

NEW MUSICAL EXPRESS

SHAM RIOT

Jimmy In Tears pages 7, 39

Rocky Sharpe p. 15

Howard The Duck
p. 7-8



KEVIN

COYNE: Uncracked Cult, Unbowed Hero

pages 24-25



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FIVE YEARS AGO

Week ending February 5, 1974	
Last Week	This Week
1	1
2	2
3	3
4	4
5	5
6	6
7	7
8	8
9	9
10	10

TEN YEARS AGO

Week ending February 5, 1964	
Last Week	This Week
1	1
2	2
3	3
4	4
5	5
6	6
7	7
8	8
9	9
10	10

15 YEARS AGO

Week ending February 7, 1949	
Last Week	This Week
1	1
2	2
3	3
4	4
5	5
6	6
7	7
8	8
9	9
10	10

CHARTS



SINGLES

Week ending February 3, 1979	
This Week	Last Week
1	(1)
2	(2)
3	(25)
4	(3)
5	(11)
6	(4)
7	(19)
8	(5)
9	(8)
10	(7)
11	(6)
12	(12)
13	(18)
14	(15)
15	(9)
16	(23)
17	(13)
18	(20)
19	(22)
20	(10)
21	(16)
22	(14)
23	(—)
24	(17)
25	(—)
26	(24)
27	(—)
28	(—)
29	(—)
30	(—)

DANCE (Disco Heat) — Sylvester (Fantasy); CONTACT — Edwin Starr (20th Century); WHEN I'M AWAY FROM YOU — Frankie Miller (Chrysalis).

U.S. SINGLES

Week ending February 3, 1979	
This Week	Last Week
1	(4)
2	(1)
3	(3)
4	(2)
5	(10)
6	(8)
7	(9)
8	(6)
9	(12)
10	(13)
11	(5)
12	(16)
13	(15)
14	(11)
15	(20)
16	(17)
17	(19)
18	(7)
19	(23)
20	(21)
21	(25)
22	(—)
23	(24)
24	(28)
25	(30)
26	(—)
27	(27)
28	(—)
29	(29)
30	(—)

Courtesy "CASH BOX"

ALBUMS

Week ending February 3, 1979	
This Week	Last Week
1	(1)
2	(5)
3	(4)
4	(7)
5	(2)
6	(6)
7	(14)
8	(10)
9	(19)
10	(8)
11	(17)
12	(3)
13	(12)
14	(11)
15	(25)
16	(8)
17	(26)
18	(20)
19	(16)
20	(—)
21	(23)
22	(24)
23	(15)
24	(—)
25	(—)
26	(—)
27	(18)
28	(21)
29	(—)
30	(13)

BUBBLING UNDER... THREE LIGHT YEARS — Electric Light Orchestra (Jet); GHOST RIDERS IN THE SKY — Slim Whitman (United Artists).

U.S. ALBUMS

Week ending February 3, 1979	
This Week	Last Week
1	(1)
2	(4)
3	(2)
4	(3)
5	(5)
6	(6)
7	(8)
8	(9)
9	(13)
10	(11)
11	(7)
12	(12)
13	(14)
14	(10)
15	(15)
16	(20)
17	(18)
18	(16)
19	(19)
20	(24)
21	(21)
22	(23)
23	(17)
24	(26)
25	(27)
26	(22)
27	(—)
28	(28)
29	(30)
30	(—)

Courtesy "CASH BOX"

SUNDAY SPECIALS AT LYCEUM

999, Gen X, Bo Diddley, Motorhead — and more

LONDON's Lyceum Ballroom in the Strand begins a new series of Sunday-night rock concerts in a fortnight's time — with 999, Generation X, Bo Diddley and Motorhead already confirmed for headlining dates. The Sunday shows are now under the aegis of a different promoter, Straight Music (previously associated with Sunday rock at the Roundhouse), who will initially be staging gigs there for 16 weeks — with the likelihood of an indefinite run.

A spokesman explained: "With the demise of the Roundhouse due to sound problems, we moved into the Electric Ballroom. We shall still be promoting there occasionally, but from now on we're concentrating all our big guns on the Lyceum."

Opening night is February 18, with 999 topping, supported by The Members. Generation X star on February 25. R'n'B veteran Bo Diddley is set for March 18, with rockabilly star

Ray Campi as special guest. The March 25 bill features a package of up-and-coming bands — including Gang Of Four, Stiff Little Fingers, The Mekons and The Cure — regarded by Straight as "tips for the top".

Motorhead are booked for April 1, and among other acts being lined up for headlining appearances are The Pop Group and Penetration.

Other names have still to be added to the bills already announced,

because there will be a minimum of three bands in every show. Admission will be a standard £2.50 throughout the series, and the gigs run from 7 to 11pm.

Gen X's concert is the final date of their "Valley Of The Dolls" tour which, as already reported, opens at Malvern Winter Gardens on February 9. And there's a change in their itinerary two days earlier: on February 23, when

they now play Bath Pavilion instead of Manchester Mayflower.

Motorhead's show on April 1 will be the highlight of a major tour they are undertaking, starting in March and including dates at big Manchester and Glasgow venues. It ties in with the March 9 release of their new Bronze album, produced by Jimmy Miller, which is preceded on February 16 by their new single "Overkill".

Bo Diddley may play one or two other selected dates during his March visit, but no details are yet available.

Hot Rods on rampage

THE FIRST 22 dates in the major 1979 tour by Eddie & The Hot Rods were revealed to NME this week. It's the first time they've been on the road since their "Life On The Line" tour last spring, when they were joined by Radio Stars and Squeeze. This latest outing coincides with the March 9 release of their new Island album "Thriller", produced by Peter Ker and featuring guest musicians Lee Brilleaux (of The Feelgoods) and Jools Holland (of Squeeze) — so it's logical to suppose that this will be billed as their "Thriller Tour".

Prior to the opening of the itinerary proper, the band play four warm-up gigs later this month — at Bath University (February 22), Reading University (23), Hull University (24), and Redcar Coatham Bowl (25). The tour officially opens at Liverpool University on March 9, followed by Glasgow Strathclyde University (10), Coventry Locarno (15), Leicester Polytechnic (16), Edinburgh Odeon (17), Newcastle City Hall (20), Leeds Polytechnic (21 and 22), Sheffield Top Rank (23), Manchester Apollo (24), Birmingham Town Hall (25), Guildford Civic Hall (26), Portsmouth Locarno (27), Brighton Top Rank (28), Hemel Hempstead Pavilion (29), London Rainbow Theatre (30), Cardiff Top Rank (April 1) and Bristol Locarno (12).

As reported last week, the full tour schedule is expected to



BARRIE MASTERS of the Hot Rods

take in around three dozen gigs, which means that a number have still to be finalised — both on interim dates in the above list, and subsequently through to mid-April. After their British commitments, the Hot Rods leave for an extensive European tour, and they are being lined up for a U.S. visit later in the year.

Radio Stars hitting the trail



ANDY ELLISON of Radio Stars

RADIO STARS are back on the tour circuit, playing 19 dates from this week to mid-March. They'll be promoting their newly released Chiswick Records single "The Real Me", a re-mixed version of a track from their latest LP "Holiday Album". The gigs also mark the return to the line-up of drummer Steve Parrot, who re-joins them for the full tour. And Martin Gordon expects to have recovered completely from a spell in hospital, where he underwent a severe dental operation, in time for the opening at Wolverhampton Polytechnic tomorrow (Friday).

Other dates are Farnborough Technical College (this Saturday), London Camden Music Machine (February 6), Newport Stowaway Club (7), Reading University (9), Hull University (10), Newport Village Club (16), Northampton County Ground (17), Middlesbrough Teesside Polytechnic (23), Sunderland Polytechnic (24), Cambridge University (26), Southampton University (28), Doncaster Bircotes Sports Centre (March 2), Manchester Polytechnic (3), Middlesbrough Crypt Club (4), Birmingham Barbarella's (6), Luton Technical College (9), London Woolwich Thames Polytechnic (10) and London Marquee Club (13).

NEWS

by Derek Johnson

Hancock, EW&F, Hillage: new gigs

HERBIE HANCOCK has added another four dates to his British tour, reported three weeks ago. They include a second London concert at the Hammersmith Odeon on February 24 (tickets £4, £3 and £2), which has been slotted in because his gig at the Rainbow on February 16 is completely sold out.

The other three extra shows are at Dunstable California (February 17, tickets £3.50), Edinburgh Odeon (20 — admission £3.50, £3, £2.50 and £2) and Brighton Top Rank (23, tickets £2.50). As already announced, he's backed by his regular six-piece band (including well-known drummer Alphonse Mouzon), and his new album "Feels Don't Fail Me Now" is issued by CBS on February 9.

EARTH WIND & FIRE have added a second date at Stafford Bingley Hall to their brief UK visit next month. It's on Thursday, March 1, which means that it now becomes their opening performance — the others being at Stafford (2) and London Wembley Arena (3 and 4). Tickets for this extra gig are all priced £4, and they go on sale today (Thursday) at usual agents in Stoke, Birmingham and Manchester. There is, apparently, no chance of any more Wembley gigs being added.



HERBIE HANCOCK

STEVE HILLAGE has added four more dates to his UK tour reported two weeks ago, tied in with the release of his Virgin live double album "Live Herald". They are at Liverpool Mountford Hall (February 26), Leicester De Montfort Hall (27), Oxford New Theatre (28) and Exeter University (March 1).

KEVIN COYNE, already set for a major London concert at the Royalty Theatre in Kingsway on March 18, precedes this show with four newly-confirmed provincial gigs. They are at Newcastle University (February 9), Derby Penine Hotel (11), Huddersfield Polytechnic (13) and Manchester University (16).

Wire on circuit!

WIRE are playing a series of dates during the next two months, to give an added boost to their recently released Harvest single "Outdoor Miner", which already seems a potential chart entry. Venues confirmed so far are Barnstaple Queen's Hall (February 19), Plymouth Metro (20), Newport Stowaway Club (21), Birmingham Barbarella's (22), Manchester The Factory (23), Liverpool Eric's (24), Scarborough Panthouse (March 2) and Sheffield University (3), with more currently being finalised.

LENE LOVICH has made a few changes in her U.K. tour itinerary, reported last week. Fife St Andrew's University (February 11) is cancelled, but three new gigs are added — Middlesbrough Rock Garden (February 13), London Regent's Park Bedford College (16) and Birmingham Barbarella's (18). For the benefit of the uninitiated, Stiff Records have asked up to point out that her name is pronounced Layna Luvitch.

THE D.P.'s, the Brighton-based band who last year shortened their name from The Depressions in an effort to attract more interest, have now accepted that the move didn't work. So they've just announced that they've decided to split up with immediate effect.

SIOUXSIE AND THE BANASHEES are off to Europe this weekend to headline a string of major concerts, opening in Hamburg on Saturday. A new single from the band is due out shortly.

SHAM 69 have been playing a few low-key gigs during the past week, the last being at Derby King's Hall tonight (Thursday). They've just brought keyboards player Tot Taylor into the line-up from Advertising, and the object of the gigs is to assess the band's sound with an added pianist. Taylor's involvement with Sham is initially for a limited period only, to see how things work out.

DOLL BY DOLL have their debut single "The Palace Of Love" issued on February 23, as the initial product under their newly-signed deal with the Automatic Record Company (distributed by WEA). They preview it at York Revolution (tonight, Thursday), Nottingham Sandpiper (Friday), Middlesbrough Rock Garden (Saturday), Leeds Florde Green Hotel (Sunday), Birmingham Barbarella's (February 6), London Marquee (7), Sheffield Limb Club (9) and Dudley J.B.'s (10). It's likely that more gigs will be added to this list.

NEWS WAVES

THE LEYTON BUZZARDS, newly-signed by Chrysalis, have their debut single out this weekend titled "Saturday Night Beneath The Plastic Palm Trees". They promote it at London Stoke Newington Pegasus (this Sunday), York Pop Club (February 5), Liverpool Eric's (8) and London Walthamstow North-East Polytechnic (17).

THE V.I.P.'s, whose second single "Just Can't Let You Go" is released on February 23 by Rok Records (distributed through The Label), have London dates this month at Harrow Technical College (tomorrow, Friday), Chelsea Whetstone (every Saturday), Camden Music Machine with Little Bo Bitch (14), Fulham Greyhound (16), Marquee Club with Little Bo Bitch (25) and Woolwich Tramshed (27).

THE EDGE have lined up three London gigs later this month — at Covent Garden Rock Garden (15), Kensington Nashville (17) and Harrow Rd. Windsor Castle (23).

ADAM & THE ANTS have extra gigs at Nottingham Sandpiper (February 16), Bradford Royal Standard (18) and Chester Smartys (19).

Punishment inflict more

PUNISHMENT OF LUXURY, newly signed by United Artists (as reported two weeks ago), have added more dates to their current tour — at Northampton County Ground (this Saturday), Sheffield Limit (February 8), Norwich East Anglia University (9), London Marquee (13), Cardiff Grannies (15), London City Polytechnic (16), Coventry Warwick University (17), London Imperial College (18), Aberystwyth University (20), St. Yarmouth Star & Garter (22), Burton 75 Club (23), Derby Lonsdale College (24) and York Pop Club (28).

THE BUZZCOCKS are embarking on a series of solo projects, prior to their European tour starting in March, reported last week. Drummer John Maher is currently recording with Patrick Fitzgerald for the latter's debut album, and both Pete Shelley and bassist Steve Garvey have upcoming solo singles. Shelley has also recorded a solo session on acoustic guitar for Manchester's Pizzazz Radio.

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- 7 Preston, Polytechnic
- 8 Wakefield, Unity Hall
- 9 Bristol, University
- 10 Birmingham, University
- 13 Plymouth, Metro
- 14 Southampton, University
- 15 Warwick, University
- 16 Sheffield, Polytechnic
- 17 Manchester, University
- 20 Birmingham, Barbarella's
- 21 Liverpool, University
- 22 Middlesbrough, Crypt
- 23 Newcastle, Polytechnic
- 24 Strathclyde, University
- 25 St. Andrews, University
- 26 Edinburgh, Tiffanys
- 28 Bradford, University
- March
- 1 Leeds, Polytechnic

Gruppo Sportivo
'Back to 78'
featuring the single 'PS78'

AGENCY REPRESENTATION - ASGARD

SEDAKA IN PALLADIUM SEASON

Stylistics' long tour

THE STYLISTICS return to Britain in April for an extensive seven-week tour, comprising both concerts and cabaret engagements. Their itinerary includes two major London dates — at the Palladium on April 29 at 6 and 8.30pm (tickets on sale now at the box office priced £6, £5, £3.50 and £2.50); and at the Hammersmith Odeon on May 19 at 6 and 8.45pm (tickets on sale shortly priced £5, £4, £3 and £2).

Other confirmed dates are at Stoke Jollees (April 23 week), Birmingham Night Out (30 week), Manchester Golden Garter (May 7 week), Oxford New Theatre (13), Windsor Blazers (20 week), return to Birmingham Night Out (28 week), Purfleet Circus Tavern (June 3 week) and Brighton Centre (10). Two other big concerts have still to be finalised by promoter Danny Betsch of Kennedy Street Enterprises. Prior to the tour, the group guest in BBC-1's "Saturday Night At The Mill" on April 21, and other TV appearances are being lined up.

NEIL SEDAKA flies into London in the spring to play a seven-day engagement at the Palladium — from Sunday to Saturday, April 22-28 inclusive. Ticket prices were still being finalised at press-time, though it's understood that the box office will be opening shortly, possibly next week. Sedaka won't be playing any other concerts during his visit, though he is appearing on TV, including his own special.

● Paul Anka is also confirmed for a Palladium season, playing a week there from Monday to Saturday, April 2-7 inclusive.

Latest tours round-up

LIVE ON STAGE

BOYS OF THE LOUGH are back on the road this month with gigs at Oxford Polytechnic (tomorrow, Friday), Loughborough University (Sunday), Livingston Howden Park Centre (9), Newcastle Playhouse (11), Motherwell Civic Centre (14), Hatfield Forum (16), Preston Charter Theatre (17), London Woolwich Tramshed (18) and Cardiff Sherman Theatre (25).

SWINGLE 8 play nine concerts this month, to tie in with the release of their new CBS album "No Time To Talk". They're at Derby Assembly Rooms (this Sunday), York University (9), Cardiff New Theatre (11), Stirling University (15), Inverness Eden Court Theatre (16), Glasgow City Hall (18), Manchester Royal Northern College of Music (20), Grimsby Western School (21) and Eastbourne Congress (23).

IMMIGRANT have London gigs lined up at Ronnie Scott's Club Upstairs (this Friday and Saturday), Camden Dingwalls (February 7), City Polytechnic (9), Camden Town Hall (10) and Hackney All Nations Club (17). They also have out-of-town dates at Sheffield Limit Club (February 28) and Lincoln A.J.'s (March 17).

ROD ARGENT's backing band for his two nights at London Victoria The Venue on February 8 and 9 comprises Peter Robinson (of Brand X and Stanley Clarke) and Rob Lumley (producer of Brand X) both on keyboards, guitarist John Goodall (Brand X), bassist Alphonso Johnson (Weather Report), drummer Phil Collins (Genesis) and percussionist Morris Pert (Brand X), with Argent himself on lead vocals and keyboards.

SUPERCARGE have added more dates to their latest gig series, reported last week — at Wakefield Unity Hall (February 16), Loughborough University (24), Wolverhampton Lafayette (March 2), Birmingham Barbarella's (3), Newcastle Polytechnic (7), Bradford University (9), Coventry Warwick University (15), Northampton College (17) and Nottingham College of Agriculture (20).

THE HEAD BOYS, reported last week as having signed for RSO Records, play Edinburgh St. Mary's School (tomorrow, Friday), Kinghorn Guinzie Nuk (Sunday), Paisley The Bungalow (February 7), Edinburgh Astoria (8), Greenock Victoria Carriage (9), Sheffield Limit (13) and London gigs at Camden Bracknell (14), Fulham Golden Lion (15), Camden Dingwalls (16) and Covent Garden Rock Garden (18).

SON SEALS BAND have now re-arranged their British visit originally planned for the autumn, but called off after they were involved in a serious train crash in Scandinavia. First confirmed dates are at Newcastle Polytechnic (March 16), Leicester University (17), Stoke North Staffs Polytechnic (22) and London Hendon Middlesex Polytechnic (23), with more to be added.

CHAS & DAVE go on the road to promote their current EMI album "Rockney" and upcoming live LP (see Record News). They play Sheffield University (this Saturday), Portsmouth Polytechnic (February 15), Brighton Polytechnic (17), Chatham Town Hall (21), Leicester University (22), Manchester Polytechnic (23), Wolverhampton Lafayette (March 9), Retford Porterhouse (10), Canterbury Kent University (13) and Birmingham Barbarella's (16).

THE YOUNG BUCKS have London gigs this month at City Polytechnic (tomorrow, Friday), Kensington Nashville (every Monday), Chelsea College (10), New Cross Goldsmiths College (14), Whitlands College (16) and Paddington St. Mary's Hospital (17). Out of town they play Portsmouth Polytechnic (this Saturday), Uxbridge Brunel University (Sunday), Bristol Granary (8), Birmingham Barbarella's (9), Sheffield Limit Club (23) and Newcastle University (24).

STIFF LITTLE FINGERS, now with new drummer Jim Reilly, headline Rough Trade's package tour this month also featuring Essential Logic and Robert Rental & The Normal Dates are Bournemouth Town Hall (tomorrow, Friday), Aylesbury Friars (Saturday), Swindon Brunel Rooms (5), London W.10 Acklam Hall (7), Cardiff Granary (8), Plymouth Metro (9), Davidstow Village Hall (10), Newport Stowaway Club (14), Cheltenham Plough (15), Manchester University (16), Liverpool Eric's (17), York Pop Club (21), Derby Agents Cinema (22), Nottingham University (23), Leeds Polytechnic (24) and Rugby (26).

STEVE GIBBONS BAND are being lined up for a series of gigs starting later this month. Details are still being finalised, but unconfirmed dates include Keele University (February 14), Manchester Mayflower (15), Birmingham Aston University (16) and London City Polytechnic (17), all supported by Straight 8.

ERIC STEWART IS 'IMPROVING'

ERIC STEWART of 10cc, is recovering in Redhill Hospital from the serious car accident in which he was involved last Thursday. He sustained a skull fracture when his sports car somersaulted off the road in icy conditions at Reigate. A spokesman said at press-time: "Fortunately it's not a bad skull fracture, and Eric continues to improve all the time. Only yesterday he was expressing the hope he'd be fit for the band's projected Far East tour in March". Even so, a question mark hangs over the tour until later this week, when Stewart will be told by a specialist when he can resume work.

News Briefs

MEATLOAF is now confirmed for a second British tour later in the spring, probably in May. No venue details yet available.

PETER STRAKER plays the role of Narrator, Pete Townshend's original part, in the new production of "Tommy" opening in London next week.

NATIONAL HEALTH are being lined up for a series of gigs later this month, when they'll be augmented by Alan Gowen of Gilgamesh.

KOKOMO headline at London's newest showplace, The Venue in Victoria, this Sunday (4) with special guests Sniff & The Tears.

GEORGIE FAME & The Blue Flames return to London Ronnie Scott's Club for a two-week engagement, starting March 5.

JASPER CARROTT has a one-off at London Drury Lane Theatre Royal on February 18, supported by Telephone Bill & The Smooth Operators. It's being filmed for a London Weekend TV special.

OSIRISA have added a major London date to their UK concert series announced a fortnight ago — at The Venue in Victoria on February 10.

FINGERPRINTZ, the band recently signed by Virgin, are supporting Lene Lovich on her UK tour — starting in Aberdeen on February 9.

ALBANY EMPIRE in London's Deptford stages a benefit tonight (Thursday) with The Realists and The Red Lights, and another on February 8 with Pressure Shocks, UK Subs and The Monitors.

SPUD are being lined up for a UK tour starting February 23. First dates set for the Irish band are Brighton Polytechnic (March 1) and Newport Harper Adams College (2).

CHEAP TRICK, who were forced by bad weather to call off their show at Oxford Polytechnic last Friday, have now re-set the gig for February 8.

SLADE begin another cabaret and one-nighter tour next month, opening with a week at Watford Bailey's from February 25. Nick van Eede supports.

SARAH BRIGHTMAN has left Hot Gossip to concentrate on a solo career, writing and recording. She'll have a new single out shortly.

BEE GEES are showcased in a one-hour Radio 1 special tomorrow (Friday) at 9pm, including Paul Gambaccini interviews with the Gibb brothers.

MIKE BERRY talks about Buddy Holly on the 20th anniversary of his death, and sings some of his numbers, in ITV's networked "Magpie" Tuesday (February 6).

GRAHAM PARKER & The Rumour now play two Irish gigs immediately before their UK tour reported last week — at Belfast White Hall (February 25) and Dublin Olympia (26).



Journey to U.K.

AMERICAN band Journey have now confirmed details of their British visit in March, when they'll be supported by the Pat Travers Band. The tour ties in with the release of Journey's new CBS album on March 9, the follow-up to their Platinum LP "Infinity", and their first to feature new drummer Steve Smith (ex Jean-Luc Ponty).

Highlight of their itinerary is a major concert at the Hammersmith Odeon on March 26, and other dates are Manchester Apollo (21), Glasgow Apollo (22), Newcastle Mayfair (23), Sheffield City Hall (24), Leicester De Montfort Hall (27) and Birmingham Odeon (28).

OVERTURES BY TCHAIKOVSKY!

BRAM TCHAIKOVSKY — the former Motors guitarist who last year launched his own band Battleaxe, now known simply by his own name — is the subject of a major launch campaign by Radar Records (distributed by WEA), which gets under way this month.

First step in the programme is the release on February 16 of their first single "Girl Of My Dreams" and, as a special image booster, the first 10,000 copies are marketed in a special gatefold sleeve — including an additional free live single, recorded last month during their Hammersmith Odeon concert with Rory Gallagher. They have also just completed work on their debut album, titled "Strange Man, Changed Man", which is due out on March 9.

The outfit flew to Scandinavia this week to open a major concert tour tonight (Thursday), taking in ten top venues. And they'll be setting out on their most important British tour to date on March 15, with details to be announced in a week or two.

Pegasus: a boost for new artists

THE PEGASUS in Stoke Newington, one of London's leading pub rock venues, starts operating a new policy this month. There'll be a 1.5-kilowatt P.A. available to all bands and a resident sound engineer present, so giving new bands a chance to play at a London venue with a decent system. Mondays and Wednesdays will be free entry nights, with two new bands having the chance to build up a following, which could lead to a Tuesday residency the following month. Thursdays, Fridays and Sundays will feature more established bands, with Big Chief continuing their Saturday residency. Any bands interested should contact the venue direct.

BRISTOLS GO LIMP!

BE LIMP is the name given to a package tour featuring several up-and-coming acts from the Bristol area — The Spics, Joe Public, Crystal Theatre, Dave Cohen, Candado Pelado, Les Vrainmont Cool and Einstein's Brain. It's being promoted by the Bristol University Students Union as part of what they call their "Rock Against Radio Wavelength Changes" campaign. Admission to gigs will be around 75p, and the first confirmed are at Southampton University (this Saturday), Bristol Brunel Technical College (February 11), Reading University (23), London School of Economics (24), Guildford Surrey University (March 2), Birmingham Polytechnic (9), Oxford College of Further Education (10) and Bristol University (16).

Smirks conflict with Beserkley

A MYSTERY concerning the recording career of The Smirks and the future of the Beserkley label remained unsolved at press-time, due to conflicting statements from the two parties involved.

A spokesman for the Manchester-based band said they have ceased to have any connection with Beserkley, who had advised them to look for another deal. And this is particularly upsetting to them, because they've virtually finished work on a new album, which can't now be released. It's being shelved until they find a new label. The Smirks claim that Mathew Kaufman, head of Beserkley USA, told them he'd decided to wind down operations in Britain.

But a Beserkley spokesman in London denied that The Smirks had been given the boot. He said that managing director Fred Cantrell resigned last week and, in the light of this, The Smirks had been given the opportunity of deciding how

they felt about remaining with the label.

He added: "There will be inevitable changes, resulting in an increased emphasis on our American acts — including The Rubinoos, Greg Kihn and Jonathan Richman". But he declined to say how the other British act on the label, The Tyle Gang, would be affected.

Despite this setback, The Smirks are going ahead with a March tour, which was originally intended to promote their new album. Confirmed dates are Liverpool Eric's (March 1), Retford Portershouse (2), Bristol Polytechnic (6), Plymouth Woods Centre (7), Exeter Routes (8), Norwich Boogie House (10), Leicester University (12), Birmingham University (13), York Revolution (14), Coventry Lancaster Polytechnic (15), Scarborough Penthouse (16), Salford University (17), Leeds Florde Green Hotel (18), Preston Polytechnic (21), Sheffield Limit Club (22) and London Marquee (23).



THE SMIRKS... on the dole?

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RECORD NEWS

Harley tape strikebound

STEVE HARLEY spends this month and March in the EMI studios recording a new album with producer Jimmy Moxworth. He's having to duplicate some tracks, because a tape he recorded in the States is currently held up at Tilbury docks by the lorry drivers' strike. Backing him in the studio are ex-Cockney Rebel drummer Stuart Elliott, John Gibling (bass), Phil Palmer and Alan Murphy (guitars) and Joey Carbone (keyboards), though this time-up could well change when Harley goes on the road in the spring to coincide with the LP's release. Meanwhile, he has a new single out on February 16 titled "Someone's Coming".

Mike Berry's new Lightning

Records single, out tomorrow (Friday), is a rare Buddy Holly song called "Stay Close To Me". Holly wrote it six months before his death 20 years ago, but never recorded it commercially. Ches & Dave and Crowder's Geoff Whitehorn are featured in the backing, with arrangements by ELO's Louis Clarke.

Parker LP set

GRAHAM PARKER & The Rumour's new album has now been named as "Squeezing Out Sparks", and it's set for March 2 release by Phonogram to tie in with their U.K. tour starting at the end of the next month. The ten-track set, recorded in London and mixed in Hollywood, was produced by Jack Nitzsche.

● The Three Degrees' current hit single "Women In Love" is now available in a limited edition pressed on gold vinyl. This is one of seven current Ariola singles being pressed in gold, including recent releases by Deborah Washington, John Paul Young and Linda Fletcher.

● Just out on Cherry Red Records is the label's first album — "The Sleeper Wakes" by Morgan, retailing at £3.49 and also available as a cassette. The band features Morgan Fisher, formerly with Love Affair and Mott The Hoople, and now a member of British Lions.

● Dan Kelleher, formerly of the 101-ers, has a self-penned and self-produced single out on Chiswick titled "I Couldn't Help But Cry". Kelleher was co-writer with Joe Strummer of "Five-Star Rock 'n' Roll Petrol".

● The Pop Group are at present in the studios recording material, with a view to releasing later this month or in early March, at which time they'll be going on tour.

● Coventry new-wave band Squad, who have recently supported Sham 69 and The Flys, have just released their debut single on their own newly-formed Squad Songs label.

● Chrysler's say that the new Blonde single "Heart Of Glass" passed the 250,000 sales mark on Thursday of last week — less than a week after its release.



● Produced by Jerry Goldstein in Los Angeles, Tenye Tucker's new album "TNT" is released by MCA on February 9, with a single taken from it "Lover Goodbye" issued the following week (16).

● As a prelude to his upcoming tour, the title track from Slim Whitman's current album "Ghost Riders In The Sky" is released as a United Artists single on February 5.

Motown supersingle

● Four of the world's most celebrated black stars combine forces on a Motown single for February 9 release. It's "Papa, We Love You" featuring Diana Ross, Stevie Wonder, Marvin Gaye and Smokey Robinson. The song was written as a tribute to Motown founder Berry Gordy Sr, who died recently aged 90.

● Nottingham band Gaffs have their first album "Neither Use Nor Ornament" out on their own Gaffs "N-Products" label. It's available at their gigs or by post (details from 0602 294919).

● The Soft Boys have parted company with Radar Records, and will be releasing their new LP "The Day They Ate Brick" on their own Two Crabs label in late March. They'll be promoting it by playing a series of gigs at the same time.

● Latest release on Lightning Records' revival label Old Gold is "The Equals" 1968 chart-topper "Baby Come Back", out this week. Two of their other former big hits will follow later in the year.

● The Records have been signed by Virgin, and are due in the studios this weekend to start work on their debut album... The Flys, currently touring Europe, have their new EMI single "Oh Beverly" out this weekend.

● Ches & Dave recorded a live album last week, in front of a specially invited audience at EMI's Abbey Road studios. It contains a batch of new self-penned material and is due for spring release.

● Steel Pulse are at present in the studios with producer Karl Pitterson, who was responsible for their hit album "Handsworth Revolution". Their new LP is to be issued in mid-May, and the band will then start an extensive European and U.K. tour.

● Sparks have been signed by Virgin, and the first release under the deal is their album "No.1 In Heaven", which will be in the shops on March 2.

A limited edition picture disc of Elvis Presley's "A Legendary Performer - Vol. 3" with a portrait on one side and an action shot on the other, is now available priced £8.99. The normal pressing, also out on RCA, costs £4.49.

● Four compilation albums out on RCA, selling at the budget price of £2.49, are Lau Reed's "Vicious", "The Many Sides Of Neil Sedaka", Nina Simone's "Pure Gold" and "Deane Eddy". And a new full-price release is "Hollywood Party Tonight" by Odyssey.

● "Hey Little Way Out Girl" by Del Ceprle has been picked up by Grapevine Records for release through RCA on March 9. It's reckoned to be Britain's most expensive single ever — there's believed to be only one copy in the country, which recently changed hands for £270.

● British band U2, current touring with UFO, have their album "Set The World On Fire" released by Bearsville this weekend. It's the first commercial picture disc LP to be marketed by the WEA Organization, and sells at the relatively low price (for this technique) of £5.99.

● Lee Fardon & The Legionaires have almost finished work on their debut album for Arista at the Rockfield Studios in Wales, with Fritz Fryer producing. The band will be doing a series of London dates later this month to preview the set.

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ROD'S WRIT!

ROD STEWART issued a writ against WEA Records last Friday, in an attempt to prevent the company increasing the retail price of his "Blondes Have More Fun" album. According to a spokesman for Stewart, he had insisted on the LP being kept at the old price of £4.49, but last week WEA declared their intention of raising the price to £4.99 as from Monday of this week.



GUESS WHO!

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PASH MUSIC STORES, 5 ELGIN CRESCENT, LONDON W11



the
new
single
from Elvis
Costello and
the Attractions
Elvis Costello
My Funniest
Valentine
on Radar
Records.
Ada
31

Can't believe it's a week since we
first - good to be back - and
back to work.

But it's a bit of a relief to be
back to work. I've been a bit
out of sync for a while.

It's a bit of a relief to be
back to work. I've been a bit
out of sync for a while.

It's a bit of a relief to be
back to work. I've been a bit
out of sync for a while.

TRACKING DOWN Steve Gerber was surprisingly easy. I had heard he'd just been fired from Marvel and was in Burbank, California, licking his wounds, picking up the pieces, but most of all working on various new projects while the legal storm settled over the much-disputed ownership of one cigar-chomping, fowl-mouthed comic-book character named Howard.

Gerber and Howard's doom was something called FAME. A case of Too Much Too Soon. After hardly a year of existence, born out of *vox populi*, Howard had been turned into a syndicated comic-strip appearing every morning in hundreds of American newspapers.

This was an unprecedented feat. It had taken years for fellow traveller Spider-Man to achieve that kind of status. Such meteoric success was all the more remarkable as Howard was not a superhero but a... duck. A talking duck catapulted into "A World He Never Made", a world of *hairless apes* through some damning twist of fate, a shuffling of *realities* so mindboggling and involved you really don't want to get into that.

There are webs and then there are webs: If Stan Lee almost single-handedly created the Marvel Olympus with *Captain America*, *Fantastic Four* and all that, he found in *Spider-Man* his most lasting success — the first character to make it big outside of the Marvel padded-celli.

The Webman was directly followed by Web-foot himself, Howard, the thinking man's duck. And behind him of course stands the Web-brain, Gerber.

If it took Stan Lee quite a few years to create the Marvel Universe as it is now known, it took less for Gerber to completely subvert it. And this didn't start with the first ish of *Howard The Duck* either: Some of his stories for *Man-Thing* were even more outrageous and often more successful: as comic-books.

Steve Gerber was definitely the rising star at Marvel, with a rabid following of his own — so hot he couldn't be stopped. He started to take liberties that were a definite no-no for anyone else.

The transgressions of Marvel's *enfant terrible* are too numerous to list. He seemed to take a perverse pleasure in getting out of step; his stories showed a quasi iconoclastic and increasingly weary attitude towards Marvel and superheroes and the *de rigueur* big fight at the end. His dialogues and sense of language were almost always brilliant, with a lot of social satire, sexual double-entendre and an incredible ear for lingo, hip or not.

He also showed a marked propensity to indulge in Felliniesque capers such as the notorious Howard ish No 16 in which he was really asking for trouble. Titled *Deadline Doom*, and subtitled *Aren And The Art Of Comic-Book Writing*, it managed to turn a prosaic technical snag into the most personal and wiggly statement a comics writer has ever committed on paper (the pencils hadn't got back to Gerber in time for dialoguing that Dr Bong story, so Gerber, then on the lam and on his way to Las Vegas, wrote this very indulgent, very funny 17-pages of bleedin' words sloppily pasted over some very hasty and cheesy art summoned from 'a cast of thousands' specially drafted for the occasion).

It was crazy, but it was alive and kicking.

This wasn't the first time Gerber had put himself into his own stories (in fact the Howard stories were getting increasingly personal), but it was the first time he tested Marvel resistance (and also his readers' patience) in such a way. It was a total freak-out in the order of *Fear And Loathing In Las Vegas*, although Gerber seemed to lean more towards Harlan Ellison than Doctor Gonzo. A Man and his Duck? Waaugh!

Well, anyway, I got Gerber's number from the new listings, and sure enough, I heard Howard on the answering service; not cackling, exactly, but the voice on that tape was definitely fowl. Two hours later Gerber called back and we agreed to meet the next day for breakfast. Breakfast being at one pm, Las Vegas time.

GERBER CLAIMS he moved into the first apartment the real estate people showed him but his this hot-pink and black two-story building at the dead-end of a sleepy Burbank street lined with eucalyptus is almost too perfect. So perfectly tasteless, so... Californian. And right next to the Warner Bros fence, too.

He lives alone in one of the upstairs apartments, with his dog and a rather vocal blind Siamese named Stupid (inherited from his ex-wife, he says).

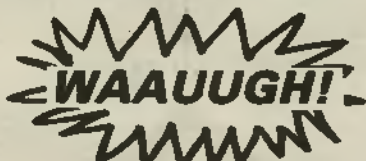
We went to the coffee shop of a drugstore on nearby Olive Street, right in front of the Warner Gate, evoking visions of Peter Lorre or Sydney Greenstreet slouching in to buy

The Duck looked at Stan Lee



... And STAN said "Git!"
STEVE GERBER got ...

HOWARD said



AND PHILIPPE GARNIER wrote it all down, giving an intriguing insight into the wild world of Marvel comics.

Alka-seltzer and bloody marys before clocking in for the day...

How come, after trying Las Vegas, he'd picked Burbank of all places. Was it the perfect spot for a nervous breakdown? I joke.

"It's funny that you should mention this," Gerber laughs, "because in a way I was running from New York, running from some heavy emotional trouble. I just needed a

space, and for a while Vegas was perfect: like, it's open all day and all night, which comes handy for a guy with my kind of hours. It had its advantages.

"In New York I know too many people, there are too many distractions, impossible to work. Vegas is this big void, no intellectual stimulation whatsoever..."

But that's also the reason he's not in Vegas

anymore — not that Burbank is any better. He looks like he needs intellectual stimulation like others might need insulin. And he looks older than I imagined, kinder spoken. Somehow I expected an angry young man, or else some crusty misanthropist like his web-footed alter-ego.

Only later will I find that Howard is not so much an alter-ego as a demon.

Gerber dresses casual and sensible. A brown army shirt and brown corduroys. Heavy specs, but they look like he was born with them on. He acts serious and seems eager to explain things. Not aloof or spaced like you could expect from a man so obviously from the '60s.

I ask how he got to work for Marvel in the first place (although I could have just as well consulted the last issue of *Man-Thing*, a Pirandello number called *POP goes the COSMOS*, where we see Steve in his Hell's Kitchen pad being visited by sorcerer Dakhim, and before that getting a call from editor Roy Thomas). He was in his home-town at the time, Saint Louis.

That was in 1972, when Marvel was bought by Cadence Industries and really expanding. There were a lot of new books being created. Stan and Roy just could not keep up. So I worked in the office for six months, doing the chores, also writing stories: then I became a freelance writer for them: I worked on *Sub-Mariner*, Son of Satan, Fear, Man-Thing and a lot of others.

Before that I was in advertising, doing radio and stuff, but I never could get enough control. Then I was a copywriter for a Saint Louis ad agency. Good money but I hated it.

The last blow was when they gave me a product called WRINKLE-RID: to hype it was supposed to prevent your clothes from wrinkling, and I guess it did. Only trouble was it also made holes in your clothes. Lethal stuff! Or else you'd have big gloopy stains all over them.

That's when I started to realise that my life was suffocating. So when Roy Thomas called I was ready to pack. We'd been Marvel pen-pals from way-back...

Was it hard for him to impose his ideas at Marvel? Did he meet a lot of resistance when he came up with the duck?

"Well, it kind of sneaked up on them. There were so many books and new stories that it was impossible for the editors to keep a firm control over material. They let you pretty much alone as far as the story went.

Anyway there was nothing they could do about it, because of the schedule and the hectic pace of production. You have to understand how things are done at Marvel: you'd be surprised! First the writer does the synopsis, as precise and detailed as can be. Then the artist does the pencils — he's the one who's supposed to tell the story.

If the artist is good, if his story-telling is good, then the reader should be able to understand what's going on without the words.

So when I get the pencils back to dialogue them, I don't waste space telling the story. I have room to be funny, original, or dense! But sometimes the story-telling is awful and there's no room.

Then you send back the stuff to be inked. So you see, there's no time at all for an editor to veto this or that. It's generally too late. And that's what happened with Howard, when Val Mayerick and I came up with this whacky idea for *Man-Thing* No 19. I wanted something wild, something off-the-wall, and Val drew this duck dressed like an accountant with a pork-pie hat and chewing on a stogie.

When Roy saw this he said okay, cool, but don't do it again. They made me kill the duck, they wanted him eliminated because they thought it would hurt the 'Marvel Image' or something. But by then I knew there was more to this duck than a one-shot joke.

So we killed the duck the Marvel way (dead without being really dead, like Dakhim the Sorcerer), and then this extraordinary thing happened: tons of angry mail, they all wanted the duck back. The Marvel offices even received a dead duck from Canada with a protest letter attached. And Stan Lee, who was doing a lot of lectures on the college circuit at the time, was given a hard time.

He would come to the office and ask,

"What's the name of our duck, again?" (Laughs) So they let me carry on with the duck and pretty soon he had his own comic-book, and again, I was pretty much in charge, because nobody had any idea of where I wanted to go with it. In effect I was the editor too. Like we had Howard running for president against Ford and Carter and I even sold buttons, that sort of things...

THERE WAS no censorship, then? I mean, Howard has a pretty problematic but also very obvious sexuality. Like, his relationship with Beverly Switzer is not exactly platonic. I mean, what about the code?

"Well, actually they made us redraw one panel in an early issue. Howard and Bev were shown in the same bed. Howard naked and Bev in a short nightie. They made us put Howard on the sheets instead of in-between. But it was still pretty obvious what they did at night.

In another ish we had Amy Pope bringing Howard up to her pad; it's when Howard has been turned into a human by Dr Bong — and

Continues over page

Requiem for a Duck

From previous page

we see Amy's sappy boyfriend Elton Burke pacing under her windows moaning. Why, they've been up there all night! They thought it was lewdly suggestive and made us change it. I'm not kidding!"

You mean, The Rolling Stones died all in vain?

Gerber laughs. "Right! And anyway, nobody objected to Timmy sleeping with Lassie, that I know of..."

But what exactly is the nature of Howard's unnatural acts with Bev?

"I'd rather not think about it! That's why I left Howard's past pretty much in the clouds. We don't ever see where he comes from. We don't know I think it's better that it remains a bit mysterious. It does not pay to be too literal."

We talk about the two kinds of stories he seems to favour: the mindboggling space operas with large doses of weirdness thrown in (the even used acid trips in one of his *Man-Thing* stories), and then the down-to-earth stories, almost soaps, but allowing him to do what he does best, social satire.

"Basically I like both kinds, and you know, I don't think there is much of a difference. Comics are the ideal medium for those two kinds of stories. I don't think it works for all the other genres like westerns, war-stories or even detective."

We discuss the various artists who collaborated with him on the different books — Brunner, Val Mayerik, Gene Colan (not to forget one Rico Rivelli).

"They gave Howard *The Duck No. 1* to Fink (Brunner) because they thought Val's style wasn't realistic enough or something. I don't understand it, but then Brunner was good too in a different way. To me the best artist was always Gene Colan, because he's the one who I think really understood Howard; he added a lot to the character."

"Gene was a great help because with him I could get much more subtle, because he's so good at rendering expressions, with humans, with a 'funny animal', anything. Most artists can give you five, six expressions and that's it."

"Actually it got so that the young artists were only good at drawing superheroes but couldn't draw normal people or animals very well."

"Gene was incredible. You should have seen his pencils. Really, there was so much more in his pencils than what the reader could see. Because after inking, and most of all after that shitty printing process they use, what you can see is maybe 20 per cent of

what was originally in the pencils. See, they use those plastic plates for printing..."

Wha-ah?

"Yes, it's cheaper. Mind you, they even tried paper plates! That's the five-and-dime mentality that prevails at Marvel and comic-books in general. Like, before we used to have 20 pages to work with; now it's down to 17, which is absolutely the worst format possible."

"See, that was my main bitch against Marvel, long before that last shoot-out or whatever went down on account of the newspaper strip: it was the 'think-small' mentality. Stan never did anything to get a larger distribution, he never ever promoted *Howard the Duck* when straight papers and 'serious' magazines like the *Village Voice* were running all those stories on the duck, which never happened before for any of the other books. I'm still convinced that had Howard been on sale next to *Heavy Metal* or *High Time* the book would have been a smash."

"As it was, the fans had to run to the candy-store to get the book; and people who normally don't read comic books were not exposed to it. You don't get new readers by advertising in the *Marvel's Bulletin* or *Wise Quack*, you know... that's why at their most successful Marvel never had a title that sold more than 300,000."

"That's why doing the Kiss comic-book was so important to me. It was not as good as it could have been; there was a lot of time pressure as I had to practically do everything myself — because Marvel were not totally behind it — but it sold very well and showed them that it was possible to get out of that 25-page format with the shiny paper and all."

"What I had in mind next for Howard was a \$1.50 book with a lot of pages and quality paper. People were ready for it. But obviously you're not going to have this with the X-ray specs ads and the Charles Atlas ads and the stink-bombs ads..."

ONE OF THE things that first attracted me to Howard was the fact that he hailed from Cleveland (more or less), like almost everything good coming from the States this last couple of years (or so it seems).

The legendary issue No. 1 legendary because some scumbag dealers highjacked almost the entire run and made it an instant collector's item; within a month it was worth five smackers, and now it's up to 15! showed Howard contemplating suicide in front of the Cuyahoga River, a sewer so foul it is reputedly prone to spontaneous combustion.

"A lot of people gave me a hard time with that — bitching because I was giving their beautiful city a bad name. Shit, I wrote much worse about my home-town Saint-Louis in *Son of Satan*. Originally, we wanted to break from that strange tradition where every comic-book is set in New York. You can DUMP on New York, nobody seems to mind..."

Relax, Randy Newman had the same problem with Ohio. And even worse in Baltimore. They really gave him a hard time when he last played there. The city commissioner or some such git climbed onstage and delivered two huge garbage bags full of protest mail against his song "Baltimore".

By the way, in a later issue of *HTD*, there's a drunk singing "Mary". He slurs the words and it's more like "Mu-u-ry." It is Newman's song?

"No, never heard of it."

Same words, too...

"Incredible..."

Yep. But what about music? What about Kiss? What about his pokes at the likes of Alice Cooper (Eugene's "The Star" Spangler in *Man-Thing No. 16*)? Does he like rock at all?

"Oh sure, I like rock, but I was mostly putting down what rock has become — this increasingly slick and sickening sort of muzak, the theatrical props, the big stadiums, the FM tedium. But I like The Beatles, Stones, Dylan, all that period, when rock was a force and was healthy."

In fact he seems to favour the groovy summers of love — Lovin' Spoonful and all that — although his hilarious flash-backs are more slash-backs than anything.

How come he got involved with such noxious bimbos as Kiss?

"Well, they approached me. They were Marvel fans to begin with, and they had the kind of management who were willing to play ball. But it was fun, and they were obviously easy to put into a comic-book."

(Ever heard of the Ramones, Gerber? — Ed).

Where does he get all these whacky ideas like Pierre Dentifris, the demented separatist beaver from Quebec? Or the mighty Dr Bong?

"Dr Bong I got from a Kiss fan; he was writing he'd got a good 'bonging' out of the book, or that he'd like to give us a good bonging. I don't know. I have no idea what it means, but it sounded pretty funny, so I used it. But like anything at Marvel, Bong is not what he seems to be. He's in reality this caven, frustrated loser of the lowest order..."

You mean, a frustrated journalist?

"Right! And he's based on a real journalist too, who attacked me. I made him my next villain, but of course he was more flattered than anything."

Never mind. What about the newspaper strip? How come Gerber isn't writing it anymore?

"That's what triggered the fight between Marvel and me. The syndicate claimed the strip was always late, which it was although it wasn't my fault. Again, it's the wretched working-conditions prevailing in the industry. Val Mayerik was drawing the strip, and I was very pleased with that. But you see, an artist doesn't get paid for a job until at least two months after he's delivered the pencils, so Val had to take on some outside work to survive in the meantime; then it got so hectic he quit, and I had a series of artists working on the strip, never the same, impossible to have any kind of continuity because the artist wasn't under contract."

"I asked Marvel to put one artist under contract for a year — like they would advance him \$200 a week for the first two months so the guy could afford to do only the strip during that time. But they refused."

"You have to remember the incredible state of servitude artists and writers are subjected to in that industry. There is no contract, no protection, it's all very paternalistic."

"I know one famous editor who refused to hear a famous artist because he'd had the guts to bring his lawyer with him to discuss a contract for a book or something. Imagine this in any other industry!"

But as for the strip, it was pretty silly on Marvel's part because they stood to earn a lot of money. It was just beginning to find its audience... And since we had a three-way arrangement (Marvel, the artist and I got a third each) they would have earned money."

"But instead of getting behind me when I threatened to sue the syndicate, they fired me! It all comes down to who owns the Howard character, the creator or the publisher. And it's not as if I was this egomaniac, you know, artist integrity and all that."

"Like, I do think Marvel should get something, a share of what Howard earns, because everytime they put something out they take a risk, and that should be rewarded. But they are completely opposed to even discuss the problem. It would set a precedent, I suppose. So now I'm out. I'm suing them, and the book and the strip goes on but has nothing to do with me..."

Actually, the strip has recently been terminated, which is just as well since it had become a pathetic three-panel daily joke with a talking duck instead of Dagwood or something; all the marvellous characterisation was gone. The 35c book is still going, and after a few ghastly issues Gene Colan is back at least, and there is a new writer. He has brought back Dr Bong and hints at a possible reunion for Howard and Bev.

BUT WHAT THEY should do instead is reunite that other odd couple, Steve and Howard, a man and his duck.

But then again, Gerber suggests that he might not want to do that either. He claims that getting the sack was a good thing for him, made him realise how disenchanted he had become, not only with Marvel but with comic-book writing as well, which he now views as being "limited".

Wasn't the duck some sort of catharsis for his own personal problems? So that instead of having an expensive nervous breakdown or an equally expensive couch with a shrink he had Howard to bitch and rant about on love, politics, cults and assorted mindfucks, fast-food poisoning or the sorry state of relations between men and women?

"Something like that, yes. Now I have a different character, whom I named Stewart the Rat, and he's very different from Howard. Mainly because I'm a very changed person. Like Howard, I used to beat my head against the walls. Not anymore. I'm less confused; less angry."

"I'm also writing a film script, which is an attempt at breaking into something different. I haven't been contracted to do it — you've got to prove yourself in that trade — but I'm fortunate that my girlfriend is in films and knows all the ropes. I also have various book projects in mind, but I can't talk about them."

He was rumoured to be writing a book on the comics industry, which should be something. He's also been writing copy for Hanna-Barbera funny animals books in Europe.

"I have a lot of fun doing that. See, Howard was anything but a funny animal. That's why



This is Stewart the Rat. Say hello, Stewart. OK, now beat it.

when Disney Industries threatened to sue it didn't make any sense; they seemed to think they had a monopoly on ducks dressed in blue.

"Howard is not like the other ducks, Donald or Daffy or any of the flat, one-dimensional funny animals. We've been very careful about this, because in a way it's the whole point. The duck has been thrown into another dimension which is not his. The duck has depth, relief, like the humans shown on the page. That's his tragedy, that's what made the book interesting!"

"But it was funny, when Disney started sending letters. Everyone at Marvel was shitting his pants. Apparently the Disney lawyers are famous the world over for being merciless and lethal. So they had the duck dressed in red suits instead, or green suits, polka-dots, anything. Anything but blue! But the funny thing is, the Disney people never protested against the book; only when we started the strip. And the strip in black and white..."

AS WE WALK back to his place we talk about California and Californians, a mutant race he has so aptly portrayed in his spoof on *Star Wars*, *Star Wasguth*; we find them at a planet-stop called Boorbank, where Korrek has to negotiate with the main honcho there, Big Mack. Gerber also mentions the fact that Stan Lee is about to put out a book on Howard with all the best episodes of the strip; published by Random House. Lee even asked Gerber to write a foreword, but Gerber declined. Still, it's not open war between him and Stan.

"I've always admired Stan for what he did in the past. And I did not immediately drop out of the Marvel pages; there were a few stories they had in reserve, one last Howard which ended up completely ruined, and three episodes of *Captain America* in which I'd been asked to tell Steve Rogers' surprising past. I mean they had no idea what I'd come up with. I made him an ex-pacifist. It's only his brother who got killed at Pearl Harbor. I also had Captain America being attacked by the Lincoln statue in Washington, and by a crazed and evil Volkswagen bug; he has to call SHIELD for help!"

"But the Marvel people were pleased, they were saying, 'See, Gerber still can tell a good story the Marvel way, he still has it if he only would.' When in effect I was mocking that very style; I followed the Marvel blueprint to a T, you know, the big fight, the hidden identity, etc... All the Marvel books read the same these days."

Back in his apartment he shows me the preliminary sketches for *Stewart the Rat*, drawn by Will Meugniot, who will do the entire book, and he also lets me read the synopsis for the first episode — weird stuff about DNA and genetic manipulation.

Stewart the Rat is definitely from Surf City: He sports Jim McGuinn shades, Indian shins and beads, uses a cigarette holder and looks like a cross between Will Coyote and Kim Fowley. The book will hit the stands in March or April and will be independently distributed.

Before leaving, I ask Gerber one more question: 'What were his colleagues' reactions during the fight between him and the Marvel management?'

"Believe it or not, they were shocked; very upset that I could do a thing like that against Stan, against the 'family'. You have to understand we're almost all second-generation Marvelites, all raised on weekly doses of superheroes, and all the artists and writers are fans first and foremost."

"It's not a raise or a little respect they expect or slave for, they're just hoping that one day they'll get a crack at working on *Spider-Man* or *Captain America*; just hope that Big Daddy will let them do that. That's their idea of material retribution."

So Steve Gerber did a Prometheus of sorts, rocked the boat and got the boot from Mt Olympus, condemned to rot in sunny Boorbank. Eat your liver out, smartass. But then Gerber is finding out he'd like to do something else besides writing comic-books. So, like he says in *Star-Wasguth*: "MAY THE FARCE BE WITH YOU".



This is STEVE GERBER. That is his dog.

Moon Martin

"...Songs which deserve friends like 'Moon' gathered around him here, namely a rock-steady rhythm section comprising Phil Seymour on drums and Gary Valentine (formerly of Blondie) on bass. Mr. Seymour was, of course, the Brian Jones lookalike half of the now sadly defunct Dwight Twilley organisation. Present also—albeit briefly—is Willie Alexander, el Loco dropping in to provide some rattling joanna on the author's very zip-some interpretation of 'Cadillac Walk'; keyboard duties elsewhere being very capably handled by producer Craig Leon..."

"... 'Bad Case Of Lovin' You' is the track that sold me the record, all yearning passion and that killer middle-eight that took my money away and paid back multifold..."

Sounds Dec. 2

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THRILLS

SHAM 69 RIOT

THERE'S A RIOT goin' on and, yet again, the hapless Sham 69 find themselves in the middle of it all.

Friday's Sham set at Middlesex Polytechnic in Hendon, North London, saw perhaps the worst example to date of the kind of trouble which has already led to calls for the group to be banned from the UK college circuit.

A heavy security presence consisting of uniformed men with dogs as well as Student Union stewards, was not enough to contain the sporadic outbreaks of violence that were prevalent throughout the evening, chiefly involving confrontations between Sham 69's own entourage and the various hoot-boy factions which had descended on the gig in force.

Foremost among the trouble spots was the stage itself, as successive waves of "exuberant" Sham fans attempted to join the group at the microphones, only to be repelled by the massed ranks of Sham's protectors. Kid gloves were not in evidence.

Midway through only the third number (ironically, "The Cockney Kids Are Innocent"), the melee became impossible to contain. A disgusted Jimmy Pursey discovered a broken bottle and the Union's vice president intervened to halt the gig.

Appeals for calm were made, with Pursey himself taking the most active role in attempts to defuse the situation. An uneasy truce was established, only to erode in the course of the next ten minutes. By the time the eighth song "Hurry Up Harry" had been effectively wrecked, even Pursey had to admit defeat and, in tears and visibly shaken, led his band offstage. (Full review of gig. On *The Town*.)

At this point the police arrived. As it became apparent that the evening was over, the crowds dispersed and there were no arrests.

Pursey was later unavailable for comment though reported, understandably, to be very upset at Friday's events. There are no plans for further London gigs in the near future and, in the light of Pursey's past statements, it will be interesting to see whether Sham 69 can ever consider home-town appearances to be viable again.

For their part, Middlesex Poly stand by the decision to accept the Sham booking in the face of allegations, notably from LSE, that the band's hard-core following is a guarantee of violence and disruption.

Middlesex report the actual damage as minimal and are satisfied that their security arrangements proved adequate to prevent the trouble getting more seriously out of hand. The general

consensus of opinion is that the presence of BBC television cameras, filming for an *Arena* feature around Sham's "That's Life" album, was instrumental in encouraging the exhibitionist excesses so much in evidence.

One might also point — in spite of Pursey's well-known anti-violence and anti-fascist stance — to the pre-set build-up of atmosphere using a loud and ominous "Clockwork Orange" soundtrack and "Land Of Hope & Glory" as if pandering to the aggressively right-wing gangs which have adopted the group for their own.

Be that as it may, the blame cannot be laid at Pursey's door. Sham's last show in Liverpool (never a city noted for the gentility of its children) for example, was a model of the raucous uncomplicated good-time gig which the band aspire to. Which would seem to reinforce the view that both of the kind which ruined last Friday's set is not an inevitable feature of Sham 69's appeal. Another irony lies in Pursey's defiant declaration to the Poly mob that "I only ever want to play in London!"

Whatever the way ahead, Pursey's progress is beginning to look very difficult indeed.

PAUL DU NOYER



JORDANAIREs OPEN THE ELVIS FILE AGAIN

THE JORDANAIREs, the vocal group who performed on virtually all Elvis Presley's classic recordings, arrived in Britain for the first time just before Christmas — an ambition fulfilled after nearly 20 years.

They'd have liked to have come with Presley, lead singer Gordon Stoker explained, adding that the person to blame for all those Elvis-Says-No-To-Britain stories was not really Elvis himself.

"Elvis was more anxious to come to London than any other place. Every time we mentioned it, he'd say, 'Sure, man, we'll go there in three or four months', and he kept saying that right through the '60s."

"But Colonel Tom Parker (Presley's manager) never did think it was a wise move — partly because of security problems, and partly because he didn't know if there was a suitable venue. "But the main reason was financial. Colonel Parker would always say, 'We haven't scratched the surface in the United States yet, so why should we go out of the country?' "If Elvis himself had one reason not to come, it was

security. I mean, he had many threats on his life, and he and his staff took them all seriously. He had bars on all the windows at home, even on the second floor, he wore bullet-proof clothes, and he always carried a gun.

"I don't think anyone would have killed him, though I've been present when guys have taken swings at him — you know, some guy would get mad because he'd stolen his girl-friend. There were always so many women — not necessarily young girls, but older women, too — who were wild about him.

"So Elvis was running scared. But if the Colonel had booked him into London then Elvis would have come."

"The Colonel," Stoker mused, "is still the same old Colonel. He maintains a home in Palm Springs, but really he lives at the Hilton Hotel in Las Vegas — he's a very heavy gambler."

It was apparently because of Elvis's — or, rather, Parker's — decision to play extended seasons in Las Vegas that The Jordanaire's, along with Presley's drummer D. J. Fontana, and long-serving guitarist Scotty Moore, all deserted him at the beginning of the '70s (and, coincidentally, Presley's wife, Priscilla,

walked out at roughly the same time).

"Every time I saw him thereafter," Stoker continued, "I saw a major change in him."

"He wasn't just fat, he was really bloated. He'd even had his face worked on about a year before his death, he was so worried about his appearance. I don't think anyone ever hated the word 'fat' more than Presley. "But he'd been over-eating for years, hamburgers, cheeseburgers, bacon and banana sandwiches. In the 15 years I was around Elvis I never saw him eat a proper meal."

"He was too cut off from the world. He couldn't go out shopping, he couldn't do anything. He was a victim of demands and circumstances; demands from RCA, demands from Col. Parker, demands from his fan club, demands from the public. Elvis didn't want it to be that way; he just wanted to play his music and have a good time."

"That's when he started taking all these pills. They were all prescribed drugs, but he was taking far too many. And because he never ate any fresh vegetables or decent food they all did far more damage to his body. "We were all on vacation

in Florida at the time of his death. Well, we went back home for the funeral, and just before going, J. J. Fontana rang me and said, 'Gordon, don't come down here — it'll wipe you out. Just remember him the way you last saw him, because it doesn't even look like Elvis in the casket.'

"Did you see that picture on the front of the *Nashville Enquirer*? It was syndicated round the world. That was fake — Elvis hadn't looked like that in 20 years. I think that's the cruellest thing that's been done to him, that they superimposed a picture of him in his coffin for the front of the magazine."

The Jordanaire's have visited Europe twice, so far. In 1974 they played Paris with Billy Swan and various Nashville musicians at the request of Eddy Mitchell, a likeable if slightly anachronistic French rock'n'roller.

Their latest visit was undertaken at the invitation of Don McLean, who has just recorded what is probably his finest album with them in Nashville, and who asked them to guest on his Boxing Day BBC television special.

Since they have

● *Continues page 17*



BEHIND NEW NINE LINES

THIS PLACE looks more like the *Marie Celeste* every sodding day. I'm the only one in the office right now and I don't even work here, f'Chrissakes. I just deliver the hate mail. There's not even a lowly T-Zer in sight. Supposed to be bleeding journalists and they spend all their time playing footsie with extra curricular activities.

Take that Neil Spencer, for a start. At least when old Nick Logan

was Editor he just used to stay locked up in the West Wing all day playing with his paint sprays. But that's not good enough for this Spencer Geezer. oh no! He sits there in his swivel chair like Lord Muck giving interviews to radio people on the state of the rock press. Broadcast this Friday on Capital's Nicky Horne show. It is. And that nice Mr. Charles Shear Murray, he's just as bad. I saw him last week being interviewed on BBC's *Nationwide* by Frank Bough with the editor of some new rag called *Superep*. A right old

barney. It was, I can tell you. And Mister Murray has got a single released this week in the guise of Blast Furnace and the Copyright Violations on Nighthawk records called "South Of The River". I don't go in for this 'best' music much myself, prefer a bit of James Galway's Golden Flute I do, but my grandson tells me it's very good.

Eeee, but they don't half get around, these rock writers! Young Dan'l Baker, he's off in New York at the moment — and before he went he gave an interview to a nice young lady called Val Hennessy of the *Evening News*. And I remember that lad when he was bloody grateful for a receptionist's job! Nice young man, though, he is.

Ooooooh, but if there's a pair I don't like. God forgive me, it's that Julie Burchill and Tony Parsons. Did you see that thing in *Melody Maker* last week where Pete Townshend of The Who said he'd written a song about them called "Jools And Tons"? Seems he was most upset about what they said about the late Kerth Moon in the *Sunday Times* interview they did when their horrible book was coming out. "Gross callousness," Pete called it. "I've written them a nice little song called 'Jools And Tons' that they won't like at all. Though I do sympathise with some of their views." Oh, you're too kind to them, Pete. The little sods have already started writing a song about you and yours called, "Pete And Meher".

And the pair of them are going to be featured in about half-a-dozen episodes of *Nationwide* talking about marriage and related matters starting on February 14. Bloody show-offs. When I was their age I was reviewing *The Lurkers* on a Sunday morning in Rutland. And you still had enough change out of a penny to buy a Mass aerati. Makes you puke, dunnit?

LUNCHEDE, BUNSWORTH

THE ROLLS



Too much hanging on the telephone. Debbie. Sent by Giblets, all the way from the Natal Mercury.

Steve Gibbons is sixteen and would like to write to a girl living in Britain aged between fifteen and seventeen.

Steve's favourite groups are The Stranglers, The Who and Emerson, Lake and Palmer and he is interested in the occult.

Steve Gibbons, 33 Manadon Drive, Crownhill, Plymouth, Devon.

A crazy mixed-up and extremely youthful Steve Gibbons, as seen in 'Blue Jeans' by Sara Moran of Wiltshire. (She was given by her babysitters — honest...)

DANGEROUS VISIONS

WHATEVER HAPPENED TO THE GREAT BRITISH COMEDY?

IF YOU WATCH the current crop of homegrown comedy shows for too long you can really get quite upset. I know, I did, and I am. You'd think the whole thing was organised by a computer — a big 1984 job in a drab, office green steel case the size of a semi-detached house.

The basic programme of this unpleasant machine is that homosexuals, Irishmen, blacks, Pakistanis, Indians, women, foreigners, breasts, buttocks and inexplicit sex are what the proles find funny.

It plays strictly for a chauvinist/racist guffaw and the sly, smutty snigger.

This computer theory is supported by the way formula follows formula in British TV. And we can take the amiable young

man syndrome as an example.

Some time — maybe four years ago — somebody had the idea of putting an amiable, presentable young man into some kind of situation where each week he could get into enough mildly amusing 30-minute situations to sustain a 13-week series.

The show if forget which one it was — it's a genre that tends to blur after a very short time) hit the ratings. Results: straight away the computer pumps out a dozen or more variations on the theme.

Suddenly all over your living room is a whole selection of amiable young men with names like David Roper, Robin Nedwell or Richard O'Sullivan, who wear fab Macca haircuts, Oxford Street leisure wear and have a handy line of chat with the birds.

They tend the sick in *Doctor On The Go*, they play soccer in *Feet First*, they run a chintzy bistro in

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Chrysalis



Robin's Nest, they sell insurance in *Leave It To Charlie* and they even work as a northern nightclub comic in *Take My Wife*.

It gets to the point where you have to scream 'enough'.

But do they stop? Not a chance.

If too many people yell 'enough' at one particular show the

computer goes into Phase Two and sticks in lots of references to wogs,

poofs and slap and tickle to keep the turkey on its feet for another

series.

That's when it gets really disgusting.

Another example is the Leonard Rossiter syndrome. When Rossiter

made the viewing public sit up and pay attention with *The Rise And*

Fall Of Reginald Perrin, the computer grabbed him and

exposed him on the air with even

more intensity than the dread Bruce Forsyth.

Even the remarkably talented Rossiter seems unable to do

anything but stand still for it, and doesn't even duck when in *Rising*

Damp a black actor (Don Warrington) is placed in the

situation to provide space for a lot of tired racist garbage.

Strip away the cheap sex, cheap

race and even cheaper formula from the current comedy menu

and you don't have very much left — just the exceptions and the

Americans.

Discounting the odd, almost apologetic whimsies like *The Good*

Life and *Two's Company*, the exceptions stand like shining

beacons in a polluted sea. In fact, they stand out so strongly it's

almost a redundant exercise to list

Left: the hung-up and strung-out cast of black homosexual neurotics and sex-starved adulterers who send up yer typical comedy fodder in *SOAP*. Right: Robin Nedwell of *The Upchat Connection* — an archetypal example of Everything That is Wrong With Our Telly Today.

them.

There's little more that can be said about a classic like *Python*. I've already mentioned *Reginald Perrin*. *The Muppet Show* is only English by dint of ATV money.

Neither of the *Python* spin-offs *Rutland Weekend* and *Ripping Yarns*, came up to the standards of their founding father, but at least the computer had no hand in their creation and they do outshine most of what is being beamed out at the moment.

Fawlty Towers breaks refreshing ground by attacking the current vogue for prejudice-based jokes by always winding up making the monstrous Basil the butt of the joke.

And that brings us to the Americans. There was a time when up-market critics regularly dismissed U.S. comedy shows as the worst things you could see on TV.

They can't do that today.

This isn't the place to analyse the nature of humour, but two important factors must be originality and flair. At the moment the Yanks appear to hold a near monopoly on both.

Even *Happy Days*, now sagging under the load of far too many episodes, manages occasionally to come up with something new and never resorts to the cheap shots of British sitcom.

*M*A*S*H* has gone on a little too long but still has to stay in the money simply for having the balls to run the same war-is-hell joke for years.

Think about it, how many times does a British show even attempt anything like a war-is-hell joke? For that matter, how often does a British comedy show dispense with the safety net of canned laughter?



And then there's *Soap*. Nothing, currently being made in Britain rivals the ludicrous convolutions of *Soap*'s two nightmare families wading their way through a welter of murder, passion, insanity, illegitimacy, homosexuality, impotence and racism. The jokes are never a dirty snigger. The overkill is so complete that all you can do is swing between bemused confusion and hysterical laughter.

It's significant that in a scene where Jody, the Campbell's gay son, breaks up with his football star

boyfriend and delivers a lone pre-suicide soliloquy there isn't a single titter from the studio audience. It's only when a deliberate joke about anti-gay bigot Anita Bryant is made at the end that the tension breaks and the audience cracks up.

If you need more proof of the uniqueness of *Soap*, just try to find characters like Bob the dummy and his schizo ventriloquist Chuck in any other show.

It could be that all this praise for American imports isn't totally fair. We don't after all, have to put up with their godawful shows like *The Honeymooners* or *The Jeffersons*. They also have a lot of duos to pay for dreck like *Vegas* and *Petrolini*.

The fact remains, though, that the British programme planners must develop some sense of responsibility and stop simultaneously patronising and playing up to the worst of our collective prejudices. It's either that or our sense of comedy — of which we're already smugly and obnoxiously proud — that is going to give us the reputation of being the real rednecks of the western world.

MICK FARREN

THEIRIDS



J. Cleese/B. Fawlty — THIS is our only hope?...

Illustration: BARBARA FRY

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ROCKY SHARPE REPLAYED

(Wot a cult he turned out to be...)

IF YOU CAN'T be a superstar then at least don't sell your ass for a mess of pottage. Hang on in there — you may turn out to be a cult.

In the year 2 B.D. (Before Darts) there existed a group called Rocky Sharpe And The Razors. A zappy little combo, all rock 'n' doowop 'n' Grease-A talent, they were packing the joints on the London pub circuit at the same time as the new riders of the NME '78 Poll were blitzing the basement clubs.

Only snag: it was a textbook case of galloping chaos. What started out as a semi-pro hobby developed into a logistical headache. Rocky's Razors were offered increasingly frequent and wider spread gigs while some of the members were still in college and others were already loose on the streets, struggling to survive. Half the band were based in Brighton, the rest in London, and no record company could be persuaded to support their proven popularity.

"At that time, record companies weren't interested in a group doing oldies," Rocky explained. "It's changed so much now. We eventually stopped performing with the idea of getting new material together, regrouping when everyone had left college, and trying again."

Rocky and his brother Johnny Stud then set about earning a crust as actor and photographer respectively. "We had this insane desire to eat," quote Johnny. Meanwhile, their old mate and co-founder of The Razors, Mad Dan Hegarty, assembled a spin-off group called Darts, who quickly picked up the trail where The Razors had left it. Suddenly the brothers were on the outside looking in at an amazing runaway success story.

"The actual split was amicable," Rocky said, "but after that it got a little bit heavy for awhile. Everything's alright again between us now, though."

With a single in the charts and a comfortable Mayfair PR office in which to meet your Thrillsperson, it's no wonder the revitalized, renamed Replays are full of chuff once more. But it's been a long time between "Rama Lama Ding Dong" (an old Edsels hit, fax freaks) and the posthumous Razors EP that Chiswick issued back in 1976.

"We were both working. I was a rep in Exeter," said Rocky, "and Johnny was getting by as a freelance photographer, and we also did acappella gigs together as The Varooks Brothers. Then we got word that Chiswick was interested in recording a Rocky Sharpe follow-up. So we went along and they let us have an unusual contract, which

enabled us to carry on working while we sorted out a record."

Enter one Helen Highwater, who, it would seem, used to be some kind of, ahem, special friend of the original Razors. As she wasn't around to speak up for herself I asked the fellas for the lowdown.

"We knew Helen from a fish and chip shop in Crawley," Johnny supplied, tongue somewhere near his cheek. "How did she come to join the group? Well, she's amazingly good looking and she's got a large chest. Mind you, she's a classically trained singer with an excellent voice."

They recorded "Rama Lama Ding Dong" in April of last year with producer Mike Vernon and a bunch of Mike's mates in on the session. At the time The Replays were bass-less so Pete Wingfield sang bass on the record. But the day after the release of the single in November, by arrangement through a mutual friend, Rocky was visited by a lanky Australian called Dick Hart.

"He only had to open his mouth to say 'Hello' and he was in the group," said Rocky.

As if on cue, at this point in our chat a long, dark shadow fell across the room and a resonant Gazy voice boomed "Sorry I'm late" from somewhere near the top of the door frame. To cut his entire life down to a sentence: after ten years with assorted groups down under he arrived in Britain in 1975 and now unexpectedly finds himself part of a hit team.

"When I joined the group they said I shouldn't expect anything fantastic. We might work up a cult following and have a lot of laughs but that was about it. Next thing we know, the single's in the charts and we're booked on *Top Of The Pops*. That's some cult following."

So are they now going to go bananas and trek off on a grand round-Britain tour? No, they're not. They're sticking with their day jobs and playing it cool.

"Darts have been knocking themselves out with their touring schedule," said Johnny, "and anyway, we haven't even got a band yet. We're about to record a new single, with Mike Vernon again then we'll probably do an album. By which time we should be in a position to get on stage on our own terms — to do a tour we enjoy."

"It's important to stress that we originally started The Razors for the fun of it," Rocky summed up, "and that's the way we want it to be with The Replays. Nothing wrong with being a cult."

CLIFF WHITE
THRILLS



THE REPLAYS

ANNIVERSARY TIME!

THIS COMING weekend, Capitol Radio's "The American Dream" show, hosted by Mike Allen and researched by Jailhouse John Alexander, switches from its 11-to-midnight Saturday slot to the unearthly hour of 1-2am Friday night/Saturday morning. Feb 3 being the 20th anniversary of Buddy Holly's nosedive into immortality, night owls can expect to enjoy a Holly special ("with apologies to Big Bopper and Richie Valens") featuring rare recordings and seldom heard interviews. And love is real, not fade away.

PEGGY SUE (MRS)

THRILLS



VALENS, HOLLY, BOPPER as portrayed by reader JOE O'KANE of Belfast.

FAKING ORGASMS IN THE PRIVACY OF YOUR OWN BEDROOM

A LARGE NUMBER of affluent, mobile American men-about-town are busy turning the bedrooms of their plush duplex apartments and homes into private discos, according to an article in

Billboard recently.

Jack Ransom, head of MGM Stage Equipment, one of the leading U.S. disco lighting equipment suppliers, reckons that these playboy types see the concept of a disco bedroom as an innovative twist to the age-old art of seduction, and "are willing to pay top dollars to indulge their whims."

Punters amongst the nouveau riche are shelling out up to \$20,000 for a fancy light show to bolster the activities in their boudoirs. Meanwhile, across the world, oil-rich Arabs are laying out small fortunes — in cash, naturally — to convert sections of their palaces into Western-style disco environs.

BARRY GOBB

THRILLS

HEN FARMER TAXMAN IN CLASH

The Daily Telegraph breaks the news of Paul Simonon's other life, hip credibility for hen farmer taxmen at last! Sent by Louis Davy of York.

The Lone Grover



BENYON

WE WERE slagged off by the punks in the same way that the hippies slagged off Scott McKenzie," says Graeme Douglas, principal songwriter with Eddie and the Hot Rods.

"Not that it's a direct comparison," he adds, obviously having little taste himself for the crooning of Mr McKenzie, a one-hit wonder who scored during the flower power era with a song called "San Francisco".

"The thing is that as soon as you get a movement, you get a narrowing of ideas, and people get hard-line ethics."

"You have to think this, you have to wear that, you have to like certain types of things. That's what happened this time."

Douglas is sitting in the rambling Island Records building in West London, and the main aim of the conversation is to find out what's been happening to the Rods since their "Life On The Line" album 18 months ago.

With Graeme is the band's other songwriter, Dave Higgs, who says very little but says it belligerently.

"At one point he declaims, 'We are never frightened to talk to journalists'. But mainly he sits staring, without blinking, through a large, magnifying pair of spectacles."

This gives him the look of a parked Volkswagen with its headlights switched on, but you get used to him after a while.

In contrast Douglas smiles a lot and his face disappears into a series of horizontal lines which match the random assaults on his hair perpetrated by an amateur barber.

Still, at times he seems a bit angry too, and really you can't help but sympathise.

Time was when Eddie and the Hot Rods were the Next Big Thing. In the drab old days before punk rock they were one of the few bands to play good, fast hard rock you could dance to.

Some approach as the punks in fact but earlier, and minus the safety pins and the risqué political slogans.

So what happens? Far from gaining respect as



RODS Higgs and Douglas — a dynamic double act. Pictures: PENNIE SMITH.

CASTIGATION FROM THE MEDIA MESSIAHS

musical pioneers they get the cold shoulder for being too soft.

Did Higgs mind all those bands coming along and stealing his act?

"Not really," says he, very morose. "At the time we came out we stole lots of people's acts. According to the press."

Some people won't even accept sympathy when it's offered.

So what have you been doing the past 18 months, Mr Higgs?

"I can't remember." Heard any good new bands you like?

"I don't go to gigs much. I don't listen to music much either."

So what do you do for musical input?

"I've got five or six albums

I've always listened to. Usually I sit and watch TV."

Graeme Douglas is much more voluble, talking readily about the band's new album "Thriller", out in a few weeks time. But then he would be, wouldn't he?

Inevitably, the album will represent not just a comeback attempt but a bid to finally establish the band as an album act.

They came close with "Life On The Line", which contained a number of classy pop songs that Douglas wrote with Ed Hollis, their manager at the time.

One reason the new set has taken so long is that they've split from Hollis. Sources close to the band say they weren't pleased by what they felt was his

growing lack of interest in their activities. For example, it's suggested that he wasn't present at many of the gigs on their debut American tour.

"We sort of lost touch with him in a lot of ways," says Douglas. "After our tours in America and the UK, we hadn't seen him for a while."

"There were lots of unpleasant bits and pieces. Anyway, now we've promoted our roadie."

The Rods' new manager is called Meaty because he used to be a butcher. Gaddit? To give him his due, he was their tour manager, not their "roadie", and he does seem very enthusiastic.

He looks positively thrilled when the new album is played for our delectation. Sits and shakes his balding

head with great gusto.

Gusto is clearly what the Rods will need in great quantities. Unfortunately, Ed Hollis didn't just help to write any old songs. He and Douglas together were responsible for "Do Anything You Wanna Do", the Rods' only number one single. Their finest hour.

The band got a fearsome beehing from our own Tony Parsons over Hollis's involvement.

Douglas can virtually quote the original text from memory though it was more than a year ago.

"He called us 'Conservative, fascist puppets of a megalomaniac Canvey Island Kim Fowley,'" says Mr Douglas with some degree of shock-horror in his voice.

"But Ed never manipulated us at all. It's unfair to say that. A superficial insight."

Wasn't the suggestion, though, that your songs reflected the views of an older manager figure rather than of young musicians?

At this both Douglas and Higgs laugh uproariously.

"Ed would love you to say that," says Douglas. "In fact, he's a couple of years younger than either of us."

So much for that idea.

Meanwhile, in the absence of Hollis, Douglas has been busy finding lyrics to go with his tunes.

"The trouble is I tend to find too many words and they're too long. I had to get my razor out and cut them down a bit."

The first evidence of his work as a solo writer with the Rods is their new single "Media Messiahs", which sounds broadly similar to the stuff he wrote with Hollis.

According to Douglas: "The song's about warthogs who talk their way onto the front pages of the music papers. One week they're on one cover, the next week on another."

Do you find that so distasteful?

"Well, there's a lot of manipulation going on. When I was a kid, I used to believe what I read in the music papers. I've taken a three-year course in cynicism since then."

The Rods go back on the road in Britain next month to help promote the new album, and it's always possible the three-year course in cynicism may turn into a four-year course.

The band have clearly lost some ground, as Dave Higgs admits.

"Okay, so maybe we have lost a bit of ground, but that gives us an incentive to work a bit harder."

One thing, though—at least Island have allowed the band to take their time over this crucial new album.

"They didn't just allow us to take our time," says Graeme Douglas. "They insisted on it."

You mean they didn't like what you offered them at first?

"You could say that," says Douglas, a bit ruefully.

Ah well, good luck lads.

You may need it.

BOB EDMANDS

THRILLS

ONE HIT WONDER CLAIMS SECOND HIT

SEEMS THE Green Beret combat training of Viet Nam veteran Staff Sgt. Barry Sadler has come in handy — yet again. Sadler, you may recall, was the somebody's-gotta-do-the-job recorder of the ultra-patriotic "Ballad Of The Green Berets", a chart-topping single that not only became America's biggest seller of 1966, but also inspired true-gritter John Wayne to star in a movie of the same title.

As with most one-hit wonders, little has been heard of Sadler since. That was until December 1, when the ex-Marine stopped 51-year-old Nashville songwriter Lee Emerson Bellamy dead in his tracks with a bullet between the eyes.

The B-movie scenario goes something like this: Sadler was in the apartment of Darlene Sharpe (a mutual acquaintance of both men) when Bellamy — who,

according to Sadler's statement had been harassing and threatening Sharpe throughout the year — knocked on the door of the lady's apartment.

Sadler made a quick exit through a side door, went around to the front of the building and discovered Bellamy climbing into a van.

Sadler alleges he shouted out for Bellamy to stop, at

which point Bellamy drew a gun. Sadler promptly drew a revolver and repeated his order for Bellamy to stop. When his request was ignored, he fired his gun.

Although he hit him right between the eyes, it's Sadler's defence that he aimed to miss, insisting that Bellamy's death was as a result of his bullet either

ricocheting or Bellamy accidentally shooting himself.

At present, it appears that the police hadn't filed charges against him but apparently a grand jury investigation is on the cards.

Rumours that Malcolm McLaren intends to approach Sadler with a possibility of cutting an album of duets with Sid Vicious, should be treated lightly.

ROY CARR

THRILLS



BARRY SADLER in his hit-making heyday.

"Oh Boy!" attacked by The Alley Cat

THIS columnist has always high praise for the "Oh Boy" TV series. But producer Jack Good must be held responsible for permitting the most crude exhibitionism ever seen on British TV—by Cliff Richard last Saturday.

His violent hip-swinging during an obvious attempt to copy Elvis Presley was reckless—hardly the kind of performance any parent could wish their children to witness.

Remember, Tommy Steele became Britania's teenage idol without resorting to this form of indecency.

ALMOST 20 years on to the day, Jack Good's innovative television rock extravaganza is once again being presented "live" on a London stage.

One only has to read the self-righteous attack on young Cliff Richard by NME's Alley Cat (the precursor of T-Zine) in December 12, 1958 edition (above) to realise that not only did old showbiz traditions die hard, but that the likes of Shakira Stevens and Abba Stardust—today's stars of the show—may be no substitute for the original Young Turks like Cliff and Vince Taylor.

Furthermore, just compare the re-run ticket prices of £2.50, £3.50 and £4.00 to those of 20 years ago: 3/6 (17½p), 4/8 (22½p), 5/6 (27½p) and 6/6 (32½p).

Those were the days, my friends!

ROY CARR

THRILLS

ABC-COMMODORE HAMMERSMITH ON THE STAGE

SUNDAY, JAN. 25 for 7 days
Sunday at 5.5.5. Wednes at 7.45

OH BOY!

TELEVISION'S EXPLOSION OF BEAT MUSIC!

CLIFF RICHARD

LORD ROCKINGHAM'S XI

FIVE DALLAS BOYS

CHEERY WAINER

NEVILLE TAYLOR AND HIS CUTTERS

PETER ELLIOTT

"GUDBL" BUGLEY

THE VERNONS GIRLS

VINCE TAYLOR & THE PLAYBOYS

JIMMY HENNEY TONY HALL

Directed and Produced by JACK GOOD

PRICES: 6/6, 5/6, 4/6, 3/6

All Seats Bookable in Advance

BOX OFFICE OPEN DAILY (10.30-8)

Roy Harper stands up for musicians' stomachs — EMI picks up the tab

EMI RECORDS were last week ordered by a judge to withdraw Roy Harper's two-year-old album "Bullinamingvase" from the shops. They also had to make a contribution to charity and pay court costs after it was decided that the lyrics of a song called "Watford Gap" slandered the Blue Boar motorway eatery — a place known intimately to the intestines of many a struggling rock artist.

The judge stated that the well-known sheep farmer and former folkie implied in his song that the Blue Boar "provided grease and excrement for food, was a danger to public health, and was a habitual resort for football hooligans."

"Watford Gap" goes on to refer to the countryside surrounding the Blue Boar in convoluted metaphoric terms: "revished like a syphilitic whore."

The song was described by counsel



for Blue Boar Motorways Ltd as a "totally unjustified attack in the most offensive of terms". EMI offered no defence to the charges.

Harper himself remained unmoved by the episode.

PAUL RAMBALI

THRILLS

LOWRY

"JOHN WALTERS AND I ARE BOTH VERY EXCITED ABOUT THESE NEXT TAPES..."



"It's pathetic really. I sent him a recording of my grandmother's funeral."

PARDON THIS interruption into what looks like a very nice, intelligent and generally sensible Thrills page, but I've just developed this theory (it came to me in a flaming pie, if you must know — ask John Lennon) about why rock stars go all mushy and horrible after a certain amount of time in the public eye, whereas bluesmen, jazzers (except for the fusion funsters) and magnificent rugged individualists of the Coyne/Morrison/Beefheart varieties keep their ethics, capabilities and perceptions intact for far longer periods.

Way it works: all yer Dylens, Jaggers and so forths have had their souls stolen by being photographed too many times (Bob's worried about this and tries to get photographed as little as possible, whereas Jagger has been committing spiritual suicide-by-shutter for — ohhhh — ages now). This is a problem which doesn't really affect the likes of Albert King or Lester Bowie, since no-one's exactly killing themselves to immortalise these gents on film.

Incidentally, this only applies to still photographs. Movie stars have other problems, which I'll have to wait until my next theory to explain fully. In the meantime, I hope this answers all your questions and now back to our advertised Thrills page...

CHARLES SHAAR MURRAY

JORDANAIRE (SLIGHT RETURN)

● From page 11

maintained the same line-up of Stoker, Neal Matthews, Hoyt Hawkins and Ray Walker since 1958, they have acquired a professional reputation second to none, and have never needed to cash in on the Presley connection.

Ordinarily, they are kept busy with regular studio work in Nashville.

However, despite their own vocal expertise they modestly accept that whatever kudos they possess is largely the legacy of their work with Presley, and almost sub-consciously seem to direct the conversation towards him rather than themselves.

For example, Gordon Stoker disclosed that the posthumous boom in Presley recordings had not benefitted the Presley estate at all.

"In 1975 Elvis and the Colonel made a deal with RCA and sold the rights to all his recordings prior to 1973 for a lump sum — that doesn't include the publishing rights, but it does include all the royalties. So since the greater amount of the sales is stuff that he recorded early on, the estate is not getting anything."

"Now the fact is that we didn't really make that much out of working with him — no-one did. And although it's shocking, he didn't make what he should have either. Someone asked me recently if Presley had died broke, and I can only say that in terms of ready cash, he probably did."

"He actually borrowed about \$1,400,000 from a bank in Memphis about three months before he died, and at his death he still owed

\$1,100,000. And this is absolutely unbelievable when you consider the kind of money this guy made."

"You see, he actually gave away, and got rid of, more than he had coming in. He was trying to keep three homes, he had a lot of leeches round him, a lot of people making money off him, and he had no tax deductions at all. He once told us that he wanted the government to come in and take every dime that was coming to them."

But, now, of course, Presley's recordings are selling in profusion once again. Stoker shook his head, and remarked on the sad, perennial truth that nothing boosts an artist's career as much as the ending of it.

BOB WOFFINDEN

THRILLS

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FEBRUARY

- 21 EDINBURGH ODEON
- 22 NEWCASTLE CITY HALL
- 23 MANCHESTER FREE TRADE HALL
- 24 SHEFFIELD CITY HALL
- 25 BIRMINGHAM ODEON
- 26 LIVERPOOL MOUNTFORD HALL
- 27 LEICESTER DE MONTFORT HALL
- 28 OXFORD NEW THEATRE

MARCH

- 1 EXETER UNIVERSITY
- 2 LONDON RAINBOW
- 4 BRISTOL COLSTON HALL

TICKETS: £1.80 £2.40 £2.80 EXCEPT THE RAINBOW FOR WHICH TICKETS ARE: £2.00 £2.50 £3.00
 POSTAL APPLICATIONS FOR TICKETS TO BOX OFFICES.
 PERSONAL APPLICATIONS TO EDINBURGH, BIRMINGHAM, MANCHESTER AND RAINBOW ON JANUARY 19.
 SHEFFIELD AND NEWCASTLE ON JANUARY 26.
 BRISTOL ON FEBRUARY 2



MAYIBUYE — all 53 of 'em

ROCK AGAINST APARTHEID

FEBRUARY 10 is the date of the most unusual concert so far this year. It's the first major benefit gig organised by the Anti-Apartheid Movement, and it features three Southern African bands now living in exile in London: Jabula, Immigrant and Mayibuye.

Jabula are the best known of the three: their free-flowing Afro-jazz is available on a number of albums on their own Jabula label, the latest of which "Jabula in Amsterdam" has been banned in South Africa.

Immigrant comprise four white Zimbabweans and three West Indians. Their first single, "One World", on Different Records, is gentle, melodic reggae, while the flipside includes a vocal track "Sasakwe Zimbabwe" with the ZAPU Choir.

Mayibuye are a ten-piece vocal group, who use traditional Zulu, Sotho and Xhosa tunes for their explicitly political (some might say Stalinist) lyrics. They also recite poems, and feature songs by Vuyisile Mini, a trade unionist hanged by the South African government in 1964.

In exile, the bands remain politically active.

Immigrant work with the ZAPU section of the Zimbabwe Patriotic Front: Mayibuye are the cultural unit of the African National Congress. Many of these musicians were jailed in their home countries for various political activities (which sometimes meant no more than playing the wrong type of music); none can return without the fear of near-certain arrest and torture.

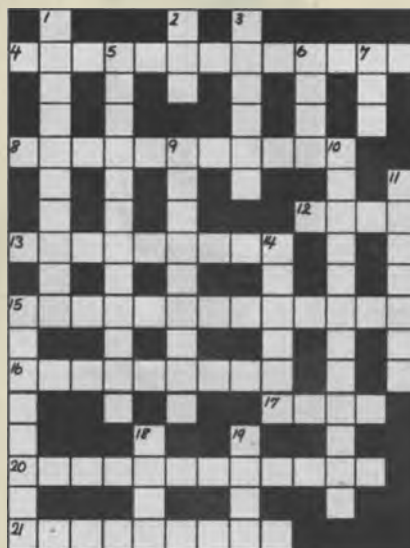
A fourth exiled group, Red Rinse, had to withdraw from the bill and have been replaced by English group The Realists.

Paul Brickhill of AAM says the concert at Camden Town Hall is 'a dry run'; if it proves successful, AAM plan a series of benefit gigs and have promises of support from several as-yet-unnamed but 'well-known' English rock bands. The Anti-Apartheid Movement, incidentally, is not affiliated to any political party and draws its membership from all shades of the political spectrum, including the Tories. I wonder what the *Daily Express* will make of that.

(Tickets for the Feb. 10 concert are available from AAM, 89 Charlotte St., London W1. Price £1 plus S.A.E.)

GRAHAM LOCK

X-WORD PROMOTED TO THRILLS SHOCK



- 5 Aka Winston Rodney, the Men In The Hills (7,5)
- 6 Gulpi Chi Coltrane appears to have swallowed a disco band whole!
- 7 Euro-rockers capable of absolutely anything?
- 9 Unaccompanied singing, such as practised by R Sharpe and Co.
- 10 Sheer mink toe (anag. two words)
- 11 & 19 As they were before Big Daddy Berry Gordy took their number away
- 14 These days applied to anyone who mimes convincingly on Top Of The Pops — This has been a cynical clue
- 15 Early '60s UK instrumental combo who struck lucky with "Telstar" one-off
- 18 Find the word which can be paired with the following: BARBED, LIVE, FUSE. You have 30 seconds. If you cannot answer, please move on to the next question.
- 19 See 11 Down

ANSWERS NEXT WEEK.
LAST WEEK'S ANSWERS BELOW.

ACROSS: 1 "Backless"; 5 (Thunderclap) Newman; 6 "Ummagumma"; 8 Adam and the Ants; 11 (George) Melly; 13 (Lee) Brilleaux; 14 "Heart Of Glass"; 17 Hype; 18 Coasters; 22 Devo; 23 Santa-N.A.; 24 Aretha (Franklin); 26 Thunderclap (Newman).
DOWN: 2 "Armed Forces"; 3 "Equinox"; 4 Capitol; 5 (Graham) Nash; 7 Kate Bush; 9 (Bette) Midler; 10 Budgie; 12 "You're So Vain"; 15 Olsson; 16 Syreeta (Wright); 19 OGWT; 20 Raga; 21 Clash; 25 RCA.

THE END



- ACROSS
- 4 Jazz keyboardman currently exploring disco/pop/funk crossover marketing strategy
 - 8 Pioneering punk brat who gave up sex for money! (4,7)
 - 12 Ain't she sexy! (This Club Exploits Women)
 - 13 N. London rock bizness "watering hole" and rock club
 - 15 Fronted by NME's ex very own Chrissie Hynd (Buy Buy Buy "Stop Your Sobbing" — gratuitous plug) (3,10)
 - 16 Descriptive of EC's affection for his label? Or a grinding hit 45 for Golden Earring from a few years back (5,4)
 - 17 Somehow, in an alternative universe, Cooder turned into an Irishman!
 - 20 A couple famous Socialists with surly city connections! (8,6)
 - 21 Neh, February?
- DOWN
- 1 Stiff recording artiste with Eastern-sounding monicker (4,6)
 - 2 What you'd pay to book The Tubes?
 - 3 Roger Chapman's old band

GRAHAM PARKER & THE RUMOUR U.K. TOUR



HARVEY GOLDSMITHS ENTERTAINMENTS PRESENTS

SUN	25 FEB	BELFAST	WITLOW HALL
MON	26 FEB	DUBLIN	OLYMPIA BALLROOM
WED	28 FEB	CARDIFF	UNI
FRI	2 MAR	SHEFFIELD	CITY HALL
SAT	3 MAR	LIVERPOOL	EMPIRE
MON	5 MAR	NEWCASTLE	CITY HALL
TUES	6 MAR	EDINBURGH	ODEON
WED	7 MAR	ABERDEEN	CAPITOL
THUR	8 MAR	GLASGOW	APOLLO
SAT	10 MAR	LANCASTER	UNI
SUN	11 MAR	LEEDS	UNI
MON	12 MAR	BRISTOL	COLSTON HALL
TUES	13 MAR	EXETER	UNI
THUR	15 MAR	BRADFORD	ST. GEORGES HALL
FRI	16 MAR	MANCHESTER	APOLLO
SAT	17 MAR	MANCHESTER	APOLLO
MON	19 MAR	BIRMINGHAM	ODEON
TUES	20 MAR	BIRMINGHAM	ODEON
WED	21 MAR	IPSWICH	GAUMONT
THUR	22 MAR	PORTSMOUTH	GUILDHALL
SAT	24 MAR	BRIGHTON	CENTRE
SUN	25 MAR	READING	HEXAGON HALL
MON	26 MAR	LEICESTER	DE MONTFORD HALL
WED	28 MAR	DERBY	ASSEMBLY ROOM
THUR	29 MAR	ILFORD	ODEON
SUN	1 APRIL	OXFORD	NEW THEATRE
MON	2 APRIL	LONDON	HAMMERSMITH ODEON
TUES	3 APRIL	LONDON	HAMMERSMITH ODEON

SINGLES

BLAST FURNACE AND THE COPYRIGHT VIOLATIONS:

South Of The River (Nighthawk)
Nobody calls their cat Dee Dee Ramone on this record. Famous friends do not sing backing vocals on this record. It is not a cuddly good-old-Charlie - he's-got-a-record-out record. It is the best single released out of the 100 plus releases this week and no doubt you'll read otherwise elsewhere but then petty jealousy has always been as rampant in the music business as hyperbole and money.

Pick a river, any river... the Thames or the Hudson... from amphetamine psychosis in IPC tower-block cub reporters to punk icon mouthings about heading straight to Harlem "and-the-blacks - better-appreciate-me" as soon as the punk icon hits New York City (and ending up posing down CBGB's, silly boy)... all these things went into this record.

It wags a finger, this record, but then our music has always been about sex and drugs and wagging fingers... and it is certainly more relevant to what's been happening these past couple of years than, say, "White Riot", "Ullster Boy" or "Theme". As a rule, journalists-turned-musicians achieve asshole status almost on a par with musicians-turned-sage, and apart from Murray and Chrissie Hynd, I can't think of one exception to this rule.

I don't know if you saw that play on television, *Waterloo Sunset*, but this would have been perfect for the soundtrack. I suppose it's derived from R&B I wouldn't know about that, but it does sound more like Creedence Clearwater Revival than Doctor Feelgood or The Pirates and that can't be bad. He could even end up on *Top Of The Pops*.



QUEEN: Don't Stop Me Now (EMI)
Same as usual.

ROY HILL: I Like I Like I Like (Arista)
Re-released after three months and even after so desperate a move doesn't seem pathetic — just seems just. The Trojan Horse of Orthodox Rock toys with fashionable sex and sexy fashions and finds them funny; wanting for nothing, happy to be an island. Could Fran Lebowitz be this good if she resisted the compulsion to drag out the killer phrase into the three-page thesis? Maybe, if she was English and had Bimbo Acok helping her.

EVELYN "CHAMPAGNE" KING: I Don't Know If It's Right (RCA)
I didn't really expect "Shame" to be followed up except by a car crash or a plane accident and then a legendary niche forever, but of course Evelyn has gone the way of all flesh and wasted her talent on some souzzy follow-up. From the all-time perigraph-paralyzing, critique-killing, heart-hurting, brain drained in favour of the feet feelings of "Shame" (always my favourite single, a difficult thing to swear to for anyone) to the cool-nightclub creeper-blackface of this



GRUPPO SPORTIVO. Pic: TOM SHEEHAN

Music To Read The Papers By

smooch mush; all about the usual thing of not wanting to sleep with some boy if he's only using you. Evelyn, I thought that was the thing that "Shame" celebrated so innocently and irretrievably! It slinks a little like "Golden Years", if you look for its virtues; otherwise it's a wound, a waste. From nothing to nowhere in one miraculous single. Congrats, Evelyn.

ABBA: Chiquitita (Epic)
The wheels are really rolling out from under the Abba wagon, what with "Summer Night City" ditching that distinctive frozen-opera-fairground sound and pinning its hopes on disco, getting the lowest chart place in ages; now old Ugly Wugly and The As That Ate Stockholm getting their undeath-us-do-part license, and even worse this bit of ble-la. It really is a rubbish song; Abba sang it the UNICEF show. WHY? There are several questions one could ask about this. So that when we heard it we would associate it with the old Abba (clean and nice to orphans) rather than the new bombshell (rude divorcees)? So that we would all rush out and buy it, thinking our royalties would end up in some starving mite's tummy? Did they time the divorce announcement to come closely on the heels of the UNICEF show, to prove that they aren't all physical, that they have a spiritual side too? It doesn't matter. This will be a hit but not massive. It lurches into insubstantial singalong chorus-things much too soon. "Chippolatta" is not a name that rolls lightly off the consumer's tongue. The Abba men start to seem less and less like crafty tunesmiths

every time that "Chihuahua" plays.

GRUPPO SPORTIVO: P.S. 78/Blah Blah Magazine (Epic)
Who Phil liked, you may remember, because he read something nasty and ambiguous into their lyrics, and for whom Paul Morley started the backlash because they weren't brown-haired and boring enough and because there was something as frivolous as GIRLS in the band. Valid stuff, this — I'm not just trying to cover some paper — because Gruppo Sportivo have written a great song about *NME* called "Blah Blah Magazine". Personally, I can't think of anything more fitting for a pop singer to sing about than the pop press; we're so important, they're obsessed with us.

Annoyed or amused by Paul Morley saying they were a missing link to or from Abba or something, Gruppo have made Art our of their resentment instead of sitting around stroking it like most of these morons do. They kick around like carthorses and win: "This week your *NME*



tells you we're like Blondie/Next week I'm like Dury/Let's go 'Hee hee hee hee'. The way those girls keep saying "Abba" is a revelation; why all the fuss about French and German girl-voiced Dutch girls are it. A-side is a frivolous, semi-French gemette, key



THE CAPTAIN OF YOUR SHIP

clues in English — one long same riff all the way through like that chorus you meet once in a while. "The Modern Dance" is a good one for it and I just wish there was a record of it going on forever to act as perfect, unfindable background music. Josie and Thingy — the Guppies — are spine-curdling with their

spoilt-brat pout-enunciation: "We were teenagers then/And now I see you again; You'd better watch out, watch out for me/I've grown up, you will see!" I suppose that Gruppo Sportivo are just one big in-joke (I don't know why they even bother with an audience) but I think only a really studious person could distrust them. Stupidity and all its attendant charms run rife throughout their music. Their accents are so sweet, and their attempts at being snide are even sweeter. Not a hit but definitely the linking miss between Eddie Cochran and the Von Trapp family.

ELVIS COSTELLO: Oliver's Army (Radar).
Cringing under accusations of being sassy, El One-Note has stopped pulling model girls' hair and turned his Napoleonic complex on politicians — in this obvious slice of "Armed Forces", saying boo to Churchill's corpse and expecting it to turn over and sob face down into its pillow.

This is Costello's "Winter of '79" or "English Civil War", with the scare-mongering for pleasure and profit usually found in those pop singers suffering from megalomania and paranoia — much more tuneful and enigmatic here but no less disposable. The unison of acoustic and electric brings to mind mid-period Dylan songs called stuff like "Queen Achilles Revisited" and the voice sounds more like Manfred Man than ever. The lyrics read like a *Holiday 79* brochure, as glib as that free colour pull-out with "Give 'Em Enough Rope" but a little more melodic.

The reference to a "white nigger" is Elvis being typically

sensitive and original and will no doubt result in much controversy mileage as radio programmers break out in a hot flush — but will, of course, get it a rave review in the ("Ain't nothing but a") Socialist Worker's Party rag. Boring in a small way.

EQUALS: Baby Come Back (Lightning Old Gold)
DARTS: Get It (Magnet)
GREG KINN BAND:
Remember (Beserkley)
RADIO STARS: The Real Me (Chiswick)
BETTE BRIGHT AND THE ILLUMINATIONS: The Captain Of Your Ship (Radar)
The ghosts of pop past and president vie for the attentions of the wireless playlists. No contest, of course...

Darts strive for the cubicle creativity sound of the Brill Building circa nearly 20 years ago (before my time I'm afraid, Horatio, though I'm sure it couldn't have been this rapid). I guess it will make the charts if their lead girl singer loses a few pounds before sporting those nostalgic hot-pants of hers on *Top Of The Pops*, but I've recently witnessed them on *Saturday Banana* and must predict, as much as it grieves me to do so, a swift return to obscurity for last year's Rocky Sharpe and The Razorblades without their ex-asset Mad Dan (retired) out front scaring the little children.

From the quasi-Robert-Powell-as-Jesus-even-though-I'm-married-to-an-ex-member-of-Pan's-people-publicity-pictures and the evidence of his torpid sub-John Denver acoustic wimpy whimsy product, the Greg Cloying Band all see themselves as The Most Sensitive Man Alive. Honestly, boys, you make Labi Siffre look like Tim Buckley, you really do.

Radio Stars' problem is that their *raison d'être* is being whacky and nobody gets the joke because there isn't one. I understand that their lead singer makes a habit of breaking his spine when the band perform live, which I suppose must be quite interesting for those of you with a ghoulish streak, but this disc of their brings to mind nothing so much as the worst moments of the Arrows. Don't tell me you don't remember Arrows.

I feel sorry for Bette Bright — she sings good old songs very badly and she wants to be a sex symbol. She also used to be in Deaf School, but let's not rub salt into her gaping wounds. Like her soulmate Little Nell, Bette tries to be kitsch but unfortunately does not appear to know the difference between camp and corn. Berserkley, Chiswick and Radar... talk about labels who believe in digging holes just to fill them in again (why, oh why, did you do it, you little Mekons?).

Lots of black records these days (I'm talking about skin pigmentation, not the vinyl, moron) have a plethora of funky - funky - get - down - party - party - awright - background noises that sound as contrived as all hell, but I reckon The Equals were the first ones to do it, don't you? They sound so casual about it, real joyous simpletons, spreading happiness wherever they may go and let's hope that it gets into the charts and David Johansen covers it for his second album.

THE KINKS: Superman (Arista)
Sorry, Raymond, but one good line does not a hit single make ("I looked in the mirror at my pigeon chest, I had to put on my clothes coz I felt so depressed.") Apart from that

Continues over

SINGLES CONT.

From page 19

we just get Ray trying to play Wilhelm Reich and unravel the repression motivation factors behind right-wing ideology. I think the way you've "borrowed" the riff to "2-4-6-8 Motorway" is quite cute, Ray, but you've really bitten off far more than you can chew with this subject matter. You'd have thought that 1976 and all that would have gotten rid of Ray Davis. I mean, can you imagine him ever writing something as great as, say, "I Wish I Could Be Like David Watts"?

DEAN FRIEDMAN: Ariel (Lifesong). One of the greatest love stories ever told. Lovely. Delightful. Heartbreaking. Like a cross between the affectionate sentimentality of "The Ugly Bug Ball" and sensitive Manhattan sensibility of Ronee Jaffe's brilliant "The Last Chance". A treasure trove of little gems, this record...

"I took a shower and put on my best blue jeans, / I picked her up in my new VW, / She wore a peasant blouse with nothing underneath, / I said 'Hi', / She said, 'I guess I am!' or 'I took her home and we watched some TV, / Annette Funicello and some guy going steady, / I started looking around with the vertical hold, / We got the munchies and I made some spaghetti..." Sweet.

LINDA FLETCHER: Mush (Ariola). Do you like Joplin? I don't know, I've never Joppled! Seriously kids, you'll all remember this Linda lass from *Get It Together*, the pop programme for us youngsters, where she got to do one old song a week in

return for reading kiddies requests, introducing Child and singing the *Get It Together* theme tune with Uncle Roy. You remember how surly, embarrassed and annoyed Auntie Linda looked when subjected to this indignity, like some surrogate Maggie Bell marking an interminable cameo appearance in *The Partridge Family*. Here she gets to flex her raunch on that old Heavy Metal torch song originally done by Deep Purple or Black Sabbath, one of them, anyway, and it really is an awful racket. On this showing she appears to think that volume = emotion; the more she let's rip the more she thinks our heartstrings will be putty in her sweaty brickle mitts. Awful, dear, awful.

GODLEY AND CREME: Sandwiches Of You (Mercury). I really liked these two when they were the non-wimp half of 10CC back in the early part of this decade (my, time flies when you're enjoying yourself, doesn't it?) but now they just come across like a couple of spent forces for whom getting interviewed on *OGWI* is the highlight of the week. This breaks its neck trying to be really weird and whacky — flogging to death a food/sex analogy. Goodness, how original. The problem with today's 10CC (apart from the fact they sorely miss the genius of Jonathan King) is that their pretty tunes don't mean a thing without Godley and Creme's clever-cleverness and the latter's urbane Dorothy Parker/Fagan & Becker pundit-fun don't mean a hoot without a catchy little jungle rhythm wrapped around it. Real Dreadlock Holiday In The Sun stuff.

ROCKERS TIME
YOUR REGGAE ROUNDUP

● RELEASES ●

WITH black American music ever more committed to pure disco for village people, it's been left to Jamaican artists to carry on the US 'soul' traditions of the '60s / early '70s — rhythmwise a little way different, cho', but the same emotional commitment, the same romantic themes (and sometimes the same songs) add up to the old formula of pure passion for feeling people.

See't, reggae is the soul music of today. It's no accident that it's increasingly a taproot of inspiration for modern white rockers just as R&B / Motown / Soul was to their predecessors.

Linnal Thompson sings — and produces — in a variety of styles but for "I Follow My Heart" (Jet Star 12") he opts for the pure tones and swooping, yearning phrasing developed by the likes of Sam Cooke and Smokey Robinson. The song, an old Dennis Brown tune, is pure tortured romance, as simple and catchy as the British cold, especially when set to a highly danceable double-drumbeat rhythm that serves for either stepping or smooching. A pity that when it comes to his turn Prince Mohammed can't talk up anything much by way of a toast, if current JA stars like Thompson, Brown, and Pat Kelley take their vocal style from the Cooke / Robinson / Ben E King school of soul, then perhaps the DJs are the equivalent of the James Brown / Wilson Pickett gatta-gotta school of grunts 'n' grunts — and as often predictable.

The Heptones certainly started their lengthy career at the height of the '60s soul boom and have been singing in a Jamaican hybrid of The Impressions, Drifters etc ever since. Their latest, "Losing You" (Third World 12") shows their vocal talents are intact despite the loss of originator Leroy Sibbles from their line-up, though the number is but standard lovers rock issue (and correspondingly popular) while the flip, "Mount Zion", is as ordinary as the title. At least there's no DJs to clutter up the dubs, which are lively enough.

The harmonies advanced by others of Jamaica's myriad vocal trios like The Royals, The Abyssinians, The Gladiators and The Royal Rascals owe less to America and more to a purely Jamaican tradition of tonal alchemy that often bewilders the alien ear and which can in truth sometimes degenerate into a slough of righteousness. Not that there's anything out of order about *The Royals' "If You Want Good"* (Warrior 12"), a fine sample of their work with lowkey but volatile dubs on both sides, but its downkey charm is unlikely to earn it the same success as *The Royal Rascals' "Unconventional People"* (Arawak 12") which deserves a mention more than Penny Reel's rave review last month if only because of its widespread popularity. I mean, Danny Baker has a copy on 12" so is that crossover appeal or what?

In the same line of Rastafarian vocal outfits come *Carlton And The Shoes*, who beside boasting one of the alltime great-namas-for-groups and an Abyssinian as Carlton's brother, offer some of the most formidably individual harmonies in the western world. "Better Days Are Coming" (Dab 12") is an excellent sample of their



Back from Ethiopia, Bob Marley sports weathermen as for latest release and the camera of ADRIAN BOOT

talents, a righteous chant to liberty and equality that shimmers into an equally heavyweight dub. Music to meditate by. And if that's not enough the top-side is *Junior Delgado's "Trickster"*, a breezy warning on feminine wiles well popular on the systems.

With Delroy Wilson's "Come Into Heaven" (Hawkeye 12") and Jackie Paris' "There's No Other" (Hawkeye 12") we're back treading the shifting treacherous sands of lovers rock, in this case weighed down by a couple of mundane torch ballads. The Delroy number has been fulsomely praised in some quarters but to these ears it's as dismal as an empty disco, a hollow echo of past glories. Play "Sarge"

In general though, UK companies seem to have lost interest in the humble 7", a shame since the average pre-release clearly offers more musical value for dunsier at £1.20 a hit than the average UK disc does for £2, a serious thing...

● PRE-RELEASES ●

TAKE any Mikey Dread title for example — and right now there's a whole gaggle of them crossing the pre-release counters by the score — and you've bagged more dubwise trickery than on anything else thus far. No doubt about it, Campbell — who habitually works with Carl Patterson and King Tubby — has emerged as the new wizard of dub. His whacky spoken / cut-up intros

loopy sound effects bombing the scenery here — just the serene misty landscape so often suggested by Pablo titles ("East Of The River Nile", "Java" etc).

Pablo is often a better producer than artist; his current teenage protégé Hugh Mundell cleaned up with his "Africa Must Be Free By 1983" set last year and "Jah Says The Time Has Come" (Message) continues where that left off: stately rhythm, righteous, prophetic lyrics beautifully sung with another top quality Pablo dub on the b-side. A talent to watch.

Maybe it Bob Marley and / or Island Records released singles like "Rastaman Live Up" (Tuff Gong International) over here, he'd be less misunderstood, the rock audience, especially *Rolling Stone* critics, seem to be under the misapprehension that these days he only records the likes of "Is This Love". Hard on the heels of "Blackman Redemption" a couple of months back, this is Marley's best offering in ages — simple enough rocking stuff, but what a relief to hear the man away from the effecient production, without Junior Marvin squinting flashy guitar over everything and without the increasingly formulaised I Three on back-up vocals — here they're replaced by a slightly quirky two part male counterpoint that uplifts the mood and gives the disc its real identity. Dub is a typically sparse Tuff Gong affair.

Another perennial favourite, Gregory Isaacs, also has a new title, "Soon Forward" (Tall) a characteristically classic and elegant reading of the "soon come" theme pursued by Peter Tosh on his disastrous *Strolling Bones* elpee (and if only he'd put out his Jamaican singles here). Again, soul and vocal style are the order of the day — Isaacs isn't called "the Cool Ruler" for nothing.

Among other rising items on the nation's pre-release chalkboards are Sugar Minott's "Leggo The Dread" (Quality), a catchy understated story of the injustice of the gangle laws, fit to grace an LCC picnic. Marcia Griffiths' "Stepping Out Of Babylon" (High Note) a strident performance from one of the island's best female vocalists over a powerful bubbling Sonia Pottinger rhythm. The Tamline's "Stars" (Tall), a lovers rock recycling of an old Eternals tune that gets the breathless falsetto touch; all moonlight onna balcony, grope onna Corina.

In the heady, expensive world of pre-release discomixes, Lloyd Park's "Officially" (Joe Gibbs 12") remains among the most popular, as seductive and palling as only a Gibbs discomix can be, with a fierce strident toast from rising talker Ray L, the weatherman himself. Still, I can't see him wrestling the title of king talker from Trinity, who on Cornell Campbell's "Whenever You Need Me" (Thompson 12") shows what the debased art of talking is all about, elevating the "New Wave / New Waves" luck from Marley's mutant "Punky Reggae Party" to exhilarating new-age heights — "New ways / new times / new wonders" — and mixing it all up with his dalliance with a certain 'Sister Lorna'. With Cornell Campbell's soulful lead vocal lead, Linnal Thompson producing, and a similar double-beat rhythm driving things along, *Rockers Time* is back where it started, with a heart full of soul.

At The Controls:
NEIL SPENCER

and see't. The Jackie Paris disc is just as wearisomely melodramatic though the b-side gets rescued by the Gussie Clarke production and sax solo that might find favour with "Baker Street" fans. Of the growing army of UK reggae groups only Fusion have a new issue. "Cold Outside" (Manic 12") is easily the best number the group have at present and the highspot of their stage act though still tinged by the curse of worthiness. On the other hand, its relevance can't be questioned.

Pabbles' "Positive Vibrations" (Arawak 7") is more UK reggae in a different fashion as Ranking Dread offers a drawing amiable talk-over, (an indie way Big Youth style) of Errol Dunkley's monster hit of late '78 "Little Way Different". Strictly Willesden style as the man runs down the average spectacle down at the club "Some come in dem 3.5 Rover, some come in dem Toyota, some come in dem Morris Marine, some come in dem Crasi... a — Merk four but dem still pon living on the sister round the corner..." Good humoured, good rocking, produced by Dennis Matumbi...

alone are worth the price of admission: "Wake up Jonathan wake up it's Michael Campbell at the controls..." begins "Robber's Roost" (40 Leg) to the sound of anores, and you're plunged into a heavy rockers rhythm over which steam whistles, door chimes and sundry electronic effects float around in a mix the depth of Vesuvius.

"Parrot Jungle" (Dread At The Controls) takes the whole thing one crazed step further into truly surreal realms of psychedelical dub, music to melt the tone controls of your hifi. "African Anthem" (Dread At The Controls) on the flip of Rod Taylor's "Imperial Majesty" is much more straightforward while "Barbar Saloon" (Black And White) displays the man's cut-from-old-leather vocal chords to good effect. All recommended to young mods as one of the highs of contemporary listening.

Augustus Pablo is another master of dub, albeit in a much more subtle — some would say boring — fashion. "Sufferer's Choice" (Message) is typical of Pablo's style, the unmistakable whistful melodica weaving a mesmerising course over a balanced shuffling rhythm. No

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"AND WHEN we played the Marquee someone walked out on us just because I was wearing a headscarf!"

"What does something like that matter? I might go onstage in an Afghan coat . . . people are just so narrow-minded!"

The trenchant castigation of London's gig-goers comes from the lips of Lora Logic, frontperson and founder member of ten-gig-old Essential Logic, currently to be seen supporting a legion of bands — usually twice their age and with only a minute percentage of their talent — through the club dives of the capital.

"Punk was supposed to break down the barriers. But since punk established itself there've been even more barriers than before. Like you have to dress a certain way, play in a certain style."

Lora, splendiferous in paint-splattered electric blue raincoat with hessian sacking draped over the shoulder as a shawl, sits opposite me across a table littered with the previous night's bitter-stained beer mats.

We are in the dog-eared upstairs dressing room of the Moonlight Club, West Hampstead, where Logic are tonight supporting Sore Throat.

The other five Logicians (all male) gathered around the table nod in agreement.

"Things are a bit like they were before punk started," mutters Mark Turner, the band's plump, pessimistic bassist. "For most people it's just a case of music for pleasure these days . . . the people booking bands into places like the Marquee and the Nashville don't really give a fuck about the music."

Such is the present state of the circuit.

Lora (aka Susan Whitby) is not without her historical importance, of course: as the original saxophonist in X-Ray Spex she was one of the first girls to gate-crash the then all-male domain of Angiopunk.

After meeting Poly Styrene (aka Marion Elliot) through a newspaper ad, she was an integral part of Spex from their first ever gig exactly two years ago at The Roxy (where else?) until just after the Virgin "Oh Bondage!" single.

The reason for her departure from the ranks of the perm-frace was, ostensibly, a return to her studies in the sixth form — but those who figured on a clash with Poly would be closer to the mark.

"I was on the point of leaving Spex anyway," recalls Lora. "I was pretty much suppressed in that set-up . . . Poly stopped talking to me as soon as she knew I'd written a few songs of my own."

The extra year at school yielded only one A-level and saw one ill-advised musical flirtation — at the request of Jean Jacques, Lora contributed sax on The Stranglers' "Black And White" album.

More importantly, the year also saw the emergence of a



There'll be a hot time in the old town tonight (groan) . . . Pictured in sauna cabin are (from left) Phil Lip, Dave Flash, Rich Tea, Lora, Mark Turner, Will Bennett. Pic: GEORGE BODNAR.

The Time Signatures They Are A-changin'

And that's no problem. But just try to wear a headscarf or Afghan coat. ESSENTIAL LOGIC bemoan the post-punk mentality to ADRIAN THRILLS.

deceptively low-key solo single on the Rough Trade label. Recorded "with just a few friends after four rehearsals", both songs, "Aerosol Burns" and "World Friction" are still included in Essential Logic's live set.

After the single, released to decidedly mixed reviews early last year, the next step was . . . logically . . . the formation of a band proper.

But Lora was determined to get her sur- s right second time around. Piecing together Essential Logic took six months and involved auditioning over a hundred prospective members.

The present line-up seems to be

a settled one: there's Lora herself on vocals and sax, guitarists Will Bennett and Phil Lip, drummer Rich Thomson (another ex-Ray Spexer), Dave Flash on second sax and Mark Turner on bass.

Since their debut — supporting Sore Throat (again!) at the Marquee in September — they have built a strong and varied set of 11 originals, the best of which, by my ready reckoning, are "Wake Up", "Alkaline Loaf", "Rat Alley" and a revamped "Aerosol Burns".

BUT THOSE expecting anything remotely akin to the souped-up heavy metal pop of Spex are in for some sort of

shock: it's now February 1979 and the time signatures they are a-changing. Make no mistake on that count.

Essential Logic's sound is unorthodox and atmospheric, characterised by clattering reverberant guitars and Lora's wheezy vocals with a sleazy hem added by the two blasting saxes. But beyond their rebut of the notion that a song must be played at the same tempo and pace throughout, they are not "experimental".

They perform with a naive charm, mischievous wit, honesty and soul that transcends classification.

As sexist Dave says: "I think people should be able to enjoy our music. I don't think it's pretentious. People have just got to make an effort to listen to it."

"The music might not be accessible on first listening," Lora adds. "But a lot of things that are accessible at first soon get boring."

"Any music that isn't just blam blam blam has got to be inaccessible to a certain degree. I'm not just going to write songs for people to bang their heads to."

"But we're not trying to alienate ourselves — you just have to see us a few times."

"Before I formed the band I had certain ideas about how it would sound, but things have turned out very different . . . much better. Really, it's been shaped by the people who are in it. I just never thought it would sound as good as it does."

At the moment all the songs are Lora's — but this is open to change. On lyrical content, however, the singer is evasive.

"I don't like explaining the lyrics. It's up to the individual what they mean — you can talk as much as you want, but in the end it's down to the music."

"The first song I wrote was 'Rat Alley'. It's about The Roxy. It was very relevant at the time. At the time The Roxy was a fantastic place for a new band, as Spex were then. People should just accept it for what it was."

There are no political messages but I don't just write lyrics for the sake of it. I don't think you can separate them from the songs as a whole. They just convey unusual messages and moods."

How important is the sax to the Logical sound?

"Very. There are a lot of ways that the sax hasn't been used before. Like, most rock sax players are only used during quick instrumental breaks."

"The saxophone has always been a suppressed instrument, suppressed for too long, like me!"

Her efforts in establishing the group aside — and she is at pains to emphasise that Essential Logic are very much A Band — Lora has recently been hard at work un-suppressing her talents in other ways.

Of prime import is her work on the forthcoming Red Crayola album, being produced by Rough Trade svengali Geoff Travis. Lora contributes sax on two tracks, and members of Pere Ubu are also featured in instrumental roles.

Then there's the imminent Essential Logic single, "Wake Up" — label as yet undecided.

"It's the most representative song for someone who hasn't seen the band yet," says Lora logically. "It's not our best song, but it gives you an idea of what to expect. It's indicative of the stuff we do."

"If you start out doing what you want to do then you should be all right when you sign to a big record company," she adds, ever optimistic.

"The worst thing that can happen is when you try to gain acceptance by playing music that you don't really enjoy — then you really muck yourself up."

G.E.D.



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THE BEE GEES

Spirits Having Flown
(RSC)

Smirk at the lowering spectre of mellifluously lush piffle, the garish omnipotence of their clout, the ungainly vision of their hair and overbite all you want — it's your prerogative — but dare even attempting to convince me you weren't seduced by at least one of the gargantuan volume of hits the Brothers Gibb saw fit to set 1978 on its head with, and I'll warrant you're either a clumsy liar or else deaf as a post.

I don't care whether it was the upbeat stuff (generally regarded as the more aesthetically acceptable Bee Gee fodder to own up to, uh, tolerating) or those irresistible gooey ballads that held sway over the airwaves — but only hearts and feet of stone could be left unaffected by the imperious strut of "Stayin' Alive" or the mesmeric irrepressibility of "Grease" (Frankie Valli may have sung it but it was as much a Bee Gee undertaking as anything else bearing the tacky trio's moniker) or heart-straining trash like "How Deep Is Your Love", "Too Much Heaven" and, best of all, the killing "Emotion".

I mean, Jesus, these Gibb boys were so hot last year they could even afford to toss pearls of their creation to the likes of relative has-been nobodies like Samantha Sang (the perfect female Bee Gee clone, as it turned out), artistes in struggling limbo like Yvonne Elliman and Tavares, not to mention kinfolk like Andy Gibb (whose sorely underrated "Shadow Dancing" cut all the Sylvesters and Chics right out of the running for the numero uno disco 45 of '78 as far as these ears were concerned).

It's virtually redundant to even ruminate on the Gibbs' total trashing of the rock business — except to note that the sudden release of this their latest album doesn't even appear to require any grand fanfare on RSO's part to press the point home. No media campaigns, no TV advertising in the pipeline — "Bee Gees records are advertising themselves", as an RSO person succinctly stated.

In strategic terms, the release of "Spirits" makes perfect sense. In superficial terms, coming as it does hard on the heels of the "Sgt. Pepper" debacle, jinxing an otherwise unbroken winning streak, it provides those salivating millions with more



"Listen, for the last time, we're not Australians."

Pic: Wendi E. Lombardi

Down At The Disco Wagnerian Strains Stomped

high-grade variations on the same winning set of formulas — whilst the chosen time of its emergence coincides uncannily with what has become to be regarded as a quiet, sluggish period for the business, wherein little else of any real competitive merit is actually around to do combat.

As to what lies waiting in the grooves — "Spirits" provides no radical departures from what has gone before since 1976's "Jive Talkin'" procured the Gibb trio that desperately needed introduction to a second phase of public interest. "Talkin'" granted them a contemporary niche, the blueprint for a formula that, hard-bitten veterans their lean years had transformed them into, they leapt at.

In the past — from their professional christening in '66 and '67 as teenage proteges garnering a premature success under the huge shadow of The Beatles —

being prolific was never (and still isn't) a problem. Pretentiousness was however — check virtually any of their lyrics from that era for an all too cloying reminder of this. The Bee Gees always tried too hard, they always seemed unbearably immature, and their downfall from that first savouring of success was too inevitable.

Their return to a mass favour, sparked by thorough market research and doubtless instigated by Stigwood himself, produced a drastically reshaped Bee Gees. They swiftly slotted their style into the burgeoning field of contemporary R&B/soul with a heavy emphasis on the disco boom, conforming at once to its dance-fetish dictates and the majestic spinniness of such as The Stylistics (an all too obvious seminal influence) for ballad content. At the same time the Bee Gees introduced an identity of their own. This

was their real coup. As lyricists they'd always been clumsy, pretentious and feeble, but the genre they chose allowed them to adeptly camouflage this and their premier talent, that of being first-rate 'pop' tunesmiths.

Fats Domino once stated to the effect that the one real essential to a song's success was the strength of its melody — no more, no less. The Gibbs would doubtless agree.

"Spirits Having Flown" continues all the traditions of recent Bee Geedom whilst subtly broadening certain aspects and pinpointing with an all too stunning accuracy the basics that have won them their current commercial omnipotence. They certainly have no pressing competition among their peers. Abba haven't produced one song as audaciously powerful as any of those here since "Knowing Me, Knowing You" back in mid-'77 whilst old warhorses

like Elton John and Paul McCartney are doing nothing more than rest on laurels. Fundamentally, "Spirits" spotlights the intertwining of the Gibbs' two aces. The melodies are primarily, I'd warrant, the work of leader Barry Gibb. As with all great 'pop', Gibb knows instinctively how to construct tunes that impinge to the fullest extent on your consciousness. He tailors and streamlines the dominant lead-up verses, slides into the often unbearably nagging chorus, often tossing in all manner of added melodic counterpoint and, if that wasn't enough, conjures up a middle-eight of such genuine inventiveness that the song scores an immediate musical detente.

This strategy is highlighted most accessibly in the ballads, particularly "Reaching Out" — all too reminiscent of Gibb's own Samantha Sang masterpiece "Emotion" —

where that idiosyncratic equation of mellifluous bathos and a truly affecting melody forge a song that forces one to awkwardly swoon at the same instant as one secretly reviles oneself for being so unutterably suckered in by the tawdriness of it all. If only Thom Bell — from whom Gibb obviously took inspiration — could be this sharp, this prolific.

In keeping with the "Saturday Night Fever" formula, "Spirits" grants equal time to ballads and dance numbers. The latter disappoint mildly due to the absence of a successor to the brilliant "Stayin' Alive". In its stead, the first track on side two — "Search-Find" — attempts a little too crazily to follow in "SA" 's footsteps without attaining a fraction of the latter's momentum.

Similarly, "Living Together" has its cross-references to "Alive", though it's taken at a more leisurely pace and is constructed around a moodily domineering bass line over which the threesome partake in some effective counterpart gymnastics.

By the time "I'm Satisfied" arrives — straight after — one longs for something of stabbing danceability consequence like "You Should Be Dancing".

"Spirits" in toto is not quite the perfect Bee Gees album. "Until" sounds too much like Stevie Wonder to transcend the debt, for example, making side two something of a non-event.

But the first side, from the obvious next single "Tragedy" — which tacks Robin's ill-becoming hysterical falsetto on a masterful melody and arrangement reminiscent of Spector's quasi-Wagnerian "River Deep" — through the exquisite schmaltz of "Too Much Heaven" to the irrepressibly nagging hooks on "Love You Inside Out", "Reaching Out" and the title track, one is left in absolutely no doubt that this is quintessentially epic pop.

As awesome as they are lawdry, as ingenious as they are slick, Bee Gee records are very possibly the best pop music around right now. (The Gibbs deserve a medal anyway for creating disco-related music without sounding crassly condescending — no mean achievement.)

Now — if only they could stop bro' Robin intoning like a neutered hyena.

Nick Kent

GENERATION X Valley Of The Dolls (Chrysalis)

"Into the valley of the dolls / Went the gang of four."

And when the smoke cleared, some poor sod has to write the obituary, I suppose? Well, I picked the short straw — but I think I detect signs of life among the confusion.

Not much, mind. Gen X seem to view rock'n'roll as a battlefield — they're obsessed with rock as rebellion and king rocker shoot-outs — and by god it doesn't seem to come easy to them. You can't help wondering why they bother with the uphill struggle; it's painful to witness Billy Idol picking his way around some of his lines like they were going to bite him.

At least in the old days Gen X used to play fast enough for you to ignore the casualties

strewn in their path — the mis-shapen melodies, the inane lyrics, the guitar gross-outs. In fact, in the light of Merin Rushent's heavy-handed treatment of the first album and Ian Hunter's equally misconceived melodrama on this set, those first two singles under the aegis of Phil Wainman ("Your Generation" and "Wild Youth") sound like halcyon days — poppy, zippy, and above all, tidy.

Now, Gen X are just a mess of contradictions. Their basic lightweight pretty-boy stance clashes with their new Hunterish bent for convoluted song constructions, all dramatic pauses and too many words. At the same time Bob Andrews' over-amped guitar soloing ("the '80s first guitar hero", according to the press release — though it's really just minor league

Down In The Dumpster Something Stirred



Ian Hunter and Billy Idol exhibit overwhelming enthusiasm at the Gen X playback. Pic: Rick Mann

Kossoff minus the sensitivity) imposes a macho stamp that Idol's shaky vocalising can't hope to match.

Lyrically they exist in an imbecilic fantasy world: "Racing wild with the radios blasting out / Ready Steady Go! / As we rip through the charts crashing like angels at the end of rock's rainbow."

Huh? The conceit is laughable. Elsewhere the streets run wild with glamorous, vibrant youth, while the "gallant four" act out their rock warrior fantasies onstage, igniting the audience to peaks of ecstasy. Next time you see some drunken skinhead grab Billy Idol's mike at some flag-bitten, depressing venue, remember that the singer thinks he's fighting the forces of darkness and inspiring the heaving mob with visions of paradise. . . . In a way it's quite touching.

Andrews with his guitar hero fantasy. Tony James as jet-set rock star, Idol creaking and (to be fair) consciously sharing visions of weekend wish-fulfilment for "Friday's Angels."

The guitar heroes and jet-setters we can do without, but I do respect Billy Idol's honesty and involvement. When he writes about a kid dressing up ("Mum and dad think you're a manic / To walk the streets dressed up like that") or going to the flicks ("I saw the universe in flames — But it's always the same like Citizen Kane / You end up with nothing and you leave for home"), he's not being condescending; his own fantasies are so transparent, just in his appearance, that it's credible.

Which is why I don't want to write an obituary.

Fry about the music.

Paul McNeill

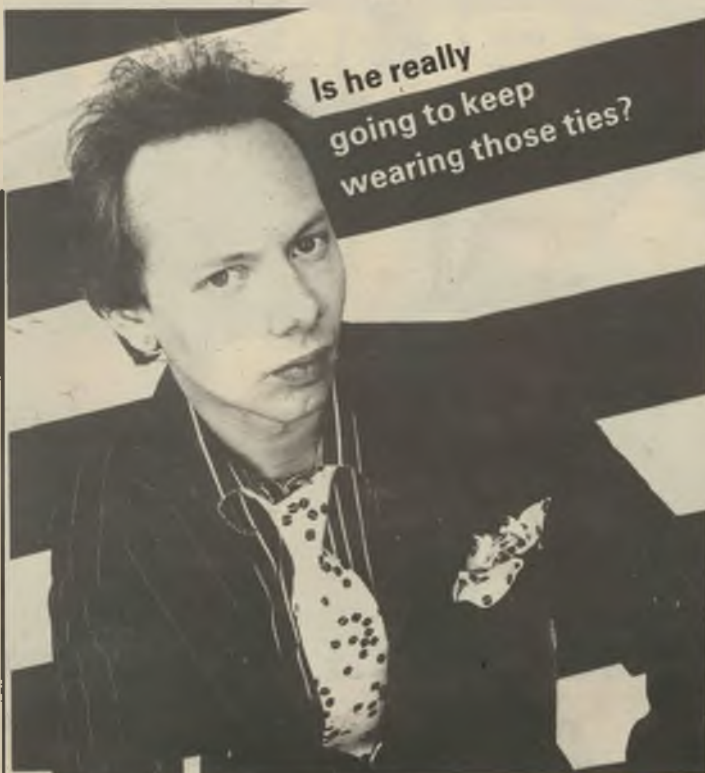
JOE JACKSON Look Sharp! (A&M)

Joe Jackson is a contender: he's fast, tough and he doesn't mess around. At a time when the orthodox powers-that-be in the rock business are geared to start acknowledging then pushing artists round about the time that they put out their third albums, this may be something of a disadvantage.

"Look Sharp!" is an impressively authoritative debut album written, sung and played in a manner that suggests that Jackson has had enough time to discard approaches that don't work and to get stylistic excesses and false starts out of his system before going into the studio.

The album's title and cover (a photograph of Jackson's feet encased in a pair of white side-lace Denson winklepickers that are, unfortunately, not nearly as cool as he evidently thinks they are) suggest an obsession with style. The style adopted within resembles a parallel-universe alternate take on the first Elvis Costello album. The ringing, contoured pop melodies, the jaundiced, sceptical lyrics and the crisp vocals recall the Big E! with the important proviso that Joe Jackson seems to be resisting hostility and alienation rather than first succumbing to and then finally cultivating these particular symptoms in the spectacular (no pun intended, honest) and disturbing manner demonstrated on "My Aim Is True."

Three basic strains seem to have been boiled down into the music of Jackson and his band: the melodic, crafted group pop of the mid-'60s, the angular, metallic sound of the post-punk late '70s and the white reggae-rock which is rapidly becoming as distinct from its origins as the old post-Stones British R&B was from proper Chicago blues. The band pivots around Graham Maby's punching, jostling bass with Gary Sanford's sparse, spitting rhythm guitar and Dave Houghton's slightly over-cautious drumming as a counterpoint. Jackson himself contributes occasional piano (which is fine when he rocks out and increasingly shaky when he tries to get jazzy or stonier) and mouth harp (whizzy and slapdash).



Joe Jackson models a more modern print but CSM still prefers the music.

The resulting sound is forceful and decisive without resorting to steamroller tactics except on the frenetic "Throw It Away" which ends the first side in a manner unfortunately summed up all too accurately by its title. It's sad that too many bands attempt to disguise an overly slight song by pulling out all the stops. The outcome is that the song is completely swamped and nothing much emerges except a thrash. It's a rare miscalculation. Elsewhere on the album it's



Joe's polka dots definitely don't cut it — luckily, his vocals do.

the songs that count, and the band do what's necessary to get Jackson's songs over, rather than trample on the material to get instrumental heroics across.

Despite taking fashionable whacks at supermarkets ("I Do The Instant Mash") and the hideous excesses of Fleet Street ("Sunday Papers"), Jackson's main theme is L-U-R-V-E, either lost or — worse still — sought but never attained. His bitterness is aimed at the girls who reject him (either right off the bat despite his cool threads or later on after he's put an emotional investment into the relationship) and at the "Happy Loving Couples" and "Fools In Love" who innocently and infuriatingly flout their bliss at poor lonely Joe.

In "Is She Really Going Out With Him?" he can't believe that his ex and all those fantastic girls he sees from his window are going out with guys who seem like complete and utter bores. In "Pretty Girls" he goes for a walk in the town centre and gets driven crazy by all these amazing women who don't seem to fancy him a lot. In "Happy

Is he really going to keep wearing those ties?

Than Zero" against the verses of "Is She Really Going Out With Him?" or "Miracle Man" against the choruses of "Happy Loving Couples", but ultimately he seems a far more sympathetic character and one whose emotional problems could be solved by the right girl rather than the destruction of the entire planet. He's a sharp (that word again) lyricist and a very, very fine singer — simultaneously crisp, matter-of-fact and highly expressive. If he can shuck his debts and maintain his standards, Joe Jackson is going somewhere.

Definitely. Just one thing, though. That polka-dot kipper tie is gonna have to go.

Charles Shear Murray

RONNIE DAVIS Sings For You And I (Jamaica Sound)

Former vocalist with The Tonnors and rock-steady outfit, with whom he co-authored the famous "Donkey" cycle of recordings, Ronnie Davis returns here with his third album since going solo in the early '70s. Unlike his earlier two efforts — "Beautiful People From Jamaica" and "Hard Times" for producers E. McLeod and Striker Lee respectively — "Sings For You And I" represents a success of sorts for this powerful-voiced artist.

Containing a dozen sides, the majority of which surfaced over the past few years on his own JA On Top label, this set takes its place alongside a dozen or so superior albums in a period of notoriously indifferent excursions, reggaewise.

Produced jointly by Pat "Scabbe" Sutherland and Davis himself, the outstanding titles on a set that maintains its consistency throughout its two sides are "Holding On", "No Weak Heart (Shall Enter Zion)", and the brilliant "Nations Against Nations" (inactive from 1977).

Also worthy of mention: "False Leader", "One Hero", "Just To Be Close", plus interpretations of Bob Marley's "Kaya" and Boney M's "Rivers Of Babylon".

As Ronnie Davis has already remarked elsewhere, what you see is what you get in reiteration of which, may I be the first to recommend.

Penny Reel

MOON MARTIN Shots From A Cold Nightmare (Capitol)

Unless you remember the barely exploited excellence of the late Southwind then chances are that the moniker John 'Moon' Martin won't mean a flying duck. There again, the connection isn't vital — Martin's song-writing crush is recent; he's not a burning, undiscovered genius like myself, more of a Johnny come lately who deserves a full-cocked ear.

What you do check are two songs, "Cadillac Walk", as covered by Willie de Mink's doo-wop combo, and "Victim Of Romance", an open-house solid commercial tear-jerker. Got the gezer? At least in spirit.

Martin is no stranger to the blinding studio lights. Southwind clocking three wooden discs (sales of over 250), but "Shots" is his true debut. Nothing new in the lyrical ideas suggests that we have a poet on our hands, but the point is that Martin gets to grips with corny teen, "Your love is killin' me, baby, got a bad case, call a doctor", guff and brings the corpse back to life without evoking The Beatles or The Plessers or stupid power pop except by careful design.

Occasionally, the man hits on a combination of rock 'n' roll expertise, courtesy of some vintage rockability licks, allied to a quattrin or doublet redolent of the form at its best. "Cadillac Walk" and "Paid Killer" are two such vignettes. They coin the two faces of Martin, the innocent naïf sucking on his sheets transmogrified by female blood into a street-smart punk ("Hot Nite In Dallas", "She's A



Moon sums up the opposition and gives up his knitted knot as a bad job.

Pretender"). Martin is abetted in the cause by a fine, hand-picked band, boasting Phil Seymour on skins, Gary Valentine on bass and producer Craig Leon on keyboards. The overall sound is high class, a trifle too wistful and flat, but indicative of a radio-tuned sensibility which ought to keep the boy safe from cult status and en route to the Blondie appeal market. All the songs have airwave frequencies, steer short of indulgence and ooze the combination of heartache and humorous deprecation necessary to maintain the listener's health and respect.

With typical generosity Capitol fail to provide English buyers with a lyric sheet. Don't be deterred, however, since it's safe to assume Moon Martin isn't just a hired hand, he's got it in him to run the ranch. Later this month he's over for some dates, further proof on request that he wants to sing and wants to play. Try "Shots From A Cold Nightmare" for signs, you're unlikely to be disappointed.

Max Bell

UFO not slighted

UFO Strangers In The Night (Chrysalis)

How about this for a paradox? Here's a high-energy heavy metal band that displays fine taste and judgement.

UFO's riffs are exhilarating without ever being overbearing. Michael Schenker's guitar solos are flashily attacking but don't outstay their welcome. And Phil Mogg's vocals are suitably butch and raucous without resorting to caricature.

Most live double albums have their dead spots where the momentum simply isn't maintained. This was particularly true of Led Zep's aptly named "The Song Remains The Same", which was mainly one long dead spot. Even last year's Thin Lizzy double "Live And Dangerous" had its feebler moments, made all the more obvious by the strength of Lynott's best-known songs.

With this UFO set, though, it's hard to detect that kind of weakness. To put it simply: this album starts close to most bands' peak and just keeps climbing. In the main, UFO rely on short, sharp songs with simple hooks, and they fire them out one after the other. Songs like "Lights Out", "Too Hot To Handle", "Only You Can Reach Me" and "Doctor, Doctor". All very effective, and easy when you know how.

The one time the band attempt a bit of an epic — the lengthy "Rock Bottom" — they never once come close to floundering, building solidly all the way. The set even includes the occasional cunning change of pace: second track, side one is "Out In The Street" (no relation to P. Townshend), a deceptively lightweight ballad with a hard centre. It's as weak-kneed as they ever get.

Now, it's quite obvious that this album has little or no

cultural/political significance. As far as the lyrics can be understood, they seem to offer no insight into the plight of suffering humanity. In fact, the only thing on offer here is high-grade hard rock entertainment — worth a million half-assed political diatribes and, to UFO, probably worth just a million.

No doubt they'll get disgustingly rich on the strength of "Strangers". But that's true of all successful rock performers — buy an album, support the wealthy, if you're into rock music you have to live with such social implications. That UFO have long hair and live in California makes them no less entitled to their moolah than your friendly neighbourhood spiky-heads.

Inevitably, "Strangers" is an album that will be deeply unfashionable. But if trendies are foolish enough to neglect it, that's their business.

Bob Edman



Phil Mogg opts for the classical striped look. Pic: George Badnar



Child: Blush when you're analysed, boys. Pic: Paul Canty

Child molested

CHILD The First Album (Ariola-Hansa)

It's very difficult to consider Child as a 'group' or on musical merit — to me they seem mostly like a bit of bland camp who appear to have caught most people on their blind side. Though I know it was the 'thing' awhile back to treat the Bay City Rollers in a serious way, this is a horribly snobbish way to go about things.

So let's put hoity-toity world-view aesthetics away and ask why does it sell? Does it sell? Yes, but much less than it used to; all you can say about this kind of act, is, well, the majority of very young girls like to have a bit of inoffensive pretty-boy to screech at, don't they?

Child want to be rich and famous, are happy making records. They know they won't last long and want to rake in a bit of muck before the little girls start growing little brains. Are they the Pavlovs of 1979's English pre-pubescent population? No, the sum of their facial parts is seriously flawed. Are they in on the joke? No, they wear Lee denim jackets. Do they know there is a joke? Probably, in these rock-paper days.

Here, they sing 12 songs, all about being (mostly sadly, rarely happily) in love, mostly slow, all very quiet. They play their instruments as adequately as any senior punk band but their singing is weak. Their songs, apart from the few 50's/60's standards they perform — "When You Walk In The Room", "It's Only Make Believe" — are all tuneless wonders (now you know how many holes it takes to fill a Child album). It's a very maternal record — you know, if you were playing it your mother would probably ask you to turn it up.

The sound they are trying for, the subject matter and their handling of it aims for an image and imagery much closer to David Cassidy's wistful beach-comber sigh-scope than the cheerfully brainless bounce of the Bay City Osmonds, but it falls flat on its spots.

What Child have got going for them is the Attack twins, pretty blondies who could probably clean up those eight-14-year-old girls who've shied away from Travolta's dark foreign danger-dance. And that dark piece on guitar, old Cheekbones McKenzie, he sets them off well.

But! Looks, looks, looks is what teeny-weeny-heart-throbs are all about, and Graham

Bilbrough, boys, your lead singer, is simply not the stuff that gets the seats wet. If he is a close friend, or if you are soft-hearted, boys, can't you just sit him at the back and put the drumsticks in his hands? Hang on — isn't Timothy, the extreme beauty of the Attack twins, the current drummer boy? Why, nothing could be simpler or more sensible — stick Graham at the drums, and let Timothy do lead mime. (Timothy is no moron, neither; he wrote a song on this album. It's pathetic, like the rest; this couldn't be less important to Tim's career.)

Interesting things: the photography is by Brian Aris, who made his name snapping "Page 3" girls for the *Sun* and now evidently is trying to move up-market in the visual world: a lot of girls they aim songs at are warned, in veiled terms, not to become loose women; not one song, or facial expression, or item of clothing indicates that the four members of Child possess one modicum of intelligence between them.

Still... any band who beat up Jean Jacques Burnel must have some germ of inner genius.

Julie Burchill

TONY COE Coe-Existence (Lee Lambert)

Despite rather than because of Humphrey Lyttelton's eulogistic sleeve notes — "Tony Coe is one of the most remarkable and brilliant musicians in the world" — I gave this a spin, as they say.

This is that angle of British jazz more for the connoisseur than the cub scout cat, whose conservative excellence may be appreciated rather than enjoyed by those of us primitives with an ear firmly in the present's more tense and congruent sounds: hinge and bracket, Humph and Braxton? There's a fair shelf of standards ("Lover Man", "Don't Get Around Much Any More", etc) and an original comp. or two that pushes its emphasis toward the ECM balance of the scales — the soprano-clarinist singsong on "Rio Vermelho" for instance. But generally the feel is untroubled and unfashionably fragile.

I don't know that I should use "unfashionably", but then I don't know that I could match the sleeve note's search for "a satisfactory definition of *je je je* hot".

"Co-Existence" is all cocco to me, I'm afraid.

Ian Penman

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ALICE COOPER
From The Inside (Warner Bros)
THE DOOBIE BROTHERS
Minute By Minute (Warner Bros)

Some people are into music like others are into real estate. It's a job, regular money, and there's no need to get emotionally entangled. Listening to these albums, I'd guess that was the case for Alice Cooper and The Doobie Brothers.

Genius may be pain, but "From The Inside" proves that pain isn't necessarily genius. Or even honesty. Supposedly based on Cooper's own experiences while receiving treatment for alcoholism, the album provides barely a glimmer of the harrowing times he must have undergone.

The title track and "Serious" are honourable exceptions; the rest are tacky showbiz fantasies on the sensationalist aspects of insanity — from the studied histrionics of "The Quiet Room" to the gory schmalz of "Millie And Billie".

The music — hard rock bombast, plus the occasional stodgy ballad — is thoroughly

undistinguished. In all, "From The Inside" is like a failed attempt at a bad joke. Too silly to be serious, too complacent to be funny, and lacking enough imagination to be in bad taste.

Poor Alice! Back in the dark ages, he could turn out a decent pop single, but music doesn't seem to be his forte anymore. He made his name beheading dolls and playing golf; now he'd be better off growing tomatoes.

He could use The Doobie Brothers' album for fertiliser. The Doobies used to be a 'boogie' band like Long John Silver was a ballet dancer. Now they've changed their style, and it's a whole new cliché.

A White Soul Shuffle no less (and certainly no more), dreary beyond words. I guess they're trying to move into the Bee Gees market, but they'll end up pushing a barrow if they persist with the dull aural torture of "Minute By Minute". Rent-a-hack lyrics stand a spoon up in it; the first Wheelchair Disco record.

Albums like these make me despair. But then, I've never wanted to be an estate agent.

Graham Loe

MUDDY WATERS
Muddy "Mississippi" Waters Live (Blue Sky)

Old Man Muddy's been pretty visible these last couple of years. Though he had to go the same-old-same-old patronage-of-white-superstars route to do it (a big hand for Johnny Winter; a little finger for Eric Clapton) but the penny's dropped — Muddy Waters is now institutionalised as the white rock fan's favourite bluesman. The black American record-buyer's favourite bluesmen is more likely to be Bobby Bland or B.B. or Albert, but that's another matter.

The white label copy of this album from which I'm working doesn't specify personnel or time or place of recording, but from aural evidence and the presence of Johnny Winter, "Muddy 'Mississippi' Waters Live" would seem to have been drawn from his 1977 promo tour from the "Hard Again" period, which would line the band up as James Cotton (harp), Pinetop Perkins (piano), Willie "Big Eyes" Smith (drums), Charles Calmes (bass), Bob Margolin and Johnny Winter (guitars). (If, on the other hand, it was recorded in '78 with the regular Waters band, I shall shed the last tattered remnants of my blues credibility and sighingly trudge into the sunset).

This album is by no means the most forceful or dynamic live work that Muddy has ever cut — that honour belongs to the "Muddy Waters At Newport 1960" album or to the Waters tracks on the "Live At Big Bill's Copecabana" set — but it's the warmest and most relaxed. The opening "Mannish Boy" sounds uncharacteristically hesitant when compared to the raging, storming *tour de force* version that opened "Hard Again",

Imports

Ooops! Seems like "Tasty", the Good Rats album I recently reviewed in this column, was not a newie, as I supposed, but rather a reissue of earlier material. Apologies all round then, especially to the Rats themselves, who have just chomped up with a legit new release in "Birth Comes To Us All" (Passport), a not unimpressive offering.

This time around, it's the songs and nothing but the songs that matter, the Rats as a band virtually taking a back-seat as lead-man Peppi Marchello adopts his singer-songwriter stance, his ever-faithful rodents just tagging along for the ride in the company of such other friendly cheese-sharers as Manfred Mann, Brian Cuomo, Pete Woods, Larry Fast, Mel Collins, John Tropea and Richard Tee. So it's the leather-larynxed Marchello who does all the pinch-hitting (or hit-pinchin' in the case of a dirty called "Juvenile Song", which sounds for all the world like son of "Penny Lane") and he's penned a batch of diverse and shrewdly assembled

pipe-benders, ranging from "Schooldays", a Seger-like, Collins-assisted rocker, cut at The Who's studios, through to the closing title number, a soft, reflective, look-back-and-be-thankful shot, that comes swathed in a baby-blue string arrangement devised by Will Malone. Immaculately recorded and mixed down with the aid of the new 602B Aphex Exciter System, "Birth" is probably the Rats' best shot to date. Willard recommended.

"Looked in the mirror, I'm almost 32. Another four years and I'm through." The guy getting paranoid about picking up his pension is none other than our old chum Armand Schaubrock Steals, the guy who can produce more expletives per lyric than McLaughlin can plan notes per concert. "You won't get any Bible crap outta my fuckin' mouth," he confides at one point on "Ratfucker" (Mirror), the latest in his line of potential Whitehouse heart-attacks imported by those jovial gents at Sonaparte Records. If Loopy Lou represents the streets then A.S.S. (neat initials those!) chae: lads for the sewers. Obsessed by a desire to ball puberal chicks —

"Pre-teen mama, when you shake your little ass and shake your little thing, you make me go ding-a-ling, you're jailbait. I'll do fuckin' time for you" (from "Pre-teen Mama") and "Statutory rape, when I was 16 she was 13, that's why I'm here" (from "Buried Alive") — Steals also has a yen for the concept job, doing his party-piece on "The Queen Hitter", enacting the part of a hit man who specialises in wiping up dissenting wives. "Sometimes they're hard to reach and I have to pay an extra thousand for getting some junkie to hit her — plus my nine thousand for hitting the fuckin' junkie, of course!" he reveals. Meanwhile, the band rips through a James Bond riff to the rear and Steals sidles off stage left, yodelling "Zip per de doo dah, beautiful feeling, blowing a broad away," all accomplished in lip-whetting anticipation of a forthcoming shiv-twisting spree.

All-in-all, solid, well-over-the-top stuff and a definite musical threat to Derek and Clive. By the way, all album purchasers receive a free, blood red, "Ratfucker" inscribed plectrum. I thought you'd like to know that.

Fred Dellar

but it sets a relaxed, good-humoured mood that never lets up for the entire length of the album. What I mean is it grooves.

As producer, Winter has slightly overbalanced the album in favour of slow blues cuts, mainly because it's these numbers which highlight Muddy's rare showcase solos. He seldom plays more than one or two guitar solos a night, but the numbers on which he features his delicately brutal variations-on-a-theme tend to vary, making it easy to give an audience far more of Muddy's

unique slide than they'd be likely to get in one set. However, there's a relentlessly swinging "Baby Please Don't Go" which enables Winter himself to strut his stuff, playing a creatively classicist lead guitar that stays stylistically congruent with the straight-ahead '60s-style Chicago blues of the Waters band while simultaneously eschewing the cliché-pitfalls that enfold most white bluesmen.

In a sense, the album saves its best shot for the end: a teasing, swinging drop-down-mama version of

"Deep Down In Florida" that effortlessly eclipses the "Hard Again" version and features truly delightful slide-guitar interplay between Winter and his mentor.

After Muddy's epic gigs in this country over the last few years, there'll be a lot of people on the lookout for a Muddy Waters live album. This one does the job just fine, and once you're that far into the man's work, there's no way you aren't going to be looking for more.

You know something? I reckon this guy could be big.

Charles Shear Murray

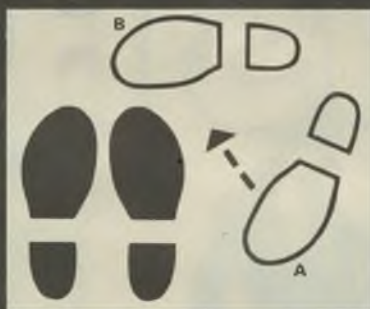


Alice Cooper and buddy — welcome to their real estate

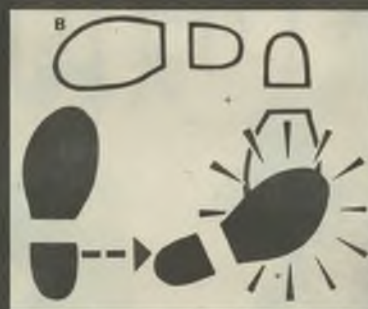
THE BRISTOL STOMP:



STEP ONE



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Hillman, McGuinn and Clark roll on, unthunderously.

Pic: Chris Walter

McGUINN, CLARK & HILLMAN

McGuinn, Clark & Hillman (Capitol)

If watching someone you once admired attempting to be inspired is the most pathetic sight imaginable, as some bloke maintained in last week's ish, then this album is admirably suited for the squeamish.

Not that Messrs McGuinn, Clark and Hillman are even attempting to be inspired here. There's the distinct impression that these three have known for some time they're all over the hill, incapable of mustering up anything of any consequence. So they gather together in the usual 'safety-in-numbers' stratagem and, depressingly, milk whatever may be left of their reputation as three-fifths of the original Byrds and the current inclination of their L.A. peers to manufacture seedy aural placebos in lieu of actual music. The result would be merely sad were they not so repellent to a fan of the Byrds' finest years (approximately '65-'68, with "Chestnut Mare" for a closer).

The album's cover is an aptly hideous showcase for the contents lurking within. Against the grainy photo of the three participants (bearing distinct signs of cosmetic restructuring) runs a sort of 'do-it-yourself' Rolling Stone review, with the usual vacuous superlatives dragged forth ("There is a timeless quality in 'McGuinn, Clark & Hillman' that renders analysis insignificant"), courtesy the famously unknown Stephen Peables.

From the first notes of "Long Long Time" — a song so chock-full of all the clichés inherent in the indolent traditions of the already torpid 'mellow' genre (the usual hokum about 'change' and 'picking up the pieces') — "McG&H" groans under the weight of its own tedium right through to the last cosy acoustic strum of "Bye Bye Baby", a characteristic McGuinn prostitution of the style he once landmarked so masterfully with "Chestnut Mare".

This is all stuff of a sickening sweetness, an unrelieved crassness well beyond the call of commercial duty. Instead of a steady stab at instant Byrds nostalgia with the 12-string Rickenbacker forced to the fore of a crystalline mix, McG, C&H have chosen to cloak their slop in a style approximating anonymous eclecticism. So we have to tolerate surrogate doo-wop (Clark's "Little Mama"), surrogate calypso (McGuinn's "Don't You Write Her Off", Clark's treacly "Feelin' Higher") and surrogate boogie (Hillman's baleful "Stopping Traffic" and "Sad Boy").

Forget that Gene Clark actually produced a decent solo effort some four years back ("No Other") or that McGuinn's "Cardiff Rose" had its agreeable moments — only Hillman on his own has seemed bereft of talent — because this desperate enterprise flounders at the lowest common denominator imaginable. Lower than the Eagles or, God forbid, even Firefall, this is the kind of pablum one can see appealing solely to senile health food nuts who get drunk at weekends on cheap Chablis and go out in the woods to talk to the bears.

If you are still thirsting for some semblance of that old Byrds spark, then plump for the Big Star double-pack, one of Television's two epic releases or Chris Stills' current single "You Wanted To Know", and you'll find the tradition being kept up, even as its slothful instigators contribute their last combined whimper toward deserved oblivion.

Nick Kent

HORSLIPS

The Man Who Built America (DJM)
Sniff 'n' The Tears
Fickle Heart (Chiswick)

There's a rumour abroad that Horslips are an Irish folk-rock group, but this album sounds like the work of clapped-out power-poppers. Jangly guitars, pretty harmonies, trite lyrics on love and loneliness—if it wasn't for the occasional and irrelevant intrusions of whistles, concertines and other suitably ethnic instruments, this might be a Plessers' album (perish the thought!).

"The Man Who Built America" is supposed to be a concept album, though I'd never have guessed and I still don't believe it. Drummer Eamon Carr reckons it's about "the idea that people can find a new place and build it from the ground up."

Well, great! I mean, up is probably a good direction to build in. But this startling insight has little to do with the actual lyrics which, if

anything, are concerned with relationships breaking up 'cos the man has to be moving on in search of rainbows, destiny, dreams and similar heavy conceptual apparatus (intellectual rigour and lyrical originality are not exactly Horslips' strong points).

A more successful, albeit flawed, attempt at pop romanticism comes courtesy of Sniff 'n' The Tears. The light, melodic drive that graced their "Driver's Seat" single is in evidence throughout "Fickle Heart", but it proves an insufficient quality on which to base an entire album.

Prime movers of the group are Paul Roberts (singer, writer) and Luigi Salvoni (drummer, producer). Roberts has an engaging voice which suits the reflective, rueful tings of his songs, and Salvoni achieves a clear, uncluttered sound. But these modest successes are undermined by the presence of several unremarkable tunes and a set of disappointing lyrics.

Apart from the forced narrative of "The Thrill Of It All" and the muddled attempt at a statement on "Looking At You", the lyrics are studiously contrived romantic clichés. Occasionally, this technique fits — "The Last Dance" is perfectly realised candyfloss sadness — but mostly it just makes the songs less interesting.

The glossy superficiality of Roberts' cover painting is repeated in the music. A clever exercise in stylistic vignettes, "Fickle Heart" ends up as an album of small delights and little substance. Stay with the single.

Graham Lock

ROBERT JOHNSON

Close Personal Friend (Ensign)

As Mr. Johnson is calling virtually all the shots on this album, it would seem he has a great deal more confidence in his talents, varied and diverse as they are, than I.

Robert the vocalist, I think, falls somewhere below Robert the rhythm guitarist, but above Robert the songwriter. Unfortunately, Robert Johnson is one of those people who seem to have acquired an unsettling ability to write songs that always sound vaguely familiar. And, while this feeling of distant kinship is quietly comforting at first, the coziness soon degenerates into yawning disinterest.

At the mixing desk Bobby really flunks out, almost succeeding in cooling out his one shining light, his rhythm guitar work. Straight E's and a tall pointy hat. So all we're left with here is a very ordinary American light rock/pop album.

John Hamblett

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Horslips drummer Eamon Carr passes comment on life

A slender, almost ascetic frame belies Karel Reisz's toughness of spirit, a resilience which has seen him through numerous aborted projects over the past decade.

A distinguished British director — though born in Czechoslovakia, he has lived in England since childhood — Reisz has completed only three films (*Isadora*, *The Gambler* and the recently released *Dog Soldiers*) in twelve years. He's vaguely philosophical about this relative inactivity and — ensconced behind a huge desk in his Hampstead home — evidently unperturbed, though an earnest inquisitiveness often breaks his otherwise benign features and he chain smokes.

"I don't know why I haven't made many films," he says, in the precise tone of someone who attended an "approved" school. (He graduated from Cambridge in physics and is a Spurs supporter, so figure it out yourself.) "I do prepare a lot of subjects that I don't get round to making. Sometimes I can't raise the money for certain projects."

He shrugs as he waits for the ash to fall from his Silk Cut.

"And I'm lazy."

Taking that remark with a sifterful of Saxe, I wonder whether Reisz — with Lindsey Anderson and Tony Richardson, co-founder of the so-called Free Cinema of the late '50s/early '60s when the naturalistic 'kitchen sink' style of *Saturday Night And Sunday Morning*, *Look Back In Anger* and *This Sporting Life* heralded a new era of social realism in British cinema — feels bitter about the wretched state of the industry in this country today. After all, the films he's made in the '70s (both of them) have been American.

SILVER SCREEN



Karel Reisz blows through thumb in vain attempt to extend ash on cigarette.

Pic by Tom Sheehan.

The Reisz And Fall Of A Lazy Man

The director of *Dog Soldiers* talks a bit and smokes a lot.

"That's simply because they're both American subjects and I go where the subjects take me," he says. "There is also a perfectly simple and boring reason to account for the British film industry: the domestic market is very small and film-making is very expensive. If I was in my 20s now (he's 52), I'd work in television, no question. You'd have to make an

enormously successful film to reach five million people in theatres."

Like other respected film-makers (including Nicolas Roeg and Richard Lester), Reisz has 'kept his hand in' before now by making commercials but, I tell him, three or four year gaps between features is a criminal waste of a proven directorial talent, especially when even

most good directors are able to make an annual movie.

"The people who make films every year are J. Lee Thompson and Sam Peckinpah since he's been making shit," he says, gently rising to the bait. "I am specially slow, I admit that, but your argument doesn't bear analysis."

Francois Truffaut though, for example, makes at least

one film a year.

"Well, he makes too many and they're probably no good. Not too many for himself

perhaps, because he lives through his work and that's a matter of temperament. To find a subject that really grabs you, that you think you can do something serious with and that has some box-office possibilities, isn't all that easy."

One such subject is Robert Stone's novel *Dog Soldiers* ("A wonderful book") and the resultant film starring Nick Nolte (reviewed in *Silver Screen* 13/1/79) is the most ambitious and engrossing of the current spate of Viet Nam-related movies. The Nolte character, Hicks, is a peculiarly complex hero, resolutely defending a stash of smuggled heroin from the clutches of a corrupt police force and the Mafia. As a cold-eyed look at America's legacy for its involvement in S.E. Asia (dope addiction and corruption), *Dog Soldiers* is entirely admirable, and certainly preferable to the wet and woolly *Coming Home*, wherein Jane Fonda and Jon Voight publicly assuage liberal guilt ten years too late.

Even the music — Creedence Clearwater songs, as popular in Nam as in California, where most of *Dog Soldiers* is set — is intelligently chosen, as against the nudging 'protest' songs used in *Coming Home*. Unsurprisingly, a hard-headed thriller that perfectly conveys that sour era of corruption, confusion and false idealism has bombed out in America, ever reluctant to re-open old wounds.

"The morality of the film parallels the morality of that time," says an unrepentant Reisz. "A time when government authority was being used for totally criminal purposes — which, of course, the Viet Nam war was."

"In the 2nd World War, Hicks would be a successful, contented soldier. But he's in a world where there isn't a war to which he can subscribe — there is nothing honourable to fight for. He's like a beached whale."

"*Dog Soldiers* holds as entertainment, it's a damn

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good story, but where we're in trouble with a big audience is that the heroes are a bit to ambiguous."

A bit too much like real people?

"If you like, Hicks is an unsentimental view of macho. A more sentimental view of macho may be more popular, but fuck it."

There is, of course, a political edge to *Dog Soldiers'* melodrama but, despite his socialist leanings, Reisz has a horror of 'political' films, finding them naive and unbelievable. The Free Cinema group were considered political, he reckons, merely because they took social reality seriously.

"If you make films about politicised characters, you end up making films for your friends. And you wish statements on your characters that you just don't believe of them in actuality. A good premise for a film is a couple of characters with a dilemma. A bad premise for a film is a social problem. Because then your characters become spokesmen illustrating that problem. That's the wrong way round. You are making fiction after all, and direct political involvement is not a good foundation for fiction."

"There's never been a good polemical left-wing cinema — anywhere. The only one who's succeeded in finding a big audience with outright leftist views is Costa-Gavras, who turns them into thrillers. I've nothing against them, but they're not the high points of my cinematic experience."

"If it doesn't sound too pretentious, *Dog Soldiers* is a sort of requiem for the '60s."

He winces. "That does sound pretentious. I wish I hadn't said it."

As we leave, Reisz makes a request. "Now don't go making out *Dog Soldiers* to be highbrow, or no-one will go and see it. Just because I'm an intellectual —"

Doesn't necessarily mean you're a bad person? He laughs.

"Some of my best friends are intellectual."

Monty Smith



"Watch out, Kerel — that ash is gonna fall all over page 34." Fats gives Anthony Hopkins a hard time in *Magic*. Bob Woffinden goes for a goggle of gear.

Magic

Directed by Richard Attenborough
Starring Anthony Hopkins, Ann-Margret and Burgess Meredith
(20th Century Fox)

Possessing no more advance information about this movie than its title and the name of the director, I was halfway prepared to discover Richard Attenborough standing in brother David's shoes and making a documentary about witchdoctors in Borneo.

On the contrary, *Magic* has been conceived as a commercial blockbuster (as indeed were Attenborough's other '70s movies, *Young*

Winston and *A Bridge Too Far*) — a psychological horror film to catch the fading sliostream of *The Exorcist*.

In fact, it's probably everything that producer Joseph Levine wanted it to be. Though not particularly good, it's almost certainly good enough. Attenborough directs with cool intelligence and occasional flair, but rarely with absolute mastery, and he doesn't always seem fully happy working in the genre.

Perhaps he'd bitten off too much. William Goldman's original story clearly needed embellishment. Compare it to the last Goldman work to be filmed, *Marathon Man*, which benefited enormously from the expertise of John Schlesinger as director and Dustin Hoffman in the lead

role, so much so that it became an exercise in terror of nightmarish proportions. Attenborough and Hopkins are an altogether less formidable partnership.

Corky (Hopkins) is a timid magician who has mastered most of the tricks, but who lacks the extroversion, charm and stagecraft necessary to attract an audience. So he turns to ventriloquism, and the coarse back-chat of Fats ("the only X-rated dummy on the block") helps eradicate his personality shortcomings. People flock to see Fats, and Corky's agent (Meredith) is delighted.

However, his solitary request to Corky as he prepares to meet the Big Time ("Don't turn shitty on me") echoes resoundingly, as Corky abandons ship suddenly and heads for the Catskill mountains to look up an old flame. At which point, the film shifts gear, loses the intriguing momentum of the early scenes, and begins to borrow its atmospherics from *Psycho*, a well-nigh exhausted seam of cinematic inspiration.

It all unravels neatly enough after that, but Attenborough is certainly no Hitchcock, and by the end the plot is seeming woefully thin. Furthermore, the entire central premise of the film seems naggingly familiar, although I confess that no particular antecedent comes readily to mind.

Attenborough made attention to historical detail a factor of consummate importance in both *Young Winston* and *A Bridge Too Far*, and he has been equally diligent in seeking verisimilitude here. Technical consultants are credited — magicians and ventriloquists; he even picked the brains of an expert on regional accents. I can't help thinking that they should have employed a consultant psychologist as well.

The film does boast excellent performances by Ann-Margret, whose looks, figure and acting ability all improve with the passing years, as the old flame, and by Burgess Meredith. Finally, however, it is seen to employ only frustrating *legerdemain* — pretending to have more tricks up its sleeve than it actually has.

Bob Woffinden

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NATIONWIDE GIG GUIDE



BILLY CONNOLLY starts his aptly-named *Big Wee Tour* this week, which takes in a massive 63 dates before finishing in April. The *Big Wee* starts his travels in his native Scotland, visiting Wick (Thursday), Dingwall (Friday), Forfar (Saturday), Arbroath (Sunday), Lanark (Tuesday) and Kilbirnie (Wednesday).

Thursday

Birmingham Barbarella's: Osibisa
Birmingham The Bell: The Clerks
Birmingham Railway Hotel: Orphan
Brighton Alhambra: The Infants
Brighton Dome: The Kinks / Stadium Dogs
Brighton Sussex University: Cheap Trick
Bristol Woodhouse: The Amazing Dark Horse
Eastleigh Crown Hotel: Thieves Like Us
Gloucester Leisure Centre: Showaddywaddy
High Wycombe Nags Head: Laura Logie & The Extensions / Double Exposure
Leeds Fan Club: Bertie Bright & The Illuminations
Leeds Polytechnic: Wreckless Eric / The Softies
London Camden Dingwalls: Joe Jackson
London Camden Music Machine: Chelise / U.K. Subs / Raped
London Chiswick John Bull: Spit Rvtr
London Deodar Albany Empire: The Red Lights / The Rainbows
London Fulham Golden Lion: Dead Ringer
London Hammersmith The Rutland: Fred Rickshaw's Hot Gobs
London Hammersmith The Swan: Beast
London Kensington The Cricketers: Maryana
London Kensington De Villiers Bar: Gold Dust Twins
London Kensington The Nashville: The Members / Local Operator
London Marquee Club: Straight 8
London Old Kent Road Thomas A'Beckett: Tour De Force
London Oxford St. 100 Club: Pressure Shocks
London Royal Albert Hall: Andrew Crouch & The Disciples
London Soho Pizza Express: Bill Szeest
London Stoke Newington Pegasus: Barry Richardson Band
London Tottenham The Spurs: Zick
London Victoria The Venue: Walter Egan
London W.10 Actium Hall: Shopping Stockings
Manchester Band on the Wall: Landscape
Manchester (Eccles) Talk Of The North: Chivy Street (for three days)
Manchester Pips: Alien Tint / The Stopouts
Manchester Watlington Police Club: Dave Berry & The Cruisers
Norwich Boogie House: Girlschool
Nottingham Hearty Good Fellow: The Hermies
Nottingham Imperial Hotel: Lap Region
Oxford Cafe of Good Hope: English Subtitles
Oxford Polytechnic: N.W.10
Poole Arts Centre: Crown Heights Affair
Plymouth Polytechnic: Punishment Of Luxury
Sheffield Limit Club: Hot Water
Sheffield Arcadia Theatre: Meshchiffa
Southampton Goumont Theatre: Nazareth
Southampton Jokers Arms: Night Rider
Stockton Edgeley Park County Club: Gerry & The Pacemakers (for three days)
Wick Assembly Rooms: Billy Connolly
Wolverhampton Civic Hall: UFO
York Revolution Club: Doll By Doll

Friday

Barnwell Constitutional Club: Dave Berry & The Cruisers
Birmingham Barbarella's: Bertie Bright & The Illuminations
Birmingham Barrel Organ: Bright Eyes
Birmingham Elizabethan Days: Bad Earth
Birmingham Railway Hotel: Spiffie
Bournemouth Winter Gardens: Debbie Bradford St. George's Hall: Showaddywaddy
Brighton Polytechnic: After The Fire
Bristol Colston Hall: Andrew Crouch & The Disciples

Bristol University: Cheap Trick
Bromley The Northover: Matchbox
Burton 76 Club: Straight 8
Cardiff University: Gonzalez
Chester Arts Centre: Next
Cromer West Rurton Pavilion: Wreckless Eric / The Softies
Didcot Rutherford Laboratory: Telephone Bill & The Smooth Operators
Dingwall Town Hall: Billy Connolly
Dundee College of Technology: Sneakers
Eastbourne Longbridge Arms: Night Rider
Edinburgh Heriot Watt University: The Cruisers
Fareham Technical College: Sisa Mark / The Molesters
Hanley Victoria Hall: UFO
Harlow Playhouse: Theatre: Jeremy Taylor
High Wycombe Bucks College of Education: U.K. Subs
High Wycombe Town Hall: Adam & The Ants
Kettering Windmill Club: The Bearsbank Band
Kirkwall Country Club: Witz
Knaresborough Folk Club: Dave Goulder
Lancaster University: Gaffa
Leeds Florde Green Hotel: Hot Water
Leeds Playhouse Theatre: Landscape
London Actium Kings Head: Paz
London Camden Dingwalls: Sore Throat / Frankenstein
London Camden Southampton Arms: Jellyroll Blues Band
London Canning Town Bridge House: The Warm Jazz / Thieves Like Us
London Hackney Chats Palace: The Some Other Time Band
London Hammersmith Odeon: Horslips
London Manor Park Three Rabbits: Raised On Robbery
London Notting Hill Old Swan: Anniversary
London Putney Star & Garter: Craig & Nigella's Folk and Blues Night
London Soho Pizza Express: Digby Fairweather Quartet
London Southgate Royalty Ballroom: Crown Heights Affair
London Stokes Newington Pegasus: The Softies
London Tickenham Richmond-upon-Thames College: Sniff & The Tears
London Upstairs at Ronnie Scott's: Immigrant
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London W.10 Actium Hall: Passions / The Reincoats / The Distributors
Manchester Apollo Theatre: Roy Ayers Band
Mettick Pavilion: Samson
Milton Mowbray Painted Lady: Desmond Dekker
Newcastle Guildhall: The Wall
Newport Village Club: Redding Cars
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Sunderland Top Rank: Gillan
Walsall Public Hall: N.W.10
Wolverhampton Rollerdom: The Demented / Radio Stars
York Revolution Club: Trans-Am
York Winning Post: Red Eye



CHUCK MANGIONE — one of today's most outstanding musical talents, who spent a full year in the U.S. charts with his album "Feels So Good" — makes his British concert debut at the London Palladium this Sunday, in company with his regular all-star backing band.

Other American visitors making their U.K. debuts are **MOCK MARTIN**, who opens at Sheffield (Tuesday) and London The Venue (Wednesday), and **EDDIE MONEY**, kicking off in Newcastle (Wednesday).

Saturday

Aberdeen University: Sneakers
Aylesbury Friars: Spit Little Fingers
Birmingham Barbarella's: Reading Cars
Birmingham (Kings Health) Hale & Hounds: Shep Wooley
Birmingham Market Cross: Special Clinic
Birmingham Odeon: Andrew Crouch & The Disciples
Birmingham Railway Hotel: School Sports
Bathurst Stamford Triad Leisure Centre: Dog Watch
Bognor Sussex Hotel: Short Stories
Bradford University: Gillan
Bristol Crown Celler Bar: The Wild Beasts
Bristol Polytechnic: After The Fire
Carshalton St. Helier Club: Matchbox
Clayton-le-Moors: Marthorne Grange
Dundee University: The Cruisers
Dunstable California Ballroom: Roy Ayers Band
Farnborough Technical College: Radio Stars
Forfar Reid Hall: Billy Connolly
Glasgow Strathclyde University: Alan Price
Guildford Surrey University: Wreckless Eric / The Softies
Ipswich Tracey's: Raw
Leeds Florde Green Hotel: John Hedley Maggett Band
Leeds University: UFO
Leicester Aylesford Theatre: Strange Onyx
Liverpool Eric's: The Human League
London Bruton St. Matthews Community Centre: Belt & Braces Band
London Camden Dingwalls: Commemoration: Night 10th Anniversary of death of Buddy Holly, Richie Valens and The Big Bopper
London Camden Music Machine: Bertie Bright & The Illuminations
London Enfield Hop Poles: Zick
London Fulham Golden Lion: Ricky Cool & The Icebergs
London Hammersmith The Swan: Double Exposure
London Penge Groves Centre: Tennis Shoes
London Soho Pizza Express: Bill Greenow/Fred Hunt Quartet
London Stoke Newington Pegasus: Big Chief
London Upstairs at Ronnie Scott's: Immigrant
London Victoria The Venue: Angelo Branduardi
London West Hampstead Moonlight Club: Spit Rvtr/The Dyals
London W.C.1 Kingsway Princeton College of Further Education: Gentry/The Dark
Manchester Apollo Theatre: Horslips
Manchester Russell Club: The Damned
Manchester University: Cheap Trick
Milton Mowbray Painted Lady: Desmond Dekker
Newbury Coldash Hall: Telephone Bill & The Smooth Operators
Newcastle University: Wild Horses
Nottingham Boat Club: Dirty Tricks
Nottingham Hearty Good Fellow: Guard Band
Parrish Moncrieffe Hall: The Trendies
Reading Bulmer's College: Simon Townsend Band
Sheffield Hurlfield Campus: Landscape
Slough College: Zaine Griff
Southampton University: "Be Limp"
St. Albans City Hall: The Kinks/Stadium Dogs
Stroud Marshall Rooms: N.W.10
Tamworth Chequers: The Kinks Band
Walsall Pelsall Community Centre: Therapy/Misty
Wishaw Crown Hotel (lunchtime): The Pests
Wolverhampton Civic Hall: Nazareth
York Revolution Club: Hot Water

Sunday

Azzurino Lykealand Lounge: Samson
Arbroath Webster Theatre: Billy Connolly
Bedford Kempton Rovers F.C.: Gerry & The Pacemakers
Birmingham Arts Lab: Landscape
Birmingham Hippodrome: Horslips
Birmingham Odeon: Nazareth
Birmingham Railway Hotel: Forwards
Bishops Stamford Old Maltings: Tracks (lunchtime) / Swing Street (evening)
Brighton Alhambra: The Primitives
Bromley The Northover (lunchtime): Bill Scott & Ian Ellis
Chelmsford Chancellor Hall: Adam & The Ants
Chichester Jesters Tavern: Tours
Colchester Gyms: UFO
Coventry Theatre: UFO
Dumfries Steeplechase: Wild Horses
Fallin Stuart Hall Tavern: The Delt Jinks
Hartlepool Co-Operation Club: Dave Berry & The Cruisers
Hull Arts Centre: Red Eye
Jacksdale Grey Topper: Reading Cars
Leeds Florde Green Hotel: After The Fire
Leicester Aylesford Theatre: Strange Days
London Battersea Nags Head: Jugular Vein
London Charing-X Rd. Astoria Theatre: Jack Good's "Di Boy" with Alvin Stardust/Joe Brown/Les Gray/Shakin' Stevens/Freddie Fingers' Law etc.
London Chiswick John Bull: Zick
London East Ham Ruskin Arms: Dog Watch
London Film Co-Op: The Heat
London Finchley Torrington: The Young Bucks
London Fulham Golden Lion: Little Ace
London Fulham Greyhound: Beast
London Hammersmith Odeon: Roy Ayers Band
London Kensington The Nashville: Gonzalez
London Marquee Club: Little Bo Bitch
London W.10 Actium Hall: Shopping Stockings
London Peckham Montpelier (lunchtime): Blue Moon
London Soho Pizza Express: Eddie Thompson
London Southgate Royalty Ballroom: Tribesman

London Stoke Newington Pegasus: The Leyton Buzzards
London The Mail Institute of Contemporary Arts: Gavin Bryers/John White
London Victoria The Venue: Kolomoj / Sniff & The Tears
London Woodhouse Tramshed: Telephone Bill & The Smooth Operators
Loughborough University: Boys Of The Lough
Macclesfield Bears Head: Anniversary
Middlesbrough Little Theatre: National Youth Jazz Orchestra
Newquay Central Hotel: The Winners
Nottingham Hearty Good Fellow: The Press
Nottingham Playhouse Theatre: Osibisa
Rochester Cosham Bowl: Gillan
Walsall Dirty Duck (lunchtime): The Amazing Dark Horse

Monday

Aberystwyth University: Osibisa
Birmingham Barrel Organ: Fashion
Birmingham Market Cross: Orphan
Birmingham Railway Hotel: Video
Edinburgh Tiffany's: Wild Horses
Edinburgh Tiffany's: White Horses
Exeter Routes: Cheap Trick
Exeter University: Horsage
Hford Cauldwell Hotel: Original East Side Stompers
Leeds Viva Wine Bar: The New Jets
Leicester Bailey's: Gerry & The Pacemakers (for a week)
Leicester De Montfort Hall: UFO
Leicester Phoenix Theatre: Landscape
Liverpool The Crown: Zick
London Camden Bradnock: Tennis Shoes
London Camden Dingwalls: X Films/The Clerks/The Juries
London Fulham Golden Lion: Addix
London Hammersmith Odeon: Nazareth
London Marquee Club: Wreckless Eric/The Softies
London Old Brompton Rd. Troubadour: Leah Kendrick
London Paddington Western Counties: Zick
London Putney Half Moon: Dick Gaughan
London Putney Star & Garter: Penny Royal
London Stoke Newington Pegasus: Psychadelic Fury/Strangeways
London West Hampstead Moonlight Club: The Members
Newcastle The Coopers: The Saboteurs
Nottingham Hearty Good Fellow: The Party
Nottingham Imperial Hotel: Gwelbie
Nottingham Clifton Entertainment Centre: Dave Berry & The Cruisers
Southend Talk Of The South: Crown Heights Affair

Tuesday

Birmingham Barbarella's: Doll By Doll
Birmingham Fighting Cocks: Brujo
Birmingham Market Cross: Cartoons
Birmingham Railway Hotel: Speed Limit
Bishops Stamford Triad Leisure Centre: The E.F. Band
Canterbury Odeon: Cheap Trick
Chesham Van Damme Club: Samson
Fleet Fox and Hounds: Speed Limit
Langth Memorial Hall: Billy Connolly
Leicester University: Gruppo Sportiva/Sneakers
London Camden Music Machine: Radio Stars
London Fulham Golden Lion: Lifeline
London Marquee Club: Straight 8
London Purcell Room: Landscape



GRUPPO SPORTIVO, the Dutch band with the Italian name, have already proved more than capable of holding their own on the U.K. circuit. And they're back again for another tour, beginning at Leicester (Tuesday) and Preston (Wednesday), supported by The Sneakers. Our pic is of Gruppo's Jose Van Iersel.

London Shesh The Derby Arms: Freddy's Feetwarmers
London Shepherd Bush The Trafalgar: Gino and The Sharks/Private Vices
London Soho Pips Express: John Wilson/Jack Embley Quartet
London Stoke Newington Pegasus: Tennis Shoes
London West Hampstead Railway Hotel: Reema Reema/The Plants
London Woodhouse Tramshed: Dizzy Gillespie Quartet
London W.1 Shaftesbury Ave. Queen's Theatre: "Tommy" (for a season)
London W.14 The Kensington: 84 Spoons
Nottingham Imperial Hotel: Gaffer
Oxford Corn Doty: N.W.10
Plymouth Metro: Wreckless Eric/The Softies
Sheffield Limit Club: Moon Marlin
Walsall Dirty Duck: The Amazing Dark Horse

Wednesday

Ashford Ben Truman: Samson
Basilston Sweeney's: Landscape
Birmingham Barrel Organ: Brujo
Birmingham Bogarts: Jameson Reid
Birmingham Railway Hotel: Renmarke
Birmingham (Yardley) Bulls Head: Roscoe
Cambridge Lady Mitchell Hall: Chris De Burgh/Catherine Howe
Chesham Plough Inn: Roadsters
Coleraine Ulster University: The Bishops
Gawlish Grand Hotel: Zaine Griff
Glasgow Apollo Centre: UFO
St. Yarmouth Whorles: Roy Bastin
Hatfield Polytechnic: Rod Argent
Keele University: Cheap Trick
Kilbirnie Walker Memorial Hall: Billy Connolly
Liverpool The Sportsman: The Stopouts
Liverpool University: Horslips
London Battersea Arts Centre: Fran Landerman
London Camden Dingwalls: Immigrant
London Camden Dublin Castle: Out To Lunch
London Camden Music Machine: Stadium Dogs / The Physicals
London Chadwell Heath Greyhound Dog Watch
London Fulham Golden Lion: Davey Partisan Band
London Harrow Rd Windsor Castle: 64 Spoons
London Peckham Montpelier: Blue Moon
London Putney Star & Garter: Dana Simmonds & Greig's Folk and Blues Showcases
London Soho Pizza Express: Martin Taylor/The
London Stoke Newington Pegasus: Spit Screams / General Accident
London Victoria The Venue: Moon Marlin
London West Hampstead Moonlight Club: Gas 5 / Aick Ack
London Wimbledon F.C. Nelson's Club The Infamies
London W.10 Actium Hall: Spit Little Fingers/Esential Logic
London W.14 The Kensington: Gaffer
Newcastle University: Eddie Money
Newport Slowdown Club: Radio Stars
Nottingham Hearty Good Fellow: Gwelbie
Nottingham Imperial Hotel: Some Chicken
Preston Polytechnic: Gruppo Sportivo / Sneakers
Sheffield Polytechnic: Gillan
Solihull Golden Lion: Special Clinic
Southampton University: Wreckless Eric / The Softies
South Woodford Railway Bell: Original East Side Stompers
Staindrop Black Swan: Pete Scott

CHRIS DE BURGH — who, until recently, was probably the most in-demand support act in the business — has now graduated to the ranks of the headline acts. And after the success of his first bill-topping outing in the autumn, he's all set to take the plunge again, opening an extensive tour at Cambridge on Wednesday. That very talented lady Catherine Howe is special guest artist on all dates, which extend into March.



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THIEVES LIKE US

A selection of February gigs

1st Knight's, Eastley
2nd Bridge House, London
3rd Alex Wood Hall, Cambridge
9th Royal Oak, Peterfield
16th Wokingham Rock Club
17th Maynams, Basingstoke
22nd Lottbridge Arms, East-bourne
23rd Dinslow, Southampton
24th Bishop's Otter, Chichester

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Feb. 4 CHICK MANGIONE	Feb. 25 GENERATION X
Feb. 5 NAZARETH	Feb. 25 BILL ANDERSON & FARON YOUNG
Feb. 9 CROWN HEIGHTS AFFAIR	Feb. 26/28 VAN MORRISON
Feb. 14 JOHN McLOUGHLIN	Mar. 2 STEVE HILLAGE
LARRY CORVELL, PACO DE LUCIA	Mar. 3 THE ENO
Feb. 15/16 U.F.O.	Mar. 7 URIAH HEEP
Feb. 16 HERBIE HANCOCK	Mar. 10 DARTS
Feb. 17/19 FRANK ZAPPA	Mar. 11 LOU RAWLES
Feb. 17/18 AVERAGE WHITE BAND	Mar. 12/14 JOAN ARMATRAD-ING & GEORGE DUKE
Feb. 18 999	Mar. 13/15 JOHNNY CASH
Feb. 18 KEVIN COYNE	Mar. 16 BILL NELSON
Feb. 23/24 JACKSONS	Mar. 18 SUM WHITMAN
Feb. 24 HERBIE HANCOCK	Apr. 22/28 NEIL SEDAKA

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Mon	12th Feb.	SOUTHAMPTON Gaumont
Tue	13th Feb.	BOURNEMOUTH Winter Gardens
Thur	15th Feb.	MANCHESTER Apollo
Fri	16th Feb.	HULL New Theatre
Sat	17th Feb.	NEWCASTLE City Hall
Sun	18th Feb.	ABERDEEN Capitol
Tue	20th Feb.	EDINBURGH Usher Hall
Wed	21st Feb.	GLASGOW Apollo
Fri	23rd Feb.	LONDON Dominion Theatre
Sun	25th Feb.	CROYDON Fairfield Hall
Mon	26th Feb.	LEICESTER De Montford Hall
Tue	27th Feb.	BIRMINGHAM Odeon
Wed	28th Feb.	LIVERPOOL Empire
Fri	2nd March	OXFORD New Theatre
Sat	3rd March	IPSWICH Gaumont
Mon	5th March	COVENTRY Theatre



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RECORDS

ON THE TOWN

Sham 69

Middlesex Poly

It always ends in tears. Sirens approach and the meat-wagons roll; there's blood on the floor in front of me and once again Sham 69 have fallen foul of their own unhappy legend. With the set abandoned, violence and confusion reign. The cynics must feel pleased.

Once, like a breath of fresh air, Jimmy Pursey got up a lot of noses in the music business. At a time when 'street' was the word *ad nauseam*, only Pursey was stubborn enough to walk it like he talked it (and oh how he talked it). He nearly crucified himself to keep the barriers down — to escape those things which define and confine 'The Star' and isolate him from those on whose allegiance he depends, whether emotionally or financially.

Their records were okay, the gigs were better; but the essence of Sham was that tension of a man who tried to reconcile his lenacious will to stand with and for the kids he believed in.

Brave enough to rage against their boot-brained bigotry, Pursey thrived on antagonism, forged ahead through conflict, found himself the victim of a vicious adulation.

Never was there a career so controlled from below. With a faith you either see as admirable or stupid, Jimmy Pursey gave 'em all enough rope. But the Sham Army turned into a lynch-mob.

Tonight's gig was a farce, cold with overtones of hate.

If this doesn't make him think twice, nothing will

collapsing into a tragic, bloody mess.

Uneasily policed by student rigger types and edgy young security men with threadbare uniforms and big, glossy dogs, the college precincts were unhealthy from the start.

Skinhead groups commanded corridor-corners, formed in tribes by football team or right-wing faction. The bar was closed, smashed up. I saw a few young girls subjected to some unpleasantness. No vision of 'Wild Youth', just of swaggering slobs.

The BBC were filming and many acted up accordingly — egged on to excess by paunchy media-men easily old enough to know better.

Sham's build-up began with 'Clockwork Orange', massively amplified (asking for trouble, surely), and —

stupidly — 'Land Of Hope And Glory', guaranteed to arouse the 'patriotic' contingents. Rock'n'roll Nuremberg.

Sham erupt — the stage is stormed and savagely cleared. 'Bodyguards' and trouble-makers are hard to tell apart. Songs are interrupted, the microphone usurped. Pursey fights to control a thrashing mass of bodies. They stomp the ground and punch the air... then turn against each other.

Badly shaken, Pursey holds up a broken bottle and the band disappear.

Appeals for peace follow the Sham return: 'I WILL ALWAYS BE HERE!' Anguished speeches, defiant manifestos; the cameras keep on rolling.

Let it be said that what little music Sham did manage was

magnificent: daft and glorious and overpowering perfection. But by now the Goon Squad have swamped the stage entirely.

Afraid for their equipment, the BBC retreat, and there it ended. Sham were gone and the police were coming in. I'd seen enough.

My heart bleeds for Jimmy Pursey and Sham 69, though others bleed elsewhere. Much of what he says or does is dumb, misguided; but his honesty and conviction just can't be questioned. No way does he deserve this

Paul Du Noyer

The Inmates

Birkbeck College

God only knows why nobody told you the news that the best rocking tonight, or any other night, is being provided by The Inmates.

They played Birkbeck for free, winding down a generous assault on London which hasn't yet got this remarkable band their deserved exposure or kudos.

Initially, they're an R'n'B experience. Perhaps that style isn't guaranteed to fire the imagination with any new visions of immortality, but the ratio of basic content to sheer excitement soon snowballs critical terminology.

If The Inmates are as good as any of the five-year plan groups who succumbed to new wave with a whimper, then the difference is that they know what they like and they show every sign of furthering the genre.

Material and inspiration are drawn from a wide cross section of the classicist practitioners — Sam And Dave, Wilson Pickett, Otis Redding; all primed and ready to do battle with Islington Stax-Volt takeaways. Then again the band can channel basic energy through vintage garage punk — Standells, Seeds, Leaves.

They establish a pedigree which has me openly amazed. And this is no anachronism either, no history lesson; the potential audience could be anyone — of any age.

Three ex-cannibals — guitarists Peter Gunn and Tony Oliver, plus bassist Ben Donnelly — are The Inmates' backbone of spontaneous flavour. Behind them drummer John Bull demonstrates the rhythm with a minimum of flash and a consistency that moves you every which way but never loose.

As if that was not enough, they also have the best kept secret in Britain today: their vocalist Bill Hurley.

He's an artist whose power and phrasing should guarantee him legendary status alongside Eric Burdon or Van Morrison with Them. Frankly, people like Graham

Parker won't even get a look in when this bloke has his due. He is *sensational*.

A repertoire of over 20 songs creates the traditional R'n'B atmosphere, and then ventures into original and undiscovered territory. They resuscitated 'Ain't Got You', and make 'Don't Miss Your Water', 'Mr Unreliable', 'Talkin' Bout You' and 'Club-A-Go-Go' sound like they were written yesterday.

Their versions of 'Tallahassie Lesson' and 'Dirty Water' won them a 'Nuggets' of their own; but detailed analysis is pointless — words won't do them justice.

Given a willingness to experiment further with original songs and a shade more psychedelia as they enter some necessary progression, The Inmates will have it sewn up this time next year.

And you should be there too because you won't need to understand and hate computers; you won't have to pass comparison with Kafka or notice similarities between the drummer's stance and Chinese Imperialism. In fact, you won't need anything... except your feet and your imagination.

The Inmates are an R'n'B revelation; Bill Hurley is a one man revolution.

Better start practising again kids; the heavyweight title is no longer up for grabs.

Max Bell

The Members

Windsor Castle

Fuelled on beer and adrenalin, the combred youth of Greater London can be an awesome spectacle.

A hefty contingent of teenagers from Willesden, Kingston, Woolwich and other far-flung places have converged on this Harrow Road hotspot; and the prevailing mood is a mixture of volatile edginess and adolescent bravado.

This is one of those proverbial nights that begins with an earthquake and steadily builds up to a climax. This ain't rock'n'roll; this is Rent-a-Riot. This is the Sound of the Suburbs, which 36 hours after the event could not be dislodged from my reverberating head. I blame it on the boogie.

A mental stockpile of over-used gonzo epithets and superlatives doesn't come close to communicating the wreckless frenzy that is whipped up when the band finally cavort onto the stage to launch their campaign of musical demolition. For The Members (Virgin's newly adopted Wunderkind) do not land themselves easily to cool grammatical appraisal

They open the set with a flailing instrumental, in which Jean-Marie Carroll frets his guitar with a mike stand. Suddenly the enigmatic Nicky Tesco trapeses over the monitors, like Gollum out of a tree, takes a quick slug of Sunburst, and abandons his herring-gutted frame to a phrenic Jagger-lantrum.

He looks extremely nervous. I think he frightened himself.

His eyes dart like tadpoles over a couple of skirmishes that have broken out near the stage. The melodrama is quickly resolved and absorbed into the mounting ebullience of the crowd. You could cut the air with a chainsaw.

Tesco's raucous voice is as rough as a bear's ass, and his contrived tunelessness is ideally suited to conveying the light'n'biller mockery of the songs.

The group sound is an unremitting seige of delinquent energy that defies comparison with any other band — past or present. It's a dexadrinal fusion of Yardbeat, Rastapom, and post-Punk pandemonium that leaves scars on your ear-drums and damages your spine if you try to stand still.

Their appeal extends beyond the pure mechanical wizardry and supercharged stage antics. Their songs are sardonic slices of invective drawn from the crass ('Soho A Gogo'), the mundane ('Sound Of The Suburbs'), the sordid ('Love In A Lick'), the isolated ('Solitary Confinement'), and the repressive ('Ride In A Police Car') aspects of the essentially boring and limited lives that most of us, to a degree, are lumbered with.

Whether this enhances their credibility is anybody's guess; but when the music is as wild as this, words like 'credibility' are mere immundo — and out the other side.

So come along and shed calories at the next Members' gig, and watch these bionic brats become very famous. The effect is shattering.

Rick Joseph



Above: the Sham gig beginning to disintegrate. Right: what it disintegrated into. Pix: ROB HALL. Far right: The MEMBERS' NICKY TESCO (pic GEORGE BODNAR)

Say 'allo to the new 'olton

Gary Holton's Gems

Nashville

"Poseur's Night at the Nashville," as the waggish Holton christened it.

This evening saw a return of the one-time Heavy Metal Kid supreme (that group now one year's rust-encrusted) on a new career with a new band.

Say 'allo to the new Gary 'Olton, still the same diminutive Cockney theatric, all wrapped up in a big girl's blouse and suggestive of a Spanish waiter entertaining with Rod Stewart impressions. But now he's in partnership with a Birmingham and Irish combination, The Gems, adopted by the singer following the loss of their previous frontman, one Pretty Boy Floyd.

This occasion being one of the first public try-outs prior to the new act's formal launching, judgements might be premature, allowances must be made and all that. Just the same, by the set's conclusion, it was a relieved Mr Holton, gratified and encouraged, who took his leave of a well-won crowd. The audition had been passed.

At least half the credit should go to The Gems, a shrewd and fortuitous choice on Holton's part because their hard and attractive style of rock, though too conventional to be especially interesting, proves itself equal to the vocalist's domineering and

demanding presence.

Instrumentally the sound gains its character from the interplay of Mark Robbins' full-bodied keyboards with the abrasively aggressive guitar of Steve Jones pose-alike Dennis Forbes. Backing up are Don McNeilly on bass and drummer Martin Hughes. It's chunky, traditional stuff for the most part — Stones and Faces comparisons cross the mind — but rescued from anonymity by the quality of the material.

There's the lively "Aeroplane Food", "Soho So Good" and a song called "Problem" (which, as Holton candidly admitted, "sounded like one"), as well as the slower and sincerely sung, "I Need A Drink".

Equally good is a lovely, mesmeric "Fade Away"; Holton's haunting performance underscored with a muted paramilitary beat, followed by the debut album title-cut "Shooting The Singer Is No Way To Stop The Opera". It's another slow, almost grandiose number and maybe the best medium for the vocalist's plaintive rasp.

I like it, the Nashville love it — and so, unfortunately, does Rat Scabies. Evidently tired and emotional the ex-celebrity commandeers a microphone to make certain we "fuckin' boozers" know about it, too.

If tonight's momentum can be maintained over the months to come then Gary Holton should get a second shot at the kind of success which finally eluded his last.



Poseurs Night at the Nashville ... GARY HOLTON.

Pic: NIGEL S. HADLEY

turbulent incarnation.

Step aside Oliver, the Artful Dodger's beck for more.

Paul Du Moyer

Ton Trix Fast Cars

Manchester

A rare event: two new bands with no pedigree whatsoever turned in highly acceptable performances on a quiet evening at the Factory.

Fast Cars were frantic and

they're ripe to make a killing on the youth market. Starting with a near-perfect version of "Suffragette City", they romped boyishly through a rapid-fire set of teen anthems, tapping Gen X and even The Who, with the song "Images" bringing "Pictures Of Lily" into a surprisingly innocent '70s focus.

Pop songs with a punk attack may not sound promising, but Fast Cars suspend disbelief by injecting every chord with manic energy. Two tunes with a

regional flavour — "Who Loves Jimmy Anderson" and "Tameside Girl" — should grant them local cult status. After that, The Undertones and co better watch out.

Ton Trix, a five-piece from Liverpool are also firmly anchored in the pop tradition; but they take a tidier, cooler, more sophisticated route.

Echoes of Roxy Music, XTC and particularly Blondie in their arrangements, with singer / rhythm guitarist Hemi Harembous' imaginative romanticism

colouring the material. "From My Room" was classic Liverpool, a multi-part opus on the general theme of ships that pass in the night, with subtle vocal chorusing and tinkling keyboard harmonics building up a slight melody into a kaleidoscopic tour-de-force.

Ton Trix are obviously still formative, but they already have a perceptible style to call their own; and they have the imagination and discipline to do well in the studio.

Two unashamedly orthodox bands who clearly believe that theorisation is no substitute for energy, that mental gymnastics are useless without application. Some may sneer, but I wish there were more like these.

Ian Wood

Drones

Moonlight Club

Unfortunately I arrived just in time for the first band. Nobody: you said it mate.

They're an under-rehearsed, unimaginative bunch fronted by yer regulation peroxide blonde lad (who can't be older than 13) unsuccessfully trying to turn himself upside down around the microphone. A few fans stupidly pogo from the first dischordant note; and time drags on ...

Things get worse. The Necromats behave in the new wave fashion but sound like heavy metal in parts. I must have lost a few million brain cells in that short spell. The vocals are inaudible, but we're treated to a drum solo midway; aren't you all impressed? I wasn't.

Time crawls by ... Finally, The Drones: a boring powerpop punk mob who can't decide who they are or what they're doing. Neither could I, and gave up halfway; I wish they had.

But they droned on and on and on ...

Deanne Pearson

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Jab Jab could mean a knockout

Jab Jab

Marques

After five years hard graft in their native Huddersfield and most points North, Jab Jab should be able to convince interested parties that their potential can be turned into something more positive.

This Marques debut was initially beset by the perils of performance, but Jab Jab's enthusiasm and self-belief won over a small yet devoted corps of fans.

Their basic sound revolves around the distinctive doodlings of keyboards lynch pin Robert Whittington, several degrees right of XTC and more firmly planted in the Billy Smart tradition. The brothers Augustine (Joe on bass, Charlie on guitar) provide a hard undercurrent of Fender snarl, node to Hendrix working out of a soulful bag that needs refining before Jab Jab commit themselves to vinyl.

They move fast and look the part; early spiky thrashings on "Pin For Dumping" and "Quilly Quayays" are exciting without breaking new ground. Reggae rhythms sit well on the band, but they aren't emulating any trends.

Drummer Skinhead Dick has his own style and his own line in idiosyncrasies, threadwise and thumpwise. He uses the cymbals effectively and operates well when the Augustines are employed on percussive chores. Having three strong characters helps guide the audience through some neat

stylistic changes on the Caribbean flavoured "Kneel Down And Pray", and the more complex material like "Shaper" and "Green House". Jab Jab aren't carrying any spare baggage either, and even tackle "All Along The Watchtower", making it a tribute with a twist.

They've paid their damn dues with change to spare, and it can only be a matter of time before some bright A&R man (if such an animal exists) recognises their force and signs them. Commercial music with a definite fun flavour running down the middle never did anyone any harm.

Check out Jab Jab, they may just put you on the canvas.

Max Bell

Blast Furnace And . . .

Hope and Anchor

Hammed in by a congregation of teenage sharks from Finsbury Park, Highbury, and Islington — not to mention Kings Cross and St. Pancras, Euston, Warren Street and Oxford Circus — it was to all intents a further fulsome R'n'B exercise from the piledriving Blast Furnace And . . . at the Hope and . . .

Back in the line-up once again stood the band's original bassist B. Bop, deputising for the departed Kevin Allen; John Mackie beat a frenetic tattoo on drums at the rear; while upfront stood the motorvatin' trio of Blitz



Bass with punch . . . JAB JAB. Pic: DENIS O'REGAN

Kreig (rhythm/slide), Skid "Slim Harpo" Marx (harmonica), and not least, Karl Shear Marx as Blast Furnace on lead vocals and guitar.

However, this was to be their final London appearance, the members having subsequently decided to call it a day, and go their own separate ways. A shame, as a Blast Furnace And . . . gig always proved a most pleasant way of whiling away an evening.

They opened their set in

customary furious fashion with "Moving On", before settling into the equally driving "Crosscut Saw", featuring lightning harp blowing from Skid Marx and some nice fluid lead picking from Blast.

Next up was the wry rocker "South Of The River" — the new single — vaguely derivative of "Driving Sideways" in its harp phrase, redeemed by a set of throwaway lyrics that I haven't stopped singing for days.

"Rude bwoys gonna make you quiver," warns Mr Furnace, "you better keep something up your sleeve, when you go south of the river."

Unlike many of the groups currently playing the R'n'B revival circuit in this man's town, Blast Furnace And . . . describe their own original compositions with a verve at least equal to the old blues masters.

Following "I Hear You Knockin'", Skid Marx played Ayatollah Khomeini as he temporarily replaced The Shaer as people's choice on two numbers written by and dedicated to "my hero Howling Wolf": "Worried 'Bout My Baby" and "Drink And A Woman". Unfortunately they lacked the same dignified delivery of a Chester Burnett, but they were rollicking, danceworthy efforts nonetheless, with strong rhythmic support from the band.

The pace remained hot and the basement bouncing as Blast resumed vocal control for a rendition of "I Can't Be Satisfied", the less outstanding "Keep On Dancing" (I stopped); and brought the set to a close with the brilliantly characteristic "You Can't Stop The Boy". We wouldn't want to anyway!

"Nobody appreciates the value of good press more than I am," CSM once confided to me, "but I'd much rather earn an encore at the Hope or Nashville than a rave review in *Melody Maker* or *NME*."

Well, Blast Furnace And . . . certainly roused their crowd to an encore, even though time was running out; and the band was joined onstage by Johnny Guitar of The Bishops to "Rip It Up" in the manner of Little Richard, and extend a final thank you to its audience with "Back In The USA".

Forward in the UK.

Penny Reel

The Bishops

Electric Ballroom

Do you have trouble convincing friends there's a future for R'n'B? Then keep them away from The Bishops. Dedicated they may be, but so were Canned Heat.

The Bishops don't even cut it on a good-time Saturday night level, for the simple reason they aim no higher. Woody Allen's remark on comedy applies: some people think this music's easy.

Dave Tice does, for one. Grafted onto the original fourpiece, he soon got this singing lark sussed. Practice your Brilleaux below, clench your fist at the mirror and you're laughing. Who needs frills like wit, phrasing and swing?

Pat McMullen (bass) and Paul Balbi (drums) are a pretty punchless rhythm section, happiest on the standard Diddley thump of "I Want Candy". Barring Johnny Guitar's doomy "Here Comes The Night" lines on "Could You, Would You", the guitars are energetic but strictly routine. The faster stuff is a featureless blur.

In this context, "Baby You're Wrong" and a now ballad sung by Zenon de Fleur are almost touching, each benefiting immeasurably from a non-Tice vocal. Zen and Johnny are hardly wizards of the larynx, but at least they sound vaguely expressive.

Then it's back to hollow bluster with "Down The Road Apiece" and "Shake Your Money Maker". Zen's slide on the latter a pale echo of Elvin Bishop (no relation) on the Butterfield version.

Musically tatty, cheerless and almost empty, The Bishops are for R'n'B junkies only; and not unless the Feegoods are out of town.

Harry George

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Punishment Of Luxury

Nashville

Christ it's tough in the rockcrit game.

It's no longer enough to like or dislike a band. "Are they contemporary?" that's the big one.

For this reason you'll have noticed that over the last few years anything fragmented and vaguely alienating gets the critical kid gloves. After all, the band could be ten years ahead of their time; and they could even be using standard rock instruments in a wholly new way.

Far harder to explain is why most writers seem to genuinely enjoy Punishment Of Luxury.

Just assigned to UA after some lavish reviews, they perform to a Nashville crowd with a high lipper quotient who seemed suitably grateful for the privilege.

"Puppet Life", their Small Wonder single, is my introduction to Brian Bond, singer-actor-mime. Both the song and the mime are mildly arresting, with Bond clad in balaclava, crown and yellow plastic dungerees and talk-singing in the style popularised by Rex Harrison. So far so novel.

The other three are badly made-up for no apparent reason, except maybe to keep up with the Mime King. Nevilluxury, blond-haired and acting like the biggest jessie of them all, is simply a capable if orthodox rock guitarist.

"Pool", their celebrated attack on bigotry, is the first evidence of Punilux's appalling smugness. The point is obvious ("Anyone who doesn't shout Pool is a pool") and worth maybe 60 seconds of your valuable time. Instead, the dismal non-tune is extended to become fully as infuriating as the object of its scorn.

Punilux also display naked contempt for "ordinary people" and "ordinary life", whatever they are. Hence the facile barbs of "Let's Get Married": no jibe is too glib for these boys.

Never trust anyone who harps on their lyrics in interviews (Punilux do). Good music speaks for itself, whether you're from Mars or Tyrannopolis.

I missed any meaning on "The Message": a bit of interminable manifesto featuring unathematic drumming. And Nevilluxury's occasionally interesting dismemberment of familiar guitar styles hardly compensated for Bond's irritating singspeak.

In the right hands, arrogance and cynicism can be perversely attractive. But it would be far more beguiling than anything Punilux have to offer.

I caught five minutes of Essential Logic, out of Poly Styrene by Patti Smith. Laura Logic was agreeable if derivative, but the weedy sax made X-Ray Spex's Rudi Thomson sound like the new Coltrane.

Harry George

Jimmy Cliff and Oneness

Hammermith Odeon

The curse of being a rock critic is that you can't simply enjoy a gig: you have to work out why, and wonder if you were wrong to like it at all.

I lapped up every minute of Jimmy Cliff, but I'm not sure I should have. As a songwriter, Cliff is living on his past reputation. Almost half his set comprised songs from his 1969 Trojan record (still his best), several of which later

reappeared on the soundtrack album "The Harder They Come". Since then, he's done little of interest: just moved steadily towards an MOR pop audience.

And significantly there were few rootsmen in the Hammermith crowd: just middle-class blacks and whites mingling together in casual affluence.

So there was definitely an air of nostalgia.

Early on, Cliff established himself with a trio of golden oldies — "You Can Get It If You Really Want It", "Beautiful World, Beautiful People", "My Ancestors" — and only then moved on to more recent songs.

And the music was safe, mainstream reggae: no risks or tricky dub sophistication. But what rendered all these limitations utterly irrelevant was... commitment. Cliff sang superbly, and Oneness were brilliant.

He has always been a fine singer; his high, lifting voice can soar effortlessly over the most mundane lyric (and frequently does). Tonight, he sang from the heart, and it

was just beautiful. A delicate figure, he'd take-off on brief, frantic dances, his white cape fluttering from his shoulders like a giant butterfly.

Oneness swayed and smiled around him with evident delight.

Their name is exactly right, the empathy confounding. At times, there were eight rhythmic variations weaving and sliding around each other with constant invention. The lead guitarists Ernest Ranglin and Earl "Chinna" Smith would insert quick, spiky guitar solos or chase each other around fascinating detours that abruptly turned back into the flow of the music with immaculate precision.

The extended stop/start ending of "My Ancestors" was the first display of their power, but "Stand Up and Fight Back" was their highspot: a mediocre song turned into an aesthetic triumph by the consummate skill of the band.

As if this wasn't enough, the first encore had me totally transfixed.

Under a single white spotlight, Cliff sang "Many

Rivers To Cross" with passionate intensity, he was literally shaking with emotion. And Ranglin threw in a solo that seemed to contain all the anguished blues you've ever heard and still sounded joyful.

A fast, celebratory "The Harder They Come" followed, and would have made a perfect ending. But the audience demanded more, and a second encore was the inevitable anti-climax.

I dare not complain, Jimmy Cliff, *phew!* Who would've believed it?

Graham Lock

The Osmonds

Rainbow

The band are on, the music's off. The lights are down, the banners are up. A wave of abject terror grips your reporter's quivering frame.

Piercing shrieks of ecstasy greet the opening chords, and a video film reminds us that the last four blissful years have passed all too swiftly.

The Scintillating Seven are back — and how.

We kick off with the dental duo: handsome Donny in cabaret drapes, and the sveite, spunky Marie sporting the first in a series of shimmering two-piece harem suits. They treat us to a couple of ditties from their recent screen special, memorable solely for its reckless title *Gon!*

Coconuts. They live, they smile, and they split backstage sharpish as four flash figures bound into the spotlights, their blinding white trappings emblazoned with musical insignia.

"Hi... I'm Alan... I'm Wayne... I'm Merrill... and I'm Available," adds the dorkish Jay, as they shift into a dance routine that's like the death throes of a lurid locomotive. Extracts from *Gon* ensue, together with a romping disco spinner "Crazy Horses" featuring a Roy Rogers soundtrack plus automated jets of smoke.

Six down, one to go, and Little Jimmy shows for his solo spot.

The chubby one wears a silver polka-dot outfit and a grin like a suspension bridge. He shuffles around stage with a roving mike, singing "Long-Haired Lover From Liverpool" while scores of innocents flip their lids.

The smarmy Jimbo scampers off into the wings to make way for the informal comedy section.

This simulates the cutesy, downhome feel of how leisure time is wiled away on the Mormon Ranch. Donny raps the keys in rinky tones, with Marie sitting prettily atop his white piano. Together they croon to the likes of "Paper Roses" and the Godawful "Puppy Love". Don, being into electronics, unveils a vocal modulator that makes him sound like anything from a cartoon chipmunk to Lee Marvin on downers, and some hapless photographer is singled out to give a demonstration.

The last half-hour is a multi-talent extravaganza, involving the toothsome foursome in an insufferable medley of Beatie hits, decked out in pastel Sgt Pepper jackets. "The Way We Were", in massed angelic ecappella, falls flat as the video packs up, thankfully sparing us some early footage of *The Andy Williams Show*.

Lastly, we discover that your average Osmond, apart from singing and dancing in

time with the music, also plays sax, banjo or trumpet with frivolous abandon. We also find that Marie's wardrobe includes diaphanous chiffon for the finale "You Are The Sunshine Of My Life", which they dedicated on the previous night to "Her Majesty" (Princess Margaret — who was well chuffed by all accounts).

It's all over, bar the screaming and the odd case of hysteria.

Yet the words of their mother Olive Osmond still ring with prophetic doom. "We believe," she said, "that the family is an eternal unit."

What have we done to deserve such ceaseless torment?

Mark Ellen

Nazareth

Glasgow

The tour for the album inspired by the book comes to the city of the title.

The book, *No Mean City* can claim much responsibility for making Glasgow a name feared wherever decent people walk. A mutant variation of its hero 'Razor King', features on the cover of Nazareth's new album.

The No Mean City tour (Nazareth's first for nearly two years) still looks like being highly successful. Why is it that hard rock bands deserve such loyal fans who can remain patient between biennial tours/albums? And why, since the audiences remain so young, does anyone start to like a band whose best work was eight years ago?

Now Nazareth — an above average, occasionally inspired, hard rock band with an underrated singer, armed only with Zai Clesmanson, lots of money and some fancy new Dr Strange artwork of forgotten demons and Hell's Angels from lost netherworld caverns — plan to smash through the limitations of their present success.

Presumably they're aiming for the category of diverse bealearightsowed, gimmick-ridden, plain cretinous American fave megastars who don't mean doodley squat over here, praise Zoroaster.

Above the stage the Nazareth logo flashes and flickers, branding the name subliminally on to 3,000 consumer brains. Below, the familiar, craggy Nazarenes do what they've been doing for years, while new guitarist, ex-SABH Clesmanson, prowls amongst them like a phantom future memory of clean, sci-fi movie rock bands; so sophisticated and slick does he appear in contrast to the others.

Enigmatic variation comes with an acoustic segment (!) when chairs are brought out and the band contrive to sound like J.J. Cale being tortured with accompaniment by Pentangle.

As with Nazareth's career the whole show is fairly enjoyable with occasional highlights, usually other people's songs ("This Flight Tonight" in particular). Although even that's blizzed by their own "Expect No Mercy".

If that level of dynamism had been kept up throughout it could have been a turning point in my life: onwards to heavy metal fandom — to Judas Priest, Rush and (gulp) even... Kiss; to a denim jacket, alcoholism and a final courtroom, pleading "I had to kill him, your honour, he tried to steal my Budgie albums".

However, this was only their second gig. The Germans at the end of the tour should get something a bit more special.

Glenn Gibson



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After reading J-J Burnel's "Systems", I couldn't help but notice that all he'd done was very mild-manneredly summarize different forms of repression complete with endless watered down cures, etc.

It's illogical but true that it's better to be a willing part of something that is basically spurious but exciting, than of something which is basically true but boring and ordinary. Fantasy exists, so therefore does reality.

Socialism is but humane state capitalism. There will never be a socialist revolution here and it's naive to think there will be. Russia, by the way, is Communist, not Socialist. Nihilism never stopped people thinking for themselves though I agree it does take longer to progress.

"Systems" wasn't patronising, just lacking anything new. Your "slaves", Mr. Burnel, if they did act together to free themselves from exploitation, would invent unions and strikes. Freedom to strike is democracy at its best. So at the end of the day we still all endeavour to feather our own nests, automatically, but unfortunately at others' expense.

Finally, getting into court on petty offences does seem a little childish, but it is fun reading about it and something for you to write home about.
BOB WILLIAMS,
Chelmsford, Essex.

Your 2nd paragraph: surely you mean "more enjoyable" rather than "better"? Your 3rd: Russia is fascist/imperialist. Your 5th: "Freedom to strike" — "Democracy at its best"? An ideal democracy would therefore be permanently on strike, nicht wahr? — MB

The obvious implications of J. J. Burnel's arguments are that if you're physically able to overthrow the system, you might as well do so. Hence, might is right, hence dictatorship/fascism by force. A democracy will stay a democracy if people choose to exercise their democratic rights — and will be flexible while people bend it in this way. To break it is simply to replace one problem with another — and I'm betting on the present one as being more attractive

than JJ's macho Hell's Angel alternative.
MARTIN SCOTT, Queens' College, Cambridge.
You said it — MB

I used to think Jean-Jacques Burnel was a pretentious bore, till I discovered "SYSTEMS". Now I know he is.

Anyone can get stoned while doing their homework, but most of us keep this obnoxious habit to ourselves instead of inflicting half-pages of waffle on innocent members of the public.

No I didn't need to look up "monosyllabic" but I suspect J-J had to.

SUSAN READ, Farnborough, Hants.

As for me, I had to look up "obnoxious" — MB
DID YOU know that your Bag page contained approx. 10,288 words last week? Of course I'm not taking into account the pictures.

STEVE W., Stoke-on-Trent.

This is an inaccurate computation — MB

We at Release feel that we must reply to Max Bell's snide attack on our benefit evening. He obviously doesn't understand what a benefit dance is all about and that the aim is to raise money for worthy causes.

I happened to be on the door when Mr. Bell came in and he flashed his press card expecting me to be impressed. Since it was a benefit at a fairly small dance hall, we were not operating a "guest list" and I insisted that Mr. Bell pay. His liver was for two people, not one as was implied in the article. As for the "Camden socialites", only about a quarter of the people at the benefit had bought advance tickets through Release and the majority there were the usual Dingwall's crowd.

For Mr Bell's information, the benefit was to help raise money for Release's new Bust Book in order for us to be able to keep the price of the book down to £1.25 and to support Release's work. The benefit raised several hundred pounds for Release which provides free legal advice to over 10,000 people a year. I just hope that Mr. Bell keeps his nose clean as he may have to end up paying for his advice if he gets into trouble with the law.
Christian Wolmar,
Gosh! I'm ever so sorry — MB

Can I just congratulate Ian & The Blocks on the success of their very wonderful "Rhythm Stick" and say how much I look forward to being stuck outside of their next London gig ticketless whilst thousands of boppers who only know two singles are inside watching my hero. A CYNICAL BUT LOYAL BLOCKHEAD, Stamford Bridge Section.
A pity — 'cos it was a great, great concert — perhaps the best Ian has ever done. I would hate to have missed it myself. Gee, I really feel sorry for you etc. etc.
(continued p.49) — MB

Dear Creeps.
It was very flattering to see in last week's NME that you had selected my very own entries to your Ramones competition for special vilification.

Having been referred to not only as 'a pinhead' but also 'D-U-M-B', my obvious delight at having joined that far-from-select bunch who have been mercilessly slagged off in your rag was somewhat abated by the fact that you omitted to actually print my name. As I have an overwhelming desire to be famous, I should be grateful if you would be kind enough to rectify this forthwith and tout de suite.
JANE GARCIA, Acton, London W.3
With reference to T.P. &

J.B.'s remarks about the lyrics of "Is Your Love In Vain", I was under the impression that women's liberation meant a woman doing as she pleases whether she wants to be a journalist, doctor, politician or whatever, and also if she wants to do cooking, sewing and flower growing for Bob Dylan or anybody else. To me it's a song about Dylan and a consenting adult falling in love. The woman can always tell him to sling his hook.
ANGIE, Bognor Regis, Sussex.
Funny, to me it's all about Dylan telling the Consenting Adult to sling her hook — MB

It seems to me that this page includes a good deal of useless information so I hope you include this as useful.
ANDREW MILES, Oakham, Leics.
If it keeps you happy — MB

So, Mr. Parsons does it again eh? Got a solution why punk will never die.
"Because King Olaf ain't no human being", my ass. Who the hell is "King Olaf" anyway? The Swedish King is called Carl-Gustav and the Norwegian one is usually called Olav. If Mr. Parsons has to finish off with a smart-ass comment, he should bother to check the

facts first. Even if no-one is interested in Scandinavian kings.
FINN BJELKE, Oslo.
My trouble exactly —
HAMLET

I am writing to protest at the articles on Grass. The song "Asylum" is not, and can not be, an attack on Christianity's fear of sexuality and obsession with death. It cannot be, because Christianity has no fear of sexuality and obsession with death. The first point can be proved by a quotation from the Song of Solomon, when Solomon says How beautiful your tripping feet, O queenly maiden. Your rounded thighs are like jewels, the work of the most skilled craftsmen. Your navel is lovely as a goblet filled with wine. Your waist is like a heap of wheat set about with lilies. Your two breasts are like two fawns, yes, lovely twins. "The king is held captive in your queenly tresses." The language may be unfamiliar but the implication is unmistakable.
JANATHAN PIESSE, New Costessey, Norwich.

Yes, you prune, but Solomon was not, repeat, not a Christian. — MB

Re. Andre Klaranberg's letter of January 20th.

His point of contention seems familiar to that of Orwell in Politics and the English Language; that everyday, undorned English is superior to "purple prose". Classicism is, indeed, ludicrously out of place in the NME, but should a writer compromise his thought patterns, his writing style to suit the minds of a clique of discontented readers? Form and content are irrevocably bound together, like it or not. Prose is an imperfect medium for the communication of emotions tenuous concepts; mundane English is inadequate for this function of criticism. For moribund clichés reads Snou's or Punch.

I am not a close friend of Paul Morley.
TEZ, The nice part of Leicester.

I'd just like to come in at this point and endorse the answer above — KING SOLOMON (of mines fame).

If everyone who now claims to have seen the Pistols at the Lesser Free Trade Hall in '76 had actually been there they would have filled Wembley Stadium.
MARTYN, Grasscroft.
Or, alternatively, those fabled mines of mine —
KING SOLOMON.

I took a walk last night down to "Sensation Boulevard" where I met a "Dreamy Lady" and we danced all night in the "Ballrooms Of Mars". We danced the "Chariot Choogle". She told me she loved to boogie and I told her that "I Love To Boogie" too.

We left the "Ballrooms Of Mars" at "Midnight" and passed the "Wizzard" on the way home. Ours was a "Hot Love" and we did the "Behane Walk" all the way to my car "Thunder Wing".

She was a real "Lady" and I was a "20th Century Boy". We reached her flat and I dropped her off. She said her "Tenement Lady" wouldn't mind her being "Foxy Roky Punctured and Funky Born Free".

She left me in my "Universe" "All Alone". "Life is Strange".
Bolonic Effs live forever.
S. WEBB, Cheshire.
You don't say? — MB

You evidently sat quite a lot of store by the results of your Poll, saying that they justify your policy of writing about new bands and ignoring or slapping old ones. I quite agree with you. But I hope you take just as much notice of the "Creep of the Year" section. Julie Burchill came no lower than third, which, to paraphrase your own words, is no mean achievement when you live in the same galaxy as Tony Parsons.
C. H. PACKMAN, Tunbridge Wells, Kent.
Tunbridge Wells? — MB

Dear NME Editorial,
Send me New Musical Express from 30-12-78.
LEIF CHRISTENSEN, Denmark.
It'll cost you. — KING SOLOMON

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