiskey.

So can a white singer sing soul music?

Sure, if she's got soul.

Hit and Run
Girlschool
Stiff America

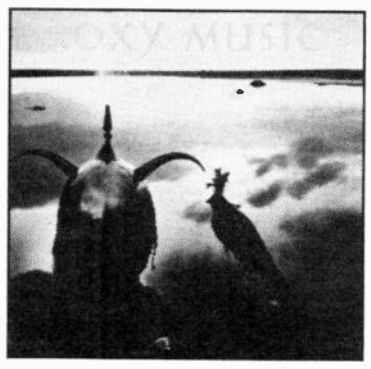
By Stuart Cohn

Girlschool plays a lively, pumped-up punk/metal that's kind of a cross between the Go-Go's and Motorhead. It's too bad they're not a more interesting band.

Not that these four girls can't play, you understand. Guitarists Kelly Johnson and Kim McAuliffe are a perfectly able one-two slam team, but producer Vic Maile hardly lets them strut their stuff. For instance, "Not For Sale" ends up with a repeating noise riff that could have been milked for two or three minutes' worth of solid headbanging. Instead, it's all over in thirty seconds or so. Traditionally, the preeminent bands in this genre have relished the chance to exploit a riff or tempo change as a sure-fire way of sending shivers of delight down their fans' spines.

Girlschool's music is also too simple, too benign. On "Race With The Devil" (an Adrian Gurvitz tune from the first Gun album in 1969), bassist/vocalist Enid Williams sheds precious little light on the dark heart of Beelzebub. The Devil's supposed to be scary, or at least campy. Here, he's about as notorious as greasy fish and chips.

Certainly these girls can be funny, sarcastic and brash; but what they lack is a great metal band's sense of put-on grandeur, not to mention a brighter, bolder mix. Sensibility or sensation—whichever comes first—will be welcome.



Avalon
Roxy Music
Warner Bros./EG

By Barry Alfonso

If the phrase "evocative lethargy" makes sense, it can be exemplified by Roxy Music's *Avalon*. Those demanding fire and tension from the veteran artiste-rockers will surely be disappointed by this moody, sleepy album, though the disc does have its merits.

Roxy Music's recent history has been dominated by singer/keyboardist Bryan Ferry, who, after a period of inactivity, reformed the band with guitarist Phil Manzanera and saxophonist Andy Mackay. In its earlier, more democratic incarnation, the group made disturbing, challenging music, crossbreeding pop forms with avant-garde ideas to startling effect; at present, Ferry's world-weary vocals and dispirited songs demand low-key, less adventurous musical support.

Once the wolfish gigolo, Ferry's romantic persona has paled into that of an enervated ex-Romeo recalling his passions. His lyrical gifts remain intact, no matter how tired his viewpoint. "The Main Thing," "Avalon," "Take A Chance With Me" and especially "To Turn You On" are eerie, dreamlike efforts. Master of the jump-cut image, Ferry leaps gracefully from the cliché to the poetic phrase.

Manzanera and Mackay contribute dabs of color to *Avalon*'s tracks, though a fan of the old Roxy Music might well wish for more. Working in blurry, understated funk and reggae grooves, their playing is ethereal where it once was biting. Between the guitarist's ghostly riffs and the saxman's murmuring lines, *Avalon* comes across as a dance party in the Afterlife, at once upbeat and inescapably sad.

Ignition
John Waite
Chrysalis

By Nick Burton

On his first solo effort, John Waite returns to the lightweight pop-rock flavor of his previous work with the Babys. The results are promising, if uneven. On the plus side, Waite sounds a bit rougher around the edges vocally, and he's backed by a hard-rocking ensemble that includes ex-Iggy Pop and Patti Smith guitarist Ivan Kral (Smith herself contributes some near-inaudible vocals here), drummer Frankie LaRocka, guitarist Tim Pierce and bassist Donnie Nossov.

Kral appears to be the key element. He's always been among the best, though unheralded, guitarists produced by the new wave, and on this outing he comes into his own as a songwriter as well. The best moments here are his collaborations with Waite. "Mr. Wonderful," "Desperate Love" and "Wild Life" stand out by virtue of their emphasis on strong, melodic hooks. The other songs are fairly ordinary, or are marred by Neil Geraldo's restrictive production. "White Heat," for example, is a real kicker, but Geraldo clutters it up so much that it loses most of its punch. Ultimately, it's the strength of the Kral/Waite partnership that stays with a listener, making *Ignition* an interesting record not so much for what's on it, but for what it suggests might lie ahead for this team.

Standing On The Edge
Frankie Miller
Capitol

By Michael Goldberg

Despite seven albums worth of honest, heartfelt performances and well-crafted material, Frankie Miller has yet to earn much in the way of public acclaim. Perhaps this album, blessed with some of this raspy-voiced soul shouter's hardest rocking songs, will change all that.

Of some concern, though, is the apparent attempt to push Miller into the Bob Seger mold by mixing tough rockers such as the menacing "Danger Danger" (similar to "Fire Down Below") with melancholy ballads a la "To Dream The Dream" (echoes of "Mainstreet"). But while Miller is as engaging and likeable as Seger, he's no Seger clone. The hope here is that listeners will push beyond the calculated similarities and learn to appreciate Frankie Miller as a worthy artist in his own right.

Motels

Continued from page 1

ly every management team in L.A. before turning to their producer, who up till now has never managed a rock act.

"He had something we wanted," explains Jourard, of their initial merger, "we had something he wanted. He wanted to do something artistically different. And we needed some success; we needed to make a great hit album."

"We needed to recoup," laughs Davis.

"Anybody who is interested in surviving," according to Marty, "must be into business one way or another. And Capitol is cool, but I also understand that they want their money back. Anybody would, you know.

"And Capitol is going to spend literally *hundreds* of dollars promoting us," he jokes. "This is no exaggeration."

Davis and Jourard may pretend to make light of their current label status, but they are all too aware that *All Four One* could be their make-or-break record. After two albums that didn't quite live up to the company's expectations, Capitol suggested that the group try a new producer, specifically Val Garay. And after Garay and the Motels presented the completed third album to the powers that be, the big boys suggested that they go back into the studio and do the whole thing again.

It was an expensive gamble, but so far it seems to be paying off. The album and its first single, "Only The Lonely," have been getting substantial airplay, and for the week of June 26 *All Four One* checked in at number 24 with a super-bullet on *Billboard*'s album chart. Buyers for several of the nation's largest record store chains, however, reported the LP twenty or more notches lower on their own charts, based on sales during the same week. For example, Lou Garrett of Camelot Records states: "We are seeing sales on the record, more than any other Motels album before, but we aren't seeing those kinds of numbers yet. We only chart to number 15, but it would probably be somewhere between 40 and 60. Sales haven't really caught up with the radio play yet." Kaye Jenkins of the Record Bar chain (which, like Camelot, reports to *Billboard*) says the Motels LP placed 42nd on their chart for the week of June 9 through June 15, up eighteen points from the previous week, with 446 units sold (as compared to 710 units sold by the group Alabama, which ranked 24th in Record Bar stores). And anybody in the record business knows that if an LP by a relatively new band ranks that low in major store chains, the figures will be even lower at the rack-serviced department and discount stores—Motels consumers don't buy their records at K-Mart. The mathematics don't appear to add up to a Top 30 album at this point, but it would be difficult to prove otherwise.

Bill Wardlow, associate publisher/director of charts of *Billboard*, claims *All Four One*'s lofty chart position is based solely on retail sales reports. "There's no airplay consideration whatsoever on the album charts," he says. "It's only sales."

Funny numbers or no, *All Four One* is a winner artistically. Each song fits a different category and stands on its own, but the thread that ties them all together is the presence of Martha Davis. Although the decision was made to recruit several sessions musicians for the revamp of *All Four One* (which the band affectionately refers to as Album 3B), Davis says, "It felt more like our album the second time around. I felt like I was getting what I wanted from my songs more than ever before. I've always been a big fan of orchestration and textures, and for the first time we were able to hear stuff on tracks that we heard in our minds. If we wanted drums, there was a phone call made and the African drums were there. It felt like more control than I'd ever had. Especially because up until this point there's always been a personality in the Motels who was trying to run the situation, and now the band is working together."

"It felt more like our album the second time around . . . I was getting what I wanted from my songs more than ever before."

The "personality" in the previous Motels, who Martha says "could be very overbearing," was guitarist Tim McGovern. Besides playing guitar and arranging much of the material on "Album 3A," McGovern was Davis' lover. When he and Davis split up during the recording of the third album, it started having a negative effect on the music and the rest of the group, so McGovern left. "We made a big to-do over, 'No matter what happens it's not going to affect the band,' " says Martha, "but the tension got to be too much."

Along with the nucleus of the Motels (Davis, Jourard, bassist Michael Goodroe, and drummer Brian Glascock), who'd played all of their respective instrumental parts on *The Motels* and *Careful*, guitarists Waddy Wachtel and Craig Jull, keyboardist Steve Goldstein, bassist Bryan Garofalo, and drummer Craig Krampf were called in to contribute their talents to *All Four One*. Guy Perry, who replaced Tim McGovern on guitar, played on two cuts, and on "Tragic Surf," the only track to survive from Album 3A, McGovern played guitar.

It's ironic that it has taken the Motels this long to break the ranks of the "established acts," because they've always had an abundance of stirring originals, played by highly qualified musicians, and sung by one of rock's most striking females. "Everything has its place, its reason and its time," states Martha. "I'm a firm believer in that. Absolutely none of this album would have happened had the circumstances been any different."

Davis, who is in her early thirties and has two teenage daughters, started playing acoustic guitar and writing protest songs at the age of eight. She names Buffy Sainte-Marie as one of her early influences. In 1971, with two daughters and a divorce, she moved back to her hometown of Berkeley and started her first band. The Warfield Foxes, as they were then called, played "once a year, usually at Halloween," and eventually became the Motels. "We thought we were so hip we'd just move down to L.A. and take the city by storm . . . that was 1974," she laughs. That edition (which included Dean Chamberlain of Code Blue on guitar) broke up, and Davis spent the next two and a half years trying to form a new band. It wasn't until late 1978 that the core of the current Motels line-up was solidified.

The group's first two LPs, *The Motels* (1979) and *Careful* (1980), were produced by Capitol's John Carter and presented the band essentially as they then sounded in concert, but without the visual impact, naturally, of Martha Davis onstage. "She's real sweet when you're talking to her in the kitchen," says Michael Goodroe, "but onstage she's pretty spooky."

"First gig I ever did it happened," according to Davis, "don't ask me how. It's definitely another Martha that had been there deep down inside just waiting to step onstage and go wild."

Garay's approach to the Motels seems to be to not attempt to duplicate their live show or sound, but to focus instead on the songs as separate entities. "We met with Roy Thomas Baker, Gerhold Mack, and all these producers," recounts Davis, "and nothing was making perfect sense. Then Capitol said, 'There's this one other guy—you've just got to meet him.' We said, 'Who's he done?' 'Well, you've just got to meet him.' This was before 'Bette Davis Eyes' had happened, so in terms of track record he, basically, had been engineering for Linda Ronstadt and James Taylor. *Right* up our alley, right?"

Yet what looked like one of the record industry's oddest couplings on paper has resulted in the Motels' most promising chapter. "And now the gosh-darned guy is managing us," quips Davis.

The group has also bolstered its live show with the addition of sideman Scott Thurston, formerly with Iggy Pop, on guitar and keyboards. "So far we have a salaried sideman," explains Martha, "but he's a real cool guy, and we all like him a lot—so who knows? We might have the first six-piece Motels. Motel 6!"

TV & Video Calendar

July

Tues/27

2:10 AM Cinemax — **Janis** (1975) Often-moving documentary on the life and times of Janie Joplin. In addition to concert footage from Monterey, Woodstock and some overseas venues, the film captures Joplin's less-hysterical side during her tenth high school reunion in Port Arthur, Texas, and in an excerpt from an interview with Dick Cavett.

5:30 PM Cinemax; also 7/30 — **Union City** (1980) Debbie Harry stars as the wife of a wimp who kills a man, and then hides the body in an adjacent apartment. The film, directed by Mark Reichert, is so-so, but Harry is effective in her dramatic debut. Pat Benatar also appears briefly. Music by Blondie's Chris Stein.

Wed/28

9 AM HBO — **Elton John In Central Park** Hour-long concert taped live from the Great Lawn in Central Park.

10 AM Cinemax; also 7/31 — **Blow Up** (1966) Michelangelo Antonioni's oblique look at the "Swinging London" of the '60s details several days in the life of a photographer (played by David Hemmings) who finds he has, quite by accident, taken pictures of a murder in a local park. A club scene features Jeff Beck and the Yardbirds playing "Stroll On" and then destroying their equipment, Who-style. The rest of the music is a jazz score written by Herbie Hancock.

Thurs/29

2 PM Cinemax — **Genesis in Concert**

3:30 PM Cinemax — **Rock and Roll High School** (1979) The students of Vince Lombardi High are up in arms over their principal's opposition to the Ramones, whose music, he claims, "makes mice explode." An exuberant send-up of '50s and '60s sock-hop musicals.

Fri/30

2 AM USA Network — **Night Flight** *Take Off*; April Wine in concert

Sat/31

11 PM USA Network — **Night Flight** *Take Off*; Chick Corea and Gary Burton in concert from Tokyo; *Yes songs*—Rick Wakeman, Jon Anderson, Steve Howe, Chris Squier, Alan White—the definitive edition of Yes—filmed in concert in 1973 at London's Rainbow Theatre

August

Sun/1

2 PM Nickelodeon — **Livewire** **Life In The Fast Lane:** guests include the Mamas and Papas; Dave Getz, drummer for Big Brother and the Holding Company; Myra Friedman, author of the Janis Joplin biography, *Buried Alive*

Tues/3

12 PM Showtime; also 8/7, 8/11, 8/16, 8/19, 8/22 — **Breaking Glass** (1980) The old, old story—sex and drugs and rock 'n' roll—in a punk setting. Hazel O'Connor is excellent, but the rest of the movie is nowhere.

Wed/4

12 PM Showtime; also 8/8, 8/12, 8/16, 8/20 — **Live Dead!** The Grateful Dead in Concert. *Saturday Night Live*'s Al Franken and Tom Davis host this 78-minute concert special, recorded live at the Dead's Halloween engagement at Radio City Music Hall.

Thurs/5

7 PM Nickelodeon; also 8/20 — **Special Delivery** The Darts: English doo-wop band in concert performing "Boy From New York City," "Sunday Kind of Love" and other songs

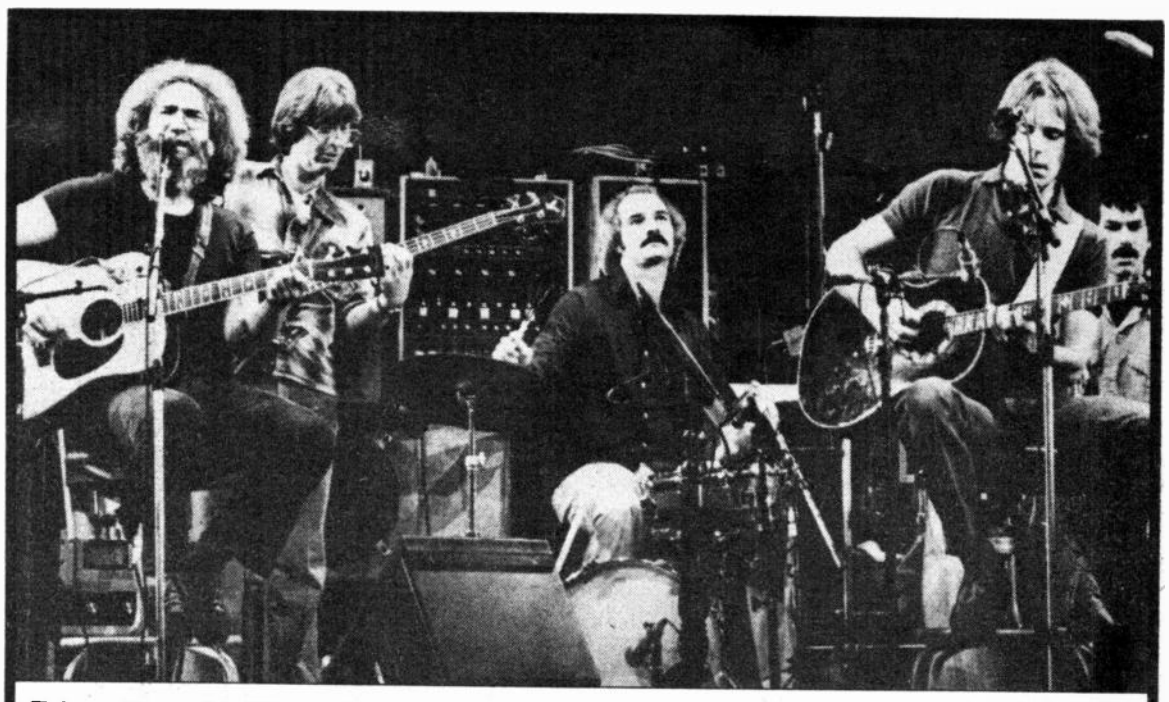
10 AM Showtime; also 8/18, 8/21 — **The Trouble With Girls** (1969) Starring Elvis Presley and Sheree North. Presley's last film musical. The big production number is "Clean Up Your Own Back Yard."

Fri/6

11 PM MTV — **Jimi Plays Berkeley** (1971) Once past the relevancy (i.e., newsreel footage of anti-Vietnam rallies and interviews with "street people"), the film soars behind some of the Experience's best playing. Songs include "Purple Haze," "Voodoo Chile," "Johnny B. Goode," and others.

Sat/7

11 PM USA Network — **Night Flight** *Take Off*; April Wine in concert; Dire Straits—*Making Movies*: abstract interpretations of "Tunnel of Love," "Romeo and Juliet" and "Skateaway."



Live Dead! The Grateful Dead in Concert

Al Franken and Tom Davis host this 78-minute concert special, filmed last year at the Dead's Halloween engagement at New York's Radio City Music Hall.
12 PM, 8:30 PM, August 4, Showtime; also airing 8/8, 8/12, 8/16, 8/20

11 PM MTV — **Billy Squier** In concert at the Santa Monica Civic (repeat of last month's Billy Squier weekend)

Sun/8

11 PM MTV — **Profiles in Rock** Interview with Billy Squier plus more performance footage.

Fri/13

11 PM MTV — **Phantom of the Paradise** (1974) Brian DePalma's rock 'n' roll sendup stars William Finley as a disfigured songwriter stalking a sleazy music promoter (played by Paul Williams) who stole both his work and his girl. Williams wrote the soundtrack.

Sat/14

11 PM MTV — **.38 Special** In concert from the Rainbow Theatre in Denver

11 PM USA Network — **Night Flight** *Take Off*; *Jimi Plays Berkeley*; *Blues From Harlem*—an evening of comedy and music featuring Duke Ellington, Dinah Washington, Amos Milburn, Freddy and Flo, Bill Bailey, the Clovers, Larry Darnell, Herb Jeffries and Nipsy Russell, with MC Willie Bryant; *Cliff Richard*—historical overview of the English pop idol's 20-year career features interview and concert footage, new and old; New Wave Theatre

Sun/15

5 PM Nickelodeon; also 8/28, 8/31 — **Special Delivery** The Police in concert performing "Roxanne," "So Lonely," "Born in the 1950s," and "There's A Hole in My Life."

Mon/16

6:30 PM Showtime; also 8/19, 8/24 — **Viva Las Vegas** (1964) Starring Elvis Presley and Ann-Margret. One of Presley's better celluloid efforts features the excellent Doc Pomus-Mort Shuman title song and Presley's red-hot version of "What I'd Say." It's all downhill from there.

8 PM Showtime; also 8/22 — **This Is Elvis** (1981) Uneven docudrama of Elvis Presley's life. Actual footage is interwoven with patently-staged scenes featuring actors who bear only the slightest resemblance to Presley. The music, though, is outstanding.

10 PM Showtime; also 8/21 — **Elvis** (1979) Starring Kurt Russell as Elvis, Shelley Winters as Gladys Presley. Fair-to-middling TV movie chronicling Presley's career up to the Las Vegas comeback years. Russell's vocals are capably dubbed by Ronnie McDowell. A fine, balanced effort by Russell.

Sat/21

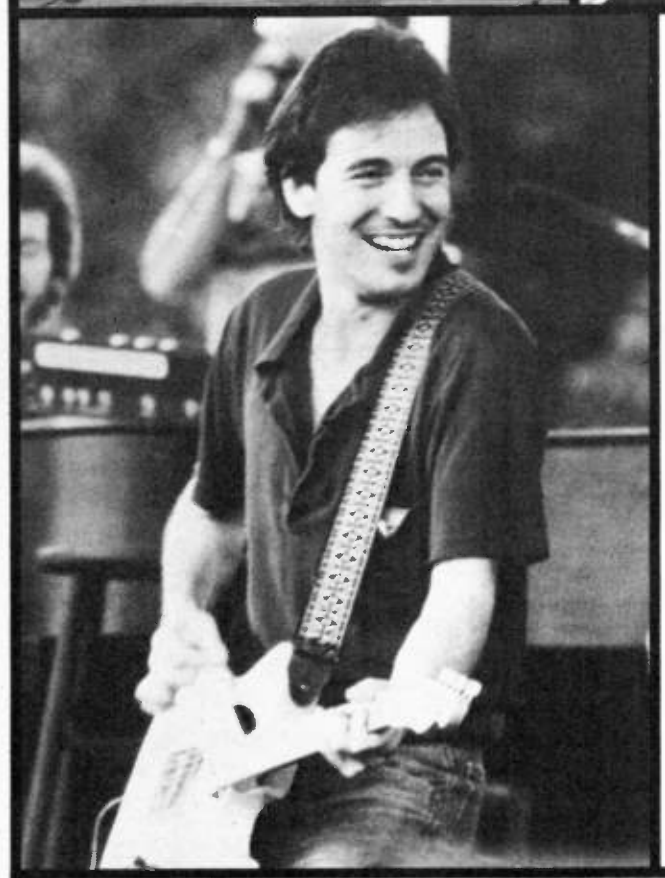
11 PM USA Network — **Night Flight** *Take Off*; *Jimi Plays Berkeley*; *Seaside Woman*—whimsical piece animated to song "Seaside Woman" by Linda McCartney and Wings; Maze in concert featuring Frankie Beverly

11 PM MTV — **Go-Go's** In concert (12/81) at Palos Verde High School; includes interview with band members

Sun/22

11 PM MTV — **The Police in Montserrat** concert and interview

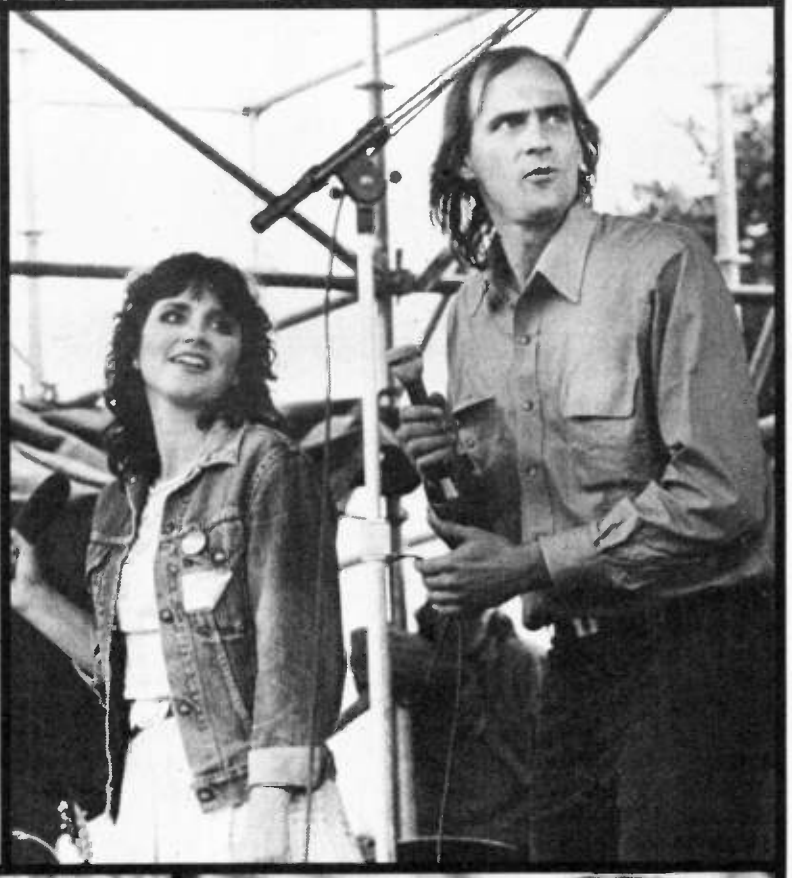
From coast to coast came a cry for peace



"WE DEMAND WORLD PEACE TODAY," chanted Stevie Wonder in Pasadena's Rose Bowl on June 6th during one of the first of many concert-rallies staged across the U.S. during Peace Week (coinciding with the U.N. Special Session on Disarmament) calling for a freeze on nuclear weapons.

The two largest demonstrations were at the Rose Bowl and in New York City, on the Great Lawn in Central Park. The Rose Bowl crowd estimated at 85,000, heard a succession of speakers, among them Vietnam vet spokesman Ron Kovic, and music by Jackson Browne, Bonnie Raitt, Dan Fogelberg, Joan Baez, Bob Dylan, Crosby, Stills and Nash, and others. In Central Park, aproximately 800,000 turned out on June 12—the largest demonstration for a common cause in America's history.

Shown clockwise from top left are some of the artists who participated in the California and New York rallies: Bette Midler; Joan Baez and Bob Dylan; Linda Ronstadt and James Taylor; Gary U.S. Bonds and Jackson Browne; Crosby, Stills and Nash; and Bruce Springsteen.



PHOTOS CLOCKWISE: NEIL PRESTON, BOB MATHEAU, FRET ROBERTS, KEN KATZ. NEIL PRESTON, CHARLYN ZLOTNICK

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THE 3 TOPS

TOP OF THE CHART

RIDING ALONG ON THE strength of his #1 single "Ebony And Ivory" with Stevie Wonder, Paul McCartney has finally come up with an album of material so compelling, so well thought-out and performed, that radio programmers, fans, even the press, have rallied round his banner.

Produced with the fifth Beatle, George Martin, *Tug Of War* owes its success to McCartney's renewed sense of commitment and craft—there's not a throwaway in the bunch. His tribute to John Lennon, "Here Today," is properly unsentimental and ironic, with an understated acoustic guitar and "I Am The Walrus" string motif. That new found sense of ambivalence informs "Wanderlust" and the title tune as well.

But it is the sheer joy of melody and song that makes *Tug Of War* happen, and it's unlikely that programmers will run out of singles for a while, what with steaming summer rave-ups like the funky "What's That" or the Beatleish "Take It Away" on the back burner. Clearly, Paul ain't dead. ◆

TOP NEW ENTRY

STEVIE WONDER IS AMERICA'S poet laureate of the street. He hears its sounds, feels its energy, and communicates its sense of hope and frustration. Of the people, by the people and for the people, *Original Musiquarium I* is one of the few "greatest hits" albums worthy of the name. As its rapid rise up the charts implies, there's a new generation of listeners discovering this most original of pop artists.

Certainly if you don't already own any of his music this is absolutely essential listening, documenting how Wonder re-defined rock, funk and jazz in the '70s, found bold new uses for clavinet and synthesizers, and humanized electronics and multitrack recordings. A thematically related new tune acts as a perfect epilogue to each side of this double set, with the multilayered "Do I Do" (with Dizzy Gillespie) a real standout. But it is the grinding, bitter tale of Vietnam vets, "Front Line," that cuts the deepest, with its nasty hard rock underpinning, sniping clavinet and irony-heavy bridge—a great protest song. ◆

TOP DEBUT ALBUM

STILL SNARLING AFTER ALL these years, Joe Strummer continues to reach for some sort of balance between his humanist aspirations and his pop inspirations. Seems that the farther the Clash have strayed from their garage-band roots—the more inquisitive they've become about the roots of rock'n' roll—the harsher the response from the ranks of betrayed fans and critics.

But in terms of their music the Clash have gotten nothing but better, and if *London Calling* and *Sandinista* were at times overly ambitious, they cemented the Clash's grasp of rock mythology and extended their message to an ever-broadening audience.

Combat Rock downscales the advances of the previous records by distilling the rawest impulses of rock into concise, tuneful narratives of outlaws and gladiators on the front lines of social consciousness. The Clash are forging a coalition that encompasses third world grooves, post-grad heavy metalists and new wavers looking for substance after the slogans have faded into dust. ◆

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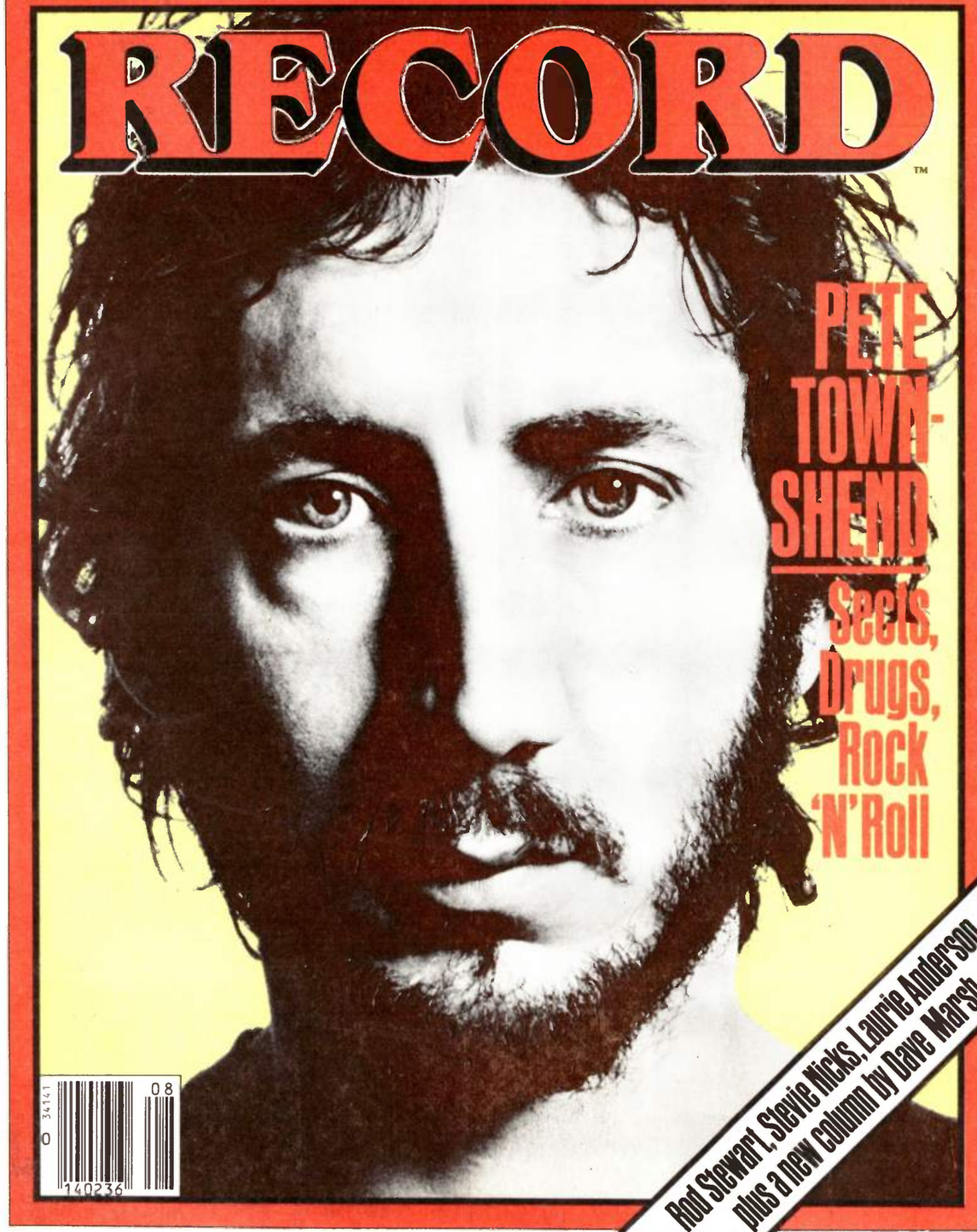

PETE TOWNSHEND Seeks, Drugs, Rock 'N' Roll

Rod Stewart, Stevie Nicks, Laurie Anderson, plus a new column by Dave Marsh

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