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SEPTEMBER 5, 1981

30p weekly USA \$2.25

RIG RIP IT UP

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READING NEWCASTLE REPORTS

charts

singles

1	4	TAINTED LOVE Soft Cell Blizzare
2	1	JAPANESE BOY Aneka Hansa
3	5	HOLD ON TIGHT Electric Light Orchestra Jet
4	2	LOVE ACTION Human League Virgin
5	9	ONE IN TEN UB40 DEP Int
6	21	SHE'S GOT CLAWS Gary Numan Beggars Banquet
7	14	ABACAB Genesis Charisma
8	3	HOOKED ON CLASSICS Royal Philharmonic Orchestra RCA
9	6	GIRLS ON FILM Duran Duran EMI
10	8	CARIBBEAN DISCO Lobo Polydor
11	7	GREEN DOOR Shakin' Stevens Epic
12	17	THIN WALL Ultravox Chrysalis
13	28	WIRED FOR SOUND Cliff Richard EMI
14	24	START ME UP Rolling Stones Rolling Stones
15	11	BACK TO THE SIXTIES Tight Fit Jive
16	27	RAINY NIGHT IN GEORGIA Randy Crawford Warner Bros
17	10	HAPPY BIRTHDAY Stevie Wonder Motown
18	12	SI SI, JE SUIS UN ROCK STAR Bill Wyman A & M
19	13	WATER ON GLASS Kim Wilde RAK
20	18	WUNDERBAR Temptation Temptation
21	16	BEACH BOY GOLD Gipsy Park Sonet
22	30	CHEMISTRY Nolans Epic
23	—	EVERYBODY SALSA Modern Romance WEA
24	25	STARTRAX CLUB DISCO Various Artists Picksy
25	—	SOUVENIR Orchestral Manoeuvres In The Dark, Dindisc
26	23	TAKE IT ON THE RUN REO Speedwagon Epic
27	15	CHANT NO. 1 Spandau Ballet Reformation
28	29	YOU'LL NEVER KNOW Hi Gloss Epic
29	—	PASSIONATE FRIEND Teardrop Explodes Zoo
30	27	FIRE U2 Island

INDEPENDENT

- 1 RED MECCA
Calafat Voltaine, Rough Trade LP
- 2 DOCUMENT AND EYE-WITNESS
Wire, Rough Trade (cassette and LP)
- 3 THE ONLY FUN IN TOWN
Joseph K, Postcard LP
- 4 AIE A MYWANA
Bananasrama, Demon 7 inch
- 5 MAMBO NASSAU
Lizzy Mercier Descloux, Philips (French
import LP)
- 6 O SUPERMAN
Laurie Anderson, 110 Records (US import
7 inch)
- 7 VELVET UNDERGROUND ETC
Velvet Underground, Plastic Inevitable
(Australian import LP)
- 8 MOINE GREGORY
Gregory Isaacs, Pm LP
- 9 RELEASE THE BATS
Birthday Party, 4AD 7 inch
- 10 FOUR MOVEMENTS
Thomas Leer, Cherry Red 12 inch

Chart compiled by RUGBY TRADE, 137 Bloomsbury Cres., London W1 1.



In at 22 in the albums: Steve Hackett's "Cured".

HEAVY METAL

- 1 STAIRWAY TO HEAVEN
Led Zeppelin, Atlantic
- 2 PARANOIA
Black Sabbath, Vertigo
- 3 MOTONHEAD
Motonhead, Bronze
- 4 OVERKILL
Motonhead, Bronze
- 5 MASTER OF THE UNIVERSE
Hawkwind, United Artists
- 6 ROCK & ROLL
Led Zeppelin, Atlantic
- 7 SABBATH BLOODY SABBATH
Black Sabbath, Vertigo
- 8 LOVE TO LOVE
UFO, Chrysalis
- 9 BAT OUT OF HELL
Meatloaf, Epic
- 10 WHOLE LOTTA ROSIE
AC/DC, Atlantic

Chart compiled from an All Time Favourites poll at Hatfield Polytechnic by Steve Hawkins and Norman Smithers. POWERHOUSE FM ROADSHOW (01 366 9852).

15 YEARS AGO

- 1 YELLOW SUBMARINE/ELEANOR RIGBY
Beatles, Parlophone
- 2 GOD ONLY KNOWS
Beach Boys, Capitol
- 3 ALL OR NOTHING
Small Faces, Decca
- 4 THEY'RE COMING TO TAKE ME AWAY.
HA-HA-HA!
Napoleon XIV, Warner Bros
- 5 MAMA
Dave Berry, Decca
- 6 WITH A GIRL LIKE YOU
Troggs, Fontana
- 7 HI LILI-HO
Alan Price Set, Decca
- 8 SUMMER IN THE CITY
Lavin' Spence, Kama Sutra
- 9 LOVERS OF THE WORLD UNITE
David and Jonathan, Columbia
- 10 TOO SOON TO KNOW
Roy Orbison, London

usa

SINGLES

- 1 (1) ENDLESS LOVE
Diana Ross and Lionel Richie, Motown
- 2 (2) SLOW HAND
Pointer Sisters, Planet
- 3 (5) QUEEN OF HEARTS
Juice Newton, Capitol
- 4 (3) THEME FROM "THE GREATEST
AMERICAN HERO"
Joey Scarbury, Elektra
- 5 (4) JESSIE'S GIRL
Rick Springfield, RCA
- 6 (9) URGENT
Foreigner, Atlantic
- 7 (10) STOP DRAGGIN' MY HEART
AROUND
Stevie Nicks and Tom Petty and the
Heartbreakers, Modern
- 8 (8) STARS ON 45
Star Sound, Radio
- 9 (11) WHO'S CRYING NOW
Journey, Columbia
- 10 (12) (THERE'S) NO GETTIN' OVER ME
Ronnie Millsap, RCA
- 11 (6) ELVIRA
Oak Ridge Boys, MCA
- 12 (7) I DON'T NEED YOU
Kenny Rogers, Liberty
- 13 (20) THE BEACH BOYS MEDLEY
Beach Boys, Capitol
- 14 (17) HOLD ON TIGHT
Electric Light Orchestra, Jet
- 15 (16) FIRE AND ICE
Pat Benatar, Chrysalis
- 16 (—) STEP BY STEP
Eddie Rabbit, Elektra
- 17 (19) COOL LOVE
Pablo Cruise, A & M
- 18 (18) THE BREAKUP SONG (THEY DON'T
WRITE 'EM)
Greg Kihn, Beserkley
- 19 (—) FOR YOUR EYES ONLY
Sheena Easton, EMI America
- 20 (—) ARTHUR'S THEME (BEST THAT
YOU CAN DO)
Christopher Cross, Warner Bros

SOUL

- 1 SHE'S A BAD MAMA JAMA
Carl Carlton, 20th Century
- 2 ENDLESS LOVE
Diana Ross and Lionel Richie, Motown
- 3 SQUARE BIZ
Teena Marie, Gordy
- 4 I'M IN LOVE
Evelyn King, RCA
- 5 JUST BE MY BABY
Larry Graham, Warner Bros
- 6 SUPER FREAK (PT ONE)
Rick James, Gordy
- 7 LADY
Commodores, Motown
- 8 SLOW HAND
Pointer Sisters, Planet
- 9 SHAKE IT UP TONIGHT
Cheryl Lynn, Columbia
- 10 THE REAL THING
Brothers Johnson, A & M

US ALBUMS

- 1 (3) ESCAPE
Journey, Columbia
- 2 (2) 4
Foreigner, Atlantic
- 3 (4) BELLA DONNA
Stevie Nicks, Modern
- 4 (1) PRECIOUS TIME
Pat Benatar, Chrysalis
- 5 (7) ENDLESS LOVE
Soundtrack, Mercury
- 6 (6) HI INFIDELITY
REO Speedwagon, Epic
- 7 (5) LONG DISTANCE VOYAGER
Moody Blues, Threshold
- 8 (8) DON'T SAY NO
Billy Squier, Capitol
- 9 (10) PIRATES
Rickie Lee Jones, Warner Bros
- 10 (9) STREET SONGS
Rick James, Gordy
- 11 (17) TIME
Electric Light Orchestra, Jet
- 12 (11) SHARE YOUR LOVE
Kenny Rogers, Liberty
- 13 (13) IN THE POCKET
Commodores, Motown
- 14 (16) WORKING CLASS DOG
Rick Springfield, RCA
- 15 (15) BLACK AND WHITE
Pointer Sisters, Planet
- 16 (14) MISTAKEN IDENTITY
Kim Carnes, EMI America
- 17 (12) HARD PROMISES
Tom Petty and the Heartbreakers,
Backstreet
- 18 (19) IT MUST BE MAGIC
Teena Marie, Gordy
- 19 (—) HEAVY METAL
Soundtrack, Full Moon
- 20 (—) EL LOCO
ZZ Top, Warner Bros



Delta 2 make it into the picture as Delta 5 whirl into the albums at 30.

U.S. charts courtesy of Cashbox

albums

1	1	TIME Electric Light Orchestra Jet
2	3	DURAN DURAN Duran Duran EMI
3	2	PRETENDERS II Pretenders Real
4	7	LOVE SONGS Cliff Richard EMI
5	4	SECRET COMBINATION Randy Crawford Warner Bros
6	6	KIM WILDE Kim Wilde RAK
7	5	KOO KOO Debbie Harry Chrysalis
8	8	BELLA DONNA Stevie Nicks WEA
9	9	THE OFFICIAL BBC ALBUM OF THE ROYAL WEDDING BBC
10	10	PRESENT ARMS UB40 DEP International
11	11	HOTTER THAN JULY Stevie Wonder Motown
12	12	HI INFIDELITY REO Speedwagon Epic
13	21	SHOT OF LOVE Bob Dylan CBS
14	15	ROCK CLASSICS LSO/Royal Choral Society K-Tel
15	—	BAT OUT OF HELL Meatloaf Epic
16	13	PIRATES Rickie Lee Jones Warner Bros
17	23	STARS ON 45 Star Sound CBS
18	14	CATS Various Artists Polydor
19	16	BUCKS FIZZ Bucks Fizz RCA
20	17	NO SLEEP 'TIL HAMMERSMITH Motorhead Bronze
21	25	THIS OLE HOUSE Shakin' Stevens Epic
22	—	CURED Steve Hackett Charisma
23	—	ANTHEM Toyah Safari
24	18	JUMPIN' JIVE Joe Jackson A & M
25	19	BAD FOR GOOD Jim Steinman Epic
26	20	JU JU Siouxsie and the Banshees Polydor
27	—	THE RIVER Bruce Springsteen CBS
28	—	STARTRAX CLUB DISCO Various Picksy
29	—	THE LAST CALL Anti Pasti Rondelet
30	—	SEE THE WHIRL Delta 5 Pre

FAST FORWARD

345

NEW YORK: The Rolling Stones officially if somewhat belatedly announced the details of their summer '81 American tour on August 26 at a press conference held in Philadelphia.

In typically unorthodox fashion, the Stones organisation planned to hold the press conference at Independence Hall there, the site of the Liberty Bell and the signing of the Declaration of Independence, keeping the location a secret until just an hour before the conference.

But when a Philadelphia newspaper blew the whistle, city fathers — fearing a riot on such historic ground — forced a change of venue. At the last minute, Mick Jagger faced the press (the other Stones were still rehearsing in rural Massachusetts) on the infield at JFK Stadium, a massive 100,000-seat open-air coliseum where the Stones will open the tour September 25.

Stones go back to clubs

Members of the fourth estate received copies of the new "Tattoo You" album and the tour itinerary at the conference, while most of their questions were of the usual lightweight variety. In response to one query about whether this was going to be the Stones' last tour, Jagger emphatically replied: "No, this is not a farewell tour." And when another newswoman asked Jagger if he still considered the Stones to be "the bad boys of rock'n'roll now that you're getting older", he grinned: "Older but gooder."

There was also some discussion about who would be opening for the Stones on their American shows and, no doubt in jest, Jagger started tossing out names like the Pretenders and Bob Dylan. In fact, the only confirmed opening act is George Thorogood and the Destroyers, who will be one of several bands playing with the Stones at JFK.

Stadium American hard rock band Journey were rumoured to be joining the Stones for a few dates, but Journey reportedly declined the invitation.

The tour — on which the Stones will be joined by long-time associate Ian Stewart on piano — will be a lengthy affair, so far running from September 25 to December 6 and taking in 21 cities. The itinerary was only 75 per cent confirmed at the time of the conference, with the strong possibility that the band will be playing small auditoriums and clubs as they go along.

They have five days pencilled in for Los Angeles in October and plan to spend the full week starting on November 9 playing in and around the greater New York area. There's also a chance that on their three days in Chicago at the end of November they will play a small local blues club.

With the summer rock doldrums finally receding, Stones fever is running high. Rolling Stones Records was reportedly forced to release "Tattoo You" in America a week ahead of schedule when radio stations in Philadelphia, Buffalo, Chicago, and NY played pirated tape copies of the album on the air, in spite of security precautions by the label. — **DAVID HICKE**

Meanwhile in London, Thursday morning saw the release of "Tattoo You", and to celebrate, EMI held a champagne breakfast. Champagne breakfasts are probably great if you've been up all night partying, but first thing in the morning a plate of devilled kidneys and a glass of Bucks Fizz was not what the old tummy needed.

A couple of cups of Rosie Lee got things in perspective, and the assembled liggers could

watch videos of the Stones from now and then. There were five songs from "Tattoo You" featured, the best of which was "Waiting On A Friend", with Mick pointing in a New York doorway to be embraced by a gloriously wasted-looking Keith before chipping into a club where the rest of the band stood around self-consciously. You've probably seen the "Set Me Free" clip on "Top Of The Pops" but visually the best thing was the film accompanying "Neighbours", a real slab of tenement living, like Hitchcock's "Rear Window" in under three minutes!

Older clips had the Stones satanically jiggling around to "Gimme Shelter", "She's So Cold" from last year and some great clips from the Sixties like "Off The Hook". It's a shame that with the wealth of video material on the Stones available, actually seeing them is restricted to rock hacks.

How about someone doing a "Kids Are Alright" job on the Stones? Time (and video) are on their side. — **PATRICK HUMPHRIES**

GILLAN ALBUM AND TOUR

ROUND about now Gillan are in the studio completing their third album for Virgin. Titled "Double Trouble" it will be split evenly between studio and live tracks and should be out at the beginning of October. A single should be released at the same time.

And at the end of that month Gillan set off on a 31-date British tour. This will follow on from a series of gigs in the Far East, and after the British dates the band are touring in Germany, Holland, France and Italy.

British dates: Leeds University (October 31), Manchester Apollo (November 2), Sheffield City Hall (4), Edinburgh Odeon (7), Aberdeen Capitol (9), Glasgow Apollo (10), Dundee Caird Hall (11), Newcastle City Hall (13), Liverpool Empire (15), Preston Guild Hall (17), Bradford St George's Hall (18), Carlisle Market Hall (19), Hull City Hall (21), Ipswich Gaumont (22), Birmingham Odeon (23), Gloucester Leisure Centre (25), Swansea Top Rank (30), Bristol Colston Hall (December 1), Cardiff Top Rank (2), Guildford Civic Hall (3), Southampton Gaumont (4), Hemel Hempstead Pavilion (7), Great Yarmouth ABC (9), Hanley Victoria Hall (9), Derby Assembly Rooms (10), Leicester De Montfort Hall (11), Oxford New Theatre (12), Brighton Dome (14), Folkestone Leas Cliff Hall (15), London Hammersmith Odeon (21 and 22).

Tickets are on sale now at box office and usual ticket agencies. — **BRIAN HARRIGAN**

CANNED DEAFNESS

ASPECIALIST from the New York League for the Hard of Hearing has been studying Americans who listen to music on portable cassette recorders via headphones, and found that everyone she met had their volume controls at levels "considered dangerous".

Apparently authorities recommend a maximum level of 85 decibels, but the quietest to be heard was 100 db. Dr Jean Madell's previous studies have included the discovery that 30% of disc jockeys have hearing deficiencies compared with less than 1% of the rest of the population.

Dr Madell concludes: "People who listen to 105 db for more than an hour a day over a period of time will develop permanent hearing loss." — **RICHARD WOOTTON**

FUTURE DAZED

NOW then, pay attention — we want to make sure that you don't get confused about two similar sounding events that are coming up this month.

First off we've got Futurama Three, a two-day festival which takes place at the new Bingley Hall in Stafford on September 5 and 6.

The final bill for this event is: September 5: Gang Of Four, Bauhaus, Human Condition, The Passions, Theatre of Hate, OK Jive, The Sound, Felt, 23 Skidoo, The Lines, Ravenna and the Magnetic Field, October 6: Seagulls, Ponderosa Glee Boys, Crown Of Thorns, Another Colour, Sisters of Mercy, Really, My Silent War, Tymon Dagg and Martin Besserman.

September 6: Simple Minds, BowWowWow, Doll by Doll, Modern Eon, Eyeless in Gaza, Diagram Brothers, Virgin Prunes, Blue Orchids, UK Decay, Havana Let's Go, Marianne Dance, The Higsons, Ludus, Section 25, b Movie, Everest, The Hard Way, Tea Set, Vana Cava, Richard Strange and Rock Star.

And the other event is the John Curd-promoted Daze Of Future Past at the Queens Hall in Leeds on September 26 and 27.

September 26: Echo and the Bunnymen, Cramps, Bauhaus, Thompson Twins, Theatre of Hate, X, Altered Images, Wall of Voodoo and The Weathermen.

September 27: Japan, Killing Joke, Classix Nouveaux and OK Jive. Three more acts to be added. — **BRIAN HARRIGAN**

Tribute to Koss staged by father

ACTOR David Kossoff has written a one-man show as a tribute to his late guitarist son Paul which he will present in London towards the end of this month.

The show is called "Late Great Paul" and is basically a theatrical biography of the former Free and Back Street Crawler guitarist interspersed with examples of his work, a number of which are unreleased.

Kossoff Senior phoned Melody Maker last week and explained something about the background and the reasoning behind the one-man show, which was officially premiered at the Edinburgh Festival in the third week in August.

"I'll be appearing at the Queen Elizabeth Hall on September 27

doing 'Late Great Paul', which is an idea which occurred to me two years ago," Kossoff told the MM.

"I'm attempting to tell people something about my son Paul, his rise and his fall and his problems with drugs. It is perhaps a campaign, with possibly no great effect, but even a small effect is worthwhile."

"I found it astonishing that when I did this particular presentation in Edinburgh that a lot of the audience was made up of young people, people who would probably be going to Paul's concerts now if my son was still alive."

"I spoke to many of the concert goers and they were people who were perhaps 12 years old when he died, and yet it seems that he had such an impact they will never forget him."

"I had the feeling that to them Paul is still so alive, so present. It all seemed to be so worthwhile to do. I want to tell people about the Paul that I knew and the Paul that I've come to know since he died."

— **BRIAN HARRIGAN**



PAUL KOSSOFF: gone but not forgotten

NOW it can be told! The saxophone player on the new Rolling Stones album "Tattoo You" is veteran American jazzier Sonny Rollins, and it's Pete Townshend who supplies guitar and backing vocals on "Slave". . . . Former WEA superstars the Reluctant Stereotypes have abandoned what their singer Paul King describes as "the rock circus". Instead they plan a completely new approach to performance and will be concentrating on theatre and live shows at "suitable" venues. . . . Despite not having made an album in a couple of years, Gris Gris man Dr John has recently surfaced on American TV singing a commercial for Tic-Tac mints. . . . Thanks to a premature report in NME last week, Kevin Rowland didn't turn up at Club Left last Thursday to be guest DJ. If

SONNY ROLLINS TATTOOS YOU

you really want to get hip, the Dexy's man sipped coffee elsewhere and talked about going to the pictures. . . . Wild Horses start a Friday residency at London's Marquee, following in such illustrious footsteps as the Rolling Stones and the Who, on Friday September 4 for four weeks. . . . Elkie Brooks' husband Trevor likes hang gliding (is this really necessary?). . . . What with it being the International Year of Disabled People, and Radio 1 not giving Dury's "Spasticus Autisticus" the time of day, Sun Ra and

Expedition Records are organising a gig for disabled people at Islington Town Hall on October 5 and 6. If you're a band who's interested in helping, contact the Mighty Ra at 17 Highbury Grove Court, Highbury Grove, London, N5. . . . Nine Below Zero have completed a new album with famous knob twiddler Glyn Johns for release soon. . . . The world's most fabulous group (okay Paulo) the Jam are polishing off their new 45, as yet untitled, but due for September release. No plans for an album this year, but an EP of cover versions for Christmas is in the pipeline. . . . Strange rumblings from the Ian Dury camp. After years of service, minder Spider Rowe has left Dury, apparently under unpleasant circumstances. Friends are the trend?



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Published weekly by IPC
Magazines Ltd.
© IPC Magazines Ltd.

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Subscription inquiries and orders should be sent to IPC Business Press (Sales & Distribution) Ltd, Subscription Department, Oakfield House, Parkmount Road, Haywards Heath, Sussex RH16 3DH. Phone 0444 38185

Rate: a year £28.
Overseas £50. USA (Air-
speeded) 130 dollars.

Annual subscription to USA and Canada: \$152.00. Second class postage paid at New York, NY, USA. Subscription mailing agent: Expeditors of the Printed Word Ltd, 529 Madison Avenue, New York, NY

New subscriptions normally begin with the issue published two weeks after the date of arrival of the subscription order at the publisher's office unless otherwise requested. Printed in Gt. Britain

ISSN 0025 9012

Vol. 56, Issue No. 36

3 4 5

BASIE ORK 'WILL NOT DISBAND'

LOS ANGELES: Rumours that the Count Basie Orchestra might disband have been denied by Willard Alexander, Basie's long-time agent. He points out that the band has bookings well into 1982, among them a week in Las Vegas with Sammy Davis, and a tribute to Basie by the Black Music Association scheduled for March 7. Negotiations are also under way for the band to play in Japan and South America during 1982. ... Freddie Hubbard will make his debut on Fantasy Records with an album called "Splash", described as semi-funk oriented. Hubbard is producing the album himself with the Los Angeles composer and trombonist Al Hall Jr, who worked in one of Hubbard's bands a few years ago. Among those featured on the date are David T. Walker on guitar; David Shields on bass; and Clarence McDonald on keyboards, as well as vocalist Jeanie Tracy, the singer from Oakland who was also heard on Sylvester's latest album. ... Teddy Wilson has been added to the roster of artists recording for Concord Jazz. — LEONARD FEATHER.

MADNESS, whose movie "Take It Or Leave It" is nearing completion, are setting off on a 33-date tour next month — their first British tour since the end of last year.

They've got a new single coming out on September 11 titled "Shut Up". It's written by Suggs and Chrissy Boy while the B side, "A Town With No Name", was composed by Chrissy Boy on his own.

Madness set dates, single

Dates: Bradford St Georges Hall (October 8), Edinburgh Playhouse (9), Glasgow Apollo (10), Aberdeen Capitol (11), Dundee Caird Hall (12), Sheffield City Hall (13), Bristol Colston Hall

(15), Gloucester Leisure Centre (16), Port Talbot Atan Lido (17), Leeds Tiffani's (18), Manchester Apollo (20), Preston Guildhall (21), Liverpool Royal Court (22), Nottingham University (23),

Bridlington Spa Pavilion (24), Newcastle City Hall (26), Leicester Granby Hall (27).

Ipswich Gaumont (28), West Rounton Pavilion (29), Norwich University of East Anglia (30), St Austell Coliseum (November 1), Southampton Gaumont (2 & 3), Brighton Conference Centre (4), Portsmouth Guildhall (5), Oxford Polytechnic (7), Hemel Hempstead Pavilion (8), Aylesbury Friars (9), Birmingham Bingley Hall (10), Poole Arts Centre (11), Bath Pavilion (15), London Dominion (16 & 17).

Tickets range from £3 to £4 generally and fans should check with box offices and local agents for details on availability.

BRUCE BENEFIT FOR VETS

LOS ANGELES: Bruce Springsteen started a six-show season at the Sports Arena with a benefit for the Vietnam Veterans of America. "Tonight we're here for the men and women who fought in the Vietnam war," said Bruce, before launching into a four-hour set.

On another night the spotlight fell on Bruce's mother and father, who were in the audience. Among the "new" songs in the sets was the Byrds' "Ballad Of Easy Rider". ... The Rolling Stones are about to announce their major local Southern California shows. The band will play a benefit at the Roxy Theatre. ... Miles Davis will be making his first local appearance in six years when he headlines at the Hollywood Bowl. And ELO are set for the Forum. ... In Hollywood's Eldorado Recording Studios, Jerry Harrison of Talking Heads is working on his solo album with Adrian Belew and Steve Scales on guitars and percussion. ... Mike Chapman is working at United Western on the next Exile LP, and Bob Dylan is at the same studio with engineer Paul Dobbie at the board. — HARVEY KUBERNIK



As a musician, Patrick D. Martin is fairly unknown, one of the myriad electronic clones to be found (Wasps and Portastudios at the ready) trying to assault the ears of an already satiated public. But when the definitive rock history comes to be written, he may find himself a footnote, at least, as the man who put out the first video fanzine.

Vidzine One — of course! — is the first of what's planned as a quarterly electronic mag. It's an hour-long tape which includes such goodies as Richard Strange holding forth at the second-ever Cabaret Futura, some classic footage of the legendary Cramps shot by Derek Burbage, an 8mm movie of Albania transferred to tape, Levi Dexter and the

ROCK RARITIES' VIDEO DEBUT

Ripcord, the Damned's "Waiting for the Blackout", a clip of Metro shot by David Rose, and interviews with Miles and Stewart Copeland sandwiched round the first, never-before-seen promo of the Police's "Don't Stand So Close To Me".

All this and more has cost Martin about £8,000, plus a lot of goodwill and downtime

editing at cut or minimum rates. In video terms this is the equivalent of taking a paste-up round to the local Xerox emporium — a true fanzine.

Martin claims it's unashamedly specialist in its appeal — he calls it "narrowcasting", get it? — but its £30 price compares very well with the cost of "professional" videograms, and there's no stinting on quality apart from a bit of hand-mike rustle in the interviews.

He's now working on Vidzine Two, which will include clips by 999, Classix Nouveaux, footage from the "Alternative Miss World" movie, and a "mystery track" which gets a sneak preview at the end of number one. — KARL DALLAS.

More to play less to pay

	Album	Cassette
ELO - Time		
Randy Crawford - Secret Combination	£3.99	£4.49
Duran Duran - Duran Duran	£4.29	£4.49
Bob Dylan - Shot of Love	£4.49	£4.49
UB 40 - Present Arms	£4.29	£4.49
REO Speedwagon - Hi Infidelity	£4.29	£4.29
Pretenders - Pretenders II	£4.29	£4.49
Stevie Wonder - Hotter Than July	£4.29	£4.49
Stevie Nicks - Bella Donna	£4.79	£4.99
Steve Hackett - Cured (limited period only)	£4.29	£4.49
Hazel O'Connor - Cover Plus	£3.99	£4.49
	£4.29	£4.49

	Album	Cassette
NEW! NEW! NEW! NEW! NEW! NEW! NEW!		
Joan Armatrading - Walk Under Ladders	£4.29	£4.49
Meat Loaf - Dead Ringer (until September 26th)	£3.99	£4.49
Gary Numan - Dance	£4.29	£4.49
Saxon - Denim & Leather (until September 26th)	£3.99	£4.49
FROM RELEASE		

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WHSMITH





LION OF THE DESERT
(Directed by Moustapha Akkad, Leicester Square Theatre).

Follow that camel

A FORGOTTEN war in a distant country a long time ago. "Lion Of The Desert" is a sprawling, 163 minute epic centred on Mussolini's attempts at empire building in the late 1920s.

It's one of those protracted epics so popular during the Sixties, but instead of Samuel Bronston in the producer's chair, it's Moustapha Akkad, an indication of who can afford to mount such lavish productions these days.

Between the skirmishes and explosions, Akkad does attempt to give the film some intellectual credibility by painting vivid portraits of the two main protagonists: Anthony Quinn does his Zorba the Bedouin bit as Omar Mukhtar, and Oliver Reed blusters and juts his jaw as General Graziani.

Rod Steiger is punchily effective as Mussolini, and John Gielgud lends his antediluvian tones to El Ganani, an Italian collaborator, a near relation to his Delai Lama in "Lost Horizon".

The script is mercifully free of "may the dung of a thousand

camels..." Arabian-type lines, although Quinn does occasionally offer such Bedouin bon mots as: "My father used to say 'Blows that don't break your back can often strengthen it'." It's a lengthy stroll down oft-trod wadis - the young officer of

principle disgusted by civilian executions, the nobility of the rebel cause, like "Lawrence Of Arabia" writ large and long.

Such a spectacular film may well have found favour 20 years ago, but these days audiences tend to be more impressed by Space Invaders shoot-outs than 60 year old desert battles. Ultimately "Lion Of The Desert" fails to convey the friction between the Reed and Quinn characters, although by the end of the film, Quinn does manage to lend a degree of dignity to his performance.

It was the Italian invasion of Libya in 1911 that started off their search for "a place in the sun", but it took Mussolini's megalomania to crunch the rebels and move ignominiously into Ethiopia.

Akkad's lengthy film shines a torch into a dark corner of 20th Century history, but only infrequently does it illuminate. - PATRICK HUMPHRIES



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IN CONCERT

NOVEMBER	FRIDAY	6TH	OXFORD, Apollo Theatre
	SATURDAY	7TH	LIVERPOOL, Empire
	SUNDAY	8TH	GLASGOW, Apollo Theatre
	MONDAY	9TH	EDINBURGH, Usher Hall
	WEDNESDAY	11TH	NEWCASTLE, City Hall
	SATURDAY	14TH	BIRMINGHAM, Odeon
	SUNDAY	15TH	CROYDON, Fairfield Halls
	MONDAY	16TH	SOUTHAMPTON, Gaumont
	TUESDAY	17TH	BRISTOL, Colston Hall
	WEDNESDAY	18TH	LONDON, Hammersmith Odeon
	FRIDAY	20TH	BELFAST, Ulster Hall
	SATURDAY	21ST	DUBLIN, R.D.S.
	TUESDAY	24TH	GALWAY, Leisureland
	THURSDAY	26TH	LIMERICK, Savoy
	SATURDAY	28TH	CORK, City Hall
DECEMBER	TUESDAY	1ST	CARLOW, Youth Centre

ALBUM AMLH 68532



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For old

Patrick
Humphries
at the
Newcastle
festival.
Pictures by
Barry Plummer

AND SO it was that the time for Festivals was nigh. And so it was that they did travel far and wide in their tribes. And some did go to Reading. And the luckier did go to Newcastle. And so it was.

"Rock On The Tyne" organisers Barry McKay and Brendan Foster obviously worked on the formula that a good setting with a varied bill equals value for money.

For their 12 quid weekend tickets, the punters certainly got plenty of variety.

But what was apparent in the low turn out was that the festival goer is a creature of habit and takes comfort from similarity, as the HM orgy at Donington proved. Sixty thousand headbangers out to shake their dandruff, while the far better balanced Gateshead gig mustered a mere 15,000 over the weekend.

The fare on offer at Gateshead was certainly diverse: psychedelia, rockabilly, R&B, the crowd pleasing Rory Gallagher, and the emotional integrity of Elvis Costello. Sadly that thoughtful balance wasn't reflected in the size of the crowd.

Mind you, it was the start of the football season, Newcastle



ELVOID steps on his stetson

behaviour is to do with denim, lager and a good time. Dury, the Feelgoods and Rory Gallagher, fine. But Elvis Costello?



IAN DURY hits them with rhythm

were playing at home and there was local racing. A shame there weren't more there, because "Rock On The Tyne" was a well organised event in a roomy stadium, with good facilities and a strong line up in a part of the country that's starved for events on this scale.

The relative failure may have had something to do with the appeal of the rock festival concept these days. Lying on the grass, listening to good music on a sunny Bank Holiday weekend is a pleasant way of passing the time. But the very idea of rock festivals seems associated with discomfort, and a return to the arid musical days of the early Seventies.

The weather stayed dry, although the festival opened on Saturday beneath a sky as heavy as a Shell tax demand. The Saturday bill was mainly "new" music, like Elvis Costello and Ian Dury.

If you think neither are particularly "New", then you're not psyched into festival behaviour. Festival

WITH all the stories about Costello's country and western album, I half expected ten gallon hats and enough pedal steels to make your eyes water. But when Elvis and the Attractions took to the stage early on the Saturday evening, there were no stetsons, and no messing.

Costello's songs of fractured emotions and jagged intensity are better suited for dark rooms and solitary confinement. But there he was in the open air, a stocky, charismatic figure, with limitless eloquence and imagination behind those shades.

He stood, fists clenched, right leg slightly bent, at the confessional of the microphone stand. I found myself transfixed from early on, as he filled the air with songs of passion and an intensity of purpose.

The new country songs were rockier than you'd imagine, and if Costello does pitch himself delta deep into C & W

it could be the biggest boost it's received since Dylan's bootheels went wandering along that Nashville skyline. Good C&W requires the heart, soul and commitment which Costello can give.

There were a lot of new songs among the old: "Tears Before Bedtime" was no gentle lullaby, and "The Town Where Time Stood Still" showed that his cup runneth over.

It was the last third of the set that elevated Costello to truly heroic stature. "New Lace Sleeves", "From A Whisper To A Scream", "Watching The Detectives", "Oliver's Army", "Mystery Dance", "I Can't Stand Up" and "Big Sister's Clothes" were awesome in their power.

Predictably "Oliver's Army" got a roar of approval from the boys of the Mersey, the Thames and the Tyne.

Honestly, after a set like that, would you rather have been anywhere else but here today?

A different cup of the same heady brew came from Ian Dury and the Blockheads, ideal headlines for the Saturday. They came on just after dark, and generated that sheer, sweet excitement of classic rock 'n' roll. It was pretty much the same set as Hammersmith for the last Royal Wedding.

What the crowd got were the Blockhead hits, and what a lot they've got to play with! Wilko raced around the stage like some amphetamine Thunderbird puppet, and the Blocks pumped it up with abandon. No surprises, "Spastious" slotted in well with old favourites like "Sex And Drugs", "Clever Trevor", "What A Waste" and "Rhythm Stick".

Hearing "Sweet Gene Vincent" pouring out into the balmy night was just one of those moments I'll treasure for its sheer exuberance. Dury

delivered a passionate etymology on "Oi.Oi" as a Thirties East End anti-fascist slogan, before informing us we were all Blockheads.

One of the band's great strengths are the permutations they can play with: the keyboards of Micky Gallagher, two great guitarists, Davey Payne's sax and a rhythm section as solid as a Geordie hangover. It may take longer to get up North, the slow way, but it was worth the effort!



U2 gladden the hearts

U2 had preceded Costello at around 4.30, and made a number of converts. I found myself admiring their youth and obvious enthusiasm for their music, but emotionally remained untouched. They looked great, guitarist The Edge, gaunt and inscrutable, while a black clad Bono stalked around the stage like a method actor auditioning for "Hamlet".

The Edge's guitar gave the music just that, and although fascinated by their swirling, crashing music, it just didn't penetrate the areas they were obviously aiming at.

There is something heartening in seeing U2 unselfconsciously pouring

everything into their music, but their power was diminished by an inability to communicate that passion either lyrically or musically. If sincerity could be bottled, U2 would have a winning brew, but for me the cork stayed firmly in place.

The early afternoon had been filled by unremarkable bands like Doll By Doll and Huang Chung, and it took the Polcats to generate some sort of atmosphere. Their good time brand of rock 'n' roll was initially welcome, but after a while began to pall as each song grew more and more similar.

They managed to turn songs

It was a nice atmosphere on the Sunday, I might even have muttered something about "good vibes". Hot dogs and lager occupied us and by the time Dr Feelgood hit the stage, the bar had been open for three quarters of an hour.

Brilleaux padded about like a cagey ringmaster, out to sell you a used tightrope act. New boy Johnny Guitar seems to have slotted easily into the spot occupied by Wilko and Mayo, and tore up a storm.

The Feelgoods seem to have recovered from their close encounter of the Bragg kind, and despite blinking at the unaccustomed sunlight,



FEELGOODS get mean and dirty

by Marc Bolan, David Bowie and the Beatles into formulaised rock based around a stand up bass, drums and guitar. They were the first band called back for an encore though, and Tim the singer's enthusiasm led him into more twists and turns than a John Le Carre novel.

SUNDAY saw the sun cautiously appear, like a spinster aunt at a wife swapping party, and deciding to stay. It was gloriously sunny as the MM kamikaze team entered the stadium to a rolling of drums, and of one accord cried "Ginger Baker".

It was a truly extraordinary spectacle of Ginger Baker's Nutters (including Trimmer and Jenkins!) tearing through Cream's "Sunshine Of Your Love", with Billy Jenkins cast in the unlikely role of Eric Clapton! For this regressive offering, Ginger received a standing ovation, and gave an idea of what to expect from Sunday's more traditional

delivered themselves of mean and dirty R&B into the early evening.

With the sun sinking as steadily as Lee's Heineken, the Feelgoods punched through a set of old favourites - "Stupidity", "Riding On The L&N", "Back In The Night" and "Roxette".

I can't imagine how anyone could not like the Feelgoods rolling and tumbling music, and if there are other ways of passing the time more enjoyably than hearing them run through "No Mo Do Yakomo" it's been kept secret from me.

ANY doubts about Rory Gallagher's top of the bill position on Sunday were blown away by the crowd's roar when he finally came on stage. What can you say about Rory? The hair remains the same, the Strat a touch more battered, the tennis shoes perhaps more scuffed... The crowd that stayed away for Costello greeted every Rory lick with more shaking heads than a War Cry salesman is used to.

In any bass, drums and guitar trio, the singer/guitarist is obviously the front man, and in Rory's case it's deserved. He is an excellent guitarist, which was apparent on the all too short acoustic break, where he came across with an honest ability.

The electronic pyrotechnics can disguise faults and labour the point, but on an old Louisiana Red song and "Out On The Plains" where he chose to demonstrate his acoustic brilliance, he was superb.

The rest of the time it was power chords and posturing. Personally I can only take so many extended solos and guitar hero postures. Rory seems a pleasant, unaffected bloke, who knows his market, and is aware of his limitations. But the sort of music he plays and the sort of role he represents is regressive, and ultimately redundant.

I found him dull and loud, the sort of music that sets rock 'n' roll back at least ten years, but try telling that to the rapturous crowd and Carol Clerk!

Finally - Rory wrapped up the festival at around 9.30, ending a set that seemed slightly longer than the Bayou Tapestry with the old Frankie Ford hit "Sea Cruise".

By ten the crowds had disappeared, and all that was left were a harvest of empty beer cans and fish and chip papers.



Variations on a single orbit

TO ME it seems like there's a certain amount of arrogance you need because you have to be able to push away things in order to be yourself. You can either be really nasty about it or you can realise that . . . if you find something in yourself you wanna express or you feel you need to do that, I think it's wise to spend some time away from things. You'll probably be compelled to do it anyway, even if you don't think it's wise . . . (TOM VERLAINE)

Television's guiding light — Tom Verlaine — comes to town to promote his new album, "Dreamtime". Since Television's heyday, things have changed. The late-Seventies New York landscape which framed them is unrecognisable now — the Ramones have turned into a second-rate Status Quo, Blondie seem to have retired, Talking Heads aren't talking to each other and God knows what happened to Patti Smith. Tom Verlaine seems much the same though.

Jet-lagged and soaking up coffee like a J-Cloth, he greets the latest invading journalist-plus-lensman with heavy-lidded courtesy. He politely declines our offer of a photo-session anywhere else but in the WEA offices, so that's what we're stuck with.

But despite his evident disorientation and a resulting tendency to ramble off up blind alleys, Verlaine has his finger on the trigger. A traditionalist and proud of it, he stakes no false claims but communicates a quietly steely purposefulness. He's not aiming at posterity (he says). He's an artist, he don't look back . . .

"I grew up in an area maybe like the suburbs of Manchester (Wilmington, Delaware). Actually the city was a little smaller than that, somewhat industrial. And when I went to New York for the first time, it was like . . . what's the phrase they use? A learning experience?"

He laughs a surprisingly silly laugh, stretches his feet languidly out onto the desk which is covered with bleeping digital gadgets and lights another Dunhill.

"Firstly, New York is probably one of the few cities in America that has an awareness of European art, period, whether it's painters, music, writers . . . There's

records available there, there's books available there, there's art museums etc, and where I grew up there was nothing like that, there was basically a Top 40 radio station.

"So there was this whole element of awakening to people being able to express themselves, or if they couldn't express themselves, there was like some intensity involved. So maybe when I first came to New York there was this first couple of years where . . . 'cos

this album's gonna be that. It's just like, um, it's all variations on this thing and that's like another variation on it, not that far from 'Marquee Moon'.

"Like a song like 'The Fire' on the second Television record or 'Breaking My Heart', it all seems like the same . . . it's like variations on like one orbit or sumpin' — a series of orbits round the same thing. It's pretty abstract."

Verlaine released his first

hearing some kinda other guitar going on. Maybe it's overtones, y'know, maybe things pile up when you get two guitars going and ringing, you get this other thing going that sounds real cool.

"I think 'Down On The Farm', the end of that song, has maybe ten guitars going on, but the most impact is coming from two and the rest are just certain effects I heard or certain parts of the picture, y'know. They don't really crowd anything. Most of this record can be done live without hurtin'."

After a couple of years away from playing live (with the exception of one shambolic New Year's Eve gig in New York) Verlaine wants to get on the road again. He's going to start in the States and wants to come over to the UK in November.

He wants to use Fred Smith on bass and Jay Dee Daugherty on drums — they both played on "Dreamtime" — and he'll add a second guitarist when the time comes. Just two guitars, bass and drums.

If you stick to that format forever, aren't you going to run out of options one day?

"Oh no, not at all. In fact there's a whole lotta stuff I've never gotten on record that involves two guitars but requires more rehearsal time than some of these new songs needed."

"It also requires a guitarist that has a real good sense of timing. It's not like it's funky or something, but 'Marquee Moon' is a song that requires really good timing, 'cos of the way those parts happen."

He also cites "Penetration" and "There's A Reason" from the new album as being tricky to play, as well as "Mr. Blur" — "That's a prime example of timing between two guitars, y'know."

It was Verlaine's single-

minded determination to drive deeper into himself in pursuit of some as yet unrealised vision of his music that blew Television out of the water. He has an apparently unyielding set of personal rules which he's stuck by, rooted firmly in the Sixties. Personal heroes include the Byrds and Eric Clapton, though he doesn't listen to much rock music generally.

"Well I do love the Byrds. This record is the first I got to use 12 string guitar on, because the other guitarist (Richie Flegler) has this real nice 12 string and he could play it. I find them real hard to play and keep in tune."

You can hear the 12 string chiming away in the opening to "Fragile". "Right," says Tom. "That's really not so Byrdsy though, the Byrds never used a beat like that. It's got a real kinda backwards beat to it. George Harrison used to do that stuff, too. Harrison's a real underrated guitar player, you never hear anything about how great his guitar playing was."

DIGGING further back to a time when Tom Verlaine was still Tom Miller and living out in Delaware, you unearth other inputs — a lot of jazz, mainly.

"When I was 15, 14, 13 that's all I listened to — tenor sax players, basically. So all of that stuff may have something to do with the way I play — I never sat down and figured it out or anything like that. It could be that if you have an ear for that stuff it's gonna translate somehow."

Verlaine's strong streak of perfectionism probably owes a

continued on p29



Adam Sweeting stares out TOM VERLAINE.
Pix: Tom Sheehan

I had a little band in Delaware for a while, but it wasn't anything like Television or anything like that. There was some period in there where somethin' got turned round, I guess."

HE STOPS, smiles, gazes out of the window. His long face and slow rural-ish drawl don't seem to belong in the same universe as the frayed and frantic voice which navigated the swirling mirages of "Marquee Moon". And is this really the guy in charge of that restless, insatiable guitar? "I been sayin' this to everybody, it's too bad . . . I look at all my work as one big thing, you know, it's not like this album's gonna be this and

solo album two years ago. Listening to "Dreamtime", there's no mistaking its author despite the time-lapse. From the vaulting riffery of "Penetration" through the cement-cracking raunch of "Down On The Farm" to the subdued whimsy of "Mary Marie", all the traditional Verlaineisms are there in the voice and the guitar. Maybe too much so.

"Yeah, it's basically the same stuff. I don't feel compelled to change anything. There might come a point when I wanna do a record with one guitar, sax, bass and conga drums, I mean, y'know, who knows? But the form I tend to like the sound of is two guitars, bass and drums."

"I like the sound of two guitars. Even with Hendrix, and Hendrix was a great guitar player, but I really miss not

FRIDAY: "Thank you, you've been a great audience, good night everyone." That's what open air concerts are all about. Not the fact that you can say good night to 20,000 people at once but you can say it at 4.00 in the afternoon when the night-time is quite obviously ages away and the sun's been beating into your eyes for the last 40 minutes.

Festivals do funny things to people, and Reading is looper than most. Doctors have been getting it wrong for years. Rock music doesn't do in your hearing, it knacker your eyesight.

Why else should you plant your bum on a patch of something that Voyager 3 might have snapped as it shot past Jupiter? Why pay 80p for a slice of charcoal between two bricks? — ah, no, you're thinking of a hamburger, see. Even Girlschool prefect Kim McAuliffe decided the audience were "lovely" to look at. Kim... optician for you, my girl.

So I wasn't the only one NOT wearing jeans, it just seemed that way. And I didn't see one bloke slumped protectively over two entire crates of Newcastle Brown, or the dog with a bra on its head, or the three pissed up geezers burying their dozing mate under a two foot mountain of straw. No? Thank Christ for that.

This year's was the 21st National Jazz, Blues and Rock Festival — officially. Truth is that since it moved to Reading on a handful of acres by the side of the Thames there's been precious little jazz and the merest smattering of blues about it. Last year's show had been a heavy metal juggernaut which the organisers avoided this year. They had a lot more competition to deal with — Donington, Newcastle, Port Vale.

Maybe that explains why the bill was flimsier this time round — Girlschool, Gillan and the Kinks as the headliners compared to the Police, Motorhead, Whitesnake and Peter Gabriel in '79.

Still, they've been doing it long enough to get it right. Two sound stages stand side by side, one being set up as the other's in use, cutting band changeovers down to ten minutes. A video screen bigger

STEVE HACKETT waves to his wife



Reading damages your



ROSE TATTOO after bottling

then a house throws up black and white images of live action once it gets dark enough and six pillars of PA spread out into the crowd providing an excellent sound for everyone.

Unfortunately it means there's no escaping a turgid performance and 1990 victimised us with the full weight of the speaker system. One description sticks unforgettably: "Commercially acceptable good creation on the production line."

That wasn't a businessman's market value appraisal... it was a lyric, and a chorus at that. Their artificial, computer

rock got a deserved drubbing. "This is called 'We Make Money'," said the blondest one. "Not from us you don't" reckoned someone six foot away in a voice like a docker's whisper.

Oh the wit and wisdom of the Reading crowd. "This is from an album we released eight months ago called 'Silent Knight'," offered a chap from Saga later in the afternoon. "How many did you sell?" was the opening bid from field level swiftly followed by a winning hand of Oscar Wilde stature: "Fuck off."

Saga were from Canada and rapidly came to appreciate the Britishers' love of the blue summer sky above their heads and how much better it looks with half a dozen beer cans flying through it. The band weren't bad, a bit pompous at times, nicking twiddly little lines from Genesis and dosing them up with heavy metal, but they had the misfortune to follow Lightning Raiders whose jerky slob rock had been the first thing since early morning to shift people's feet around.

Saga only exercised their throwing arms. "Awful waste of good beer going on," commented vocalist Michael Sadler on starting up a track titled "No One's Going to Help You". And they didn't.

Fellow foreigners Telephone were more successful, though their opening line of "We are from Paris" was the last understandable in the set. Somehow they managed to make more sense than the preceding bands, possibly because they were playing in the 1980s — a jumpy, punchy brand of rock with a twist of what the French still call punk, or maybe Le Punk. Anyhow they snapped through a brisk 40 minutes of clean, straight-backed stuff. Ask not for whom the phone rings... not Saga on the strength of Friday's reception.

The sun was beginning to drop behind the mixing tower and the flags were coming up as Budgie moved to give the amplifiers a work over. On with the light show, on with the video, up with the hands, out with the HM scales. The attendance wasn't mighty,



BILLY SQUIER plays Gillan

only around 20,000 for this day which was down on last year. You would have expected a blistering sunshine weekend to solicit extra punters.

A fair percentage of those who did turn up clustered around the stage front for Budgie who announced themselves available for "weddings, barmitzva's and Reading." Can't see many brides trotting up the aisle to ten minute guitar overdoses even if they do contain chunks of Bach chopped up into munch sized pieces.

When a full scale battle broke out between opposing sides of the crowd, bass player and vocalist Burke Shelley tried the FBI approach — "keep your hands up" — the theory being that while they're clapping at least they can't be buzzing Heineken empties about the place.

As the first lit up and videoed band of the day, they had the benefit of the biggest impact so far. For three people they make a vast amount of noise, and if the trailer tracks from the next album were anything to go by, it's not going to be getting much quieter.

Backstage the last two acts of the evening were ambuling round the hospitality tents. Steve Hackett was with his newly acquired Mrs. Kim Poor, artist and illustrator of his albums sleeves. One way to keep down the expenses. They'd both been enticed by the restaurant under canvas though whether they went for the advertised kate and sidney was never established.

And Kelly Johnson, oh boys, dressed in a diaphanous white creation that would make Princess Di look like a navy.

The new Hackett band hadn't had much piggling experience when it stood on stage at Reading. They roughed up the first couple of

numbers and weren't helped by Steve's guitar lead going on the blink but by half time they'd hit the atmosphere dead on. Most of the set was drawn from the man's supply of moody, melodramatic instrumentals, a number of them plucked from the very first album, "Voyage of the Acolyte".

As the night darkened and the dry ice drifted away towards the Thames, Steve beat living hell out of his guitar. So much for the mild mannered man of rock, that's what marriage does for you.

Headlining Reading must surely make Girlschool the most successful all-girl band Britain has ever seen, not as though that consideration really comes into it since they are also simply one of the best heavy rock bands around. They've never changed.

Their communication with an audience is immediate because there's just no gap between them. Alright, so there's still a lot of girly onstage chat between numbers; pause while Kelly belts a chord and asks the crowd if she's in tune. But that works for, not against them.

And for a band young to the highlight they've got a lot of classics behind them — "Kick it Down", "Don't Stop", "Hit and Run", "Yeah Right", "Tush"... they've also got some of the biggest, loudest, bloodiest thunderclashes ever to have knocked your head back. They put to shame a good deal of macho men-only rock bands that night from first note to the encore "Emergency".

And then it was the witching hour and time to track down the last train, or the nearest spot for the tent. My last vision of Reading that night was of six people cleaning their teeth in front of six running standpipes and all of them cleaning their teeth in the dark.

— PAUL COLBERT



GILLAN plays Gillan

SATURDAY: When the three minute buzz of pre-programmed noise, sub-

Wagnerian yodels and bedroom mirror guitar heroics reached the end of its trail to nowhere, the microphones monitored a routine that was so close to a fictional parody of a lame rock'n'roller that I almost touched the ground to see if the ink had dried.

"ARE YOU AWRIGHT?" If the crowd had been told the bank rate in Thailand had just gone up they couldn't have seemed more indifferent.

"IS IT LOUD ENOUGH?" It was loud enough to shake a transatlantic jet out of the sky, but a second wave of nonchalance merely fluttered across the field whilst a few souls near the front let up a cry of "Nooooo!" like chimps pressing the red button to collect a banana reward.

The denim kid lying next to me in the sun looked on in sullen indifference, a "Rock Won't Never Die" badge flapping indolently from his lapel. Someone told me later that I'd been watching Lionheart.

Like political demonstrations, events of the Reading ilk are as important for the element of mass ritual they offer as they are for their stated *raison d'être*, giving an opportunity for collective solidarity where members of minorities can shake off their insecurities and celebrate their similarity to one another, spitting in the face of a hostile world.

As Harold Pendleton, promoter of this "21st National Jazz, Blues and Rock Festival" (sic), stated blandly in the cash-in edition of the local rag, "It's the Reading Rock Festival that's the star attraction, not any particular group."

Of course this aspect of open-air festivals is hardly new. What has changed is the nature of the ritual. Where late Sixties events like Isle of Wight were gatherings of youth-in-general that shouted out against a world of...

Paul Colbert, Lynden Barber
Robert Ellis

eyesight . . .



GIRLSCHOOL's KELLY points to audience

political and cultural values were represented by their parents, festivals like Reading represent a giant fist waved against other youths.

Lacking any unifying ideology, the heavy metallurgists have turned towards depravity and mindlessness in their quest for a badge of identity. Although most of these would-be Hells Angels are probably nice kids at heart who wash their dad's car on Sundays, something in the Reading air seems to trigger off irrational impulses in some of them.

The worst example of this occurred during Rose Tattoo's set when the sky darkened under a dense cloud of hurled cans, careering into the air from every which way like deadly popcorn, but there were plenty of other cases of sordidness and stupidity to be seen around the site.

AND the music? "After last year's feast of heavy-metal, the menu is more varied this summer," promised the official programme, but the line-up of groups on Saturday displayed as much variation as a tank of goldfish.

I watched three or four "numbers" by every act, quitting when I realised that they could only play three songs each; the medium-paced heavy metal song ("Keep On Rockin' Babe"), the fast heavy metal song ("Gonna Love Ya All Night") and the in-between paced heavy metal song ("Gonna Keep On Rockin' Ya Babe All Night").

And they all sounded like Gillan!

There was Lionheart play Gillan, Samson Play Gillan, Rose Tattoo Play Gillan, Billy Squier Plays Gillan and Trust Play Gillan.

Gillan, not unreasonably, played Gillan too, only they played it with more finesse than all the rest, which I guess was the reason they were given top billing.

The only group which held out any hope for a slight variation on the theme were ex-blues boom relics Chicken Shack, but they sounded suspiciously like Gillan too. Or maybe Gillan sounded like

Chicken Shack. Trying for all they were worth to look like a group of overweight roadies testing the equipment and succeeding admirably, they had me scratching my hair in pursuit of some strand of meaning to the whole affair, before deciding there was none.

If Chicken Shack can come back for an encore at a festival in 1981, then next year I guess we can look forward to . . . Blodwyn Pig! Dr Strangely Strange! Or how about a revamped Medicine Head topping the bill? The wild ways of pop know no bounds!

Backstage an anonymous looking American, shaggy locks and guitar slung low, posed for the cameras while his gold-bomber-jacketed girlfriend looked on disapprovingly.

"This matters, there are people who are going to see me through this," he informed her, before leaping up the ramp and onto the stage. It was someone by the name of Billy Squier, whom the heavy metal pundits (those who can not only tell the difference between the Lionheart and Samson versions of a Gillan song, but can rate the guitar solos on a scale of one to ten) are probably this minute dubbing "the hit of the festival".

INSINCERITY dripped out of Squier's every pore like a cold sweat as he worked his way through a well-practised list of polystyrene gestures. This was music without one speck of honesty, feeling, originality or emotion; just another overgrown high-school kid playing at being a rock'n'roll star so he could pull gold-bomber-jacketed women.

The heavy metal apologists are probably at this moment reaching for their pens to protest that there's "nothing wrong with people sitting in a field listening to exciting music", but they're missing the point.

A day's worth of music that allows no room for surprises, dynamics, rhythmic interplay or the slightest glaucoma of intelligence must ultimately lead to a prolonged monotony that sedates rather than



RAY DAVIES calls the faithful to prayer

stimulates its audience. The sad thing about Reading is that so many are prepared to settle for so little. —LYNDEN BARBER

SUNDAY: Back again to less grass, more dust and a field that seems to have been sown in Newey Brown cans overnight.

Last minute addition Dark Star are providing a breakfast call for late sleepers in the camp site, but a good couple of hundred have already nipped down to the Thames for a splash, without their trunkie pants or fully clothed.

A Royal Life Saving Society dinghy chugs up and down the Reading stretch. Tragically it wasn't around to rescue 20-year-old Andrew Ridge, who drowned on Saturday. Difficult to imagine anyone could have got into trouble on this still pond of a river and sunshine always makes things look safe.

It doesn't do much to decorate the camp site though, which is strewn with burnt out bonfires and boiled egg sarneys ground into the dirt for no immediately apparent reason.

During Afraid of Mice's set a lone glider whirrs on the thermals of 28,000 steaming bodies. Blimey, it must nift up there. Early though they may be, Mice turn out to be one of the most promising bands of the day, even better than at their Venue gig a couple of weeks back. Smart, big-sounding stuff which doesn't have the crowd in fits but certainly goes down better than Reluctant Stereotypes, who get the first canning of the day.

"Thank you for your kind welcome, it's good to be back here in 1981 in the armpit of the world." The irony is lost on Reading, as for that matter is the accuracy for today's bill is like a memory test —

continued on p29

SAMSON celebrate Gillan's set



TUESDAY lunchtime in a plush WEA office finds Modern Romance under pressure. That morning the bad news had come through and stung them like a swarm of bees.

"Everybody Salsa", the third Modern Romance single, had only climbed nine places to 29. After shooting up from the nowhere seventies to 38, they'd expected top 20 at least. This slice of unwanted news meant that "Top Of The Pops" were now not interested. Perhaps next week. Perhaps.

Geoff Deane and David Jaymes accepted the news philosophically, and did what you can only do in such circumstances. They poured themselves another glass of Pernier water and waited for yet another inquisition about their salsa-inspired single.

And let's get one thing straight. "Everybody Salsa", whatever the claims made for it, is perfect proof of a hit single 1981 style. Flimsy, superficial, dressed up in bright rags, and sold to mums and daads everywhere.

It borrows from a pure source, in this case the real heady salsa of New York, cheapens it, waters it and dilutes it into a pale imitation of the real thing. Or perhaps I'm taking it all too seriously.

"Well I've listened to things like Celia Cruz and things like that," defends Deane, "but the basic thing I drew from Latin music was the use of percussion which was something that we'd already got into. It just so happened

when we put this melody to music and then put all the layers of percussion on there's about five or six layers of different percussive things on the single — it was then that it took on a Latin feel.

"It wasn't a matter of 'let's sit down and write a Latin single'. It was just the melody line. Once everything was on it, it obviously had a Latin feel. It was a very light-hearted song and the lyrics just follow.

"I mean we've been slated for the lyrics but we're all reasonably intelligent people who could have written a really super hip lyric, but it would have been absolutely wasted on a song like that.

"If people want something more substantial musically they can flip it over and listen to the dub side which is possibly what we'd all listen to. It's a fun record. It's a summer record and it's not pretending to be anything more."

"We wouldn't call ourselves a Latin group mind you," butts in David. Geoff's songwriting partner. "The music is a lot broader than that. The bulk of the songs are more straight funk than Latin."

DAVID himself admits to having never heard of Kid Creole before writing this new ditty of theirs, or indeed any real salsa. However, he can understand salsa purists getting annoyed at their interpretation, shall we say. But he thinks he's doing them a favour.

"No doubt we'll do them a lot of good. Like in the Sixties when white musicians started playing the blues the old blues masters started making money

How to water down the real roots

Paulo Hewitt discovers how Modern Romance did it

out of it, it brought it to the front."

So why do Romance succeed where the salsa purists have failed?

Quite simple really. Firstly no-one had taken much notice of salsa before, it was ignored and left to Festival Hall audiences. That was until London's nightclubs, forever on the lookout for something hip, started playing, along with soul and funk, hip dudes like Kid Creole who, though not strictly salsa, utilised it effectively in their music. The next step was obviously to check out the roots.

What Romance have done is anticipate that interest and capitalise effectively. Dressing themselves up in suits and creating a "modern" image, the plan has worked



beautifully.

"Rather than being a normal, faceless funk band," says David, "we have got a reasonably strong image which is not really contrived. We are what we are. Our image is what you see... didn't sit down and say 'What image are we going to be?'"

"It's all part and parcel," agrees Geoff. "I don't think you

can separate. The music is part of our personality as indeed is the image. The music isn't phenomenally contrived, neither is the image. But it's really difficult to separate them."

As for helping salsa into national prominence, forget it. If I was a 13-year-old kid and Modern Romance was the first salsa record I heard, I don't

think I'd want to hear another for the rest of my life.

"You put a record like 'Salsa on,'" says David, "and they're all up on the floor doing the conga and going crazy to it. It must have an effect like the 'Can Can' had when that hit the discos."

"Great," says Geoff. "That's what I've always wanted to be. The next Bad Manners."

EVERYBODY SALSA

SUCKING the top off a spint of lager like a vacuum cleaner, Al Salvador demonstrates the undoubted muscularity of an alto sax-trained mouth, looks deep into the abyss of his thinking mind and constructs the definitive picture of the group he has made his life's work: "We're just a bunch of jerks having a good time!"

"Oh no we're not," counters The Andes (guitar and lyrics). "If you say that he'll write it down. I mean, I don't think we're jerks, you are, but leave us out of it. This is an interview remember!"

And so the argument, sorry interview, rages on while we listen to more stars on 45 and get to grips with the Latin connection in a pub somewhere near the tropics of Waterloo.

Whether this magnificent seven fit Al's florid description is debatable, though few would deny that the Havana gang have a good time — especially the motley members themselves. Joanna Havana (vocals), Eamon (in the right direction) (bass), Mark El Vargo Tanner (drums), Frank Campani (percussion), Ricky De Janeiro (tenor and baritone sax) and Peter Rico (tenor and soprano sax) all agree that good clean fun is their reason to exist.

Yet as they insist on having fun with a capital F, continually and all at the same time, talking to this collection of walking one-liners is relentlessly chaotic and equally as treacherous as shopping at Harrods in the sales.

Bad jokes and felicitous puns fly through the smoky air like the clumps of frequently airborne fruit at one of



Havana Let's Go! in fruity pose.

... and squash the fruit

Ian Pye gets to grips with Havana Let's Go! Pic: Tony Mottram

their picture sessions. Swaying under this humorous assault I suggest an adjournment to the nearby Alaska studios where they are currently rehearsing their act.

The motion is accepted and we take

up new residence, leaving behind half the band who miss the twin delights of Rockin' Kurt And The Sauerkrauts (rehearsing in the adjacent studio) and the rumble of overhead trains — which was preferable is again

debatable.

No beating about the savanna I come straight to the point and inquire if this is a case of jumping on the salsa bandwagon or a genuine desire to explore the possibilities of Latin

musics.

"Well it's neither really," is Andes' reciprocally blunt reply.

"We've been doing Latinish things for quite a long time now (they've been together about a year) but there was never any attempt or plan to hype up the music business. It's only recently that we've got this Latin tag."

"Obviously there are Latin influences there," Peter adds, "but it's not our only concern and we don't begin to pretend to take any kind of ethnic approach. We still play pop songs and whatever else feels right."

With a line-up top heavy in horns (they hope to add a trumpet player soon as well) and a policy of handing out percussive objects — anything from maracas to kitchen utensils — at their shows, the nearest Havana come to salsa (itself a broad term that encompasses numerous deviations) is in spirit.

Anyone who's ever heard or seen the Fania All Stars live will appreciate that Latin magic thrives on a party atmosphere.

Joanna agrees that the group go more for the feel and flavour of Latin music rather than a strict adherence to its demanding twists and turns. "I really love the Latin things we do but I wouldn't like people to think we were just a one-track band. Our influences include soul, R&B, pop, big band swing, Spanish — you know, we're very diverse!"

"We always hand out percussion to the audience because we want people to be involved instead of just standing there and watching the band." So partying is important, I suggest. "Oh yeah," Al agrees, "that's the whole thing. I see our stage shows like one big party and the band is just part of it. We want the audience to join in — not just be entertained."

Rather than hinting at the roots of Cuban salsa they say the name is more an evocation of pre-communist Havana and its itinerant population of cowboys and gangsters who whiled away their ill-gotten gains in the old capital's underground maze of dodgy clubs and gambling houses.

So far the band have recorded only one single, "Torpedoes/Rio", which is in itself a reflection of their main preoccupation — creating the best show in town. Besides if this crew ever did make any money from vinyl they'd probably charter the first available jet to the Caribbean and frighten the natives there.

Anyone for fresh fruit from unknown places?

singles

Reviewed by CAROL CLERK

ADAM AND THE ANTS: "Prince Charming" (CBS). To the undoubted surprise of the Cinderella world out there, Adam's "Prince Charming" materialises in a most unlikely way. The best, sometimes the only, way to deal with a success so phenomenal that it seems hardly able to last is to stay one step ahead; keep a trick

not told who the "friends" are on this particular track, except that Elmer Gantry's on vocals.

It's a sturdy, strongly structured and cleverly timeless song that attaches itself quite readily to the memory banks. Worth chequeing out.

THE CHIFFONS: "One Fine Day" (RCA). Released as part of the "Golden Grooves Collection", the Chiffons sound as fresh and fanciful, as bright and beautiful as they ever did.

Ridiculous . . . but charming

up your sleeve and deal it when the sceptics' voices scream loudest.

Adam knows that. And he's trumped them all with a masterpiece of a single; a potential monster. Here, he takes one simple idea, twists it, turns it and inflates it to epic proportions. He accomplishes the seemingly impossible task of combining heady, hypnotic repetition with a sense of the unexpected.

Opening with a series of wails, the song moves into a thick percussiveness surrounded by dense, dramatic texture, bagpipe guitars and layers of vocals building up gradually to a stirring, disturbing conclusion. "Ridicule is nothing to be scared of," he sings. And if anyone should know, it's Adam Ant.

SLADE: "Lock Up Your Daughters" (RCA). The massive success of Slade at Castle Donington should hopefully boost sales of the single, tried out there to an encouraging response. It's a raucous rendering in the glorious traditions of "Mama Weer All Crazee Now", and possibly their finest moment since then. From Noddy's opening scream — "Lock up your daughters!" — you know it's Slade on form: great hot-headed riffs, a rhythm that'll wear out the heels of your boots in ten minutes and a beauty of a chorus. Just watch it go...

WAS (NOT WAS): "Where Did Your Heart Go?" (Island). As someone who wouldn't know a Funkapolitan from a Neapolitan, I'd still say this sounds like pretty superior dance music (even though Paulo insists they should've used his mix).

An interesting intro, cooler than a Consulate, leads into a seductively intelligent rhythm that leads your feet instead of bossing them about. Mandolins flutter and a blissful, tuneful vocal captures your heart. A case of once heard, never forgotten.

DEF LEPPARD: "Let It Go" (Vertigo). Of that surge of young, frantic metal bands that fell under the banner of the "New Wave Of British...". Def Leppard emerged as one of the most talented, concerned with songs as well as volume and showmanship. This is an excellent example.

The opening follows classic HM traditions: the guitar picking out a riff, the bass and drums joining in, a sustained chord while the rhythms carry on... and then the voice. A verse slightly restrained with the certainty of imminent explosion builds, then it does explode, and the first of those crazy, rollicking choruses pulls you straight into the body of the song. A triumphant single.

SPECIAL GUESTS

COZY POWELL AND FRIENDS: "Sooner Or Later" (Polydori). As an exponent of the original metal sound, more aptly described as heavy rock, Cozy Powell still ain't beyond giving things a bit of stick, as it were. We're

JOSEF GARRET: "Without Sex" (Ellie Jay). Patrick Fitzgerald slips into the guise of Josef Garret and delivers, as curiously as usual, the A side — a delightful collage of whisking rhythms and intriguing instrumental effects supporting his outbursts: "And sometimes I wonder if I may be abnormal/But the process of sex somehow all seems so formal..."

The B-side, "Pop Star, Pop Star", uses the minimum of backing for its tumbling recitations. For his world-weary attitude presented as naivety and bewilderment, sometimes, deadpan acceptance, Fitzgerald's a compelling performer.

AND AS SUPPORT . . .

JOAN ARMATRADING: "I'm Lucky" (A&M). Carol, our receptionist, loved this single for its delicate swing and Joan's caressing vocals. Personally, I find the breathless repetitions, the little yelps, a touch too predictable and the song far from stirring.

THE BARRON KNIGHTS: "Mr Rubik" (Epic). In an ode to that infernal cube (am I the only half-wit in the world who can't even get one side the same colour?), the court jesters give us a single that raises a snigger or two on the first play — "My wife's all black and blue cos I keep dreaming she's a cube" — and immediately loses all its novelty.

ALVIN STARDUST: "Pretend" (Stiff). Pretend. Pretend that Alvin Stardust adopted the clean-cut voice of a 'Fifties teen dream balladeer. Pretend that he applied it to a perky, up-tempo song, threw in a few hand-claps and raised his eyes to the charts. Pretend that you listened to the single and discovered it was all true...

DIANA ROSS AND LIONEL RICHIE: "Endless Love" (Motown). Diana! What have you done? You've gone to number one in the States with your Commodore pal with this movie title track. You've gone syrupy, sentimental, superficial, unconvincingly romantic. You've made an escapist record for coffee table couples, staring into their cups and wondering "Where did our love go?"

MEATLOAF: "I'm Gonna Love Her For Both Of Us" (Cleveland International). Like a bat out of hell, I'll be running miles from the strains of Meatloaf's crummy single when I next have the misfortune to hear it. Described by the publicity machine as "powerful", it carries all the strengthening qualities of a bottle of Mandies.

The main man drags his enunch vocals through a song that sounds like a mangled, mongrel mutation of "Bat" and "Born To Run"! If it took all this time to get the album out, it can only have been due to lack of inspiration. Still, people will love it. I despair.

BUDGIE: "Keeping A Rendezvous" (RCA). Here's another 'un with the vocal abilities of a manservant in the Sultan's harem. Apparently bereft of any redeeming qualities at all, Budgie

offer a mid-paced, stodgy, tired old heavy metal number and go through the motions like a bunch of All-Brat addicts.

MICK FLEETWOOD: "You Weren't In Love" (RCA). Old bluesmen never die, they simply lose their sensitivity. This is an entirely unenlightening, surface-scraping song of unrequited love, a quiet, ballady slice of nothing from a man who apparently lost his soul when Fleetwood Mac lost Peter Green.

JOHN FOX: "Europe — After The Rain" (Virgin). The presence of trees and leaves during John Fox's recording sessions have obviously influenced his music, as he claimed. It's sad. Ordinary in the extreme, the song skitters along with a notable lack of individuality, and despite the fact that he's using more musicians than machines these days, it still sounds mechanically lifeless. Where are the natural rhythms of nature that we might've been forgiven for expecting? (Max Ernst sends his love — Ed.)

THE JACKSONS: "Time Waits For No One" (Epic). An unremarkable string-laden lament from the Jacksons that swings, rises to a melodramatic climax and does nothing to uphold their former standards.

SHEENA EASTON: "Just Another Broken Heart" (EMI). The woman who can't decide if she's a career girl or a doorman goes dancing... and decides she feels "used and confused". No wonder. Sadly, wearily hit-bound, I suppose.

BETTE BRIGHT AND THE ILLUMINATIONS: "Some Girls Have All The Luck" (Korova). This, on the other hand, is from a lady who ought to know better. In some sort of hideous reggae/disco blend, she sings a shallow song of self-pity... a reassurance, perhaps, for love-lorn teenagers.

There's no sense of feeling, of understanding... merely a series of glib statements like "My life is only

filled with rain". She'll never join those girls who "have all the luck" if she keeps on sounding so damned sorry for herself.

HOT GOSSIP: "Criminal World" (Dindisc). It's all so heart-sinkingly predictable. Breathily "ohs" drift over a disco rhythm that'll give the Gossips yet another excuse to wrap their limbs round each other in a public display of their sham-glam erotica. Cutie-pie vocals make absurd promises like "I'm going to wear just what you're looking for" and, of course, it's not music. Unsavoury, undistinguished and unpleasant, it's simply a soundtrack.

THOMAS LEER: "Four Movements" (Cherry Red). Four movements: (1) Place it on the turntable. (2) Lower the needle. (3) Take it off. (4) Go home. No doubt there are those who admire the predominantly jazzy, sometimes disco, leanings of Thomas Leer, but I'm afraid I have to pass.

"We try to make our clichés as tasteful as possible," smiled Gass.

MM 3.9.81 . Signature

Adrift in the HM mainstream

THAT old festival magic was starting to build up at Donington as we arrived, 24 hours before the first band was due to plug in onstage. A transit van with "HENDRIX" painted on the side, scruffy tents with CND flags flopping weakly above them, denim kids squatting on the wet grass around heaps of damp branches which obstinately refused to burn.

Would they never learn? Today's menu: hot dogs from a stall or pizza from a double-decker bus.

A giant crane crouched like a praying mantis over the unfinished stage. Among the scaffolding, the bug-eyed clutches of lights and a junkyard of amplification, Blue Oyster Cult waited with professional boredom for the sound crew to sort things out. Stage right, portly tour manager Steve Shank combed his hair, peering obsessively into a mirror inside his attache case. Absurd!

"I think there are a lotta groups that are pretty linear about what they do, and I don't think we are," said Cult frontman Eric Bloom a little later. "I don't think there's too many groups out there doing songs like 'Joan Crawford Has Risen From The Grave'."

"Um... we have, you know, a pretty good sense of humour about it, about who we are and what we're doing."

Today, the humour is keeping a low profile. Headliners AC/DC have instructed Cult that they can't play longer than an hour and can't use their pyrotechnic effects onstage. Worse, they've forbidden Bloom to ride his Harley-Davidson motorbike during BOC's version of "Born To Be Wild".

And drummer Albert Bouchard has fled the country in a fit of pique, leaving a roadie to fill in.

Temperers are frayed. "God, this place is terrible," I moan to Bloom among the sleazy tents and squalid Portakabins which form the backstage area. "That's rock 'n' roll," he snaps by way of reply. Eric's vision of "rock 'n' roll" is distressingly clichéd.

"Can I ask you a question?" he asks. "How come women don't come to rock concerts in the UK? I mean if girls do come they come with their boyfriends, and there's no backstage scene like in the United States."

"In the States, four or five girls would come together to the show, they would do their best to try and meet the group, the crew would be making out in the afternoon, you know what I mean? That kinda thing is just unheard of over here. It's like sexual sensory deprivation. Not so much for the group but for the crew — it's driving them up the wall because they're used to the sexual revolution that's taken place in the United States."

I try to explain that many people are glad these brainless geriatric rituals are dying out, but in the middle of Castle Donington it's futile, somehow.

Disappointingly, the Cult seem happy to accept being lumped together with the heavy metal mainstream, even though the scope of their



Adam Sweeting consoles BLUE OYSTER CULT. Pic: Tom Sheehan

words and music over the years has at times displayed unusual breadth and intelligence.

Their third album, 1974's "Secret Treaties", was varied, mysterious, exhilarating. Two years later, "Agents Of Fortune" delivered the shimmering pop latticework of "Don't Fear The Reaper" among a collection of differing and ambitious pieces. The Cult had brains! And they weren't tone deaf!

Since then, it's been a story of slow submission to the dominant strains of the American mainstream, though the new album, "Fire Of Unknown Origin", offers a few flashes of prime Cult. But recent output like "Mirrors" and "Cultosaurus Erectus" has seen irony gradually turning to iron as the Cult have watched groups like REO Speedwagon, Styx and AC/DC storming the Americas with scant evidence of a frontal lobe to share between them. Seemingly, the Oyster boys have felt obliged to follow suit.

Thus, on a miserably damp day in August, BOC take their place among the rusting, supine tonnage of Castle Donington.

AFTER savouring the arcane delights of the Cult's finest recorded hours, it's comical to meet the

chaps in the flesh. They look all wrong. Lead guitarist Donald "Buck Dharma" Roeser is squat and beginning to collect chins. Bassist Joe Bouchard is short and stocky.

Keyboardman Allen Lanier, on the other hand, is pale, thin and withdrawn.

Eric Bloom, small and wiry, talks faster than the average politician and has a manner reminiscent of a rusty Brillo pad. When the soundcheck finally ends with an impressive run-through of "Reaper", Bloom is offered as the sacrificial interviewee.

He marches brusquely off towards the Portakabins, paying a brief visit to the Portaloos and ignoring the food tent. The latter is already a hideous sight, ankle deep in paper plates, serviettes, mud and old chips. There aren't any catering staff, just a long line of microwave ovens and two huge deep-freezers with locks on. My theory is that these are ready to store dead heavy metal fans for scientific analysis at a later date.

Eric and I end up inside the rented midnight-blue Porsche which he's using for the Cult's tour. It's very comfortable and has perfect acoustics, and features such luxuries as electric windows and headlamp-washers at no extra cost.

So tell me Eric, what

about... "Let's talk about movies or cars or sumpin'. Fuck the music business." Ah. Thinking quickly, I ask if he's seen "Raiders Of The Lost Ark". "Yeah, loved it. That's about the only good movie I've seen this year."

Moviegoers can thrill to the prospect of a pair of films on the horizon featuring Cult contributions. One is called "Heavy Metal" and includes BOC performing the tiresome "Veteran Of The Psychic Wars", a track off the new album co-written by Bloom and sci-fi author Michael Moorcock.

The second is called "Black And Blue", a concert movie starring the Cult and — yeeecaaargggg! — Black Sabbath. The two bands toured the States together last year, y'see.

Bloom's connection with Moorcock may also lead to yet another film if Eric gets his way. This is how he first got in touch with the Lancashire-dwelling novelist: "I wrote him a fan letter basically, saying 'I'm really into your characters and stuff and I'd love to see a film happen, I'd love to write songs and do the soundtrack and stuff'."

"He called me from England and said he's familiar with BOC and he'd love to get together with me sometime. So he sent me some lyrics right off, and

the first set he sent me had 'The Great Sun Jester' on, which was on the 'Mirrors' record."

"Last year he wrote 'Black Blade' just for me 'cos I wanted a song about Eric, which is the character from his books that I really wanna do the film on. We get together about once every nine or ten months, whenever he's in the States."

AFTER a decade together, with the bulk of that time spent on the road, it's no wonder the Cult are beginning to feel like making changes. They've collectively agreed to divide their time between the band and solo projects — "make one record a year, tour three, four months a year and that's it."

"That's one thing a little unusual about BOC — every guy in the group is a college guy and you know we're not just a bunch of guys off the street who thought they wanted to play rock 'n' roll. I'm not trying to make it sound like we're some sort of intellectual dilettantes or something, there's just more to the group than playing some tunes."

"Everybody wants to do different things with their lives, and also keeping the Cult intact at the same time, so

we've managed to come up with a workable formula and it's very therapeutic."

"Perhaps we're not making as much money as we could, but that's become not very important any more. It clears the air a little bit everybody's not pushed together all the time."

This means Eric can devote more attention to his semi-pro car-racing hobby as well as to his own show on a local New York radio station, Buck Dharma is in the midst of a solo LP, and sticksman Bouchard (Albert) is trying to figure out how to finish off a solo concept record. Since this revolves around lyrics by the Cult's former manager/producer Sandy Pearlman, it could take time.

Pearlman, ousted from the Cult's inner sanctum since "Agents Of Fortune", makes a comeback on "Fire Of Unknown Origin" with some lyrics for the ghastly "Heavy Metal: The Black And Silver". I suggest to Eric that the song is crass. "Crass? Do you know what it's about?" No. "It's about black holes." "Good Lord!"

The song originally featured both words and tune by Bouchard (Albert), along with the attractive title "Ear Damage". Nobody liked the words much, so the song ended up with a rehashed version of Pearlman's black holes saga which he'd lifted from a treatise in Scientific American magazine.

"It's a good throwback. I think," says Eric. "A lotta people like Sandy's lyrics."

Try these: "Into the whirlpool where matter vanishes/anti-matter is the black horizon/beyond being will be coming, beyond time, space and control...". Sandy Pearlman may be the James Burke of rock 'n' roll.

THOUGH the Cult professed themselves well pleased with the English dates they played under their old name of Soft White

Underbelly, all of which sold out, there's a crushing sense of "what else can you show me" about them. Another interview, another

gig... let's get it over with. I talk to Buck Dharma for a while. He's amiable but disinterested, casting a jaundiced eye over the decline of the West.

"Even if we wanted to I don't think we could tour as much as we used to, just because it's too expensive. Ticket prices are too high, there are too many other things competing for the entertainment dollar or whatever, there's all this video stuff you can buy now."

"It seems like the last decade, all the kids bought decent-sounding record players and then they bought records. Now there's all this video stuff they can buy."

"Not only that, I think people don't have as good a standard of living as they used to. That's all over the world. I think the golden age of the United States is over — we have to scramble like everybody else now, y'know!"

Luckily, the Cult have found themselves an inflation-proof niche in the rock 'n' roll circus, which the American success of the new album and the single, "Burnin' For You", won't hurt a bit.

"We're sort of unassailable at a middle level," says Buck, sounding bored. "We're very secure in our echelon of success. I can't complain — I'd love to be rich, I'm not but I wouldn't mind it."

"But on the other hand I'm thankful to have made the living that I have out of it."

The magic that can set you free? Sorry, the company that used to make it went bust.

albums



Mick spits in Ron's requila

ROLLING STONES: "Tattoo You" (Rolling Stones Records CUN5 39114).

WHEN innovation becomes a cliché, and originality little more than parody, then the time that waits for no one cannot settle solely on past achievements.

Over the years, the Stones have gone from a scream to a whisper; the passing years have shown the difficulty of reconciling an image with the reality. As a band, they've had to witness the changing of the guard, and feel more threatened than most.

If your initial stance is youthful rebellion, how then do you cope with approaching middle age? The romantic rebel in those that grew up with them may have dwelt on the idea of the Stones dying on the eve of Jagger's thirtieth birthday, but I shouldn't think Mick Jagger was too fond of the idea.

From being the scourges outside the establishment's walls, the Stones came to epitomise "radical chic". Between the bursts, jet-setting and jams, they produced albums that sounded like

obligations. Their last album sounded lethargic. "Some Girls" at least showed them mixing their own punchy brand of rock 'n' roll with modish disco, but "Emotional Rescue" had all the impact of a soggy Kleenex. A shoddy compilation earlier this year did little to alleviate the doubts that the Stones were over the hill on a one-way ticket.

Obviously times and attitudes change, and the Stones can never again be as influential and threatening as they once were, but "Tattoo You" at least goes some way towards redeeming their reputation as a premier, down-the-line rock'n'roll band.

Recorded in the comfort of Paris and the Bahamas, the album sounds as though it's based round the nucleus of the Stones themselves (the sleeve and notes are shoddily ineffectual). Guitars are well to the fore, the rhythm section as dependable as ever while keyboards are kept well down in the mix.

There are odd snatches of sex, particularly on the rolling, mid-paced "Waiting On A Friend", which ends the album on a high, if laid-back, note. But it's those chugging, relentless guitars which open the album with "Start Me Up" that display the Stones back on something approaching form.

The album sounds like an attempt to return to the rockier feel of albums like "Some Girls" and "Exile On Main Street", with thumping rockers like "Slave" and "Little T&A" (which offers Richards a solo vocal).

Although once classified as "the world's greatest rock'n'roll band", the Stones have shown their musical diversity in the past. Obviously on R&B and blues standards, but also their tongue-in-cheek approach to country.

"Tattoo You", particularly the first side, finds them back into those gritty riffs which they storm through so effectively. Even though, at times, they seem like they're revisiting the past for

comfort rather than inspiration, the first side does offer a grittier change from the complacency which threatened to overcome them.

But the lethargy is still there. "Heaven" is a plodding effort that seems to grow longer each time you play it, and "Worried About You" takes its time getting nowhere in particular. But they still demonstrate an innate ability for cutting near-perfect rock songs, like the catchy "Hang Fire" and "Neighbours" which hit the bull right from the first play.

For those who despise the Stones and everything they stand for, "Tattoo You" will do little to redress the balance. For the more tolerant, it displays an attempt at a more no-nonsense, rock'n'roll Rolling Stones.

As an album, it raises as many questions as it provides answers: just how long, and why, will the Stones keep going? They've proved in the past they could do it and they go a considerable way towards proving it here, but the cracks are showing, and they widen with age.

Like Mick and Keith's alter egos, the Glimmer Twins, "Tattoo You" does offer a glimmer of what once was, and, more important, what could be. It proves the snarl is still there, even if the bite has gone. — PATRICK HUMPHRIES

POINTER SISTERS: "Black & White" (Planet K52300).

SINCE splitting with sister Bonnie, who went solo, shaking off their nostalgia image, and signing with producer Richard Perry, Ruth, Anita and June Pointer have advanced their career with a mixture of pragmatic common sense and the inexorable progress of good singers getting their due. Perry must take much of the credit for this.

Now the Pointers and Perry make a slight readjustment, pulling back towards a slightly harder style of rock while using new — or less well-exposed — writers. Two of the best cuts are those in which the girls take a share of the scribbling.

"We're Gonna Make It", which ends side one, is a fast, synth-driven song led in tandem by Anita and June, who also co-wrote with keyboard/synth players David Foster and Mike Cotton. Those sisters also co-wrote "What A Surprise" with tenorist Trevor Lawrence and Anita sings lead over its cool, strutting pace.

June takes four leads, Anita three, they share one, which leaves Ruth with just one, "Take My Heart, Take My Soul". Perry now presumably thinks she sounds too black. June is especially strong on "Fall In Love Again", a song she violently attacks, and "Should I Do It" is a good pop song whose arrangement swings way back to the early Sixties girl group style of the Crystals and Chiffons. "Doo lang, doo lang" indeed.

A final special word of praise for Trevor Lawrence's tough sax breaks. A heavy horn. — GEOFF BROWN.

THE KINKS: "Give The People What They Want" (Arista SPART 1171).

REPUTATION is a fragile thing. People prefer it hermetically sealed in a glass case, which they frequently pass in the Museum of the Mind, pause, and affectionately mutter: "Ah, those were the days!" The only problem is when the reputations refuse to stay behind the glass, and insist on breaking the illusion by simply keeping going.

The Kinks are a case in point. Fondly remembered for Ray Davies' evocative vignettes of little bits of England in the late Sixties. Their career received a necessary shot in the arm when they (or, more accurately, Ray Davies) were championed by the Jam and the Pretenders.

Riding high on a Stateside reputation, they triumphed in America with an unfortunate brand of HM riffing over their old classics. Yet they played a great gig at the Lyceum last year, before a new generation of Kinks fans. It was like the Kinks were out to prove they could still cut it.

That seems to be the message behind "Give The People What They Want", but behind that unambiguous title are 11 songs that at least show Ray Davies trying to recapture some of his former glory. Ray jumps neck deep into nostalgia with the opening track on side two, "Destroyer".

That immortal "All Day And All Of The Night" riff and the mention of "a girl called Lola" in the first line! Nostalgia aside, the two most successful songs on the second side are some of the best things Davies has done in years.

"Yo Yo" recalls the balmy days of "Sunny Afternoon" and "Waterloo Sunset", with its strummed acoustic guitars, and Ray wryly pinpointing the foibles of suburbia. "Art Lover" is another of those lightly Caribbean flavoured songs he favours, about a dirty old man in the park on Sunday afternoon, watching schoolgirls with "pretty little legs, like a Degas ballerina".

The "Art Lover" is obviously nowhere near as sympathetic a figure as Walter, Terry or Julie, but he does come across as a character. It's Ray Davies at his observational best, just like the old days...

Side one is less successful, with the heavier side of the Kinks on display, which tends to make them sound like a dozen other bands. The title track, "Killer's Eyes" and "Add It Up" are lyrically interesting, but are not supported by the lacklustre tunes.

"Predictable" opens with Ray opining: "Don't even know why I'm bothering". Tongue in cheek perhaps, but sadly summing up side one's efforts. Ray Davies' great strength as a writer was in his affectionate observations of very English characters. While his contemporaries dwelt on the Mississippi Delta, Ray found an enduring fascination with Muswell Hill and Waterloo.

"Give The People What They Want" almost does just that — it offers hope to Kinks fans who treasure the scuteness of Ray Davies' observations.

The album shows that Davies hasn't wholly lost that ability, and for that we should be grateful, even if it is only in small doses. — PATRICK HUMPHRIES.

country pie

SOME years back, in the heyday of progressive country, Gary Stewart and Delbert McClinton had the best antidote to mellow country-rock. They wrote and performed modern honky-tonk songs that could be as mean as a kick from a steel-topped cowboy boot, dirty as the shit on the heel, sharp as a broken Lone Star bottle, and sometimes as warm and comforting as Jack Daniels.

Stewart made six albums for RCA, and the early ones are glorious celebrations of the bar-room world of love, lust, despair and liver disease songs like "She's Acting Single (I'm Drinkin' Double)", "Flat Natural Born Good-Timin' Man" and "I've Got This Drinkin' Thing". But his later releases showed a fearful decline, which suggested that

his lifestyle was becoming synonymous with his songs. His best work has been collected together on "Greatest Hits — Gary Stewart" (RCA AML1 3981 — Import) and it was, released, ironically, the same week that he was dropped from the label.

Delbert McClinton seems to have fared much better. Although he seems to have stopped writing songs, he's finally enjoying chart success with the Muscle Shoals produced, funky R&B album "The Jealous Kind". But his best work was made in the mid-Seventies with Nashville producer Chip Young; most notably "Victim Of Life's Circumstances", with several tracks, including the title, recalling his misspent life in Fort Worth bars.

"The Best Of Delbert

McClinton" (MCA 5197 — Import) features highlights from "Victim", and his two other ABC albums, "Genuine Cowhide" and "Love Rustler", including his original version of "Two More Bottles Of Wine", which was a big country hit for Emmylou Harris.

Jerry Jeff Walker has clearly taken note of Delbert's recent success, because he's also used Barry Beckett and the Muscle Shoals session men for his new release, "Reunion" (Southcoast Records/MCS 5199 — Import). It will please the Jerry Jeff faithful as it's a marked improvement on his last two (Elektra) albums, though it isn't going to win him a larger following; those gruff vocals get rougher every year, and are very much an acquired taste. — RICHARD WOOTTON.

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albums

DAVID LINDLEY: "El Nayo-X" (Asylum K532283).

IN THAT most preciously precious corner of musical rock music — David Lindley holds an especially revered seat of power. Apart from being a session man of extraordinary talent, Lindley is a tried and trusted chief lieutenant to Jackson Browne, and that, folks, means RESPECT.

So you can be sure that Lindley's coming out with many gets full honors, with the great Jackson himself stage-managing the whole affair.

You'd imagine that somebody just two paces stage left of the spotlight for so long would be burning with ideas, energy, and pent-up frustration. But while he's to be applauded for not attempting to rip his nerve-ends to shreds in front of us the way Jacko does, this merely comes out sounding like somebody playing at making records.

His arduous, self-conscious bid for individuality is done by setting virtually everything to up-service reggae arrangements, with a couple of songs in foreign (Spanish and French), a couple of drastically re-arranged classics ("Bye Bye Love" and "Twist And Shout"), and a couple of songs that are supposedly light relief (including the title "Tuber-cu Lucas And The Sinus Blues").

It seems grossly unfair to other artists to make comparisons, but the clogging whimsicality of "She Took Off My Romeo's" and "Quarter Of A Man" recall a pseud Joe Walsh, striving meekly to capture the mood of "Life's Been Good".

Lindley is an outstanding guitarist, an invigorating fiddle player, and even a passable singer. But he's made an album of such little conviction and sincerity, it's an insult to the reggae camouflage behind which it so miserably cowers. — COLIN IRWIN.

THE TWINKLE BROTHERS: "Me No You, You No Me" (Twinkle Records).

THE Twinkle Brothers blend in calypso and pop like Third World and Eddy Grant, but they avoid sounding like a spoonful of treacle dripping back into its pot.

Twinkle is sometimes pinhead hard.

Singer Norman Grant is as boisterous and rich as the late Jacob Miller of Inner Circle, but the Brothers don't cross to Inner Circle's soul/rock territories. The main delight is the shuffling, chirpy horn section, but all the instrumentation is excellent throughout, with a very long list of musicians.

"Africa For Africans" is their central song. It has a lace of tortuous message, including "black men stop fighting amongst yourselves". They are not spiritually stand-offish though, like Black Uhuru (especially live), it is always an open celebration.

"Conspired People" is one of the Twinkle Brothers' best songs, and it has this same damnation.

"Me No You . . ." is a happy LP, but one not without longings, or laments for lost living and we all have those. — NEIL ROWLAND.

GARY NUMAN: "Dance" (Beggars Banquet BEGA 28).

ONE almighty and irresistible urge hits me whenever I see Gary Numan: I want to shove a thermometer under his tongue and see what it reads — a few degrees off zero if the hapless android image is anything to go by.

But there are different ways of keeping cool. You can end with stiff-eyed robotism, or world weary detachment, and this album marks the shift from one to the other. Numan at rest after flaring out of the concert world, a bit of space, a slower pace, a few fresh ideas.

Sadly, very few. Though the surface has warped, it's still the same three note riffs underneath, the same downcast vocals dropping like wailing hyacinths (synths???) at the end of each line. A handful of new musicians whose gliding bass lines produce the highest instrumental peaks have dressed up the package, but it's essentially the same suit in different cloth.

Side one has the widest departure, holding only four tracks to side two's seven, and one of them a near ten minute epic of drifting percussion and passing lines "Slowcar To China" picks up slices of melody, dissects them, and drops them back into the pool a few minutes later.

He's staked down that territory half a dozen albums back and Numan's restyling has less of the inspired oddness, the "found" music that makes that such a success. But it still works.

Gazza's life, however, has got to be more cheerful in the meantime. He seems obsessed with the sex deals of his street heroines or the broken love agreements that apparently litter his travels. Either way it usually ends up with someone losing, and badly.

Black power

My favourites feature T-Bone Walker and Irma Thomas. Walker was an electric guitar pioneer who straddled the worlds of jazz and blues, and was one of the finest and most influential Texan musicians of all time. "T-Bone Jumps Again" (CRB 1019) captures him at the very peak of his career, immediately after the Second World War.

New Orleans-based Irma Thomas was frequently ahead of her time, and the fine "Between Tears" (CRB 1020), which was recorded with Jerry "Swamp Dog" Williams in 1970, includes "Coming From Behind", an early example of the rap technique which was later developed so successfully by Millie Jackson.

Less important albums in this series are another Elmore James collection, "Got To Move" (CRB 1017), tracks recorded between 1952 and 1963 in various American cities; Little Johnny Taylor's "Part Time Love" (CRB 1012) a soul-blues set recorded, like Lowell Fulson's "Man Of Mo" (CRB 1018), in 1970; and soul singers Solomon Burke, "King Of Rock 'n' Roll" (CRB 1024) and Ted Taylor, "Keep Walking On" (CRB 1011).

Equally well-packaged and imaginatively selected R&B reissues have come from Chiswick on their Ace label. Particularly worthy has been "Like Turner's Kings Of Rhythm - Volume 1" (CH 22) which fills a much-needed gap. While there have been too many repackaging jobs done on Ike's work with his wife Tina, there's been precious little from his early days in the Fifties.

This collection comes from 1952-58 when Ike was working for Modern records around the Mississippi Delta area, acting as talent scout, producer, and band leader — playing guitar and sometimes piano. He's featured singing on just two tracks; the rest are shared between some of the fine vocalists he discovered including Dennis Binder, Brother Bell and Lonnie "The Cat".

There's little in the way of new American rhythm and blues being recorded these days.

The exception is Ray Sharpe, whose "Texas Boogie Blues" (Flying High FH 6502 — import) is the best new R&B record this year, though it sounds authentic enough to have come from 20-years ago. Sharpe, a black Fort Worth singer, had several hit singles in the early Sixties, most notably with "Linda Lu", which is featured in a new form on this high powered set, recorded in Dallas with accomplished back-up from the King Peach Band and Delbert McClinton on harp, along with some other Sharpe originals. — RICHARD WOOTTON.

ROBERT ELLIS ORRALL: "Fixation" (Why-Fi WHO2).

ROBERT Ellis Orrall is not alone in his emotional cowardice, and is not aware of it. He hides behind impersonations of Parker and Costello, mixed with absurd, empty Meatloaf bombastics. Haven't Meatloaf and Jim Steinman shown that their overkill dramatics are more hollow than emptiness itself?

"Girls Gotta Listen" and "She's All Grown Up" express only inane love, and even the use of the phrasing of English poets can't veil it. Costello prizes "love" open, he brings perspective to its distortions, exploits its contradictions, looks with humanity to its victims, and drowns its exploiters with venomous truth.

You can't copy that. He cut and distributed his first LP himself, in the hope Sire would sign him — but Sire were taken over by Warners and the deal disappeared. "Fixation" is the culmination of four years' work, and he has tenacity.

I don't blame him for the fundamental failure of this record, because coming from "just outside" Boston he must be blind to the central humanity we are demanding from pop in the Eighties.

Orrall will find himself as welcome as a hippo in a fish pond over here and his obnoxious, even if unintentionally, insulting "love" will either offend or bore. — NEIL ROWLAND.

Return of the lost time bandit

TOM VERLAINE: "Dreamtime" (Warner Bros K56919).

ART school's sake — is this what a Tom Verlaine's friend?

Occasionally revered for his sometimes mediocre rock record, Verlaine isn't the same without "vision". His first solo album from 1979 was still undoubtedly by television's leading man, but neither that nor "Dreamtime" have the same aura that Verlaine's hand could muster on a good day in the studio.

This isn't the added hastily to say that "Dreamtime" is less than a good album. At

times it's great, and anyway I'm quite happy to sit and listen to Verlaine's guitar playing.

He's the most distinctive American guitarist since McGinnis, and would be to set the MM classified section to seeing that most of the records released this year.

However, it's all very well being another of the great recluses of rock, but I'm certain the enforced disciplines of hectic schedule would force Verlaine to stretch himself more than he has done here.

Apparently the recluses supposed to be a lyricist included with the album, though my copy doesn't have

one. You can argue about the merits/debits of being able to read the words to songs, but in this case it would help a lot because the words are none too subtle.

Therefore it's hard to say whether or not Verlaine is weaving the same kinds of syntactic spells he achieved so mysteriously with songs like "Friction" or "Carried Away". If he is, why hasn't he made sure we can hear them? On a positive note, much of the playing and arranging of "Dreamtime" is breathtaking. There are loads of examples — the trusting riff of "Alone" and its magically ascending chorus, carried by Bruce Brody's clanging piano line, or the canny climbing 12

string guitar which swirls across the opening of "Friction".

"A Future In Noise", where another tough, urgent beat Iranke chorus ("I gotta keep about a mile from you"). Ace.

But elsewhere, even magical playing can't disguise some basic deficiencies. Mainly, those centre on a lack of development in several of the songs, though the massed guitars always have some time to say over and above the basic song structures. Nonetheless, you can't tell me that "Mr. Blue" or "Down On The Farm" are much more than potent but simple riffs repeated and embellished,

while "The Blue Robe" is the result of a studio jam whence Tom lifted the best chunk and turned it into a song. It appears in rejuvenated form on the B-side of the imminent single, a remix of "Always". Haven't heard it yet.

Praise, and possibly even adulation, are due to the crew of musicians assembled here. Richie Fieger on guitar, Donald Nossow and ex-TV midget Fred Smith on basses, Jay Dee Rich Teeter and Jay Dee Daugherty on drums. But creditively as they compare with Verlaine on "Dreamtime", I'd still advise the man to find himself a niche where he has to push himself. "Dreamtime" is fine, but not great. — ADAM SWETING

albums

ARLO GUTHRIE:
"Power Of Love"
(Warner Bros WB
56910).

IT'S to his credit that, early in his career, Arlo Guthrie managed to move convincingly away from his father's shadow, although his most 'Alco's Restaurant' success has been limited, and these days he's regarded mainly as an interpreter of other writer's songs (most notably his 1982 hit 'Waltz'). Steve Goodman's 'City Of New Orleans'.

His new album, 'Power Of Love', finds Arlo in mellow mood, at times eerily recalling early Dylan with his nasal delivery. There's a pleasant balance of choice of material, with Arlo choosing his songs carefully.

His cover of Richard Thompson's 'When I Get To The Border' never matches the intensity of the composer's original, but is still an astute choice, which would bring the understated Thompson some welcome royalties.

Also contributes a couple of his own songs, the understated 'Slow Boat' and potentially interesting 'Living Like A Legend'.

A real curio comes with his version of the old Harry Belafonte standard, 'Jamaica Farewell', in the incongruous company of Rickie Lee Jones. It works surprisingly well, but pretty much sums up the album: pleasant, if unambitious. **4/5**
PATRICK HUMPHRIES

THE DELINQUENTS:
"The Delinquents" (Live
VW 22).

THIS record, and presumably the band, emanate from Austin, Texas, and though they are a long way from Weyl or Willie, they confirm that the capital of the Lone Star State is producing more good music than almost anywhere else.

Particularly like the vocal style of guitarist Becky Blackham, one of the two ladies in the five-person band, who has that deadpan, seen-it-all, know-it-all, hate-it-all waltz-mercy young American lassies are so good at. It's a stance echoed by the lyrics, which are either about love gone wrong ('Pain Like Bullets'), 'It's Just Not the Same', or something rather nasty happening on the beach ('Alien Beach Party', 'Beach Balls in Hell').

The songs are '81 equivalents of Beach Boys idylls, with speed and eye liner substituting for the beer and sun lotion.

What we have here is a view of the Eighties seen through the distorting glass of Sixties imagery. Only one of the Beach Boys could surf. Well, there ain't much scope for hanging ten along the meandering curls of the Colorado either.

A shock tradition continues. **— KARL DALLAS**



Straying off the path

SIMPLE MINDS: "Sons And
Fascination"/"Sister Feelings Call"
(Virgin V2207 and OVED 2).

If the current spin of trenaidera were to be judged purely on music instead of out of the cloth then Simple Minds could quite easily be seen as one of the precursors of New Romanticism.

Due to a common predilection for the Roxy-Bowie axis, rather than any direct causal links, Minds and the nouveau plastics have accidentally ended up with a remarkably similar form to each other's in their search for the Great White Elektrik Diskow In The Sky; you know the score by now — mid-tempo dance beat, synthesizers playing a dominant role in the process, etc.

What distinguishes Simple Minds, of course, is their passionate concern for substance. Where others are content to chuck together a motley assortment of chords, pompous vocals and electric frills in a failed attempt at 'good pop', the Minds have used their music as a vehicle for emotion and mood, resulting in the sensuous 'Empires And Dance', one of last year's best albums.

But, having defined their stance, they've now fallen into the trap of virtually repeating the formula on much of this new album (currently on release as a double album package, although later the two records will

be available separately). It's the same old scene — mid-tempo sway and swing laid over a thick electronic carpet — but this time the seductive aura has been displaced by Steve Hillage's insensitive production, leading to an acute attack of synthetic overkill.

It's a muscular sound, but too often the raw meat machine at the heart of the matter is smothered by trilling layers of synthesizer, an approach that soon becomes wearisome, leaving the listener gasping for breath. And Jim Kerr's naturally deep, rich voice is (probably unconsciously) slipping into affectation and exaggeration.

Despite these handicaps, there's enough exceptional material to lift it out of the rut (although with four sides to cover it's spread far too thinly), and it's significant that these successful tracks are the ones that develop their sound in new directions rather than strictly following the path laid down by 'Empires'.

'Boys From Brazil' and the title track, for instance, both thunder along on a frighteningly aggressive backbone, the synthesizers and guitars used to haunt and beguile. 'League Of Nations' (already available as the B side of 'The American', also included here) falls around an appealing circular bassline, like an early morning pad through a jungle clearing.

But since most of the best material comes on the 'Sons And Fascination' half of the album, Minds aficionados would be advised to wait until the record is available in two separate packages before dealing out the cash. **— LYNDEN BARBER**

VARIOUS ARTISTS:
"The Elvis Connection"
(RCA International INTS
5078).

FOUR years since his death and Elvis Presley mania is still so strong that anything bearing his name will sell. Most souvenirs, books and vinyl tributes are worthless, serving only to cash in on his memory, but this bargain-priced album stands out from the crowd.

It's a carefully researched, copiously annotated, and well-organized collection of 17 songs connected with Elvis. Includes, in addition to the original versions of some of his biggest hits, included are Janis Martin's rockabilly classic, 'My Boy Elvis'; Lou Monte's ludicrous, tub-thumping 'Elvis For President'; Humor and Jethro's pastiches of 'Hound Dog' and 'Heartbreak Hotel'; and two early songs from country singers Jerry Reed and Bobby Bare, 'Tupelo Mississippi Flash' and 'All American Boy', which don't even mention Elvis by name.

The original versions demonstrate how Presley drew on supposedly diverse musical forms to create his own style. Hank Snow's pure country hit 'A Fool Such As I' nestles beside three raw blues tracks by Arthur 'Big Boy' Crudup; 'That's All Right'; 'So Glad You're Mine'; and 'My Baby Left Me'. **— RICHARD WOOTTON**

BOBBY CHARLES:
"Bobby Charles"
(Bearsville IRSP 26).

BOBBY Charles' roots are steeped in blues, R & B and the warm, earthy quality of those southern styles keeps his music on a slow, glowing burn. Sounds like? Well, a pinch of Lee Dorsey and Fats Domino, a dash of J. J. Cale and Billy Swan, a squirt of Randy Newman and, of course, the band, who accompany him here along with guests such as Amos Garrett and Dr John.

The album's best cut, 'Small Town Talk', is a loose, easy ballad about down-home gossip, whisperings on the porch or behind the screen door, murmurs by the creek or over the Main Street store counter.

On 'Let Yourself Go', Charles exudes a sort of sleepy Southern macho. In 'Grow Too Old' he decides to live life before it passes him by, while 'Save Me Jesus' and 'He's Got All The Whiskey' actually switch the styles one would expect of them.

Charles has been one of the least hosannaed of southern States songwriters, yet captures the same vivid moods as southern novelists from Carson McCullers to Flannery O'Connor. His lack of output suggests he suffers from southern languor too. **— GEORGE BROWN**

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The Muddy connection

BUDDY GUY & JUNIOR WELLS: "Drinkin' TNT 'n' Smokin' Dynamite" (Red Lightnin' RL0034)/
VARIOUS ARTISTS: "Living Chicago Blues Vols 4, 5, 6" (Sonet SNTF 840, 841, 842)/
MUDDY WATERS: "King Bee" (Blue Sky SKY 84918).

THE influence of McKinlay Morganfield lies over all five of these albums. Junior Wells came to prominence with Muddy Waters after he replaced Little Walter on harp in the Little Walter blues band. Perkins also plays on the tracks by Luther 'Guitar Junior' Johnson on volume six of the Sonet series together with Calvin Jones (bass) and Willie 'Big Eyes' Smith (drums) who, with Johnson, also appear on Muddy's own album, and Lovie Lee, who replaced Pinetops Perkins in Muddy's band, has four tracks on the Sonet volume four.

It is an influence that is totally benign, and while the blues is more than Muddy, it's more than obvious that without Muddy the Chicago blues wouldn't have been the same. This is still as true as ever, for 'King Bee' shows him on vintage form, even though he leaves most of the guitar chores to producer Johnny Winter, apart from some delicately understated slide on 'Sad Sad Day'.

Winter's playing is consistently tasteful, notably on 'I Feel Like Going Home', which is for me the stand-out track by virtue of its economical arrangement. We know that Muddy never plays guitar while he sings, but three other guitarists does seem a mite excessive on some of the other tracks.

Certainly, the mixture of black and white bluesmen is no longer the tokenism it once was. I know few black young-

sters who play with Winter's feeling for the traditions of the blues — it's interesting to compare his complex, melodic style with the more riff-based playing of Luther Johnson on his own tracks.

Come to that, who would expect to hear such good blues drumming on the Guy/Wells album from Dallas Taylor, best known in the past for his work with Stephen Stills? Along with Perkins and Rolling Stone Bill Wyman on bass, he produces what is probably the best blues rhythm section sound anywhere on these albums, a vital rhythmic underpinning, the significance of which is often ignored by traditionalist and revivalist alike.

In the present favourable climate for blues playing, the Buddy Guy/Junior Wells album has been attracting a lot of airplay, and while in my book it doesn't come up to the classic Vanguard albums produced by Sam Charters, the attention is well deserved. It has always been something of a unique partnership of equals, for the equal billing is

no mere contractual arrangement. However, it is not just preference for the more obscure by-ways of the blues that makes me recommend the three Sonets, licensed from the influential American Alligator label, to anyone who really wants to find out what today's blues is all about.

Though it is good to hear the old slagers still blowing and playing at their best — if, in Muddy's case, with a slightly less of the old, remembered fire — the future of the blues depends not on such great stars of yesterday but on the lesser-known players of today. Some are not so young, like 84-year-old Lovie Lee, who only became a full-time professional musician a couple of years ago, though he's played for half a century. Some are not so old, like harp-player Carey Bell's son Lurrie, who has joined his dad with Lovie.

On the basis of these recent recordings, and the output of King, Guy and Wells, the long-predicted end of the blues is going to be a long time coming. **— KARL DALLAS**

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Ripping yarns

GRADE ONE: Red noise in the morning, a spirit's warning.

THIS bunch of jumpy bratlings, all cheery grins and toothy smiles, rush in where fools fear to tread, make a tear and RIP it all to shreds. Clacking beats sprung like a high tension coil rebound, build the tension and smelt down into breezy calm.

Dance and listen, laugh and furrow your brow. Don't expect anything except the normal and the abnormal thrown together so perfectly you never see the joins. This lot will grab your chair from behind and push it back into place before you've even noticed it's missing.

Whatever you do, DON'T PANIC. This sublime cross-cultural razzamatazz is all down to the entity that is Rip Rig and Panic, a fresh wind blowing through the five continents in a heady whirl, lifting their magic dust from a dazzling plurality of sources and casually depositing it at the interface, arms akimbo and faces beaming. How's that? And you dare to call this steaming tonic a "group"?

"A group as a group, that sort of ethic, has just gotta go, you know, that whole thing of having certain individuals being one group for the next three years is so old hat and so unnatural. It's just purely for saleable purposes." Gareth Seger, possibly the most

photogenic man in "pop" (?), delivers the warning. "The group has got to go... That's the only way you're going to get musicians — and people in any sort of walk of life — just mixing and mingling and getting a lot more from each other. That group thing is like... I dunno, like a white middle class kid's 'let's set up a second family' situation."

At the root of this bubbling



A man of mysterious American-ish origins, 20-year-old BRUCE SMITH talks like he's spent a lifetime at Don Cherry's knee. He has, in fact, just married the man's daughter Neneh.

Recently heard with the Slits, and previously The Pop Group, Bruce's spectacularly skilful drumming shows him to be a man of supreme taste and wit.

Nursing barely-concealed Jake La Motta fantasies, Bruce The Moose is frequently to be seen with a white towel around the throat, the mark of a man with a strange neurosis. To this very day teams of internationally reputed specialists have been unable to untangle the complexities of this man's weird and wonderful psyche.

trouble lies Gareth, marvel drummer Bruce Smith, Sean Oliver and Mark Springer, the nominal bass of Rip Rig, but the gates stay permanently open; wandering in and out at any moment might be the beanpole Weasel, the enigmatic Flash, Neneh Cherry, Ari Upp, and very famous legends Don Cherry and Nico. Or whoever.

If Rip Rig are anything, they are a SPIRIT, a beautiful antidote to everything that is pompous, empty, unimaginative and restrictive, an eruption that sends sparks flying in every possible direction but down. Rip Rig and Panic make the happiest noises I've heard all year.

"I don't think ambition's our biggest drive," says Gareth. "Passion's a bigger drive for us."

Their irreverence is simply "the best way to keep yourself going. Always being able to laugh at yourself is the best way to do it."

Demon pianist Mark elucidates: "I don't think we take it very seriously at all, actually. We just do it for the love of doing it, and just for fun. We all feel strongly about music in one way or another, so on one level we feel seriously enough to feel strongly about it. But 'feeling serious' about it is the wrong way to describe it."

"Hang loose" is probably the nearest we'll get to a definition of the Rip Rig ethic. Play when you want to, where you want to, with who you want to, and because you want to. Simple! If the mood's right, then get out in the streets... or invite yourself to someone else's gig. "The worst thing is you get pissed off when people say 'no!'"

Like Funkapolitan at the YMCA... or the time they gatecrashed the cosmic pyramid at Glastonbury with two saxophones and a hand drum and had the PA turned off on them within a couple of minutes.

"We play every day, but most of the time it's on the street, right?" enthuses Gareth. "You can go down on the corner and play your bass clarinet. You're giving more to people than, say, in a concert hall, because there they're coming and there's no heavy surprise, they know they're going to get something laid on."

"It's much more interesting to lay it on people who are not expecting it."

In a typical Panic gig (if such a thing exists) there might be any number of people leaping around, swapping instruments and doing what comes naturally. If their acquaintance Nico wants to come up and play, fine! (And for the record, my observation that they were taking the piss out of her in a review of a recent gig was mistaken. Apparently Mark Springer was berating himself for playing in the wrong key.)

The whole thing sounds like it must inevitably turn into a godawful shambles (just getting on a stage and playing without a written list of songs??), but there's a barely concealed secret...

"WE CAN ALL PLAY," says Bruce, something that should be obvious from the most cursory listen to the Riggers. And it's no mere blunt statement of complacency, either: just confidence.

"The danger for a lot of people, when you can use the instrument you're playing, is to think 'Well, I know it all now, I can just do this, I know how to play it,'" he continues. "You never really know all that, you've always got everything to learn."

"It won't happen with that theory business and with people thinking about themselves; it's to do with everybody playing together, and for you as an individual listening to what everybody else is doing."

Gareth: "Before you start getting that loose you gotta get

tight... really tight. You have to be aware that people are going to move with you."

"Say I want to go and play some solo piano without shouting to the others 'Stop!' and having it written on a bit of paper — '15 minutes into the set, stop, I'm gonna play the piano'. You've just got to see if that space is there, and if that space isn't there, forget it. Get into what else is going on."

And Bruce again: "You can't just say 'We're gonna be way out now' and start freaking out, because it takes more, it's like that tight thing, it takes a lot of discipline before you kind of get there."

GRADE TWO: Rip Rig and Frolic; the return of the yellow fever.

GO, go, go, this is it! Like determined jumble sale hunters, Rip Rig jostle at the doors, leap in and rummage through

the pick of the bargains, tossing musical influences over their arms and dashing out with shirt tails flapping. Within two minutes they'll have the whole lot stitched into a brightly coloured patchwork and flying at the top of a flagpole.

Some of the influences should be obvious from Bruce and Gareth's previous involvement in The Pop Group; James Brown, Sun Ra, Ornette Coleman, for instance. But Panic's distillation of blues and roots is a whole New Thing, a stylistic brew that shines according to which turn of the kaleidoscope comes to rest.

"Go, Go, Go, This Is It!", their debut single released on their own Uh-Huh Prods label, couldn't be further from The Pop Group. One of the few singles this year that approach classic

status, this rip-snorting charge that pulls the Glitter Band, heavy Afrika and even hints of Brenda Lee's "Let's Jump The Broomstick" in its wake.

And if Simon Bates and his chums aren't too perturbed by the awnerdish sax spiralling from speaker to speaker mid-way through, it could even be a massacre.

"Ooooo-eeeeee! Heavy hypothetical one there!" laughs Gareth although it should be pointed out that the map is



Currently residing in a white Volkswagen, gigging 20-year-old GARETH SAGER is a dedicated follower of fashion whose frizzy hair is often to be seen sticking above a pair of dapper running shorts.

Despite a former career playing songs with titles like "We Are All Prostitutes" with whacky Babilonians The Pop Group, the only moment when there's a smile beaming from his friendly face is when he's posing for the camera.

Gareth's musical talents extend to such diverse instruments as guitar, saxophone, spoons and unbridled wrynx.

Lynden Barber raves about Rip Rig and Panic. Tom Sheehan observes

status, it's a rip-snorting charge that pulls the Glitter Band, heavy Afrikaans and even hints of Brenda Lee's "Let's Jump The Broomstick" in its wake.

And if Simon Bates and his chums aren't too perturbed by the avant-gardish sax spiralling from speaker to speaker midway through, it could even be a massive hit.

"Ooooooeeeeee! Heavy hypothetical one there!" laughs Gareth (although it should be pointed out that the map is



Currently residing in a white Volkswagen, slightly 20-year-old GARETH SAYER is a dedicated offlower of fashion whose reckless features are often to be seen shining above a pair of dapper running shorts.

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Gareth's musical talents extend to such diverse instruments as guitar, saxophone, spoons and strangled larynx.

always in a state of advanced mirth).

Not forgetting, of course, the 'b' side "The Ultimate In Fun", a retelling epic that stirs the blood into a boiling river with one of the meeziest sax riffs heard in ages ("Friends are divided as to which number they prefer", writes *MM* reader *Enricho Peel*).

Next step in the Ripping scheme is cheekily named "God", their debut album, consisting of the Red, Yellow, Green and Blue sides, each playing at 45 rpm (the title's just what's needed for getting into the News Of the World, reckons Sean).

On "God", the "commercial" and the "non-commercial", the "accessible" and the "inaccessible" lay cheek by jowl, then contort into a unifying grin. It's all up to the listener to approach with the right attitude: if your view of "rock" is restricted to horny-handed guitar solos over a welter of clichés, or if you retreat in horror at the thought of a music that feverishly melts down the boundaries between funk, pop, jazz and soul, then steer clear.

It's a record that's impossible to sum up with a simple, glib phrase. Displaying a sparkling array of ideas, every track exploring different avenues, "God" irradiates the sheer joy of playing music.

Largely improvised, it was completed in about three days of recording spread over the first three months of this year, and now they're already recording their next masterpiece with Don Cherry helping out on trumpet.

"We've got to get over this attitude of 'this audience', 'that audience'," says Bruce. "That's a bunch of bullshit."

What about their heavy jazz leanings (their name derives from a Roland Kirk number)?

"The thing is, we're very influenced by a lot," comments Gareth. "The jazz thing is always built out... but all sorts

of things as much, probably... gospel singing and stuff like that."

Seen chimes in: "Like if you check the guitar playing you might find a really heavy rockabilly, R&B thing."

A rich dose of funk puts in an appearance from time to time, but Rip Rig are nothing to do with the cottage cheese "jazz-funk" movement and all its computerised clichés.

If anyone tries to lump Panic



A musical genius at birth, MARK SPRINGER developed his talents when his grandmother, Frieda Von Krackenbaum, whipped him at the piano stool. He was to grow up a broken man, at one stage remaining in the same chair for three weeks in case he had a heart attack.

The highlight of his career has undoubtedly been Maelstrom And The Bear Garden, a duet consisting of the man they call Weasel playing a clarinet through a hosepipe while naked, and himself. They played one gig and split up. But it was thanks to the legendary Jock that 20-year-old Mark gained his experience of public performance.

Mark is German.

in with the current funk bandwagon they're wasting their time. As they cockily point out, Bruce and Gareth were "white cats doing funk" at least three years ago in The Pop Group.

"Now you turn on the radio and it's like another group whooming their bass strings out and making it 'Boink', you know," says Gareth with healthy cynicism. "All I can see that's going to happen in another six months is tons of cats getting up on stage and trying to play 'out'."

I mention James Chance, but before I can complete the sentence Bruce cuts in: "He is repulsive, that guy, he is repulsive. I heard him years ago and he was pathetic."

"To me he ain't got it," says Gareth, explaining how annoyed he gets when people keep asking his opinion of Chance. "His tone and everything."

And as for "tribalism", yet another one of the 57 Varieties of trend floating around this year, "We were the first anyway. Adam and the Ants copped it all from us."

"I remember seeing The Pop Group when Mark had that jacket that Adam wears now, that whole look," adds Sean.

Which all leads back to that perennial question hanging over what we might loosely describe as, ahem, "the rock scene" — originality (or rather the lack of it). Rip Rig and Panic may have turned their heads into the wind, shaking an array of musical styles through their own personal sieve, but how many of their admirers will be merely content to try and copy them in a doomed attempt at emulation?

Gareth is well aware of the problem. "Whereas you wanna encourage people to go out and start doing it for themselves, you don't want to have a million other groups picking up bass clarinets and trying to play 'out'

and leaving the soul behind.

"I'm much more interested in the group that maybe goes out and does two minute pop songs, but doing them with real feeling and soul, than everybody jazzing up and picking up saxophones and stuff. I see a lot of The Pop Group stuff coming back now, you know?"

Bruce picks up a copy of The Face and opens it at a spread of photos on "Beatnik style". "This



SEAN OLIVER: — The Stinkin' Hog to his friends. He was in Green Park tube station running through his usual repertoire of Michael Jackson songs "and all that sort of rubbish" when his eyes met those of famous pop star Gareth Sayer. Their lives were never to be the same again.

A much travelled man, 19-year-old Sean has lived in Antigua, Middlesex, Norfolk, Cyprus, Norfolk, Canada and Kent because his father "was in the airforce, or summing weird like that."

Arriving in London, he opted for busking at the age of 16 because "it was the easiest way of making a living without doing all the shit," later ditching it to play with his Rip Rig pals.

is the sort of thing that annoys me. That whole thing of 'Okay, now jazz is in'... His face screws up in disgust.

GRADE THREE: Green was the colour, and other tales of youth.

UNFORTUNATELY but perhaps inevitably, misconceived comments about Rip Rig and Panic's "new Pop Group" have already

started appearing in the pop press. Bruce says he doesn't care.

"To be perfectly honest with you, no offence, but I could just do without the music papers altogether."

I comment that unlike Rip Rig, The Pop Group seemed to be complacent about their abilities and too po-faced.

"I would never point any fingers," says Gareth, "but you probably know who might have had something to do with it. The Pop Group wasn't trying hard enough. We're trying a lot harder."

"Let's just say we were pretty young," states Bruce disparagingly.

So do they see Rip Rig as the next stage in an evolutionary process?

"I want it to be much more than that," says Gareth. "Their stuff was like here, and this is like... going out" (he demonstrates with his hands). "You get this feeling that people think they really mean it when they play something really hard."

"Those kids whacking their guitars as hard as they could meant they wanted to change the world more! You'll probably find that someone who plays a lot more soft has got a lot more guts, playing with sensitivity. I'm not talking about Neil Young!"

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folk History in the making

THERE are musical experiences that stay with you through life, colouring everything that follows. They come few and far between, and fewer and farther as the years go by, but I think I scored a rare addition this year: the first time I heard the Champion String Band.

Ostensibly, it's nothing but three superlative musicians playing together on some out-of-the-way tunes and accompanying a few songs. So why does the hair rise on the back of my neck with the same unmistakable shock of recognition that here musical history is being made?

The opening notes of their first album, perhaps, give a slight clue, in the syncopated accompanying chords which leave the initial pulse of the tune ambiguous. We are miles away from that monotonous thumping which accompanies so many dance tunes, as an entire audience taps its feet, recognising a rhythm but pounding it into the ground before it has had a chance to take flight.

The Champion String Band all have day jobs, they recorded the album for a new label dedicated to the non-commercial and anti-hype, and they have no plans to do it full-time. They might just be fooling themselves.

All three of them have track records, though only two of them might be well-known outside their immediate milieu. Tom Giffellon, of course, was a strongpoint of the High Level Ranters for many years, but was also known among fretting aficionados as a guitar-player tasty enough to make it on to Kicking Mule — a rare accolade.

Fiddler Chuck Fleming first came to prominence with the old JSD Band, played in the last version of Trees, one of the more neglected bands from the heyday of English electric folk, and was in the first version of Five Hand Reel. Then he moved up to Durham, and was rarely to



Karl Dallas raves about the Champion String band

be heard outside local sessions, and the NE-based Joint Stock Ceilidh Band which he ran with Jim O'Boyle and Martin Matthews.

Martin Matthews is the third member of the Champions, and though the folk scene doesn't know him well outside the North East, he won the all-England fiddle on banjo and was runner-up in the all-Ireland, after having played for only a couple of years.

They have all, as you can see, got roots.

And though the band has suddenly come to prominence — largely through their unheralded but powerful appearance at the Cambridge Festival — its "overnight success" is really the product of those roots, combined with about six months' very intense work getting a repertoire together.

When Rubber Records' Geoff Heslop, who has used them to launch his new Black Crow label, saw them at their very first gig at the Bridge Hotel, Newcastle, he asked if they saw the band as a short-term thing. Tommy told him: "We're not planning to go on the road

professionally with this band, so we can't offer you a great deal. But we hope to look at this as a fairly long-term project over a period of years rather than months, to see where we can go. We've started."

"We know where we are but we want to see how far we can go, because there's no point in having a band unless you're going to stretch yourself and each of us stretch each other."

THE result of that stretching is a tension between the artists, their material and each other which produces a genuine excitement, rather than the hyped-up amphetamine rush of lesser instrumentally-based groups.

"So far," says Tommy, "we haven't been doing many gigs. I don't want to sound smug if I say public reaction has been most gratifying, that's a very trite phrase, but I was in tears on Friday night (at Cambridge) when I came off. There were tears as big as pinkies in my eyes because the tent stood up and applauded."

"Again, it's been a long time since I went on stage with

butterflies, because none of us know what the reaction's going to be yet."

This is partly to do with the differing musical personalities of the people concerned, but it also has a lot to do with the material, much of which comes from a largely unknown traditional composer called James Hill.

To most north-easterners, he's the man who composed "The High Level Hornpipe" and that's it, but to the Champions — and particularly to the Scot, Chuck Fleming, whose fiddle playing comes from a similar background — he was a master musician and composer whose use of unusual "flat" keys rather than the common G, D and A has limited the wider acceptance of his compositions among fiddle-players.

Chuck points out: "Kerr's did an Irish collection and eight of the 12 hornpipes in it were written by Hill. So who's this man James Hill?"

"I thought to myself, well, 'The High Level', right, fair enough, there's a hornpipe and it's found itself in a lot of the collections, but I've got this feeling about Hill that a lot of his

music is played and he never got credit for it.

MANY of the Hill tunes in the Champions' repertoire were rescued from oblivion when they were found in a notebook discovered during building work on an old collar's home. One of the tunes in it is dated 1828.

They were probably fiddle exercises, and though Chuck admits that they might not sound very beautiful "in the raw", in the Champions' hands they have a unique character, partly because of the lack of open strings in their original sound, and to a great extent because of the arrangements.

"The challenge was really to put the tune down and to try to work the banjo or whatever into that tune," says Chuck, "and this is where Martin comes in. This is his strength."

Both of them give a lot of the credit to Martin Matthews, and Tommy would agree with Chuck's estimation: "This guy holds melodies, 32-bar harmonies and descants in his head. I've worked with some musicians in my time through the years and nothing with Martin is dead and done. Martin Matthews is special, you know. He really is."

Writing an appraisal like this seems to me dangerous, because the worst thing to happen to the Champion String Band would be the sort of over-publicised forced development in their early days which the Albion Country Band, for instance, found so hard to live up to.

I hope they will be able to resist the temptations about to be put in their way: to go back to being full-time professional musicians, to jump on the roundabout of constant touring, the one-way road to sterility as artists and exhaustion as human beings.

Tommy says: "We're excited about what's happening and I know, myself, from my own experience, that it is building. We won't be touring a lot, we just can't, it's as simple as that."

"Martin is a newsgang, Chuck works, I'm still teaching. We hope we'll get abroad, maybe once a year, maybe two short tours of Britain, and, of course, there's weekends."

"If clubs would only get together instead of bickering and combine to put on a concert at a weekend they could pay us a decent fee and more likely than not make a profit on the night."

news



The McCalmans — just one of the guests lined up for the Biddle Arts Centre. Pic: Valerie Wilmer.

chart

- 1 WILD AND BEAUTIFUL Billy Whizz
- 2 SEAL SONG Osian
- 3 THE WOMAN I LOVED SO WELL Planxty
- 4 THE BEST OF THE BOSTON BAND
- 5 MOST COVERED MOUNTAIN De Danann
- 6 CRANN ULL Clannad
- 7 FRENCH RECORD Kate and Anna McGarrigle
- 8 SHOT OF LOVE Bob Dylan
- 9 STRICT TEMPO Richard Thompson
- 10 IN THE TRADITION Boys of the Lough

Chart supplied by: 23RD PRECINCT, 23 Bath Street, Glasgow, G2.

Spinning the world

THE first new Spinners single in years is released this week by Dingle's Records. The record, "Around The World ... And Back Again" marks a welcome change from EMI's endless re-cycling.

THE Home Service, who made their television debut last Thursday on BBC2's second film from the Cambridge Folk Festival, are to appear on BBC1's "A Little Night Music" at 11.10 pm on Wednesday September 23. They've also been asked to write and record a new theme tune for Radio 4's "Start The Week" show on Monday mornings.

PEEWEE Hunt has left Mechanical Horsestrough to concentrate on running his real life bar in Trowbridge, and a folk club at the Fir Tree Inn, Radstock, Avon. His place in the Horsestrough will be taken by Tim Webb of Thirty Thousand Frenchmen, who are disbanding. Peewee is also forming a company, "Factual Ales Ltd" with Bill Vincent, who runs the Rochester Brewery Folk Club. They aim to provide "A professional

and human folk festival bar service" at festivals next year.

PETER BELLAMY will be presenting three concerts based around his songs of Rudyard Kipling, which he has successfully recorded in the past. The premier of the show will be at the St Edmunds Arts Centre, Salisbury on September 8, followed by the Atheneum Arts Centre in Warrminster on September 11 and finally at the Fox and Firkin, Lewisham High Street on September 20. The latter show will feature slides, and will be in aid of the Kipling Society.

THE third BBC2 programme from the Cambridge Folk Festival will be shown tonight, September 3 and features Jake Thackrey, the McCalmans and Steeleye Span.

NORTHUMBRIAN traditional band Badger in The Bag are playing at and running a new folk club at the Biddle Arts Centre, Walsand, Newcastle, with a strong series of guests up to Christmas, including Nic Jones, Peter Bellamy and the McCalmans. The Badgers are also helping with the third Hallow-histle Folk Festival, which runs

from September 18-20, and includes sets from Michael Chapman, the Celebrated Ratcliffe Stout Band and Archie Fisher as well as workshops and dances.

PERFORM now has a new magazine covering the south west of England. "The South West Junction" is to be published in August, De-

cember and April and aims to provide "A positive response."

for all involved in the performance of folk music in the south west." Editor Martin Bloomer is keen to hear from fans, performers and club organisers. He can be contacted at 1, Elliott Close, Sylvania Park, Exeter, EX4 5ED.

THE Contortions are a three piece act that play Irish traditional, Chinese and Armenian music in and around the south east. They are also the winners of the first ever South of England Busking Championships and comprise Paul Hancock, Mark Tursuskie and "contortionist" Christine Wilkinson, who dances to their music. They've just finished a colour video, and are busy arranging dates at present.

SAFFRON Summarfield, who has been presenting a one woman show at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival, goes into the studio soon to record her new album with young jazz musicians, and will mark "a new direction" for her music.



Peter Bellamy

caught in the act

Any Trouble open fire

ANY TROUBLE
The Venue, London

IKING Any Trouble doesn't make me feel guilty anymore. Recommended by this paper - this writer (?) actually - with an enthusiasm that probably left the group red at the neck with flustered embarrassment, Any Trouble's first album was elsewhere given unmerciful stick.

Much of the time, it seemed like the chaps were being kicked around the houses because they'd reminded some critics that they could also be fans.

Under attack for reasons that had little to do with the quality of their music, Any Trouble remained good-humoured, persevered and finally came up with a decisive reply to their critics with their second album, "Wheels In Motion".

Last Wednesday's hash at The Venue was more than a showcase for the new record: it was a triumphant vindication of every claim made for their excellence. Deliant from the bell, they opened with the two-listed dynamics of "Open Fire"; suddenly, the dancefloor was the only place to be.

Caught square in the slipstream of their initial assault, it seemed damned unlikely that anyone could find Any Trouble less than totally irresistible. Clive Gregson writes the kind of songs that could single-handedly support the jukebox industry. Packed with hooks, they never seem crowded; tingling with incident, they have a perfect sense of pace and measure, sparkling, they're never just glossy, and they're usually so arresting that they have your heart in handcuffs from the first flutter of his guitar, the first vocal intonation.

Most groups have one good shot. Any Trouble don't even bother to count the ammunition. Having reached an early climax with an achingly moving version of "Dimming Of The Day" (ignited by an eloquent Chris Parks guitar

solo), they regrouped, reloaded and fired off a furious volley that included "Romance" and a rattling "Second Choice" and an inspired juxtaposition of the epic "Walking In Chains" and the unsettling drama of "Eastern Promise".

With the late exception of the starkly somber "The Sun Never Sets", the rest of the set was dedicated to the ankles with an especially fearsome version of "Turning Up The Heat" threatening to dislocate the knees. Reluctant to acknowledge closing time, Gregson led the group back for a trio of encores. Augmented by the O-Tips' brass section, they weighed in with a dashing "Wheels In Motion" and a flamboyantly grooving "Rock 'n' Roll Shoes".

And then there was Gregson, alone in the spotlight, crooning "Girls Are Always Right". Chris Parks' deftly played guitar lines heralding the group's powerful punctuation. As Any Trouble left the stage for the last time, Gregson paused for a moment to savour the audience's applause, genuinely moved; genuinely moving. - ALLAN JONES.

CLIVE GREGSON hits the target. Pic: Lesley Sy.

RICK WAKEMAN,
Hammersmith Odeon,
London

PERHAPS it was the imperfections of the sound system or the fact that the gig was being tele-recorded and every time we put our hands together the director shone ruddy great floodlights in our eyes; perhaps it was the fact that I was marooned up in row 7 of the gods without an oxygen mask so the whole thing seemed a bit remote; whatever it was I really didn't enjoy this Rick Wakeman one-off as much as I'd expected.

Despite having minimal connection with the George Orwell classic, Rick's "1984" album marks a really significant stage in his development, if only because of its concentration upon songs, rather than demonstrations of instrumental virtuosity.

I must confess I'd hoped this gig would be used as an opportunity to present the album in three-dimensional form, instead of the trip down memory lane it turned out to be, with individual selections from the new album presented alongside such long-awaited revivals as a "Catherine Of Aragon/Anne Of Cleves" medley from "The Six Wives Of Henry VIII" and blockbusters like the battle from "Journey To The Centre of the Earth".

Although it would have missed the narrative sweep of the new work, this could have been an acceptable alternative, placing Wakeman's newest compositions in perspective with his total achievement.

On the album, the main burden of the songs is carried by the formidable Ms Chaka Khan, who could make "Baa Baa Black Sheep" sound as significant as the Last Trump, but obviously she's not available for tours, so Rick has recruited an unknown lady, Cori Logas, to do the job.

Physically, she lacks Chaka's magnificent presence, but whether her voice comes up to scratch I'd find it hard to say, since the sound man didn't seem to pay her much attention.

Whatever my own reservations about the evening, the audience loved it, especially when he played some of the less well-known tunes from his repertoire. I was interested, too, to see how well his one solo piano tune, "Danielle" (dedicated to his wife), went down. - KARL DALLAS



ALTERED IMAGES' CLARE sets the visual standards

FUNKAPOLITAN
Edinburgh Nite & Day Club

CROSS Steely Dan and Shaktiek, add a bit of punch, put them in a disco and you get Funkapolitan.

They were on very late last Wednesday at the Nite & Day Club, the 12-hour cabaret which forms the backbone of the Edinburgh Rock Festival this year.

Appearing alongside Richard Strange's Cabaret Futura, which was in residence

for a week, it seemed like an incongruous mix of styles, but the pantalooned futurists managed to shelve their pretensions for a while and enjoy a good old-fashioned boogie.

There's not much that's old fashioned about Funkapolitan's act, though - it's slick, tight, gutsy and entertaining, and ventures way beyond the limited range of harmonies employed by more conventional disco bands.

What they seem to be saying, with their inventive chord

changes and cheeky lyrics (tag two solid minutes of "Gimme A Gimmie") is that most funk bands take themselves far too seriously, and you're not going to catch them doing that.

Their rapping is wicked, their beat infectious (even two denim-clad heavies who'd leaked up from a Whitesnake gig downstairs were enjoying themselves) and their single "As The Time Goes By", of which they gave us two different versions, has to be a winner. - ELY SALE

ALTERED IMAGES/
APRES MOI
Rafers, Manchester

IT'S EARLY evening and I'm sympathising with a couple of young fans who have travelled all the way from Sheffield, only to be told that they will not after all be able to see their new pop favourites Altered Images in action.

The idea of an early show for the kids and a later concert for the older ones (with bar) appealed to my critical instincts. What better way to look over a band who are receiving encouraging notices than compare their commitment to two contrasting audiences?

So I arrive early and notice the two disappointed fans learning that Altered Images have turned up too late to perform an early set. They can watch a brief soundcheck for nothing, but must leave immediately afterwards, otherwise the club licence will be in jeopardy. Many more soon arrive but they don't complain when they hear the news. Altered Images don't apologise and I begin to understand why the concert halls and clubs are currently struggling.

Four hours later I return to a sweaty, heavy club atmosphere, with a number of glassy eyed bear swillers having replaced many of the true fans. They're just happy to find another resting place and don't really notice an exceptional support set from Acres Moi.

"The Window" is the highlight - a darkly atmospheric number which showcased an incredibly danceable drumbeat, a lively guitar range and delicate vocals. Acres Moi deserved an encore for that song alone.

Altered Images finally take the stage and launch into an impressive set which steers deliciously in between zippy innocent pop and inventively modern dance music. Vocalist Clare sets the visual standards, tantalisingly moving around her microphone, singing lightly above an irresistible blend of full blooded music. The controlled energy and youthful enthusiasm soon reach sections of the audience.

"Happy Birthday", the latest single, is typical of their live-wire set - a set which more than confirms their potential, and was only blacked by their earlier questionable attitude to the kids who made a wasted journey. - FRANK MORRALL

entertainment guide

THE HALF MOON

83 LOWER RICHMOND ROAD
PUTNEY, SW15
01 760 7307

Thursday 3rd
PACIFIC EARTHQUAKE

Friday 4th
FAMOUS BLUES BLASTERS

(Presenting Phish Blues)

Saturday 5th
CRANNOG

Sunday 6th
KEVIN COYNE

+ Q & A

Monday 7th
NOEL MURPHY

+ ARKWICHES FERNET

Tuesday 8th
GONZALES

Wednesday 9th
BOB KERR'S WHOOPEE BAND

COMING SOON: MONDAY 13th

PRELUDE

KINGS HEAD

4 FULHAM HIGH STREET
JAM METRES FROM
PUTNEY BRIDGE

Thursday 3rd
THE MGS

Friday 4th
THE 45

Saturday 5th
RED BEANS & RICE

Sunday 6th
BILLY FLAMES AND CAPER

Monday 7th
JOHN SPENCER'S BAND

Tuesday 8th
DUCK SOUP

Wednesday 9th
THE DOWNBEATS

DINGWALLS
RHYTHM 'N' BOOZE
CAMDEN LOCK, CHALK FARM RD, LONDON NW1 01 267 4967

THE SEARCHERS
★ FRUIT EATING BEARS ★
THUR 3 MUSEUM 11 NIGHT

MANUFACTURED ROMANCE SUPPORTED BY RESTLESS
SAT 10
SEVEN YEAR ITCH THE BILL STICKERS
REVINA & THE MAGNETICS WITH MAGIC MICHAEL

ALTERNATIVE TV
SUPPORTED BY 77 FROM AUSTRALIA THE MODEL 5
WED 9
JOE SUN WRECKLESS ERIC
THUR 10

JOE SUN WRECKLESS ERIC

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musicians' world

Drumming in the chips

WARREN CANN of Ultravox runs his sticks over the Linn Drum Computer £3605 inc VAT (depending on dollar exchange rate).

ANYONE wishing to be a drummer can now look further than an acoustic set of drums and a suitcase full of percussion odds and ends. There are two basic types of electronic percussion to peruse: player activated (Syndrums, Simmons SDS 5, etc), and player programmable (Roland, Korg, Hohner).

The former are more popular than the player programmable types — the "drum machines" — but I feel the true potential of programmable drum machines is yet to be realised and that ultimately they will become a new instrument in their own right.

Linn Electronics, a Californian firm, have released the Linn LM1 Drum Computer and it's a product that is shaking up the percussion world. By digitally recording real drums and storing the information on chips the artificiality of earlier drum machines has vanished. I quite liked some of those crude synthesized copy sounds, but ultimately they're frustratingly limiting.

The Linn's sounds are very good. They're probably what many people would consider the classic "good bass drum, good snare drum" sound to be. Flat through a desk it's almost certain an engineer will say "Bingo!... we work with this; now what effects do you want?"

As source sounds it's easy to take them in any direction you want to go, all ideal starting points for gig sound-check or recording session.

The LM1 Drum Computer features 12 drum and percussion voices: bass drum,

snare drum, high-hat, high and low toms, high and low congas, cabasa, cowbell, handclaps, tambourine, and clave. The level of each voice is controlled by a mixer panel and the 12 faders are overridden by a master volume control.

Each voice is available through either stereo high and low impedance master outputs at the rear panel, or from its own individual output jack, a sensible way to arrange it. Each is individually tuneable for pitch and I find that as you raise the pitch of the bass drum and toms the liveness gives way to a more damped sound; some will like it, some won't.

The tempo control is read in beats per minute off an LED display (as are all function status), but it's odd that you can only get the tempo to display when the machine isn't running.

Programming the memory or playing in real time is accomplished by tapping a button corresponding to each voice. The 13th channel on the mixer adjusts the gain of the

metronomic "click" to help you program.

When programming you can overdub, erase (in bulk or selectively), edit, ad lib, or copy until you have what you want. You can accent five of the voices via a duplicate button beneath the main one, but I think the level they have been set at is too great for realistic, or rather, practical usage.

I could rant on about every minor fault I found, but the Linn is still so good that they don't matter. Any breakthrough has its initial share of bugs.

If you're thinking the breakthrough is the regurgitation of real drum sounds from a rhythm machine instead of a synthetic one then — fine. It's not. What's truly special about the Linn is given away in its name; it's a drum computer. It has a greater programming capability and flexibility than any drum machine before it and that's where things really do get fascinating.

"REAL" drum sounds were an inevitability; Roger Linn got the jump on everyone

there, but he made sure that you could actually exploit them by being able to program them into doing whatever you wanted.

An auto-correct facility lets you commit minor timing errors and get away with it — they'll be pulled into time. You can adjust it for increasing degrees of subtlety, or even cut it entirely. Perfect.

Also you can place different percentages of emphasis on odd and even beats to give you varying degrees of swing instead of straight time. You can alter the length of the measure of the drum beat to any length you want, a feature that's incredibly useful. But the Linn really comes into its own with the memory and chain section.

You can program 100 different drum beats into the Linn. The "chain" section of controls enables you to construct up to eight different chains of drum beats, and if each different beat pattern can be termed a "link" then you have the capability of storing up to 99 links in each one of those chains.

Once the knack of writing a beat is learnt you can obtain

progressively complex arrangements of those beats and their myriad variations written into chains to follow a piece of music all the way through in complete sympathy to its changes.

Drummers seem to have an irrational fear of things like the Linn, but it's so unnecessary.

It's really the opposite, they have a headstart over anyone else through their experience of playing. True, there are lots of people who might play another instrument as their main vehicle of expression, but they can hear great rhythms and only lack the long practise at motor skills to actually carry them out. The Linn can help them realise those sounds.

A drummer has had a long time to learn why certain things are played, when to leave things out, taste and judgement in what to do. How to do it comes with experience. In that respect the Linn is as dumb as an electric shaver. It can only do what you write into it. So, if your ideas are average the results will be likewise.

I've had quite a long time to become familiar with the Linn as I had one of the first few to

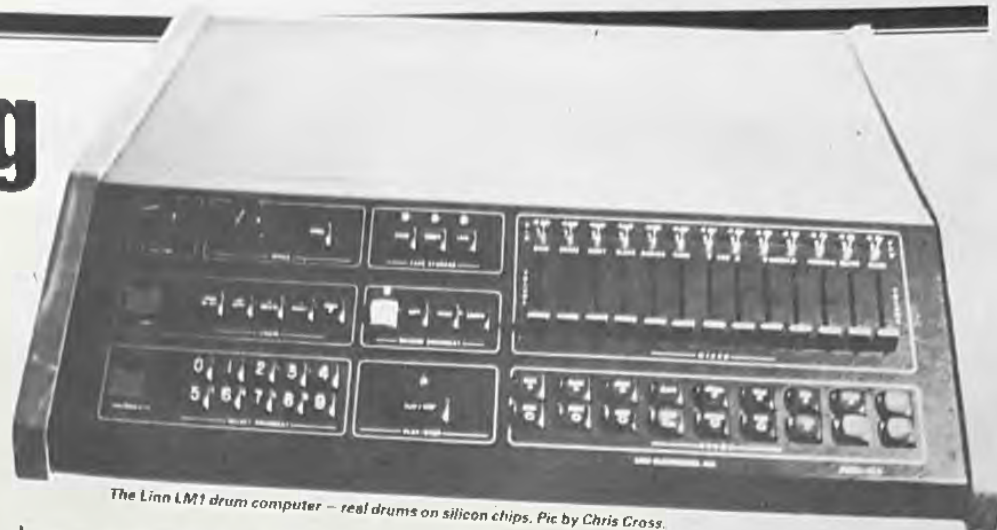
enter the country via Syco Systems, London. Like other instruments it takes time to get the best from it.

LINN have been developing the machine throughout its run and the newer models have slightly different features. The fascia is laid out a bit differently. A series of LED dots now light to indicate which mode of auto-correct you're in — a quicker way of positive identification.

The programming buttons have been changed and they now have a different touch to them, the action is firmer.

The Linn Drum Computer is not cheap but, then again, neither were the first synths. Rooms full of electronics brooded over by teams of technicians paved the way for portable Wasps; given time and demand through interest, increased production will bring down costs and more people will make music in new ways. Try one.

Enquiries: Sound Equipment, 97-99 Dean Street, WC1. Tel 01-734 2812.



The Linn LM1 drum computer — real drums on silicon chips. Pic by Chris Cross.

Warren Cann of Ultravox. He got one of the first Linn's to come into the country. Close up of the Linn (below) shows chain section.



Solo team.



Phil Collins plays Premier.

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sound and vision



Hitachi DE 57 stereo cassette with Dolby 'C'



DBX model Disc Decoder and DBX discs

When silence is golden...

THIS year's Harrogate International Festival of Sound was a bit like Sherlock Holmes' dog that didn't bark in the night.

Harrogate is the one British hi-fi exhibition which portrays what is really happening in the world of domestic sound. The glossy ads in the hi-fi mags may propose, but Harrogate can dispose of their claims with short shrift if they don't live up to their promise, or if they are just plain irrelevant to what the home listener needs for better sound.

This autumn, however, despite the fact that the noise from the demonstrations was louder and louder than ever — there's a fortune awaiting the first European exhibition organiser to erect really soundproof, acoustically correct demo rooms — the most significant sound was a long, loud silence.

What everyone was being so quiet about was the worst-kept secret in the business: the fact that when digital records become available, most of the equipment on show will become obsolete.

In America, the New York Times, no less, has already queried the expenditure of huge sums on promoting obsolescent equipment, when

everyone knows the digital audio disc is only just round the corner. And yet you could search the whole exhibition, and the only references you'd find to the impending digital revolution were on the stands pushing high-quality, digitally mastered discs — though, of course, the discs themselves were good old-fashioned steam-sound analogue pressings — and the fully-functioning 3M 32-track digital recorder shown working on the Scotch tape stand.

As far as I know, this is the first time since the 1974 Audio Fair that the consumers have been allowed to see how the products they buy are produced, but away from its studio setting, the 3M recorder didn't really prove much, one way or another.

UNFAIR

Of course, I'm being unfair. So far, we've got no firm date for the launch of the first digital audio discs, which are presumably waiting for the bugs to be got out of the video disc launch. Though the RCA and Philips-Pioneer video systems are already on sale in the States, they've been plagued by massive software problems, which is presumably why the planned spring '81 UK launch has been put back, and why, though Philips and Pye both had Laservision demonstrations on their stands, they were being coy

about a possible European launch date.

The Sony compact audio disc, which they have developed with Philips, using similar technology to Laservision, has been demonstrated in Europe, and the results are impressive — especially coming from a disc hardly larger than a compact cassette.

But, again, no dates are being forecast, as yet.

Even when digital discs come on the market, they'll not make existing discs obsolete overnight. Just as King Oliver jazz records are still played today, though they come from the era of pre-electric recording, no one's going to throw away their Beatles records, just because they weren't digitally recorded in the first place.

But I'd expect new analogue recordings to become rarer and rarer, and classic analogue performances to be gradually remastered into digital form — a process that could take as long as ten years.

I'm not naive enough to expect the manufacturers of analogue equipment to advise us to hold off buying till then, but what surprises me is that the organisers of hi-fi exhibitions aren't taking the consumers into their confidence, and demonstrating to them the shape of sounds to come.

It was good to see, therefore, that the most exciting news out of Harrogate was something that will be top of the tree well into the digital era: the

Upgrading for



Sony's new cassette cleaner

THERE'S a cautionary tale in next month's hi-fi press about a guy who was unhappy about the harsh "top end" (treble) on his sound system. He tried a better stylus, but it got worse. A better one still, even worse. He was thinking of getting a new deck, when he tried a completely different tack.

For just 50p he bought some velvet, and put it between the turntable and the anti-static mat he had on it.

"Result — wow! Fantastic! Firm open sound, good separation, smooth top end, midrange: more forward, bass: firm, transients: frightening!"

He's now put mats under his home-made bookshelf speakers, fitted a ceiling tile as an airtight gasket in the speaker cabinets, and is now planning to fit rubber grommets between the drive units and the cabinets.

"For a modest £1.12, my system has improved no end," he concludes.

The moral of this tale is: before spending a fortune on expensive electronics, why not try a few pence spending on making what you've got work right?

For instance, your records. Yes, I know the quality of pressings gets worse and worse, but are you making the best of the ones you've got?

Are you storing them on end, or flat? Never store records flat.

Do you make sure you always handle them by the edges, that they are always kept in their inner liners, that when they're put in their sleeves, you turn the liner so the opening is closed to dust? So many people store their albums with the liners turned so they can be extracted more easily — but if you can get them out easily, dust can get in easily, and for dust read grit.

So far, we haven't cost you a penny, but we've increased the life of your albums, and cut down the snap, crackle and pop noise when you play them.

If your records are in poor shape, then ten-to-one your stylus is, too. The gunge in the grooves collects round it and clogs it up, making the sound woolly and remote when it should be clear as crystal.

Currently, I keep my stylus clean three ways: First, by cleaning the record as it plays, with a carbon-fibre sweep brush; second by cleaning the stylus after each play; third, by giving it an extra-special chemical clean once every week or so.

Actually, to clean after each play I've got a couple of gadgets, both from top quality cartridge manufacturers.

The first is a combined stylus cleaner and record clamp from Nagaoka,

whose moving coil cartridges are deservedly famous. It fits over the record as it's playing, incidentally removing unwanted resonances between disc and turntable, resulting in a lighter bass sound.

Around the handle of the clamp is a disc of what looks like nylon plush, and after each playing you just place the stylus (g-e-n-t-l-y)

on to it, and it cleans off any loose debris.

I haven't had it long enough to check out what this particular clamp does to the sound, but it certainly cleans the stylus up a treat.

For what the pile won't remove, though.

Goldring's new electronic stylus cleaner really does the trick. This is a battery-operated triangular

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sound and vision

announcement (and, to a privileged few, the demonstration) of the fantastic new Quad electrostatic speaker.

At £500 each, these are not cheap - though they're not the dearest speakers on the market, either. But they are definitely a standard by which all other speakers will be judged, for many years to come.

In actual fact, Peter Walker of Quad has been working on this new design since 1963 - hence its marquee number, ESL-63 - which was itself only eight years after the first prototype of their earlier electrostatic loudspeaker had appeared. That loudspeaker is still on sale today, slightly modified to improve its directional properties with the growth of stereo, and it will continue to sell alongside its new big brother.

When it first came out, the earlier speaker attracted a lot of controversy. Some of the criticisms of its lack of bass response were justified, but just as some people today complain about the "too clinical" sound of digital recordings, what some of the anti-ESL brigade were attacking was the failings of the recordings they loved, which the loudspeaker exposed quite uncompromisingly.

The new ones are as revolutionary as their predecessors, but have made up for their slight failings. The bass response is better, and they can be played much louder without danger of overload.

I was interested to read Angus McKenzie's view, though, that with such a "clean" pair of speakers, one tends to need rather less volume than with the normal cone-type, and that was certainly my impression.

The appearance of this speaker couldn't have come at a more important time, especially for studios planning



Akai recorder with "Extra Efficiency" tapes

to "go digital". New recording techniques have allowed us to get more out of the grooves of old phonograph cylinders than contemporary listeners were able to hear, but with digital recordings, engineers will be limited only by the quality of the speakers they use for monitoring.

In other words, once the recording is mixed and made, what you hear is what you'll get - and no more, whatever improvements follow on. A lot of sloppy recording gets past the present, fairly slapdash methods of monitoring sounds - and the fairly rudimentary equipment used in the home - but with digital recording, it'll be like opening a window into the studio itself.

The ESL speaker gives the engineer a similar window, and he's going to have to keep it open if the industry is not to hit a wall of consumer resistance compared with which the current "home taping" scare

will be just a ripple.

Incidentally, one good thing about digital discs is that they'll be harder to copy on to cassettes.

Meanwhile, the next best thing to a digital recording is one with a really efficient noise reduction system, and it was notable that the number of competitive systems available is increasing. Dolby, of course, reign supreme, but this year a

number of items available with the new Dolby C process, which claims up to ten times the noise suppression of the familiar Dolby B, were promised.

In actual fact, few of the promised models were on show, and the ones that were, from Nakamichi, were actually

very similar to those being shown as long as a year ago. This time, however, they are about to come into the shops, and very handsome they are, too.

Prices range between £425 and £695, so they are not cheap, but the dearest one actually sets itself to the type of tape you have put in by recording a signal and monitoring the effect.

If you are as confused as I am becoming by the different grades of ferro, chromo, ferro-chromo, pseudo-chromo and metal tapes on the market, this is a valuable short cut to good sound, if an expensive one.

Nakamichi also showed a slimline "black box" to add Dolby C to any existing tape deck, selling at less than £200.

The other noise reduction "news" at Harrogate was hardly something new, since dBx noise reduction has been slowly but surely eating away at Dolby's pre-eminence in the studios for some years, but it does finally look as if adequate dBx domestic equipment is going to become available now.

On paper, dBx claim much better results than Dolby, and only direct A-B comparisons will prove what the truth is. What is important about dBx, however, is that they haven't restricted their interests to tape. To play a dBx-encoded disc is an experience almost as startling as one's first experience of digital sound -

and a darn sight lower in price. As I've said, dBx discs aren't new. I've had a dBx-encoded version of Mike Oldfield's

"Ommadawn" for several years now, but it never went on general sale in that form. In general, distribution problems have held up availability of dBx discs, and the equipment to decode them.

Of the range of various dBx items, including things like "dynamic range enhancers" (actually, our old friend the studio compressor-expander) and a "subharmonic synthesizer" to add ultra-low frequencies to your sound system generally below the 50Hz bottom limit for most records and broadcasts, the most useful item is the 224 model encoder-decoder, usable for tape and disc, selling at about £195, including VAT.

Other quick news from Harrogate was the fact that Philips appeared to have adopted the Olympus/Panacorder format for a stereo microcassette system some while ago - the growth of the Philips 2000 VCR series video with the addition of a Pye model, and the development of a new EE ("Extra Efficiency") open reel tape by Maxell and TDK in conjunction with the new range of recorders from Akai.



DBX Model 224 - simultaneous encode/decode system

a few quid

gadget, about three inches along each edge, with a small rubber disc on which the stylus can be rested. Turn it on, and a high-frequency vibration shakes the rubbish free - there's even a small mirror so you can see it happening.

It's not cheap, but for less than £10 it's a neat gadget that really seems to work.

And when you're cleaning the stylus with brush or (as I prefer) plush pad, always brush towards the tip, never backwards, which will bend it or even, eventually, break it off. All styli are expensive, even if you don't personally spend as much as £100 for them, so treat them with care.

BEFORE we leave the stylus, make sure your cartridge is properly aligned on to the pick-up arm. Alignment protractors are cheap enough, and the directions are simple.

Make sure, too, you are tracking at the correct weight by using a stylus pressure gauge, another cheap item.

Also make sure your loudspeakers aren't feeding back acoustically up through the record deck plinth, through the turntable and into the

cartridge, producing distortion. A common cause of this is having speakers on the same shelf as the turntable, which should always be avoided.

If you live in a bedsitter, or for some other reason it's unavoidable, you can get shock-absorber feet to minimise the effect. And use a spirit level to make sure your turntable is not tilted.

Remember that the quality of what you get out of a system depends first of all on the quality of what you put into it, which is why it's also vital to spend comparatively small sums on decent FM aerials and cassette tapes - and on keeping cassette heads clean and regularly demagnetised - to prevent deterioration of

sound there, too.

The other place where sound can be improved comparatively cheaply is at the loudspeaker end. We've already discovered acoustic feedback between speakers and pick-up, but some attention to where and how the speakers are fixed can be helpful, too.

Never put speakers directly on the floor, even big ones. Your bass sound will suffer - and so, probably, will be the people downstairs if you live in a flat!

Always get proper speaker wire, and if you can afford it, get some of the special low-loss cable that has come onto the market. It really works.

Finally, do make sure your speakers are in phase i.e. correctly connected!



Goldring's new stylus cleaner

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Tom Verlaine

from page 9

lot to this early immersion in the rigorous disciplines of jazz. He admits to being a firm believer in craftsmanship. He reckons there's a depressing lack of it about these days, in rock at least.

"There's not a whole lotta instrumentalists coming up," he protests. "I mean Clapton in what, '66 was like 19. Is there a 19-year-old guitarist that can even play Clapton lines in England today?"

Well, I doubt if anyone would want to.

"Well it's the interest in... Where? You know what I mean? There doesn't seem to be any interest in capability even for its own sake."

"I've never been interested in it for its own sake — Clapton definitely was. Clapton had heard 100 American blues guitarists and fell in love with the sound. There haven't been any instrumentalists coming out of anywhere in the last ten years that I've heard."

I ask if he's heard the Scars, because I reckon there's a bit of Verlaine in guitarist Paul Research's playing. Verlaine hasn't, but he writes the name down.

Inevitably, he has no time for the funk fixation sweeping across New York and all points east and west. He's particularly scornful of Talking Heads. "Talking Heads is your little eclectic band that listens to Nigens guitar music and decides to get y'know, somebody from Funkadelic on their record. It's just not my cuppa tea." He suppresses a wince.

"I don't know if David Byrne's looking for something that's international, you know

what I mean? To me you're more international playing it from yourself with the greatest depth you can, 'cos that's how you're gonna reach somebody in their own depth. Ornette Coleman may go to Algeria or Morocco and play with local musicians, but he still plays Ornette Coleman. Or Dizzy Gillespie may go to Africa but he still plays Dizzy Gillespie. "I don't know if it's a valid criteria, that band. Basically my ears tell me something, my ears don't care for their sound."

STILL, there are some similarities between your singing and David Byrne's. Wouldn't you agree? Verlaine tries not to choke on his coffee. "Oh no no no... that's the wrong thing to say to me." He lets out a slow gurgle of laughter and changes the subject.

"I noticed after hearing this record that my voice had changed somewhat. I noticed while I was singing these songs that it seemed to be doing things that it didn't do before or sumpin, like different kinda phrasing on words and stuff."

It's all part of Verlaine's personal quest — but for what? He's kept that distinctive sound, sharpened it and tightened it, and he still writes some great songs. Most of all there's his guitar, declaiming, describing, asking questions... maybe the guitar says it all.

"Well yeah," he says. "I think it's a voice, like a guitar is a voice and it ought not to just mutter away to itself... like a guitar is struggling to be a human being in a way."

from page 11

Wishbone Ash, the Kinks, Greg Lake. This place is supposed to have a long echo, but surely it doesn't go back that far.

The Stereotypes attempt to make a bargain with the crowd — "You dance and pretend to enjoy yourself and we'll... hurry up." It goes down no better. There's a light bunch of ardent fans up front but they can't carry the day.

By all rights the Enid shouldn't even exist, let alone get an entire festival on its feet screaming and shouting for more, but they did it. What can you say to "Land Of Hope And Glory" with a glob of metallic xenophobia dumped in the middle? And there's Robert Godfrey, fat, bald, bearded — whose first words to this seething mass of potential can-launchers are: "What an absolutely splendid lot you really are. Isn't it a wonderful day."

I never have figured out whether people laugh with him or at him, but laugh they did. And here's the Enid turning out gloomy classical bits like "Judgement" that wouldn't be out of place in the soundtrack of a BBC2 arty-crafty play and they're getting applause. Makes no sense. It'll be a long time before I forget seeing Robert Godfrey bouncing like an overfilled brandy glass and singing "Wild Thing". I will try, though.

Time for a wander round the estate, past the military clothing bus at the end, a brief glance at the tattoo artist who's set up shop in the back of a Sherpa van and a check over the messages board.

"Thank you whoever got my girlfriend out of the crowd after she was canned last night," runs one hastily sketched note. Pity he spoils the atmosphere by demanding the return of his leather jacket which he must have wrapped round her in a misplaced moment of tenderness. "It's really important". True love without a doubt.

Punters are still drifting in and swirling the overheated pitch into a dust bowl. Reading must be unique in that you have to queue to get out. If you want re-admission it means collecting one of those plastic wrist straps they splice round turkeys in supermarkets.

The toilets are filling up nicely, or not so nicely, but the price of beer is coming down. Who needs to buy it if you're standing up close to... 38 Special? The best thing they did during the entire set was hurl a half-filled bottle of whisky into the audience and if the music was anything to go by, that was probably watered down as well.

What that crowd can have in common with bland Southern States boogie will remain as unathome as what is currently being put in the middle of a roll and called a hot dog.

The Desperadoes finally solve the problem of cans. They have fielders. On the first salvo a bruiser at the side of the stage marks out the pitcher in the audience, wades through to him, smacks him one then climbs back on stage



GREG LAKE dreams of the good old days.

Reading fest

to tumults of applause. No more cans.

It can't be easy to upstage a 40 piece steel drum band all in matching scarlet track suits, but someone managed it by clambering onto the corrugated roof of the stage next door and flinging any available lumps of metal at pursuing security men. The Desperadoes plugged on with plinking versions of standards old and new but the audience recognised a good fight when they saw one and kept their eyes on the human fly eventually swatted by a massed security raid from all four corners of the roof.

In fact that was the only serious breach of defences within the festival confines. On Friday night 18-year-old Stewart Woolcott was stabbed, on Saturday night a lift was raped after accepting a lift, but both took place beyond the perimeter and away from Reading security (the organisers were quick to point out).

During the three days police made 143 arrests and the site's hospital treated 1,000 cases, 100 up on last year and most of them cuts from flying cans. The average individual's knowledge of anatomy hasn't improved much — "ere, should one ankle be bigger than the other?" was one of the more informed enquiries the staff dealt with — though

someone who had a finger sewn back in 1979 did drop in to wiggle it at them and prove it was still working.

Wishbone Ash are also still working. Dutiful and business-like as ever, they slipped into the familiar twin guitar strut, as much an institution as Reading itself. Can't help feeling sad for a band that may inwardly strive to move forward but is unable to get away from the earliest songs, in this case "Phoenix", "Jailbait" and "Blowin' Free".

On the other hand there was no compunction at all for Greg Lake who, without sign of conscience, plundered his own songs and those of almost every band he's belonged to. "Farfare For the Common Man", "Court Of The Crimson King", "21st Century Schizoid Man", "Lucky Man"... ang on, don't a lot of his songs have the word "man" in them!

Partner Gary Moore wrestled with "Parisienne Walkways" and as usual turned in a guitar solo ten times larger than life. It's tempting to say that Greg Lake's chubby chops share a similar proportion, but that would be unkind. On the strength of past victories they got a stirring reception, but on the basis of latter day contributions they deserved a sizeable raspberry.

Thank the Lord for Nine Below Zero who were the

day's single chance to dance and rapidly converted the field into a ten-acre ballroom. Night-time, a sudden chill wind and the resulting scattered bonfires had already dressed it up as an Olympic style barbecue.

Obviously the best way to keep warm was to jump up and down, a practice that tracks like "Rockin' Robin" and "You Can't Please All the People" could only assist. Uppity as a tom cat with your foot on its tail, they strutted out a fierce 50 minutes of R & B, harmonicas squawking in the wind.

The Kinks have an altogether tougher relationship with their audience. They'll give them what they want, but only after they ask nicely. Out on two platforms running into the audience, brothers Ray and Dave jumped and teased before they eventually came out with the favourites — "Lola", "You Really Got Me" and finally "All Day And All Of The Night".

It's possible to forget how good a rock band the Kinks are. When at last they hit those songs they could have been written yesterday.

I don't know how they managed it, but after taking the boards as one of the oldest and longest established bands to play Reading that day, they left sounding the freshest. All that and a suntan too. — PAUL COLBERT



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