

PARKER SCAGGS ELO HOT NEWS



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RIP IT UP

N.Z.'s FREE ROCK PAPER



Brent Eccles Greg Clarke Geoff Chunn Mike Chunn

GOOD MORNING CITIZENS

After a year or so of torpor, Auckland is starting to fill up again with working bands who are a little more than that label often implies. Hello Sailor probably started it, but now there are enough bands around offering enough extra to ensure that a night out at a rock and roll pub or club is something more than a chance to show off your new jeans and haller top.

Although the Sailors have already broken free of the pub circuit, and seem able to exist solely on concert work of one kind or another, there are quite a few others who are hovering on the brink of bigger things. Because of their pedigree, if nothing else, Citizen Band must be prime contenders in the cross-over stakes.

Although you can see the shudders when they hear it, the band boasts two members with the ever more common Split Enz connections, a Space Waltzer or two, and even a member who can trace his pedigree back to the near-legendary Moses. Besides these rather esoteric backgrounds, drummer Brent Eccles and guitarist Greg Clark have spent years playing in club and pub acts — of which Vox Pop is only the most recent.

Undoubtedly, the band is chiefly the product of the combination of the Chunn brothers. Geoffrey is the principal songwriter, and Michael, after five years or so playing bass with Split Enz, gives them a depth of experience a little out of reach of the rest of their league. Considering the kinds of projects the two of them have been involved with before, the style of Citizen Band's music comes as something of a surprise.

While Geoffrey Chunn also began with Split Enz (as a drummer), in the last two or three years he has become noticeable more for solo work (backed by strays from Waves, amongst others) and a short-lived band called After Hours. Both of these lineups played a curious kind of melodic — and usually drummerless — material with definite blues and bossa nova tinges.

Michael was a major contributor to the gothic rhythm section of Split Enz during a period when they could never have been accused of being simplistic. It is still some-

thing of a shock to walk into a pub where Citizen Band are playing and hear a genuine beat group.

Like most bands at their stage of development, Citizen Band cannot produce a complete three hour working night of original material, but their choice of songs to cover is a clear indication of how they are trying to shape their own songs. No ten-minute covers of "Cocaine", no Chuck Berry, but a careful selection from the goldmine of 1960's pop music. There can't be another band in the country covering Larry's Rebels.

At times, Citizen Band come closer than anyone else to capturing the spirit of witty, song-centred rock and roll which got swamped by the march of the axe heroes. A song like their next single, "Out in the World," with no real echoes of antiquity, recognises the value of a simple approach in a way that almost parallels some of the more recent foreign phenomena. They retain the recognisable New Zealand sound and themes of some of Split Enz' better days, but still demonstrate a preference for pop like that shown by Elvis Costello or Tom Petty. They might not like what those two play, but they probably like what they listen to.

Still, it's not as simple as that. Obviously, from their first record, and their problems in putting together an album which really suits their tastes, they haven't yet found an easy way to put across that feeling while recording. "In a Lifetime", quite a little gem in its own way, is no frontal assault on the pop sensibilities of New Zealand, and they admit to dissatisfaction with a portion of the recording they have completed for their already overdue debut album. In an effort to counter a tendency to over-embellish and fill up all sixteen tracks, they have

turned to playing 'live' in the studio, and cutting out over-dubbing. Already, the products of the new approach, which will probably appear on a maxi-single with "Out in the World" seem much more immediate, and suit their intentions better.

This is also reflected in their decision to cut back to a classic two-guitar line-up and do without the keyboard contribution originally intended. Warren Sly, who co-wrote a number of the repertoire with Geoffrey Chunn will feature on those but from here on it will all be streamlined.

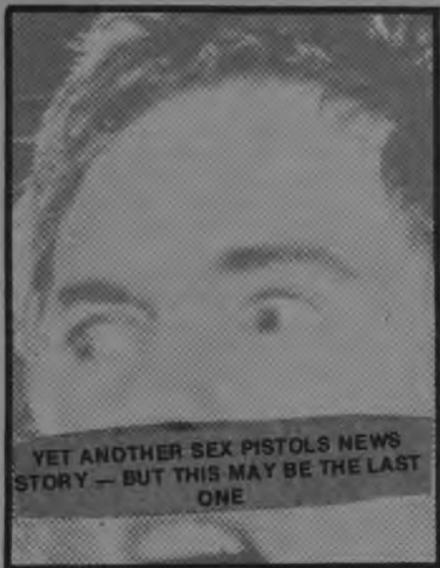
As well as their problems in the studio, they obviously also find it difficult to translate a successful small scale act into something which sounds good and holds the attention of a large audience, especially an outdoor one. They have been regulars at this summer's spate of one day festivals, and also appeared at Nambassa. Most of the time they suffered from major sound

balance problems and the casual pace of an act born in the Island of Real Cafe began to look leaden in front of an audience five hundred times as large.

The fact that they refuse to be rushed or to drop parts of their act which could be called 'idiosyncratic', is probably a reflection of the experiences of Michael Chunn with Split Enz. He has said that he felt that that band got somewhat out of control of those who should have been in charge. Citizen Band, with no manager, no immediate plans for emigration, beyond "playing in Takapuna", and a satisfaction with recording in Auckland at the moment, do not seem likely to head out for huge debts and stresses on the international market.

There is no telling how long they will keep that attitude of course. If they do manage to stay happy domiciled in Auckland they will be pretty well unique. I can't think of any other band of their originality or potential which has stayed home and stayed together. It may well be that there will be a day when, to survive, Citizen Band have to move. If they do, you can safely count them among the statistics — the big ones that got away.

Francis Stark



The Sex Pistols no longer exist.

But the circumstances behind the break up of the band are clouded in a haze of conflicting rumours, statements and stories. Their record company, Virgin, issued a bulletin that is the clearest statement of the position: "It's now quite definite that the Pistols are going their separate ways for the moment. But don't exclude the possibility of any permutations of the line-up in the future, though certainly they have no intention of working for the time being". But all four members of the group remain contracted to Virgin as individuals.

The break up occurred at the end of the

band's brief but sensational US tour and as they were due to fly out to Rio de Janeiro to perform at a concert at which Great train robber, Ronald Biggs, was to give a poetry reading. It seems Johnny Rotten felt that this smacked too much of a publicity stunt and decided to quit.

Alternative versions of the final split up have manager Malcolm McLaren, firing Johnny Rotten for "driving us mad with his ego".

At one point Rotten said: "I didn't leave the band. The band left me. No comment on the reason why. This is not the death of punk rock, it's the demise of one band of many. It stopped the rise of the Rolling Stones of the 80's ever happening."

At another point Rotten stated: "I was bored chronic singing the same set that we'd played for 2 years. I won't work with any of them again and that's no great pity. Steve can go off and be Peter Frampton, Sid can go off and kill himself and nobody will care and Paul can go back to being an electrician."

In fact Sid Vicious, bass player for the Pistols, collapsed on a plane flight from San Francisco to New York and was rushed to hospital with a suspected overdose. Vicious was apparently advised by a doctor that if he didn't slow down on his use of alcohol and drugs, he'd be dead in 6 months.

As for the future — Johnny Rotten has said he intends to form another band possibly with more of a reggae flavour. He said: "I'm looking for a new band, but I don't want to do no Johnny Rotten show again. I hated that in the Sex Pistols."

We'll keep you posted.

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POSTAL BIDS WELCOME

Tours

Nobody should need reminding that the event of the year occurs on Thursday March 9th at Western Springs Stadium when **Bob Dylan** plays his only New Zealand concert.

The only other overseas tour for the month of March is that of jazz guitarist **George Benson** (who is profiled elsewhere in this issue). Dates are: Christchurch — Thursday, March 23; Wellington — Saturday, March 25 and Auckland Sunday, March 26.

Additional tour has been announced for March. **Seals & Crofts** will perform in Auckland — March 20, Wellington — March 21 and Christchurch — March 24.

Flyers Split

Midge Marsden, long-time frontman and singer for the Country Flyers, is to split from the current edition of the band. The remaining members — Neil Hannan, Bud Hooper, Richard Kennedy and Beaver — will continue under a different name.

The split has been motivated by an increasing divergence between Midge's musical leanings and those of the rest of the Flyers. Bassist Neil Hannan commented that they'd now played with Midge for three years and they felt a change in direction was essential.

The new band arising out of the Flyers is as yet unnamed but will include guitarist Paul Clayton, well-known for his work with Quincy Conserve and the Golden Horn Big Band. It will feature slightly more jazz-oriented and instrumentally based material, much of it original. But Beaver will still be a featured vocalist on soul inspired songs.

You can catch the new outfit at the Island of Real on the 23 of March and thereafter at gigs around the country.

down 2, then right

Up Durham Lane, turn right at Broadcasting House, turn left up the alley (watch out for the doggie-do), and you'll find Zwines, another new nite spot devoted to punk and new wave.

Inside, time and care has been taken to deck the place out in the best of punk chic, with spray-can doodlings extolling the virtues of resident band, the Scavengers.

A wall of mirrors behind the bandstand allows you to admire yourself and adjust your safety pins. Turn around and you'll find food and drinkies.

Upstairs there's plenty of seating, allowing a panoramic view of the band and the dancers (no gobbing from above, please), plus a juke box, offering the latest and greatest in new wave music, along with other selections (play the Wild Cherry, Wings and Fleetwood Mac discs at your peril).

The Scavs keep the place jumping, literally, from 10pm till whenever. Venture onto the dance floor at your own risk. These dudes dance for keeps.

If disco is dire, ballroom is boring, and the pub just can't keep pace, give Zwines a try. Old Farts need not apply.



One person sure to be glad the Sex Pistols have called it a day, is crooner **Frank Sinatra**, aged 61. Said Mr Sinatra when asked to comment on this latest youth phenomenon of punks and their rock: "They make me want to throw up. It's a bad scene and I don't understand why it has to exist when there's so much in life." Punks please take note . . . meanwhile the grand daddy of punkdom, **Keith Richard** of the Rolling Stones, has had his trial for trafficking in narcotics rescheduled for May. On being interviewed by *High Times*, the US drug magazine, Richard said, "I feel very hopeful about the future. I find it all very enjoyable with a few peak surprises thrown in. Even being busted, it's no pleasure but it certainly isn't boring. And I think boring is the worst thing of all. At least it keeps you active." . . . 1977 seemed to reach a peak of rock 'n' roll fatalities and already on the list this year is Chicago guitarist **Terry Kath** who shot himself at a party. Kath, who was 33 years old, was apparently unaware that the gun was loaded. Yet another recent casualty was Blood, Sweat and Tears sax player **Gregory Herbert** who died on tour in Holland. . . . Now a return from the grave. **Peter Green**, legendary guitarist in the original Fleetwood Mac, is newly married

TMG TOUR

Currently touring NZ for 6 weeks from February 15 are the Ted Mulry Gang, a hard rocking 4 piece based around singer/bassist Ted Mulry.

Before the formation of the TMG, Ted had already established himself as a successful songwriter in Australia but with the birth of the Ted Mulry Gang saw him moving in the direction of Stones styled raunch mixed with Status Quo boogie.

The formula has won them a big following in Oz and they've released 4 albums and many more singles. They've racked up a reputation as one of Australia's hardest working bands with a no bullshit approach to their music. As Ted once commented, "It's drinking music." You can catch TMG at the Glenfield Tavern, Auckland — March 6th to 18th or at the Lion Tavern, Wellington — March 20th to April 8th.



and according to reports has his feet back on the ground and is ready to work. He's signed a recording contract and **Mick Fleetwood** of the Mac has agreed to manage Peter. Green was last heard of when he was committed to an institution for threatening his publisher with a revolver. It'll be good to have him back. . . . **Fleetwood Mac's** next album will be a double (no not a live one) due to what Mick Fleetwood terms a 'glut of material'. It also means that if they can sell as many copies as they did of the last one, then they'll all be twice as rich . . . other reincarnations include **Alex Harvey** who, just a few months ago, announced his surprise departure from the Sensational Alex Harvey Band. Alex has returned with a new band and an ambitious show using complex scenery and lighting, with a choir and orchestra. . . . ex-members of the SAHB, **Zal Cleminson**, **Chris Glen** and **Ted McKenna** have formed **Zal** with the addition of guitarist **Billy Rankin**. . . . also new on the group front is a band going by the name of **UK** that's — wait for it — a supergroup, if anyone can remember what that word means. Members of UK are: **John Wetton** (ex King Crimson, Family, Bryan Ferry and Uriah Heep), **Bill Bruford** (ex Yes, Crimson and Genesis), **Eddie Jobson** (ex Roxby Music and Zappa) and guitarist **Allan Holdsworth** (ex Soft Machine). Impressed? . . . just in case anyone still cares out there, **Ozzie Osbourne** has rejoined **Black Sabbath** after the new singer they hired on his departure didn't work out. . . . On the financial front, rock music interests seem to be taking over the burgeoning American soccer business. A syndicate which includes **Mick Jagger** and Rolling Stones manager **Peter Rudge**, **Peter Frampton** and his managers, **Paul Simon** and manager, as well as well-known promoter **Bill Graham** and A & M label boss **Jerry Moss**, have just bought the soccer franchise for the city of Philadelphia. The top team in the US soccer league is the New York Cosmos who are owned by Warner Communications, the parent company of Warner Brothers Records. And manager-producer of the group Chicago, **James William Guercio**, owns the franchise for part of Colorado. . . . **Patti Smith's** new album is to be titled *Easter* and will feature a track she wrote with **Bruce Springsteen**. . . . the future of rock 'n' roll also lends a helping hand on **Lou Reed's** newie, *Street Hassle*. . . . **Rick Danko**, is aided on his first solo album by all his mates from The Band

and also **Eric Clapton** and the ever-present **Ron Wood**. . . . **Elvis Costello's** second LP to be titled *This Year's Model*. . . . second album from **The Clash** to be produced by **Blue Oyster Cult** Man — **Sandy Pearlman**. . . . the much delayed second album from **Boston** has been completed, though it's still some way from release. Reports suggest that it's similar in style and quality to their huge-selling first. . . . **Warren Zevon** will record his third album for Asylum under the direction of producer **Jon Landau**. Hopefully this means that Landau has finished work on the long awaited **Springsteen** album. . . . and finally the strange alliance between producer **Kim Fowley** and singer **Helen Reddy** is about to yield up an album and **ELO's** **Jeff Lynne** has apparently written a song specially for the project. . . .



Phil Judd

joining **Abba** — *The Album* and *Abba* — *The Book* is **Abba** — *The Film* which is released overseas this month. Where will it all end? . . . **Kris Kristofferson** currently doing nicely as the latest Hollywood stud/leading man, has taken time out from all that movie frolicking to record two albums — one solo and one with wife **Rita Coolidge**. . . . **Rod Stewart** and **Elton John** are to star in a movie together. As yet the script has not been worked out, but it has been decided that the film will feature comedy as well as the expected music. Shooting will begin late this year or early next. . . . oh yeah it's to be called *Jet Lag*. . . . **Wing's** single "Mull of Kintyre" has sold 30,000 copies in N.Z. since its release in December. So guess we can expect **Macca** mania when the boy's new album, *Londontown*, is released later this month. . . . on March 9, **Dragon** begin their first ever national tour of Australia in a gruelling series of one nighters that takes them through NSW, Queensland, Victoria and Australian Capital Territory. But due to negotiations between management and **Dragon's** American label, **Portrait**, dates for the later part of the Aussie tour remain unsettled. . . . **Split Enz** packed out London's Roundhouse at the end of their British tour. Particularly notable in an extremely favourable review in music trade paper, *Music Week* is mention of new material: "Phil Judd's new song 'Play It Strange' is surely bound for single's chart honours — a classic in the mould of 'Whiter Shade of Pale' in terms of atmospheric". . . .

Tommy, **Ken Russell's** visual extravaganza based on the Who's rock opera, is to be re-released and is scheduled for screening round Easter time in Auckland and elsewhere in early April.

With this issue we bid a rocking farewell to cub reporter **John Malloy** off to gain a bit of the old O.E. He has now been promoted to overseas correspondent as long as he promises we don't have to pay the air fares.

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Pete Townshend in Tommy

pssssssttt!!!

Wellington Rumours

Steve Gilpin's band **Fragments of Time** has undergone a startling name/music/image change. They have gone right into new wave material and have become **Mysex**. They are recording a new single, and hope to take it to the land of Oz before the wave breaks.

Red Rose has broken up but all four members are staying within the local music scene. The split was amicable and mainly because of musical differences. One member has joined Mysex, the drummer has returned to Skylord and the two remaining members are staying together to form another band.

Both **Rockinghorse** and **Coast to Coast** have original songs entered in "The Entertainers". Coast to Coast are continuing their North Island pub crawl and Rockinghorse are still getting plenty of gigs around the country as well as a lot of pub/club/concert work in town.

Another name change — this time the **Golden Horn Big Band** has changed to the **Rodger Fox Big Band**. Rodger is the musical director and trombone player in the band. The R & R Music shop now sponsor the big band. Both the **1860 Band** and the **Big Band** are going through to the Tauranga Jazz Festival at Easter. This year a Big Band contest is included in the programme.

Rough Justice have been out of town since Christmas, and they have a lot of out of town work booked for the future — about the only Wellington work in recent times was a week of varsity dances for orientation.

Things are hotting up on the nightclub scene — **Ziggys** are introducing a new scheme every Wednesday and Thursday night for bands and theatre groups — providing a venue on a "percentage of door" basis. Because of the new Wellington motorway project, both **The Cabin** and **Uncle Albert's Attic** are going to be demolished. **The Balcony** is being reformed to make a new club which will be called the **Side Street Disco**.

Simon Morris from the **Heartbreakers** has been hearing rumours that the band is

breaking up. They aren't. At present they are still at **Cricketers** and at the beginning of April, Simon and Don Wilson are taking two months break to go overseas. When they return the band will resume work in Wellington. Long term plans still include going to Aussie.

Lynne Attwood

Auckland Rumours

Schtung have been building up a healthy following with their residency at the Royal International Hotel. If you want a night of excellent music, try the Cascade Bar, Royal International Hotel, Auckland. Tuesdays to Thursdays... **Hello Sailor** have a fan club. Would-be fans can write to P.O. Box 15477, New Lynn for further information. Send a stamped-addressed envelope...

Auckland's beat group, **Citizen Band**, have finally decided on a single from their myriad of sessions. It will be a triple play featuring "I Feel Good", "My Pohutakawa" and "Good Morning Citizen"... Although the Manurewa Rock Show was poorly attended, the people that bothered to attend got a chance to test some new groups.

Tailor Made covered some familiar material well and **Iceberg** continued to spread their suburban neuroses with suitable distortion. The same show featured **Alastair Riddell** with guest keyboard player Jan Preston from the Red Mole Troupe. A vast improvement there. Riddell's new single "What Good Does It Do Me" is being pressed at the moment... **Raflo B**, the Auckland Varsity radio is coming across loud and clear on 950 khz. The programming is a relief for those oppressed by American Top 40 although I would have thought "Smoke on the Water" was a no-no in '78...

The **DA ROX Club** in Christchurch has achieved notoriety by featuring a new spate of groups. **Doomed**, **Vandals**, the **Vauxhalls** and **Vacuum Blue Ladder** all performed recently to a very enthusiastic, pogoing public. Looks like Wellington is still the place to leave if you want to bop... Although **Split Enz** are touring Poland, it is not predicted that they will defect. The group's as yet unrecorded album is tentatively entitled **Evil Thoughts** and will be produced by themselves... Watch out for the **Tourists**.

L.B. Sands

The Beach Boys Love You



Carl Wilson Brian Wilson

it was perfect Beach Boys weather. Sunday afternoon, hot and dry, cloudless sky, and a Fleetwood Mac size crowd. Quite an achievement for a group whose biggest successes were 10 years ago.

But the taste of mythical California sand was everywhere. Some of these people weren't born when "Surfing USA" hit, but they've all ridden the eternal wave. Even if like the girthful Brian Wilson, only in the surf of their minds.

"Hi, everyone," Mike Love welcomes to a parade of Beach Boys hits. "California Girls" opens and there's immediate microphone problems. These will recur, taking the edge off some songs. The breeze scatters the sound a little, but these are minor quibbles. It's all hard work and good fun.

Everything a Beach Boys fan could want to hear. Twenty seven songs. Bar a couple, all hits. Naturally, some are received better than others and the continuing sound problems do no justice to others. "Heroes and Villains" suffers. But "Help Me Rhonda" has the audience up and clapping. "A potentially rowdy crowd out there," says chairman Love, before racing into "Wouldn't It Be Nice" and "Get Around."

By now the Beach Boys can do no wrong. Earlier flat periods are forgotten, even the seemingly interminable noodlings of saxophonist Charles Lloyd, which prompted the man next to me (I'd never seen him before) to ask, "Disappointed?"

They dedicate "Good Vibrations" to the audience. Maybe they do that every time out but it has the desired effect. It's one of those generation anthems that seems to last when all the other memories fade.

An encore is called for and Dennis Wilson shambles on stage to do his piece. Hands in pockets he gravel-voices his way through "You Are So Beautiful," a performance all the more affecting for its being thrown away.

He's joined on stage by the others for a good rocking climax: "Barbara Ann," "Rock and Roll Music" and "Fun Fun Fun".

"Barbara Ann" is a classic idiot song. Always felt bashful about admitting to liking it. Several thousand other idiots owning up feels good.

Gonna have fun fun till daddy takes the T-Bird away.

Ken Williams

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resident scribbler - Johnny Mutant
watch out Legs McNeill!!



ALPHONSO JOHNSON - 'Spellbound'

Alphonso is carving his own legend on the Progressive music scene with his third solo album, 'Spellbound'.



CRAWLER

At last a whole group that really does go off like a Rattlesnake! Includes the single 'Stone Cold Sober'.



WET WILLIE - 'Manorisms'

The Best of Southern Rock and certainly more of 'the Burgundys' than 'the Blues' Wet Willie debuts on Epic with 'Manorisms'



AEROSMITH - 'Draw the Line'

18 months after the Platinum 'Rocks' (5 million units actually), Aerosmith 'Draw the Line' for another platinum success.



EARTH WIND & FIRE - 'All 'N All'

Featuring the single 'Serpentine Fire' the album contains eight new titles. ALL 'N ALL - an excellent album..



STEVE KAHN - 'Tightrope'

As a guitarist who's worked with Steely Dan and George Benson, the talent of Steve Kahn defies easy description..



KANSAS - 'Point of Know Return'

Already gold in the USA, let Kansas take you Off the Edge to 'The Point of Know Return', It's well worth the trip.



BLUE OYSTER CULT - 'Spectres'

Hard as nails but as Sweet as cream 'Spectre' show the Blue Oyster Cult to be the Fleetwood Mac of Heavy Metal.

THE OTHER COLLECTION





If 1977 saw a resurgence in NZ rock 'n' roll (and I think it did), it was also particularly Hello Sailor's year. In my reckoning of NZ rock awards for last year, they'd take best single — choose either "Gutter Black" or "Blue Lady" — and walk off with best album too.

Touring through the last few months of last year broke them to a wider audience but also took its toll on the health of singer Graham Brazier's voice. Voice trouble developed on the beach tour early this year and Graham confessed that the problems had depressed him so badly that he almost quit. But the success of their set at the Great Western Music Festival soon dispelled any such thoughts. Brazier's voice had largely recovered and they went down a storm.

Since that time, they've taken a well deserved holiday and this, together with the decision to quit constant pub gigging, has allowed Graham's voice to recover and also given the band a chance to review their repertoire — reworking existing material and introducing new songs. They've now accumulated more than enough new material for an album.

A single will be recorded first though, and most likely candidate is "Son of Sam", already an established stage favourite. "Blue Lady" has been released in Australia and they're working on video clips to back up the promotion of the single over there.

All in all, I'm prepared to bet 1978 will be Hello Sailor's year too.

Alastair Dougal

MORE Junkie Lovelies

Everybody knows what Norman Mailer meant when he used the word "fug" in *The Naked and the Dead*. Of course he wouldn't have to use that word if he had written his novel in the 1970s but then again his characters probably would have gone on to far more kinky things than this by the Age of Aquarius.

Anyway this is all something of a long-winded intro to the Fugs who were Reprise's resident group of shockers before Zappa came along. The group, which consisted of the basic trio of Tuli Kupferberg, Ed Sanders and Ken Weaver, were very much part of the mid-sixties New York underground scene — the post-Beat generation. Their E.S.P. material never saw light of day here, but nearly all their Reprise catalogue did — *Tenderness Junction*, *It Crawled into My Hand*, *Honest and The Belle of Avenue A*. It is almost impossible to describe the Fugs' characteristic melange of Rabelaisian obscenities, literary erudition, and hard-core country-and-western. All these albums are worth looking for although *It Crawled* is probably the best. Their last album *Golden Filth*, recorded live at the Fillmore East, never made it here, probably because of the extremely racy spoken intros to all the songs.

Another strange Reprise release was Mort Shuman's first album *My Death*. Now here's a man with a healthy 'pop' credential (remember "Save the Last Dance for Me" — well, he co-wrote it). However *My Death* was something of a change of pace. Inside a cover of hirsute butch Mort we have nineteenth century obstetrics texts read to the music of Handel, orgasms to the Clementi Piano Sonata, and lots of Brecht and Brecht (trendy thespians take note!).

Another 'pop' man who has done some amazing work is the great Van Dyke Parks. Like Randy Newman, VD did lots of work with groups like Harper's Bizarre — "Come into the Sunshine" and "The Debutante's Ball" are probably his best known tunes. His initial Warner's album, *Song Cycle* was the floptro of all time money-wise, Warners ended up offering copies at a cent each, and it was five years later before VD was able to record his *Discovers America* album, a fabulous and funky calypso-ish treat with the hand of Lowell George all over the place. Parks' version of Little Feat's "Sailing Shoes" is quite magical. Incidentally, I suspect our local companies just threw up their hands in desperation when Parks' third album *Clang of the Yankee Reaper* was released in late 1975 — it certainly never made it here.

The more we delve into this, it appears that the music world is indeed a Jekyll and Hyde business with writers paying their dues with journeyman projects so that they can eventually 'do their own thing'. Jimmy Webb is such a man, although he managed to do some tremendously interesting 'con-

cept' albums with late sixties people — Richard Harris' *A Tramp Shining* or *The Yard Went on Forever*, Thelma Houston's *Sunshower* or the Fifth Dimension's *The Magic Garden* which is a lovely lovely album.

Webb's solo career has had its ups and downs too, and his first album is still his best. *Words and Music* appeared in the early seventies and was such a notorious bad-seller in New Zild that H.M.V. were scared off Jimmy Webb for a while. In *Words and Music* Webb played most of the instruments himself, and wrote some of his sharpest lyrics as well as one of his loveliest songs in "P.F. Sloan". And the deliberately stringy sound acts as a healthy corrective to his usual romantic tendencies.

Space is running out so here are some odd left-overs: Geoff and Maria Muldaur's *Pottery Pie* (Reprise) still surfaces occasionally, and you should also look out for Geoff's first solo album *Is Having a Wonderful Time* (Warners) before that vanishes forever. The Muldaurs were long-time residents in the Jim Kweskin Band, and Kweskin's *Garden of Joy* (Reprise) is a fine example of their work. In fact, after listening to *Garden of Joy* and *Pottery Pie* one can see where Maria Muldaur gets the formula for her solo albums from.

Now what about putting pen to paper, and giving us details of some of those favourite records that you are sure not enough people know about? Could make for a lively letters column.

William Dart

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Benson Breezes In

George Benson may make guitar playing sound relaxed and easy but don't let that mislead you. He didn't turn singer overnight either.

Benson, who turns 35 the day between his Christchurch and Wellington shows, was first introduced to the electric guitar at the age of six when his stepfather played him some Charlie Christian recordings. In subsequent years there were many informal lessons on a number of old instruments but the boy's first love was singing

rhythm and blues. (In fact he did a vocal recording for RCA at age 10.) Upon leaving school at 17, Benson formed a rock 'n' roll band in his home town of Pittsburg. He played guitar, but his voice was still the main feature.

Then at 19 he was hired by jazz organist Jack McDuff and it was in his three years with this group that Benson says he became a real guitarist. On the road, playing day in, day out, the musician developed. He also got to see other guitarists, picking up tips and teaching himself a lot of theory, especially harmony.

Finally, the desire for greater personal expression led Benson to form his own quartet, using the same lineup of guitar, organ, tenor-sax and drums. He wanted to play only jazz but finances often dictated the band accept rock gigs, sharing the stage with go-go dancers. As leader, Benson had major responsibility for music which was being heard not just by a jazz clientele but by rock and R&B audiences as well. He continued to grow, and so, slowly, did his esteem, first among fellow musicians and gradually among a growing coterie of fans. During this time he began recording, either on his own, as in some of the Blue Note supersessions, or with his own group. CBS have recently released a double album, entitled *Benson Burner*, compiled from quartet recordings in 1966-67. In this music the gutsy R&B influence is particularly evident. Polydor have also re-released a '68 L.P. *Blue Benson*, featuring Herbie Hancock and Billy Cobham.

By the early 70's Benson had landed a contract with CTI, and he made a number

of recordings, both as leader and sideman, with that label's heavies: Hancock, Ron Carter, Jack de Johnette, Freddie Hubbard et al. It was CTI who first directed him towards the pop market. His '72 album *White Rabbit* (after the Jefferson Airplane hit) was nominated for a Grammy. He even tried unsuccessfully for the top twenty with a formula-funk vocal single, "Supership."

Irrespective of the pop marketing, Benson was now firmly established as one of the great jazz guitarists. In both '72 and '74 he was voted best guitarist by his peers in Playboy's "All-Star's All-Stars" poll.

After CTI he signed with Warner Brothers where he made *Breezin'* and the rest, as they say, is history. *Breezin'* has sold well over 2 million copies making it the largest-selling jazz album in history. Its appeal is remarkably broad. (This writer knows both bowls-playing retired business-men and fifteen-year-old disco dudes who own and love it.)

Of course the music has changed. It is a heavily hybridized form of jazz that Benson plays now. Electronic keyboards, bass guitar and lush string/moog arrangements replace the organ and tenor sax of yesteryear, and the rhythms are tailored to popular taste. Nonetheless the lyrical guitar style is still there.

Whether you prefer Benson as pop singer, jazz guitarist or simply like his funky beat, his New Zealand performances should fulfil all expectations.

(Benson's new L.P. *Weekend in L.A.* is reviewed elsewhere in this issue.)

Peter Thomson

Guitarist-singer George Benson is touring New Zealand this month.

have previously played with Bowie: guitarist Stacey Heydon, drummer Dennis Davis and bassist George Murray; as well as three 'new' members: Simon House (ex Hawkwind) on violin, keyboard player Shaun Maynes and synthesiser player Roger Powell from Todd Rundgren's Utopia... another act hitting the road is Genesis who have tour dates set up from March to November. Interesting enough their November dates take them to Japan, could they make it down here? The purpose of the tour is to promote their new album, *And Then There Were Three*, which is released in Britain this month. As you'll recall, with the departure of guitarist Steve Hackett, Genesis are operating in the

studio as a three-piece. All tracks on the new album are co-written by Phil Collins, Mike Rutherford and Tony Banks — the three remaining members. On stage Genesis will continue to use American drummer Chester Thompson and the new man recruited for stage work is Daryl Mark Stuermer who'll play guitar and bass. Stuermer has previously played with George Duke and has spent the last two years with Jean-Luc Ponty... and finally it seems that punk's favourite casualty, Sid Vicious of the Sex Pistols, bad mouthed Split Enz as everything he hated in music. Tim Finn of the Enz was delighted. He told NME: "It made me go all warm when I heard that." Nice one, Tim.

who's where

Ted Mulry Gang March 6-18, Glenfield Tavern, Auckland. March 20-April 8, Lion Tavern, Wellington.

Rocking Horse March 13-18, Te Mata Havelock North. March 20-25, Windsor Castle, Auckland. April 5-8 and 12-15, Royal Tiger, Wellington.

Golden Harvest March 13-18, Te Mata Hotel Hastings. March 13-18, Sandown, Gisborne. March 20-25, Cabana Hotel, Napier. March 27-April 1, Palace Hotel, Rotorua.

Spatz March 8-11 & 15-18, Royal Tiger, Wellington.

Hello Sailor March 11, Soundshell, Gisborne. March 12, Soundshell, Rotorua. March 16-18, Gluepot, Ponsonby. April 3-14, University Students' Arts Council Tour. Dances at High Schools — Rutherford (March 30) & Otahuhu (March 31), April 1, North Shore Teachers College.

Citizen Band March 23-25, DB Tavern, cnr Albert St & Wellesley St, Auckland. March 30-April 1, Milford Marina. March 12, Soundshell, Rotorua.

Urban Road March 8-11, DB Tavern, Auckland. March 15-18, Milford Marina. March 22-25, Ponsonby Hotel.

Bruce Morley Little Big Band Saturday afternoons, Windsor Castle.

Schtung Tuesday, Wed & Thurs nights at Cascade Bar, Royal International Hotel, Auckland.

Bamboo March 10, Island of Real.

Murray McNabb's Hard Jazz March 15 & 29, Island of Real Cafe.

Dean Rod Band (from U.S.A.) March 11, Gisborne Soundshell.

Red Mole April 5 & 6, Island of Real

Tama's Band March 24, Island of Real

Rick Steele March 30 — April 1, Island of Real.

Sam Hunt/Gary McCormack March 8 & 9, Island of Real.

Jan Kemp/Margaret Blay/Riemke Ensing March 16 & 17, Island of Real.

Th' Dudes March 17 & 18, Island of Real.

Country Flyers, March 11, Island of Real.

Beaver, Hannan, Hooper & Kennedy, March 22 & 23, Island of Real.

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late news!!

David Bowie returns to the concert stage with 13 dates in the UK scheduled for June. This will be the first time the thin white duke has played Britain since 1976. The band he'll use includes three members who



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ELO
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PHOTOS BY PAUL GILMOUR

The Electric Light Orchestra should give some of the other overseas performers tips on how to perform before Western Springs' audiences.

Those other performers who give the impression they don't care what standard of performance they give during their one and only concert in our little known and quickly forgotten speck in the Pacific.

At the Springs one recent summer full moon night, ELO involved the audience in a way rarely seen there.

They knew and understood what sort of concert their fans expected and they added the small but important public relations exercise most groups don't care about — they made their fans feel important.

By warm happy comments, the group got the crowd in a two way conversation, singing along and jumping to their feet to the studio-quality diet of hits the crowd adored.

Gone was the usual lethargic crowd reaction refusing to have anything to do with calls from the stage for handclapping

and singing.

As ELO's driving force — singer, guitarist, writer, producer Jeff Lynne explained:

"I always feel sorry for big crowds in arenas like the Springs. They sometimes don't hear the sound and most never see what's on. It's pretty bad for people at the back.

"So we give them the giant laser light show so everyone can see what's going on more or less. And that is being fair to the audience."

The laser beams-coloured light you can 'see' as it travels through the air — reached out and enveloped the audience like a spider's web.

Gone was the barrier between stage and audience. Gone were the days of sitting up in the trees catching only vague impressions that there was actually a live group somewhere out there in the distance.

Who can forget seeing the crowd respond to Captain Lynne, like a dog to his owner, when he commanded them to sit

down after dancing and listen in silence to hear cellist Hugh McDowell break into the "Flight of the Bumblebee" while the beams painted pictures in the trees.

Perhaps there is a future for the New Zealand Symphony orchestra yet!

And what of Lynne and his music?

His favourite composers are Lennon and McCartney. His favourite record, the Beatles *Revolver*. Listen to songs like "Mister Kingdom" off *Eldorado* and you would swear you were revisiting the era of Strawberry Fields.

Is ELO simply cashing in on a good scene, filling the gap where the Beatles left off?

Replies Lynne: "Obviously I'm very much influenced by the Beatles. But I can only call it a compliment if someone says I sound like the Beatles.

"I would never be offended by that."

But he is offended by some of the other things people are saying about his music.

The tag "classical rockers" for example. It is an understandable tag. The unusual feature of the group is its incorporation of a string section into the rock group instead of it being additional to the group.

Explains Lynne: "There is a reason for this. Every group had guitar soloists and it was a nice change to have something else for the solo instead of the guitar."

Other reasons can be put for terming ELO "classical rockers." All the string section members once belonged to symphony orchestras. An opera singer appears briefly on the latest album *Out of the Blue*. The group incorporates snippets of classical music into their songs, leading to a purists' moan that they are stealing the cream of the classics and presenting a cheap version to the unsuspecting pop-orientated audience.

Says Lynne: "That's wrong. I don't think the term "classical rock" has ever accurately fitted our music. We do use string instruments, so I suppose to some people that's classical rock. But our music borders on a lot of styles."

Does Lynne have any knowledge of classical music himself?

"Um, no I don't know much about it. I've got a few favourite classical pieces but I don't know much about it."

Well what, are your favourite pieces? (Side glance . . . what is this, some sort of expose?) "I like Dvorak best of all . . . but I mean I know so little about it compared with the string players who know really all the classical bits."

We turn to the striking familiarity of a lot of ELO numbers.

"Across the Border" with its melodic passage similar to "Heroes and Villains", the Beach Boys classic, and the Bee Gees feeling about "Starlight" and "Steppin Out."

Is it justified to accuse Lynne of stealing, perhaps unintentionally, other people's works?

"I can't say I like that suggestion at all. But I know it's untrue so my conscience is clean."

One review calls *Out of the Blue* hollow bland Muzak and an uninteresting and horrifyingly sterile package.

Is that fair?

"That's not very nice. I mean, the first four years of the group we got great reviews and no success. You know, great critical acclaim and no success but people like to knock you as soon as you have success. People always want to knock you down again. It's not a pleasant thing to read that sort of thing.

"I like the last album but then I always like the last album best. But it is the cleanest sound we have ever done."

Why was the group getting critics' praise for years but having no success?

"Obviously we were not appealing to people, only to critics at the time. But as soon as we start doing well, they start knocking us again, trying to give us hell."

What has brought the change in public reaction? In 1974 ELO couldn't quite fill the Town Hall for their one Auckland concert,

this time they had a captive outdoor audience of 20,000.

"It's difficult to say. Probably because our music is much better. It's very strange. That's the only thing I can think of.

"We worked harder and had better songs."

How has the music changed?

"It's become more accessible. Before, I used to write songs very strange, to say the least. And now I write songs I really like. Nice tunes."

Strange?

"Yeah, I was just writing to be cool, man. Now I'm doing things I think people will think is cool instead of doing things I just wanted to do."

ELO songs might have nice tunes but they never say very much. Rarely any noticeable passion or emotion, certainly containing no profound statement.

Lynne: "I don't know really. It's very difficult to say about lyrics. Very strange things to talk about. I try and make every number a single. I don't have any (sideward glance from manager sitting beside him) much say in the release of the single. That's our manager who does that."

I turned to trace briefly Lynne's musical background.

I began:

"You were once a member of the Move joining in 1971 . . ."

(Lynne's manager throws his hands in the air, his voice drowning me out): "I'll just stop you for a minute."

"What's wrong?"

"We're a bit short on time so perhaps we could end . . ."

"Don't you like mention of the Move?"

"Well there's just one thing. We only like to talk about ELO."

"Why don't you like talking about the Move?"

(In a slightly more agitated voice): "It's just, we like to talk about the future, not the past."

"Well, I would like to ask one question about the Move."

How do you view the group and your involvement in it in retrospect?

Says Lynne, somewhat reluctantly "Well to me the Move does not mean very much. I did not join until the Move had just about packed it in. I was with a group called Idle Race until then."

Interview time over. ELO are shown as a band which actually cares about the public. So it is no wonder their popularity is on the increase. Jeff Lynne dashes off to be presented with two gold, one platinum disc from Festival Records and there will be more to collect next time they come.

Which leaves two last thoughts on the ELO concert:

Firstly Golden Harvest. I was once told the theory that local groups who precede superstars at such shows are chosen because they sound bad and will be an incredible contrast to the overseas group.

If this is true, we won't be seeing much of Golden Harvest at the Springs. Their rendition of "All Along the Watchtower" Hendrix style was a knockout. Watch this group — it should have a big future.

Secondly: The usual straining for effect in the pre-concert blurb resulted in a most remarkable statement. It reads: "More than one reviewer has noted that while audiences of most rock groups leave a concert with a dazed and drained look on their faces, ELO audiences depart smiling and alive."

I checked it out and it is strange but true. The twenty thousand fans were widely happily though a little disappointed they could not have had double the 70 minute ELO dose.

But then come to think of it, I can't recall the last time I tripped over dead bodies on my way out from a concert or encountered an angry crowd raping and looting at the Great North Road bus stops!

Nigel Horrocks

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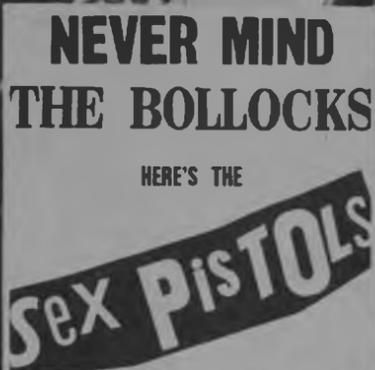
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GRAHAM PARKER

THE PETROL PUMP LEGEND



Graham Parker

To attain the status of a genuine rock 'n' roll legend, a snappy beginning is very helpful. You know the kind — it's 1954 and a good-looking 19 year old truck driver strolls into a run-down Memphis studio to record two songs for \$4 as a present for his mother on her birthday. That was Elvis. Presley not Costello, of course.

Or . . . spiky-haired youth wanders into London's Sex boutique and is spotted dancing spastically next to a juke box. He's approached by two other youths who inquire, "Can you sing?" To which Johnny Rotten replies "Of course not!" That, according to legend was the formation of the Sex Pistols.

Or how about this . . . pasty-faced, diminutive, petrol pump attendant Graham Parker is sitting bored on the forecourt when a bunch of rock 'n' roll heavies drive up in a battered ban and with a "Hey kid, you wanna sing in a rock 'n' roll band?" Graham Parker and The Rumour are born.

Well . . . it wasn't quite that way. As Parker says, "it wasn't like that at all. It was more like: 'who is this little twerp.'"

But the alliance between Graham Parker and a bunch of pub rock legends was almost as much of an accident as the hype might suggest. Through ads placed in the musicians wanted section of *Melody Maker*, Parker, then a struggling singer-songwriter, was introduced to Dave Robinson, manager of London's Hope and Anchor pub adjacent to which is a small recording studio. Robinson was convinced that Parker's songs were worth recording and persuaded the Rumour to work with our petrol pump jockey in laying down some demos.

The Rumour existed before Graham Parker appeared — keyboard player Bob Andrews and guitarist Brinsley Schwarz were from the group that bore Brinsley's name, guitarist Martin Belmont was late of Ducks Deluxe and was, at this time, supporting himself working as a barman at the Hope and Anchor, while the rhythm section of Andrew Bodnar on bass and Stephen Goulding on drums had just left the little-known band, Bon Temps Roulee. All five were using the Hope and Anchor studio as focal point — piecing together songs and laying vague plans.

Martin Belmont confesses: "We were a bit directionless at that time. We were just rehearsing and nobody was interested in going out and doing gigs or anything. Graham gave us a sense of direction. He had the songs and he needed to go and play gigs."

Although Parker filled the Rumour's need for a frontman and all-round pushy personality, there were still doubts on both sides. Parker recalls: "We all got together because Dave talked me into it. He had to twist my arm. These were the first really good musicians I ever played with, so I told Dave, 'Maybe y'know, okay,' so the next thing I know I'm rehearsing with Brinsley, Bob and Martin and they weren't sure about me. They didn't know if I was really that good or not."

"I mean they didn't know who I was or anything. But I knew that if I could get the band together, that my songs would cut through and the whole thing would cut through. But they didn't at first."

"So it took a bit of time but as soon as we'd got on tour, man, then it clicked. It all pulled together."

Since schooldays Parker had possessed a vitality, an 'internal energy' he calls it, that he had to let out. "I knew it was gonna come out strongly in some way you know, and there's never been any other way really but music."

Parker's future couldn't really lie in any other direction. In his last year at school, he'd consulted the youth employment office and when asked what sort of employment he had in mind Graham replied that

he'd like to collect rare animals for zoos. The youth employment officer politely suggested perhaps he'd rather work in a supermarket.

The famous job as a petrol pump jockey was one of a series of dead end jobs. As Parker recalls, "Writing was the only thing that was gonna save me in a way. Most people around must have thought 'Well he's gone down the drain. But I knew I'd gotta make a go of it now or never, so I was really propelled at that time to get totally into music so I could make a living out of it.'"

The Rumour provided the perfect foil for his songs — a top flight rock 'n' roll unit with the ability to play with both aggression and subtlety. Parker had tried working as a solo singer but admits "only when I met good musicians on a working basis did I start getting it right. I was getting to the point where I had to find musicians who wanted to play songs as opposed to solos and suites that people were writing then."

Parker's songs draw on a wealth of influences — notably Dylan, 60's R & B and the Stones — but as one perceptive Stateside writer noted: "By and large, the influences are almost all American yet coming back at us through these British musicians, they somehow are given a renewed life, and power and a totally distinct style."

The British press were initially sceptical of this unknown runt in shades fronting what no-one could deny was one powerhouse of a band. Others trotted out the superlatives but compared Parker to his influences. As Martin Belmont commented at the time, "We kept a list for a while. We had a table going with the names we'd seen Graham compared to. We had Van Morris-

son, Bob Dylan, Bruce Springsteen and Nils Lofgren. Lofgren fell behind pretty quickly. Right now Van Morrison and Springsteen are neck and neck."

Not that Belmont denies the influences — "There's nothing original in what we play . . . it's not without influence obviously. But it seems to me it's like a shot in the arm; it's what I've been wanting to happen. You get fed up hearing the bland pop records on the one hand and the art on the other. I think what we're doing falls in the middle."

The three Graham Parker and the Rumour albums have shown a steady development of the six man outfit into a distinctive unit. Their first album, *Howlin' Wind*, sketched in their influences and showed the strengths of GP's songs. On the second set, *Heat Treatment*, the melodies were stronger, the ensemble playing was

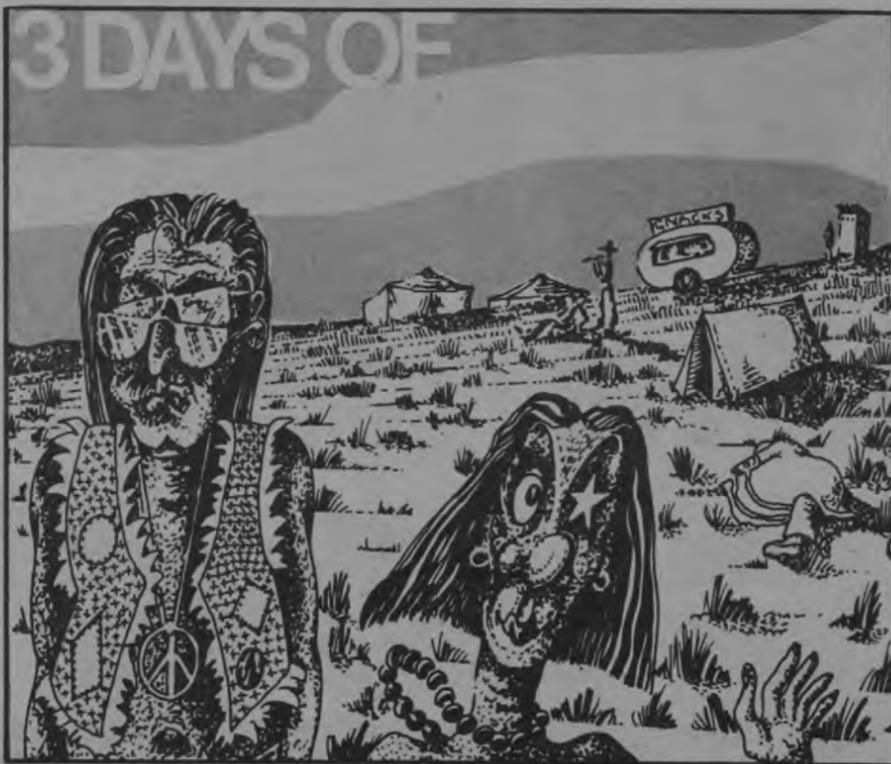
astightasthis and the production perfectly complemented the tone of each song. The latest *Stick to Me*, highlights the development of the Rumour into an even tougher and more aggressive band. World domination is in sight.

Even the future of rock 'n' roll himself, Bruce Springsteen, was heard to mutter after a New York concert, "This guy combines the best of Van Morrison, Eric Burdon and John Lennon . . . he's the only guy around right now I'd pay money to see."

But one last point, Graham, why the ever present shades?

"They're just a bad habit. I started to see too much so I put shades on to cut down on what I see. Someone once said I look pretty cool in shades so I just left them on. I do take them off in the bath though . . . if the lights are dim."

Alastair Dougal



It's history now so I guess anyone who wanted to now knows all about it. But strangely enough, at least for such a large gathering, Nambassa was a very personal event. You hated it/you loved it/you slept/drank/burnt through it. Veterans returned home with enormously varying stories of the organisation and the disorganisation, the excitement and the boredom, the beauty and the squalor. And with an audience of somewhere between ten and twenty thousand which ranged from the Kapiti Christian Centre to the Filthy Few from Rotorua, every tale was probably true.

But from where my sleeping bag lay the most disparate forces seemed to form a un-

ique union which made Nambassa work. In those three days a tolerance, that could well be unparalleled in events of this kind, was established. The Krisna followers, who for years have been ridiculed in the streets of cities, were welcomed at Nambassa and not only for their massive free banquets. Along with most every other spiritual, political and philosophical group represented they added weight to what could have become just another rock concert. Just as Peter Terry, one of the organisers had hoped, not all the preaching was to the converted. The seminars, workshops, and lectures were well-attended by people who had come principally for the music but had

stretched themselves beyond that.

Just as well, for without the 'crafts and alternatives' side of the events Nambassa could have failed badly. I doubt whether even the most ardent disciple came home raving about the music. Those bands who are consistently good were good at Nambassa and those who are bad were boring. But no-one stood out from the big line-up of New Zealand talent. It wasn't that the music was of a generally low level. It just wasn't brilliant. The successful acts were those who appealed to the audience on a large scale — as a mass rather than as individuals. Skyhooks and Living Force were popular because they involved the thousand or so people close to the stage. You could dance, you could chant, you could sing and so the criteria for good music were radically changed if only for a weekend.

Both the smaller Aerial Railway stage and the main stage featured non-musical acts. The audience response to these depended to a great extent on timing and venue rather than merit. And so although Limbs met an excellent response during the day on the smaller stage, when they were slotted to perform before Skyhooks on the main stage at night they came across very badly. This was perhaps one of the greatest flaws in the organisation with only the poet Gary McCormick, managing to overcome the problem of size and movement for a solo act on an enormous stage.

Of course there was lots and lots more than just the music, lectures and craft stalls. There were problems too, although they were surprisingly few and minor. The overwhelming feeling though was of people — everywhere. And each of them saw Nambassa as he wanted to. The arguments will never end because although it may sound corny, Nambassa was very much what the individual wanted and expected it to be. Good or bad — at least it happened.

Louise Chunn

BIG BOZZ MAN



Boz Scaggs is a man who takes himself and his music seriously, and it seems to have paid off. At an abortive press conference to which *Rip It Up* was invited, but not able to interview the man, Boz answered even the trite questions of the mainstream media with intelligence and depth. The same professional attitude was obvious at a faultless concert at Auckland's own Western Springs Stadium.

Even the excellence of the pop group, Dragon, who opened the show strongly, paled beside the superb show put on by the Scaggs team. I say *team* because the lighting was right on cue, the staging was excellent, and the sound was as good as comes through an expensive stereo. Which is what it was.

And the man himself was right up to the treatment accorded him. His vocals were impeccable, and he moved sparingly but gracefully around a huge cleared stage. His band, stacked out of the limelight, nevertheless put on the performance you would expect from a bunch of L.A. session musicians. If it sounded exactly like the record (but louder), then it was probably because that's how it was meant to sound. Michael Landau stood out, on guitar, and the two backup singers, Vanetta Fields and Paulette Brown, sounded (with a little help from the engineers) like an entire choir.

But the main impression was that of a band, superbly rehearsed and tasteful, creating the perfect environment for the boss, the man. From where I stood, he seemed to be concentrating hard on his vocals, occasionally playing piano, or flashing off a guitar lead, but always the musician. The only miss to my mind were his slow ballads, which were just too bland for my taste, but which obviously reached the audience, just as "Lido Shuffle" blew the place apart. Boz Scaggs came back for two encores. I doubt if I've ever seen a Western Springs audience get off that way. It was the least we could do.

John Malloy





Billy Joel
The Stranger
CBS

It isn't all fun and games being an entertainer you know. And it isn't made any easier by the natural wariness people have of someone who understands enough about his position as entertainer to write of his first hit song:

*It was a beautiful song
But it ran too long,
If you're gonna have a hit
You gotta make it fit,
So they cut it down to 3:05...*

Nobody else even openly mentions artistic compromise within the music business, nobody else has made a hit single out of it. But Joel knows just a bit too much about the pop star business and still lacks the self-confidence not to let that knowledge influence his songwriting. After all, he can write hit singles, good hit singles like "The Entertainer" and "Piano Man", like this album's "Just the Way You Are".

Anyone who has listened to commercial radio for more than five minutes in the last two years will tell you that love songs still top the charts, whether it's the right time of the night, because nobody does it better or because it makes my brown eyes blue. "Just the Way You Are" is, well, nice and, yes, it is romantic. A love song for the depression years:

*I wouldn't leave you in times of trouble,
We never could have come this far,
I took the good times, I'll take the bad times,
I'll take you just the way you are...*

There are some nice touches to *The Stranger*, the "ack-ack-ack" which Joel adds to the words "cadillac" and "heart attack" to reinforce the "keeping up with the Joneses" storyline in "Movin' Out", saxophonist Richard Cannata's able backing — now characteristic of Joel's songs. And the opening to the title track, a movie theme, the hero wandering the streets after learning that his girl has been killed by some no-good hoods, the soundtrack to a Bogart movie.

Billy Joel always wanted to be a concert pianist with a full orchestra behind him —

Man from the Hills



Burning Spear
Live
Island

In a career spanning five years, Burning Spear have established a reputation in the reggae recording field that is, to say the least, enviable.

Their potent, driving sound, usually aided by ace producer Jack Ruby, has built them a solid following among "roots" reggae lovers, and now looks set to break the sound internationally.

Winston Rodney, always the heart and soul of the vocal trio, was left on his own to record the latest studio release, *Dry and Heavy*, and this new, live offering.

The earlier albums, *Marcus Garvey* and *Man In The Hills* have achieved classic status, and little wonder.

Rodney, at 29, has a voice and lyrical depth of a man twice his age. His intensity of feeling is etched into every groove. He can turn the word "no" into a fervent cry of entreaty or a shout of defiance.

He embodies all the power and warmth that is the root of reggae.

Now that Rodney is solo, Island Records seem intent on turning him into the sort of celebrity that Bob Marley has become.

listen to "New York State of Mind" and "Say Goodbye to Hollywood" on his previous album, *Turnstiles*. But songs like "Captain Jack", on the *Piano Man* album, "Miami 2017" and "I've Loved These Days" prove that he is among rock's best lyricists:

*... we can only go so far
On caviar and cabernet,
We drown our doubts in dry champagne
And soothe our souls with fine cocaine.*

It's often a narrow line between what's art and what isn't, what's schmaltz and what isn't and most of *The Stranger* oversteps the limit. *Turnstiles* is to date the most perfect marriage between Joel's two

If it works, it will be an admirable achievement, simply for getting a wider audience interested in Burning Spear's music. But the task may not be as easy as it was with Marley.

Rodney is a rural Jamaican, not a Kingston man. His music is not so easily accessible. Spear needs time to appreciate, but the effort is well rewarded.

Live shows Rodney's strengths and weaknesses. Without the counterpoint singing of Rupert Willington and Delroy Hines, Rodney sounds sparser than ever, and the strength of the hook lines of the songs is sometimes lost. This is most apparent on the live version of "Man In The Hills".

That reservation aside, this album is spontaneous combustion. Recorded in London last October, it features the best of Jamaica's session men, whose empathy with Rodney and each other shines throughout.

The audience is ecstatic and Winston Rodney is triumphant.

Not perhaps an ideal introduction to Burning Spear, listen to *Man In The Hills* first, to get the feel. Then don't hesitate to buy.

Duncan Campbell

personas; that of the entertainer and of the embittered cynic who is cocksure enough to say what he thinks.

Nearly always the artist loses some if not all his distinctive appeal in the transition from cult hero to pop star. But there are also the practical realities of the situation: even Johnny Rotten has to eat and Billy Joel knows it. *The Stranger* may be his answer. But I prefer to believe that he still intends making his masterpiece, and that this album is merely a clever business move to ensure that everyone will be listening when he does.

Jeremy Templar

Breezin' Back

George Benson
Weekend in L.A.
Warner Bros

Any artist who had found a musical formula that increased his record sales by a virtual hundred-fold, and didn't stick to it on subsequent albums, would have to be either a fool or Bob Dylan. George Benson is neither and his new, 'live' double-album *Weekend in L.A.* follows the same pattern as his gigantic *Breezin'*.

First and foremost there's the instrumentals: those briskly-paced, smoothly-flowing slices of funk that Benson and his group seem to play so effortlessly, (plus the obligatory slow piece for balance). The band is the same as on *Breezin'* and its successor *In Flight*, so there's no new styles to disrupt the pattern. Yet this is a superb bunch of musicians and well worth rehearing, not just *ensemble* but as individuals. Benson, of course, is required listening for anyone interested in electric guitar, but so is Upchurch for his rhythm work. In fact the playing of all concerned is quite exemplary. Their sound is denigrated by some people as merely hip dinner music, and occasionally, maybe, it so descends — as on *Breezin'*'s "Lady" — but it is nearly always a great deal more than that, and rewards closer attention. There are ample opportunities for this on *Weekend in L.A.*

Then there are the vocal numbers. Benson's voice lacks the brilliance and originality of his guitar work, but his huge hit with "This Masquerade" provided much of the sales impetus for *Breezin'*, and so, assured by popular success, he has here increased his vocal performances to almost half the album. All are in the same, tested, ballad mould and, again, all are shrewdly chosen from well-known but currently neglected material. There is even another Leon Russell composition. They are sung very competently, although "On Broadway" is too long for the song's own good, and the Schifrin theme loses much of its original lilt. The vocal numbers are basically middle-of-the-road pop with funky backing — owing much in conception to the *Donny Hathaway Live L.P.*

Thankfully, *Weekend in L.A.* has avoided nearly all the pitfalls of live albums: the sound is excellent, the music never falters, there are no spoken intros or crowd cajoling, and audience response, while enthusiastic, is never intrusive.

What you have then is an admirably executed continuation of the *Breezin'* legacy, may be carefully tailored, almost easy-listening at times, but it's also very musical. George Benson has become to jazz what Fleetwood Mac is to rock, but is that bad? As a jazz guitarist friend of mine said after hearing *Weekend in L.A.* "It's nothing new but it's bloody good."

Peter Thomson.

Elvis Costello
My Aim Is True
Stiff

He looks like Buddy Holly and he plays guitar like Hank Marvin. If you don't know who Hank Marvin is, go ask your mother. From the cover to the tunes to the drum sound, this is a sixties album. And it's all about guilt and revenge. That's what Elvis says anyway.

*Well I used to be disgusted
But now I try to be amused...*

It makes a peculiar sort of sense to have the antidote to seventies much couched in the musical vernacular of the early sixties.

But Elvis is no reactionary. A current of anger runs through most of the record, but it is a personal anger, not directed at any scapegoat. "Less Than Zero", the single that resulted from a TV documentary on Oswald Mosely, the British Nazi, hides strong feelings beneath a smooth sixties beat feel.

A pistol was still smoking, a man lay on the floor

Mr Oswald said he had an understanding with the law...

And he follows that with a classic teenage song called "Mystery Dance". But he is never far from revenge and guilt, with songs like "Sneaky Feelings", "Pay It Back", and the brilliant "I'm Not Angry".

This is a bloody good little record. At the moment it's right up there with Mink de Ville at the top of my personal playlist. It's easily accessible and it grows on you, and like the Mink de Ville set, it's got a stack of good songs. Elvis has got something to say.

It is easy to see how so many record companies turned Mr Costello down before he was signed by Stiff. He's too different. He's not safe. He might lose money.

But I doubt it. Judging by the airplay and the press he's getting, he can't go far wrong. And with nutters like Elvis around, there's hope for the business yet.

John Malloy

A Stick Up

Graham Parker and the Rumour
Stick to Me
Vertigo

Amongst the milling, the noise, the hype, the push and the blarney of New Wave rock and roll, Graham Parker and the Rumour stand a figurative ten feet tall.

The first coming of Parker, in reality a diminutive fellow with mean sunglasses and a ferret-faced appearance, was deceptive. He seemed interesting, but not devastating. The first album, *Howling Wind*, aroused admiration, yet also led listeners into a count-the-influences game. There were Jagger, Springsteen, recent Bob Dylan all lurking beneath the surface of a well compiled rhythm and blues set.

But *Heat Treatment* (the first Parker record released in N.Z.) reiterated two points that might otherwise have gone unnoticed: the first being that Parker and his band were capable of generating a real gusto that was, for all its enthusiasm, rhythmically tight, the second being that Parker could write very, very, strong songs.

Given the promise of its predecessors, *Stick to Me* is an album of which much has been expected. On it stands the long term impact of its creator, the importance of Parker as an innovative force. For me at least *Stick to Me* stamps Parker indelibly into the musical catalogue for the 1970s.

Drawing on the well established reserves of rock and roll, themes of sex, the streets, drugs and violence, Parker and the Rumour are licking the entrenched competition on its own ground. Songs like "Stick to Me" and "Playhouse" are raunchier, more vital, more aggressive than

anything the Stones have done for years. To date there is no sign of Parker's creative growth wilting.

However, more than part of this performer's success must be credited beyond Parker to his band. Constructed from the bones of the disbanded Brinsley Schwarz ensemble, the Rumour have given their frontman a great headstart. They have achieved a professional polish that never obscures the energy of enthusiastic performance and participation. On *Stick to Me* the playing is faster, more closely packed, with fewer holes than ever before. Credit for this must also go to producer Nick Lowe who, is re-investing British rock with the percussive, middle register quality of the beat sound.

Combined with The Rumour Graham Parker has now created a style that owes a bit to many people, but is original and important enough not to have to acknowledge debts. *Stick to Me* has its failings — I eye the New York theatricality of "Heat in Harlem" and "The New York Shuffle" with suspicion. It seems a little too remote from the band's origins to be carried comfortably. But the consolidation of a sound that is Graham Parker, and Graham Parker alone is welcome. Even if you don't like it, it's not about to go away in a hurry.

Bruce Belsham

The Rumour
Max
Vertigo

By now you shouldn't need to be told who the Rumour are or where they come from. But the question remains — on this, their first solo outing, can the backing group cut it without the main man out front?

Max proves they can. Several critics have

made much of the similarities between the Rumour's sound and that of The Band. But it's worth pointing out that much of the resemblance is probably due as much to shared musical heritage as to any direct copying of licks. Nonetheless the Rumour's vocal harmonies and Bob Andrews' organ parts are undoubtedly more directly derivative.

Wisely, the Rumour's singers — Bob Andrews and Martin Belmont, I believe — have decided to head for a vocal approach that is emotive rather than technically accurate. While this approach occasionally exposes them straining for the notes, it has the advantage of making the singing affecting rather than bland as is often true of singers with limited ability.

On the question of songs, the Rumour have also wisely added to their own material with Nick Lowe's stand-out opening track "Mess with Love" plus the old Tamla stomper "I Wanna Make Her Love Me" and an uptempo version of Duke Ellington's "Do Nothing Till You Hear From Me". Their own material, while it lacks the instant familiarity that is the feature of so many of Graham Parker's songs, more than makes up for this with a depth in the arrangements that slowly reveals buried melodic fragments.

The sure footed choice of songs and use of arrangements means Side One moves with style from the rollicking "Mess With Love" through to the Rumour at their most Band-like on the plaintive "Airplane Tonight". And even the inclusion of two weak tracks in the middle of Side Two only marginally detracts from this impact.

Not only does the best of *Max* rival the Band's more recent output, but its best stands effortlessly besides Graham Parker's work. Nuff said.

Allstair Dougal



Dolly Parton
Here You Come Again
R.C.A.

It doesn't seem so long ago that I was reviewing the Dolly Parton record that was intended to launch the little lady into widespread popularity. Judging by the rapidity of this new release the campaign has been geared up a notch.

Projected sales of the latest album seem to be based upon two things: the recent success of the catchy title single and the super glossy packaging which features our buxom star luring customers with several poses, all of which include a red and white checked blouse filled by the renowned wonder-bust.

The real question is — does the record offer much more than a hit single and a flashy cover?

Thankfully the answer has to be "yes", but we are forced to admit that less hasty product might have preferred still more acceptable content. On the positive side of the ledger are a Bobby Goldsboro ballad called "The Cowgirl and the Dandy", an excellent rendition of a number called "Baby Come out Tonight" and two good Parton originals "Two Doors Down" and "It's All Wrong but it's All Right". On the debit side is the sad fact that there are only four Dolly Parton songs actually on the album and of these one "Me and Little Andy" is a piece of twee rubbish. With all the good will in the world for Southern sentiment one still has to call it mawkish nonsense.

Dolly Parton has never been one to spend much time on a record, but if pressure of output leaves her short on own material then she just might be working too fast. Parton's talents are as evident here as they are anywhere — the singing is in places magnificent, the backing proficient

and tasteful — but with just a few months between releases she is obviously run a bit thin. Mind you, almost as if having one hand tied behind her back she still wallops Linda Ronstadt as a popular country performer.

Bruce Belaham

Phil Manzanera
Listen Now
Polydor

The arrival of this album has been heralded for me personally by the almost unbridled enthusiasm of some friends who have had access to an advance copy. My own anticipation had been keen enough — the 801 Live album from '76 includes many of the same musicians that are found on Listen Now, and that remains one of my favourite albums of recent years. A powerful, creative and well programmed live album of a sort quite rare in rock music.

As a band 801 is a little like Steely Dan in concept. It comprises in this instance a single central figure, Manzanera, who at appropriate times for either live appearances or studio work, surrounds himself with a carefully chosen group of musicians. This time the roundup includes Simon Phillips, Dave Mattacks, Eno and Split Enz's own Rayner and Finn.

Listen Now has none of the blazing rock 'n' roll or inspired cover versions of the live LP but it does have considerable virtues of its own, and they lie in a seemingly unlikely



Eric Stewart and Graham Gouldman
of 10cc.

area for a musician like Manzanera.

Unlikely that is until you look at the fine print of the well detailed album credits. There's a very adept mainstream sophisto-pop element that infuses even its most complex arrangements and jazz fusion forays. I think the clue to the comparatively large commercial success this record might well enjoy lies under its progressive veneer where there lurks a glossy but very intelligent and attractive pop-ness. This is a catchy record.

The influence of the unique and brilliant Eno is still there to be heard, but it's balanced by the more conventional talents of ex-10ccs Godley and Creme, and it's towards the better work of that once excellent band that the music on Listen Now tends to lean.

The dispassionate vocals of Simon Ainsley together with the nylon tracheae of Messrs G. & C. give the singing an uninvolved coolness that may or may not be a barrier for some listeners. This is compensated for by some effective arranging and a sense of pop/rock dynamics, fashionably slowed and numbed, that again can be traced back to 10cc.

Although not consistently to the fore, Manzanera's guitar sounds as bracing as ever and the songs, composed largely by Manzanera and bassist MacCormick are clever and interesting if not especially stimulating lyrically.

Listen Now is another in a long list of fine albums that Manzanera has been associated with, and despite early doubts, due I'm sure to reasonably high expectations, I'm getting to like it more each time. I can't honestly see it in the same league as 801 Live or Eno's Taking Tiger Mountain for example, but I unreservedly recommend it as worthy of investigation and effort.
Terrence Hogan.

10cc
Live and Let Live
Mercury

Mother and I were making chutney as I gave this latest, double live offering, a spin.

We wept unashamedly as we sliced the onions to Eric Stewart's bitter-sweet, heart-wrenching vocals on "People In Love."

"Ships Don't Disappear In The Night (Do They?)" provided the necessary brisk background for the peeling and cutting of a

multitude of tomatoes.

"I'm Mandy, Fly Me" added the sugary sweetness in cupsful, "Marriage Bureau Rendezvous" that essential salty taste, topped off with the acidic vinegar of "Art For Art's Sake."

While the mixture bubbled merrily for the necessary hour, we reflected on the changes that had taken place in 10cc. Gone now are Lol Creme and Kevin Godley, and with them half the creative talents of the often-infuriating, often-delightful Shepherd's Pie that was 10cc.

It has been replaced with the constant striving for a perfect musical soufflé that has been the mark of Eric Stewart and Graham Gouldman. They've surrounded themselves with a mixed grill of highly competent musicians, to leave this effort sounding like an immaculate studio omelette with applause dubbed on at the end.

10cc Mark One was a dubious live entity, never quite reaching the dizzy heights they did in the studio. The new model has changed all this. The new recipe now looks set to conquer on the stage as well.

We broke from our reflections to add a dash of funky mustard to "Wall Street Shuffle", but found the spicy curry powder of "Oh Effendi" sadly absent. Also missing was the thickening flour that "Don't Hang Up" or "Rubber Bullets" might have provided.

Leaving things to simmer, we reached the conclusion that the pungent sauce tartare of the old 10cc, poking a derisive finger at human sham and foibles, is gone from the table forever. In its place is a smooth mayonnaise of pop perfection that is bound to sell like hotcakes.

The chutney was superb.
Duncan Campbell

Emmylou Harris
Quarter Moon in a Ten Cent Town
Warner Bros

Emmylou Harris has already enjoyed a Top 20 hit — the gorgeous "Boulder to Birmingham". She has sung backup on albums for such established artists as Linda Ronstadt, Little Feat and Bob Dylan. She has had three highly-touted solo albums, yet with this, her fourth, she still hovers on the verge of major popular success.

There seems to be two basic reasons. Firstly, she is essentially a country singer being promoted in a rock market and, as

LITTLE FEAT

LOWELL GEORGE/RICH HAYWARD
BILL PAYNE/KEN GRADNEY
PAUL BARRERE/SAM CLAYTON
WAITING FOR COLUMBUS



LIVE
LIVE
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records

such, faces that market's buyer resistance. Rock listeners will embrace the odd novelty country number (Dr Hook, Commander Cody, etc) or the occasional ballad (herself, Maureen McGovern, et al) but not sustained exposure. Even the extraordinary Dolly Parton experiences this problem.

Secondly there is the problem faced by all singers who are not also strong songwriters, namely the finding of good material. If Linda Ronstadt is forced to scuffle for songs, retreading wornouts and accepting filler, then how are ladies with far less sales appeal going to make out?

Fortunately Ms Harris has a couple of friends who write well. Her rhythm guitarist Rodney Crowley contributes two numbers here. His rocking "I Ain't Living Long Like This" is a standout. Susanna Clark's "Easy From Now On" is probably the strongest song on the album so I suppose it's only fair that she should be allowed to illustrate the cover. (The album title is also her line but she can't paint as well as she writes.)

On the Jesse Winchester compositions Harris further demonstrates her interpretive ability. Winchester's wistful, almost languid pieces gain strength from her plaintive performances. There is also a fine duet with Willie Nelson on "One Paper Kid", highlighted by the spare accompaniment of harmonica and acoustic guitar.

The backing throughout is, as previously by her own Hot Band. They are aptly named with veteran guitarist Albert Lee, in particu-



lar having many fine moments.

All in all, however, I can't see this album radically altering Harris' popular status. It's a pity, because, although her appeal may not be as immediate as, say, Ronstadt's, her voice is as pure and her emotional sense seems more finely honed. (And for those who count such things, she is also stunningly good looking.) Harris continues to work at what she does best, refusing to sell out on the chance of ephemeral chart success. In the end it must be the only way but as the lady sings: "Been doin' all I can but opportunity sure comes slow." **Peter Thomson**



But Stephen Bishop is not Paul Simon and in the end falls short, if only marginally, on every count. That of course takes its toll, particularly on the issue of originality.

Potentially a fine talent Bishop founders in a professionalism that tends to be imitative. It's very nice to have famous names on your record, it's very nice to set high standards, but because it doesn't define its own style this album remains a pleasant something to tide one over to the next Paul Simon original. **Bruce Belsham**

Earth, Wind & Fire All 'n All CBS

I'm going to stick my neck out and propose a theory: that, on the evidence of this album, Earth Wind & Fire are becoming increasingly dissatisfied with their restricted role as disco darlings, despite their popular success, and that they are seeking to develop their potential in fresh, less commercially safe, directions.

The tracks on *All 'n All* may be broadly considered in three sections: the up-tempo, dance-oriented numbers, three slower romantic songs, and a couple of very brief 'interludes'.

The five fast numbers contain the heart of the album. Yet of these, the hit "Serpentine Fire" is the most obvious in conception and the least musically exciting. The song is, I suppose, necessarily straightforward, written within the limitations of the disco formula. However, although the other four up-tempo tracks depart from these limitations as they develop subtleties and complexities, they nonetheless retain the essential visceral appeal of good dance music. This development culminates in the superb "Runnin'" which, not only has thoroughly sophisticated rhythm section work, tempo changes, and two classy horn solos, but contains an oblique mocking of their hit single. Half-way through "Runnin'" the music winds down and we hear "Serpentine Fire" coming from a tinny, pocket-radio type speaker. One of the musicians calls "I wanna get down. We gotta take it on up," and so the band resumes "Runnin'" pulsating instrumental.

This self-criticism is not, perhaps, as overt as I have made it out to be. "Serpentine Fire" is still side 1 track 1, while "Runnin'" is buried in the middle of side 2. The group (or the record company), do realise where the money comes from.

Both fast and slower numbers are well written, although the sound-picture 'interludes' soon pall. Mercifully they are brief.

One of the great strengths of this album is the musicianship. It is excellent throughout: disciplined, tight and driving. The horn-work is especially noteworthy; the arrangements are imaginative and the performance punchy. And this applies equally to the slower tracks. (Try the kickass brass and rhythm sections on "Be Ever Wonderful".)

A word about the cover: Only the first shipment of the album receives the original double cover. If you intend purchasing the record be in fast because the full cover painting, which obviously won't open out on a single cover, is worth having. It's an idealised secret-power-of-pyramids-in-days-of-future-past sci-fi thing. Good fun. Unfortunately, however, the inner sleeve (in both cases) contains a lyric sheet. Aurally, the lyrics can easily be ignored; read, their complex niceties prove to be meaningless verbiage and rhyme-for-fun.

But it's a minor criticism. All in all *All 'n All* is a welcome surprise. An American critic once labelled Earth Wind & Fire as black middle-of-the-road, as purveyors of assembly-line music. On this album they show a potential and desire for much more. If you like the single you're probably going to investigate this album anyway. Even if you dislike "Serpentine Fire" there's a lot more which may appeal. It's worth checking out. **Peter Thomson**

No More Heroes



The Stranglers No More Heroes United Artists

Don't be fooled into thinking this is just another bunch of self-acclaimed underprivileged victims of society loudly and violently despising hippies, women and drugs.

These angry young men turn out to be in their 20's (guitarist Hugh Cornwell is 28 and graduated from Grammar School to read chemistry at Bristol University for a time).

For all their offensive, immoral, hail-Trotsky stance they are happily counting the dollars brought by two big-selling albums, popular television appearances and a 36-date U.K. tour.

Amidst the current wave of wrath, Stranglers have one secret ingredient which suggests their records should be filed under 'rock' rather than 'punk': they can actually play.

By being fashionable, namely mean and

nasty, they have had quick success, becoming the heroes of nouvelle vogue despite the statement of the title of this, their second album. The group has the best of both worlds like the tactics of the Rolling Stones of old.

No More Heroes is a logical progression of the group's first album. Lock your liberated girlfriend in the bathroom to prevent her protests about the confused sexist lyrics, assure your mother this group does not want to take out her daughter because they don't like chicks, inform your grandmother you hear worse language at the movies these days and get into a promising hard driving rock band, especially tracks "I Feel Like a Wog," "Dead Ringer" and the title track.

But if you are a relic of the 60s, dig out your early Doors' albums and you will discover the Stranglers' real heroes. **Nigel Horrocks.**

XTC White Music Virgin

Any relatively new English group with short hair and such a snappy name is bound to come in for a pretty critical reception these days. Especially one with a keyboards player. But XTC fare well by most comparisons.

Organ and piano don't lend themselves to quite the same identikit buzzsaw effects as guitar does, but most new groups use them for similar rhythmic effects. XTC excel in that the other musicians match this with a beatiness almost to the point of making it funky. The rhythm section is terse and tight enough to tell of the years it's been together. Andy Partridge — guitar and Barry Andrews — keyboards, match up well in their mutual quirkiness. The beats they play are clear, choppy and more than a little unpredictable. It's good to hear an English group that's willing to play with a bang and a squeal rather than a thud.

The songs range from breath-catchingly clever to bouncy pop. The care that's shown for their structure and texture is relentless. It's a record that'll stand repeated listening, although I have it on good authority they're far superior live to their performance on this record.

Don't call it art, don't call it new wave until you've heard it so often that the terms don't matter any more. But do listen to it. It's got "All Along The Watchtower", and falsetto harmonies on it, so it can't be too bad at all.

Grant Dillon

Stephen Bishop Careless ABC Records

A record like Stephen Bishop's *Careless* always poses difficulties for a reviewer. What does one say about music that is so patently inoffensive, so well played by studio musicians who include Victor Feldman, Eric Clapton, Andrew Gold, Jim Gordon, so immaculately produced, so infused with good taste, and yet still somehow missing out on big league status.

Stephen Bishop is a young man whose overwhelming influence appears to be Paul Simon. The tinkling electric pianos, the clean acoustic guitar sound, the understated backing vocals, Bishop's own voice are all reminiscent of Simon's magnificent *Still Crazy After All These Years*. Perhaps Bishop's difficulty is that he chooses such a demanding model. Simon's is a delicate art constructed from impeccable musicianship, a real lyric gift and memorable melodic construction.

It is not that Bishop lacks these talents. He sings extremely well, probably with more flexibility than Paul Simon, he pens good tunes ("On and On" presently doing well as a single is really excellent), and his words are middling to good.

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**The Bruce Morley Little Big Band
Island of Real**

On paper it looked a bit dubious — a sextet attempting big band music, and playing such chestnuts as "Take the A Train", "Got My Mojo Working" and "Summertime". In performance it worked very well indeed. With a front line of three brass the LBB was able to approach the ensemble intensity of a big band, while with one soloist they could swing with the lightness of a small combo. And swung they did, sending good feelings throughout the cafe to a small but enthusiastic audience.

It was the group's first public performance and, while there was the occasional flub, on the whole complex arrangements and tricky timings were well-executed with

(apparent?) confidence. Soloing from the whole front line — Ivan Hunter: trumpet, Brian Biddick: trombone, Dave Hickson: tenor sax — was to a high standard kicked along by Morley's finely punctuated drumming. Although the individual members hail from such disparate musical backgrounds as showbands, rock, dixie and the Auckland Symphonia, they mesh well as a unit, deploying their individual style in varied solos.

Despite my initial reservations the material was never boring. "Summertime" was successfully handled at a dangerously fast tempo, the ageless beauty of "Greensleeves" shone in a stately performance, and if the Bach Bourree creaked from under rehearsal, it finished with a good solo by bassist Stan Knecht.

This band must be unique in Auckland. It is unashamedly rooted in 50's mainstream jazz (Basie, Ellington) also drawing on some 60's combos (Horace Silver, early Hancock), while providing an outlet for the work of local composers and arrangers (Wayne Senior, Neil Dunningham, Brian Henderson). As such it is serving a very worthwhile purpose. It is also thoroughly enjoyable. Catch it if you can.
Peter Thomaon



It just wasn't Spatz week in Auckland. Their drummer had gone down with hepatitis, their bus had to have the clutch replaced, and they felt more than slightly wary of the audience at the Windsor Castle who had made it known that they liked a slightly tougher approach from their bar bands.

But with the very capable Bud Hooper of the Country Flyers sitting in on drums, Spatz still managed to impress particularly for their original material.

Originator of the band is guitarist, vocalist, artist and songwriter Fane Flaws; on double bass is Patrick Bleakley and on drums (that's when he's not out of action) is Bruno Lawrence. All 3 are perhaps best known for their time spent with that travelling mad house, Blerta. Sharing guitar and vocal duties in Spatz is Tony Backhouse, late of Mammal, and rounding out the line-up is pianist Peter Dasent, last seen in the company of Andy Anderson's band. Right, now you know who they are. Why are they?

Fane confesses that the band was formed with the intention of presenting his songs and those of Tony Backhouse. In the 6 months they have been together they've assembled a considerable quantity of original material, and although some of the songs are still a little rough, their potential is very large indeed. Tony's and Fane's songs bear some comparison with those of Steely Dan, not for any obvious stylistic similarities, but because they adopt a jazz influenced approach to the popular song. But such an ambitious style necessarily needs a tight empathetic band, and using stand-in drummers, no matter how good, can't achieve the necessary results.

But Spatz have plans beyond just the successful performance of these songs. As befits three ex-members of Blerta, they in-

tend to adapt theatrical ideas into their shows, including an old-time set of swing and be-bop numbers they'll perform in tuxs. And to top off that aspect of the show Fane and Patrick are learning to tap dance.

But number one priority is staying alive, and their plans are all aimed at giving Spatz a definable identity, both musically and visually. Like many other Wellington based bands they're making the break and moving to Auckland and by then their remaining problems over drummers and clutches in buses should be sorted out.

Definitely a band to watch. After all how many rock bands can you think of that can tap dance?

Alastair Dougal

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WED TO SAT**

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The lucky winners of Graham Parkers new album *Stick to Me* are C.B. Cantlay, Alan Hanks, Greg Knowles, Brenton Learning, John Dunslea, Warren Purdy (all of Auckland), G. Lambert of Lower Hutt and W. van Ballekom of Invercargill.

The answers to the questions were that Parker and the Rumour's first two albums were *Howlin' Wind* and *Heat Treatment*. "Hold Back The Night" was released on the maxi-single entitled the *Pink Parker*. Max is the title of the Rumour's album.

RECORD EXCHANGE

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Albums Wanted

- Byrds Fifth Dimension
- Byrds Younger Than Yesterday
- Comus To Keep From Crying
- Coasters The Early Years
- Chain Towards the Blues
- Drake, Nick Any
- Fifth Dimension Stone Soul Picnic
- Gaye, Marvin In the Groove
- Gaye, Marvin How Sweet it is
- Harper, Roy Any
- J.D. Blackfoot Son of Crazy Horse
- Johnny Winter Band Live
- Kennedy, John Assassination Documentary
- King, B.B. Live at the Cook County Jail
- Mothers of Invention Uncle Meat
- MC5 Back in the U.S.A.
- Nash, Graham Songs for Beginners
- Pretty Things First
- Pablo Cruise First
- Quickilver Messenger Service Happy Trails
- Redding, Otis Pain in my Heart
- Redding, Otis King and Queen
- Redding, Otis Tell the Truth
- Redding, Otis Soul Ballads
- Rydell, Bobby Best of
- Temptations Meet the Temptations
- Temptations Papa was a Rolling Stone
- Underdogs Pig, Man & Edwards
- Underdogs Wasting Our Time
- Various Allsorts (NZ artists)
- Word Jazz
- Son of Word Jazz
- Yardbirds Any

- Byrds Dr Byrds & Mr Hyde
- Byrds Untitled
- Belaire Pops Orch. Jan & Deans Pop Symphony No. 1
- Brainbox Best of Brainbox
- Barefoot Jerry Southern Delight
- Butterfield, Paul The Paul Butterfield Blues Band
- Champion Jack Dupree Cabbage Greens
- Canned Heat Hallelujah
- Canned Heat The New Age
- Canned Heat Future Blues
- Donovan This is Donovan
- Domino, Fats Here Comes Fats Domino
- Domino, Fats Star Collection
- Freedom Freedom At Last
- Four Tops Reach Out/Live (Db)
- Grossman, Stefan Those Pleasant Days
- Garcia, Jerry Garcia
- Grateful Dead Aoxomoxoa
- Grateful Dead Anthem of the Sun
- Harper, Roy Flat Baroque and Berserk
- Havens, Ritchie Electric Havens
- Hooker, John Lee Simply the Truth
- Hollies Hollies
- Hollie For Certain Because
- Hollies Would You Believe?
- Incredible String Band The 5000 Spirits or the Layers of the Onion
- Incredible String Band The Big Huge
- Iggy and the Stooges Raw Power
- James Gang Straight Shooter
- King, Harry Divided We Stand
- King, B.B. To Know You is to Love You
- King, B.B. Blues on Top of Blues
- Lennon, John John Lennon and the Plastic Ono
- Los Jaivas Los Jaivas Band
- Mitchell, Joni I Came to the City
- Mark Almond Rising
- Mothers of Invention Just Another Band from Mothers of Invention Overnite Sensation L.A.
- Mayall, John Bare Wires
- Margret Lucifer
- Newman, Randy 12 Songs
- Ochs, Phil All the News That's Fit to Sing
- Ochs, Phil I Ain't Nervous Anymore
- Ono, Yoko Approximately Infinite Universe
- Plastic Ono Band Sometime in New York City
- Paxton, Tom 6
- Paxton, Tom An't That News
- Ponty, Jean-Luc King Kong
- Quickilver Messenger Service Just for Love
- Rolling Stones England's Newest Hitmakers (London)
- Rolling Stones Welcome to New York City (Pig)
- Rolling Stones Out of our Heads
- Rush, Tom The Circle Game

- Rush, Tom Tom Rush
- Rush, Tom Wrong End of the Rainbow
- Sonny Terry and Brownie McGhie Sing
- Syreeta Syreeta
- Turner, Ike & Tina Workin Together
- Turner, Ike & Tina Come Together
- Tolkien, J.R.R. Poems and Songs of Middle Earth
- Various The World of Bluespower
- Various Fathers and Sons (Chess)
- Various The Greatest Organ Players (Liberty)

- Various Quadro Hotteterre 1
- Various Quadro Hotteterre 2
- Who My Generation
- Yardbirds
- Five Live Yardbirds
- Yardbirds Yardbirds (WRC/Capitol)
- Zappa, Frank 200 Motels
- Zappa, Frank Hot Rats
- Zappa, Frank Chunga's Revenge
- Zappa, Frank Apostrophe

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records



"If you've been in Australia for a while then there's really nothing new at the moment" says Graeme Strachan, Skyhooks' lead singer. In fact, he adds, he was talking to some rock writers there the other day and someone said that the only thing that could liven the Australian music scene would be to have some rock star die. Perhaps a plane crash could be arranged. Even the newer bands aren't really that new, there's always at least one veteran among the members of each new band. And the best known bands? "They've all been around for ages. They're established bands like Skyhooks, Little River Band, Sherbet, AC/DC or whatever."

Skyhooks — Graeme Strachan, Greg Macainsh, Fred Strauks, Bongo Starkie and new boy Bob Spencer — were in Auckland before playing at the Nambassa Festival in late January. The last time they were here, about two years ago, they were opening act to Santana and, that duty performed, they left to spend five months in the States. *Straight in a Gay, Gay World* was recorded at the Record Plant in Los Angeles at that time. The band had also played as opening act for Roxy Music, Joe Cocker and Little Richard and completed a nationwide tour with Uriah Heep — before

returning to Australia to mix the album. They haven't been back to the States since.

Red Symons left the band about a year ago; he's now a musical director for Oz records. Bob Spencer was abducted from Sydney band, Finch, to take his place as guitarist.

A new album, *Guilty Till Proven Insane*, has been recorded in Melbourne and Sydney with an American producer and mixed at LA's Record Plant. It was due to be released in Australia in February.

"We're not quite as staccato now," says Macainsh, "which I think makes it a bit more listenable". Other changes have included an end to the bizarre costuming of their former entity. The audience, too, has changed and the screaming teenyboppers seem to have moved on or, perhaps, grown up with the band.

But how long can they stay in Australia? The contract with Mercury Records in the States has lapsed and getting back there will depend on a new contract with enough advances to make a return tour possible. In the meantime Skyhooks can still draw large audiences in Australia — and there's less chance of their being in a plane crash.

Jeremy Templar.

Rough Mix

Pete Townshend & Ronnie Lane
Polydor

As those of you who bought the first Pete Townshend solo album, *Who Came First*, will have a fair idea, this is not a Who album in any sense, and Ronnie Lane fans (probably an equally small number) shouldn't expect a Slim Chance record. Like *Who Came First*, this is to some extent a record for Meher Baba who is Lane and Townshend's spiritual master.

With all those disclaimers out of the way, let it be said that this is a very good record.

It seldom gets up and grabs the listener by the throat, but there are moments of remarkable power in *Rough Mix*. For someone who is so skilful at creating the grand climax with a three-piece rock and roll band, Townshend obviously relishes the chance to use different formats to get his effect. There are three Townshend songs with extensive use of Rabbit Bundrick on organ and piano, and the album's centrepiece, "Street in the City" is backed by a string quartet and a full orchestra.

More than any of Townshend's recent songs about the demise of My Generation, "Street in the City", with its extraordinary backing and image of a window cleaner who refuses to become a suicide for the sake of the narrator's jaded romanticism, has the keenness and energy that made the Who's name.

Lane's contributions on the songwriting side are, not surprisingly, less notable, but his presence ensures that the slight studio sterility of *Who Came First*, which was per-

formed almost totally by Townshend himself, is replaced by the instantaneous feel suggested by the title. Just as a comparison between Townshend's demo tapes and the Who shows what a violent working environment can bring out in the music, *Rough Mix* shows what can be done in a friendly one.

Francis Stark

New Boots and Panties

Ian Dury

Stiff

It's not bleedin' fair.

I mean, we all know what to expect from this fellow who looks like a plumber for the New Wave, records for Stiff Records, and has punk credentials as long as your bondage pants. The trouble is, Ian Dury doesn't seem to realise what is supposed to register well on the punkometer. What we have here is an exercise in Cockney Funk.

It takes quite a while to shrug off the disorientating effect of this monstrous hybrid of Albert Steptoe and The Commodores, lurking and leering about the place. I think it's probably worth it. I still can't quite see it as the instant classic that some others can, but it can be great fun while it lasts.

As you might guess from the title, Ian Dury has a taste for the tasteless, which he exploits to good effect on such tracks as "Wake Up And Make Love To Me" and "If I Was With A Woman". As well as this sort of stuff, we should also note the presence of a definite contender for the classics stakes, "Sweet Gene Vincent", which would stand out if only because it is genuine rock and roll, but also has the advantage of being great rock and roll.

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Francis Stark

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